



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

YELLOWSTONE NIGHT SKY PHOTOGRAPHY

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR - SUMMER 2021

INSTRUCTOR: Kevin League

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Kevin is a Helena, Montana based award-winning professional landscape, lifestyle, and wildlife photographer, capturing Montana and the western United States' most beautiful, fleeting, and fascinating moments.

He has been a student of photography for several decades beginning as a teenager when his parents handed down their 35mm film Nikon cameras to him. Fast forward a few decades later, Kevin would establish his photography business in 2015, and in 2020 he opened a gallery in downtown Helena, fulfilling a lifelong dream and quickly becoming one of Montana's favorite new visual artists.

Inspired by early conservation photographers, Kevin believes his ability to share the beauty of our last best places will inspire others to respect, protect, and enjoy them. Kevin has dedicated his life to conservation through his photography, educational workshops and throughout a career protecting natural places that has spanned over 20 years with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is an activity **level 2** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 3 miles per day, comfortably, with elevation gains up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking possible.*

**All field activities will be conducted as a group. If you cannot meet the activity level expectations during your program, you may be restricted from participation in daily outings. We will not alter program itineraries or activities to accommodate participants who cannot meet the expectations of the stated activity level.*

LOCATION: Lamar Buffalo Ranch – Yellowstone National Park, WY

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES: The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 7, 2021, and ends on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, August 7, 2021, and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 10, 2021.

MEALS: You will need to bring your own food; lunch should be able to travel in the field with you.

For general information about the facilities, preparing for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Welcome to the side of Yellowstone that few experience!

Yellowstone is famous for so many great reasons – the geothermal features, abundant wildlife and notoriety as the world’s first National Park to name a few. However, very few know of the park’s other unique attribute – its amazing night sky. In fact, according to the Bortle Dark-Sky scale, a numeric system that measures the quality of the night sky, a large portion of the park features some of the darkest skies on the planet.

Nighttime holds a special allure and stillness in Yellowstone, showcasing a pristine example of the nighttime wilderness. Nestled in the fabric of a dark sky, the stars twinkle above with a brightness that few around the world see. Yellowstone’s summer milky way shines with its colors and mysterious textures, while the constellations reign overhead in their myth and lore.

Our evenings together will combine classroom instruction to learn the concepts of astrophotography, combined with lots of in-the-field time to capture Yellowstone by starlight, perhaps with a chorus of wolves!

I look forward to sharing this special experience with you,

- Kevin League

PROGRAM ITINERARY

The itinerary is designed to take advantage of the best opportunities in the park, but may be adjusted to adapt to weather conditions, wildlife activity, holidays, and road construction.

The details and timing of the agenda are subject to change.

Day 1	Evening	Welcome and introductions. Presentation with night photography inspiration, course overview and intro into night photography practices. Photography of the Lamar Valley night sky right out our front door!
Day 2	Morning Midday Late Afternoon Evening	Sleep in after a late night. Explore the park or relax at the ranch. Presentation: Night photography practices, techniques, and execution. Photograph Old Faithful erupting as well as other thermals in the upper geyser basin.
Day 3	Morning Midday Late Afternoon Evening	Sleep in after a late night. Explore the park or relax at the ranch. Image review and how-to editing nighttime photography. We will head to the Roosevelt Arch to learn how to balance ambient light from town with the stars. After Roosevelt Arch, we will head south to photograph the Mammoth Terraces.
Day 4	Morning	Check out of ranch by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

Items specific to this course are -

Required:

- **DSLR or mirrorless interchangeable lens camera**, with the capability to do manual exposure settings. 'Full frame' sensor cameras do best at night, but 'APC-C' or 'crop' sensor cameras with manual settings will work fine. For this course, we do not recommend any camera that does not allow for an interchangeable lens, like 'superzooms,' 'prosumer' or 'bridge' type cameras.
- **Your camera's manual**. We will not have access to the internet, so please bring your camera manual to answer any settings questions that the instructor is unable to help with.
- **Sturdy Tripod**, and mounting plate that attaches to your camera body.
- **Headlamp**, and extra batteries. Some headlamps feature a dim red light that is particularly useful for illuminating your area without negatively impacting your night vision.
- **'Fast' wide angle lenses with manual focus**. Any lens with manual focus ability will work for night photography, but a 'fast' wide-angle lens tends to work the best. The speed of a lens refers to the aperture, and a fast lens would be anything with an aperture of f/2.8 or larger (the smaller the number, the larger the aperture). f/2.8, f/1.8, f/1.4 are all great night lenses! Wide angle lenses 10mm to 24mm are ideal.

Suggested, but optional:

- **A laptop** with photo editing software for editing photos during downtime as well as for asking questions related to editing. I personally use Lightroom CC Classic and will be doing demonstrations with it.
- **A remote shutter trigger with timer**, connects either wirelessly or via a wire to your camera. Your camera should have a 'bulb mode' which allows you to use an external shutter release trigger. I recommend remote triggers with a digital timer feature for programming long-exposures. I find this type of device to be an easy way to operate your camera's exposure settings at night while minimizing disturbance to the camera during long exposures. Look on Amazon for 'Newer' or 'JJC' brands for your specific camera model – you should be able to find a wired model for around \$20. Your camera's manufacturer should also offer one, but at a higher price.
- **PhotoPills smart phone app**, (\$9.99 one-time fee, iOS or Android) is an amazing tool for planning and pre-visualizing where and when the Milky Way or other night sky features will appear in the sky. Other helpful tools include the ability to calculate what your shutter speed should be for pin point stars based on your specific camera body, lens and f-stop setting. I will go through how to use the app during the course.

RECOMMENDED READING

No prior reading is required, but participants might enjoy the following publications, that complement the program. Most publications are available at Yellowstone Forever's online store at shop.yellowstone.org. Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount and proceeds directly support the park.

- **There are no recommended readings specific to this course.**

WHOM TO CONTACT

For any questions, concerns, or additional information please contact the following:

- Program itinerary, health forms, payment, and activity questions please contact Yellowstone Forever at institute@yellowstone.org or 406-848-2400
- Road updates, park conditions, and general park information please contact Yellowstone National Park Service at <https://www.nps.gov/yell/contacts.htm>
- If running late for a program, please contact 406-848-2400