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JUNE - DECEMBER 2018

Yellowstone

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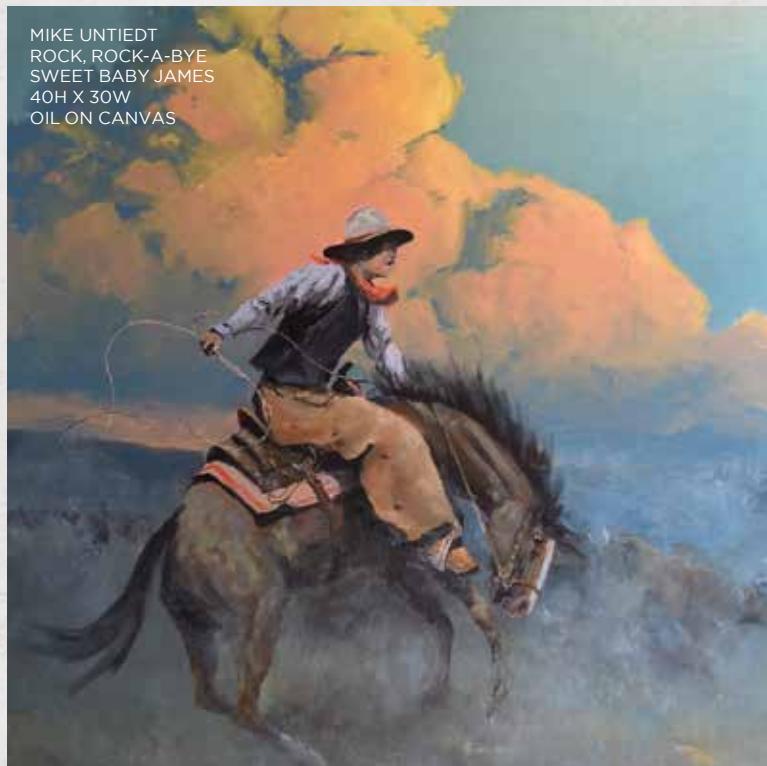


A wide-angle photograph capturing a stunning sunset over a mountain range. The sky is filled with dramatic, billowing clouds colored in deep orange, red, and purple hues. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the vibrant colors of the sky. Beyond the water, rolling green hills and dark forested areas lead to a majestic mountain range. One prominent peak, Electric Peak, is visible on the left side of the frame. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and tranquility.

The sun sets over Electric Peak
during the 2017 summer solstice.
NPS PHOTO

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ON THE COVER: A female grizzly bear, known as Blondie to the locals, grazing among the wildflowers in Grand Teton National Park in June 2017. PHOTO BY STEVE MATTHEIS



Black Pool, one of the largest hot springs
in the West Thumb Geyser Basin.
NPS PHOTO



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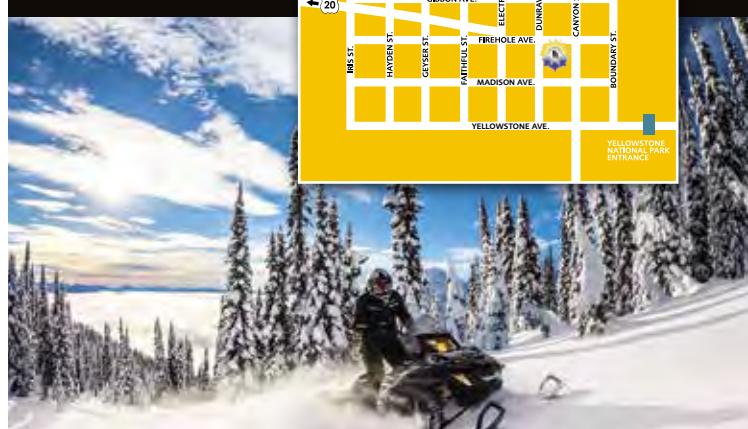
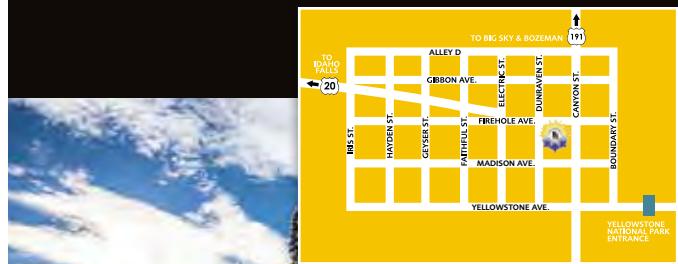


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From the Editor:

Seize the summer in Yellowstone

Summers are short in the Greater Yellowstone, but a lot of residents here wouldn't have it any other way. Many of us live in the region for the world-class winter recreation—the skiing at Big Sky, Jackson Hole, Grand Targhee and Bridger Bowl; snowmobiling in Cooke City or West Yellowstone; or the exceptional Nordic skiing opportunities.

But the prolonged anticipation of sun and sandals, and knowing the season's brevity, make the warm months all the more extraordinary. When the snow starts retreating up the peaks and wildflowers begin to paint the hillsides, visitors from around the world flock here to join us in marveling at this spectacular ecosystem.

Every spring, we bear witness to the annual emergence of grizzlies from their slumber, and the year's young taking their first steps. We get to watch this new generation of bison, elk and deer grow before our eyes and fatten for the winter, which always seems like it's around the bend.

We don't waste our weekends here. Knowing how abbreviated the summer calendar is, we carve out ample time for raft trips, mountain bike excursions, alpine hikes and angling adventures on blue-ribbon trout streams. Some of us spend our days off in Yellowstone, joining the crowds to experience the natural wonders of our nearby national park.

It's easy to take Yellowstone for granted when it's on your doorstep, but every time I drive into the park, I'm reminded why we're lucky to live here. Just the sight of one of the simple, brown trailhead signs induces a sense of calm—the certainty that it leads to a high and wild ridge, a gurgling mud pot, or a stunning waterfall makes it easy to forget the bustle of civilization outside of Yellowstone's borders.

If you're joining us from afar, or just need a friendly reminder to explore your back yard, you'll find inspiration and guidance in the pages of this magazine. Whether you favor art or science, wildlife or water, there's something for everyone in our nation's first national park.



Tyler Allen
Managing Editor



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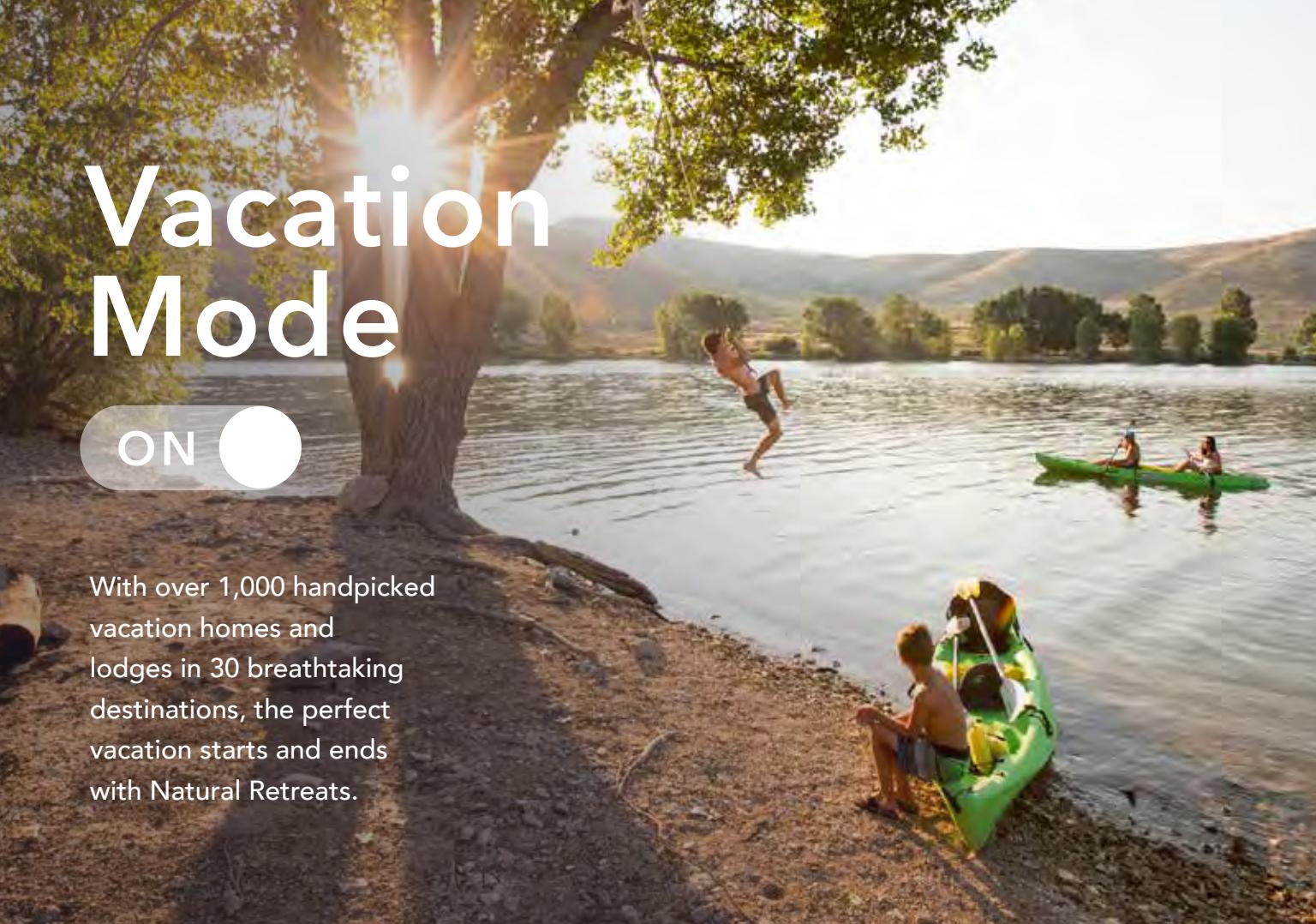
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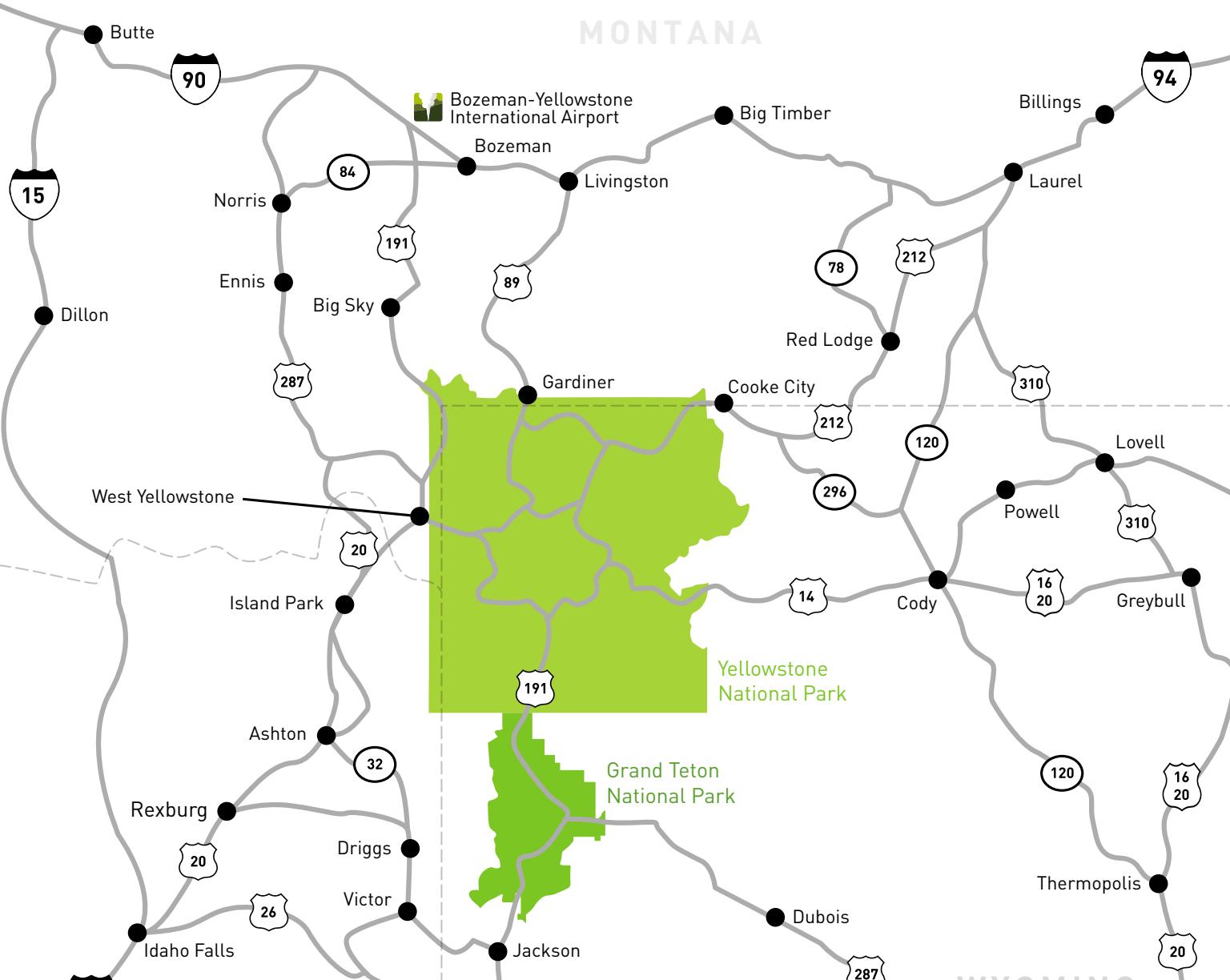


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Getting to Yellowstone



YELLOWSTONE & GRAND TETON NP ENTRANCE FEES

The National Park Service announced in spring 2018 price increases to entrance fees for Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, and that it would no longer be offering a joint entrance fee or annual pass for the two parks.

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\$35 per vehicle to visit each individual park, for one to seven days.

MOTORCYCLES

\$30 for each park, for one to seven days.

INDIVIDUAL (FOOT/BICYCLE/SKI, ETC.)

\$20/person for each park, for one to seven days

ANNUAL PASSES

\$70 for each individual park. An \$80 Interagency Pass is valid for entry to all fee areas on federal lands. Valid for one year.

SENIOR PASSES

\$80 lifetime pass, or \$20 annual pass, available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents age 62 or older.

ACCESS PASS

Free for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities.

MILITARY ANNUAL PASS

Free annual pass available for active duty military personnel, and their dependents, with proper identification.

FREE ENTRANCE DAYS

September 22: National Public Lands Day

November 11: Veterans Day

Exploring Yellowstone

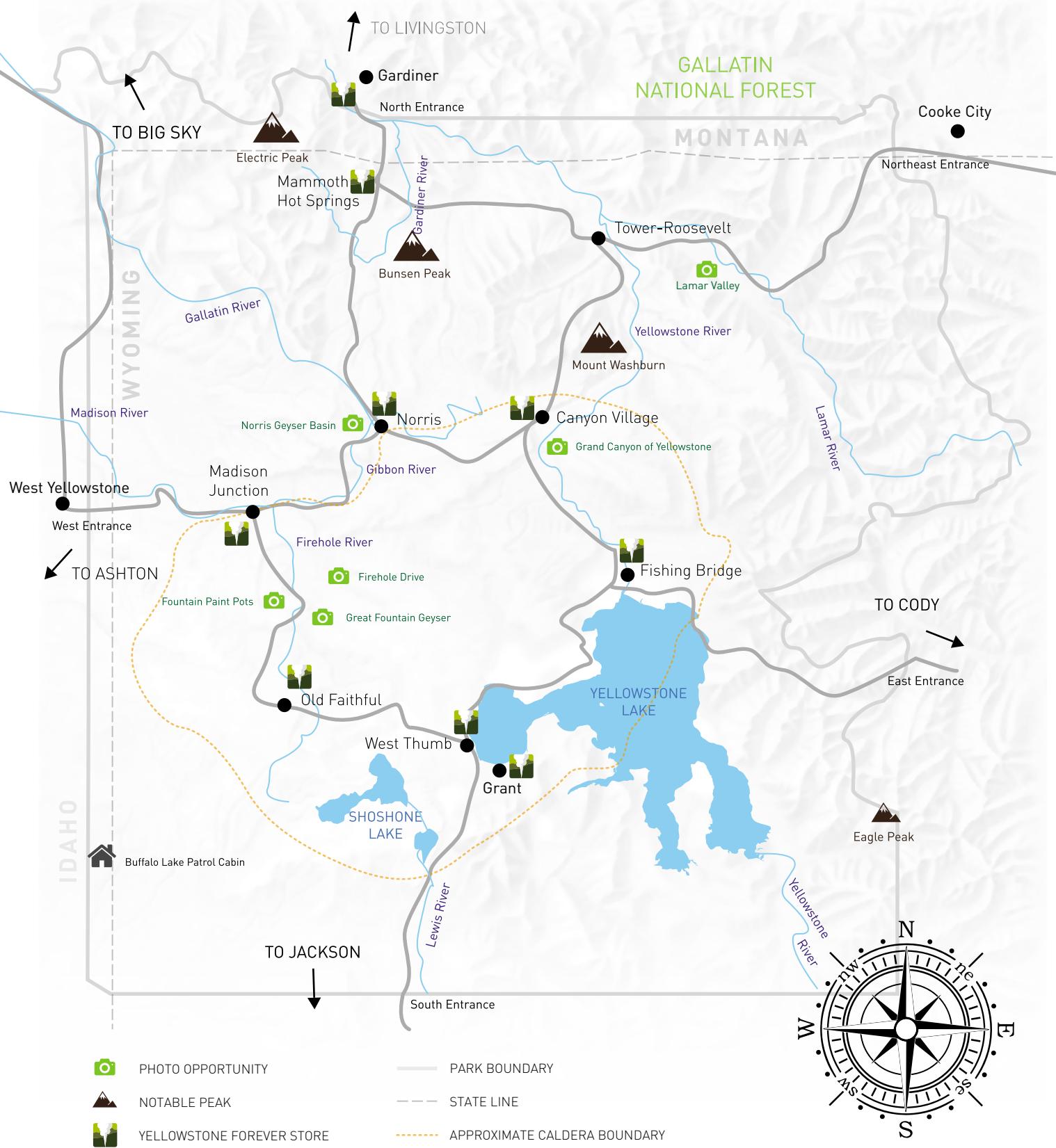


PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

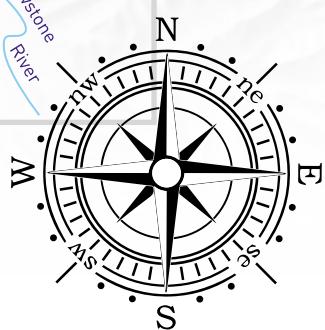
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JUNE 9 | Meeteetse, WY

BECK LAKE CHALLENGE

JUNE 9 | Cody, WY

YELLOWSTONE HALF MARATHON & 5K

JUNE 9 | West Yellowstone, MT

JAKE CLARK'S MULE DAYS

JUNE 11-17 | Ralston, WY

2ND ANNUAL SUMMER SHRED FEST

JUNE 15-17 | Beartooth Basin, WY

GARDINER RODEO

JUNE 17-18 | Gardiner, MT

37TH PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM POWOW

JUNE 16-17 | Cody, WY

Fourth of July fireworks in Big Sky.
OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO



The inaugural Jackson Hole PBR is July 17. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

JULY

99TH ANNUAL CODY STAMPEDE

JULY 1-4 | Cody, WY

WILD WEST EXTRAVAGANZA

JULY 2-4 | Cody, WY

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

JULY 2-4 | Livingston, MT

ROUNDUP RODEO

JULY 2-4 | Livingston, MT

BIG SKY FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

JULY 4 | Big Sky, MT

NIKE JUNIOR GOLF CAMPS

JULY 9-20 | Big Sky, MT

BEARTOOTH RALLY & IRON HORSE RODEO

JULY 20-22 | Red Lodge, MT

NATIONAL DAY OF THE AMERICAN COWBOY

JULY 14 | Meeteetse, WY

**TARGHEE MUSIC FESTIVAL**

JULY 13-15 | Grand Targhee Resort, WY

JACKSON HOLE PBR

JULY 17 | Jackson, WY

DOG AND GROG MONTANA MICROBREW FESTIVAL

JULY 20-21 | Virginia City, MT

TETON COUNTY FAIR

JULY 20-29 | Jackson, WY

YELLOWSTONE BEER FEST

JULY 21 | CODY, WY

BREWGRASS FEST

JULY 21 | GARDINER, MT

BREWFEST AT BIG SKY RESORT

JULY 21 | BIG SKY, MT

RED ANTS PANTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

JULY 26-29 | WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, MT

BIG SKY PBR

JULY 25-28 | Big Sky, MT

BIG SKY ART AUCTION

JULY 26 | Big Sky, MT

AUGUST**SWEET PEA FESTIVAL**

AUGUST 3-5 | Bozeman, MT

LIVINGSTON CLASSIC PBR

AUGUST 4 | Livingston, MT

BALE BEER FEST

AUGUST 4 | Virginia City, MT



PARK NEWS



Grand Targhee Bluegrass Festival is Aug. 11-13 in Alta, Wyoming.
PHOTO COURTESY OF GRAND TARGHEE RESORT

CODY AIR FAIR

AUGUST 4 | Cody, WY

RENDEZVOUS MOUNTAIN HILLCLIMB

AUGUST 4 | Jackson, WY

WILDLANDS FESTIVAL

AUGUST 10 | Bozeman, MT

BIG SKY CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

AUGUST 10-12 | Big Sky, MT

GRAND TARGHEE BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

AUGUST 10-12 | Grand Targhee Resort, WY

WILD WEST RIVER FEST

AUGUST 18-19 | Cody, WY

SEPTEMBER

THE RUT MOUNTAIN RUN

AUGUST 31 TO SEPTEMBER 2 | Big Sky, MT

HOMESTEADER DAYS

SEPTEMBER 7-8 | Powell, WY

GRAND TARGHEE RESORT OKTOBERFEST

SEPTEMBER 15 | Alta, WY

37TH ANNUAL BUFFALO BILL ART SHOW

SEPTEMBER 21-22 | Cody, WY

ONGOING

JACKSON HOLE RODEO

MAY-SEPTEMBER | SELECT DATES
Jackson, WY

BIG SKY FARMERS MARKET

JUNE-SEPTEMBER | WEDNESDAYS
Big Sky, MT

MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS

JUNE-SEPTEMBER | THURSDAYS
Big Sky, MT

WILD WEST YELLOWSTONE RODEO

JUNE-AUGUST | SELECT DATES
West Yellowstone, MT

GRAND TETON MUSIC FESTIVAL

JULY-AUGUST | SELECT DATES
Jackson, WY

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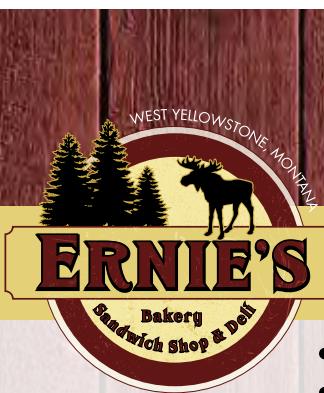
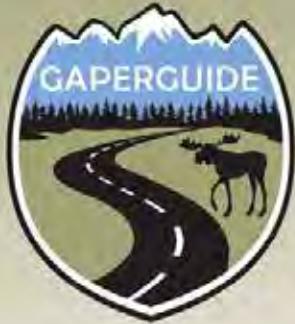
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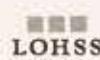
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FROZEN IN TIME



A DAY TRIP IN THE LAMAR VALLEY



Guided day trips in the Lamar Valley are a great way for wildlife lovers to leave the planning and driving to the experts. PHOTOS BY MARIA BISSO

Imagine standing on a hillside overlooking miles of verdant grassland, where jagged peaks rise from the horizon line in the distance and a red-tailed hawk glides overhead, its shadow skimming across the valley below. Hundreds of dark silhouettes dot the landscape—immense herds of herbivores grazing alongside a river that cuts through the landscape like a long, blue ribbon.

Located in the park's remote northeast corner, Lamar Valley is arguably Yellowstone in its purest form—a glimpse of what the park might have looked like centuries ago. For those of us who have braved the crowds at Old Faithful or the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Lamar Valley remains a more secluded experience in one of the most popular national parks in the United States. >>

■ BY NEALA FUGERE

THE ‘SERENGETI OF NORTH AMERICA’

Lamar Valley is named for Lucius Q. C. Lamar, secretary of the Interior during the Cleveland administration. Part of Yellowstone’s northern range—the broad grassland that borders the Yellowstone and Lamar rivers in the northern portion of the park—the valley was carved out by the powerful hand of glaciation thousands of years ago.

Often referred to as the “Serengeti of North America,” the valley sustains one of the largest, most diverse communities of free-ranging wildlife in North America. Lamar makes up only 10 percent of the park’s land area, yet half of Yellowstone’s wolves make their home there. With less snowfall than much of the park’s interior, the valley provides winter range for Yellowstone’s largest elk herd. Pronghorn, moose, mule deer and bighorn sheep, as well as cougars, bears and raptors, are all residents of this ecosystem.

Rob Bush, senior director of operations at Yellowstone Forever, the park’s official nonprofit partner, is one of the lucky few who has lived and worked in the valley. Bush was a former campus manager of the Lamar Buffalo Ranch, where the park’s nearly extinct bison herd was reestablished in 1902. Today, the ranch serves a base camp for educational classes in the heart of the valley.

“Sometimes I could see half a dozen species of wildlife in the same place at the same time,” Bush recalls. “I’ve sat at the Buffalo Ranch with a spotting scope and have seen everything folks hope to see in Yellowstone all at once—bison, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, badger, even a bear.”

GETTING THERE

Though relatively accessible, Lamar Valley is still considered an off-the-beaten-path destination in Yellowstone. The valley is located off the Grand Loop Road between Tower Junction and the park’s Northeast Entrance at Cooke City, Montana.

Visitors can access it year-round from the North Entrance in Gardiner, Montana, just 33 miles to the northwest. In the summer, when more of the park’s roads are open to the public, Lamar is roughly 100 miles from Cody, Wyoming; 67 miles from West Yellowstone; and about 200 miles from Jackson, Wyoming.



A wolf on a carcass at Blacktail Ponds.

EXPERIENCE LAMAR

Regardless of which direction visitors come from, there’s plenty to see and do in the Lamar Valley, even for those who only have one day. Visitors should come prepared with food, water, a map of the park, and binoculars or spotting scopes to optimize wildlife viewing. Yellowstone is home to the largest concentration of mammals in the lower 48 states, and the best place to see them in the park is in Lamar Valley. Head out early in the morning or in the evening for the best chance of spotting wildlife.

Apart from wildlife watching, the Lamar Valley offers world-class fly-fishing opportunities. Native Yellowstone cutthroat trout are the stars of the **Lamar River** and its major tributaries—Soda Butte, Cache and Slough creeks.

“Fishing Lamar Valley’s rivers and streams is an incredible way to experience the ‘wild’ side of Yellowstone,” says Daniel Bierschwale, director of Gateway Partnerships for Yellowstone Forever, who’s been fly fishing in the area for the last decade. “Your bear spray is just as important as your fly pattern on this landscape,” he warns.

Visitors seeking an off-road experience have a number of day hikes to choose from—Rob Bush’s favorite way to experience Lamar. **The Lamar River Trail** meanders through meadows and provides an excellent corridor for anglers. **Trout Lake** is a short but steep jaunt just east of the valley, offering stunning views of the Absaroka Range. **Specimen Ridge** is a local favorite that can be enjoyed for just a few miles or as an aggressive, 20-mile adventure. Watch for marmots, bighorn sheep, and humbling views of the valley below on this subalpine trail.

GUIDED DAYTRIPS

Wildlife lovers seeking a more in-depth experience—or those who want to skip the planning and driving—might consider taking a private or group tour with the Yellowstone Forever Institute. Naturalist guides from the park's education and fundraising partner live and work in northern Yellowstone, and often have the best insight on where to find the wildlife action.

"The aesthetic of Lamar Valley alone is impressive, and many visit the area simply to enjoy the sightseeing and wildlife viewing," says Zachary Park, assistant director of Yellowstone Forever Institute operations. "But there's so much more to understand about this ecosystem. Our expert naturalist guides can bring this depth to the experience."

The valley is also an epicenter for wildlife conservation and research, and a private tour with the Institute will help visitors unpack these important stories, Park says. "Yellowstone Forever programs include fascinating discussions informed by scientific research," he says. "These aren't just discussions about Yellowstone, but the broader global implications that impact our lives."

A LANDSCAPE FROZEN IN TIME

There's a lot you'll find in the Lamar Valley, but also plenty you won't—crowds, boardwalks, and a hectic pace, just to name a few. The adventure begins with a turn at Tower Junction, a quick drive across Yellowstone River and over a grassy rise, and into a spectacular Western landscape, frozen in time.

Neala Fugere is the communications coordinator at Yellowstone Forever.

The Lamar offers your best chance to see bison in Yellowstone.



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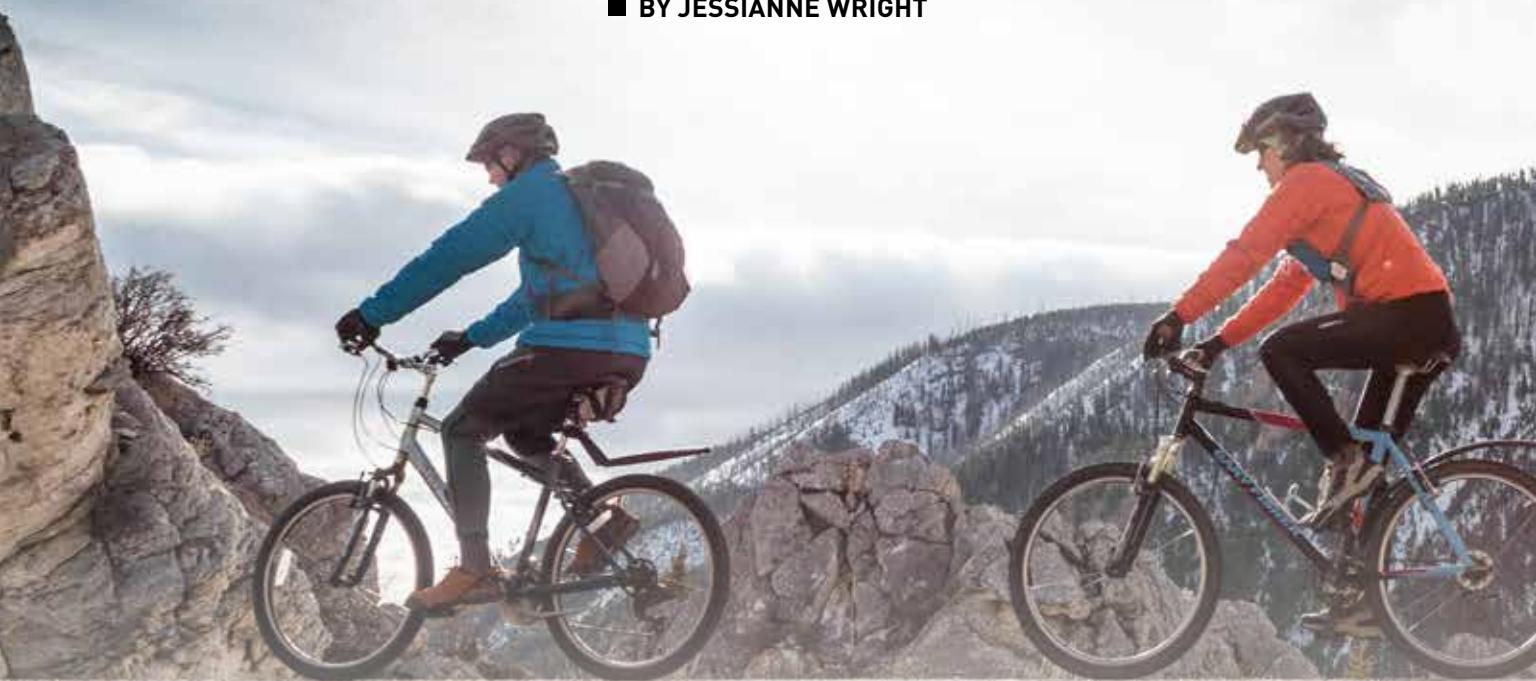
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YELLOWSTONE ON WHEELS

Bicyclists have the park to themselves in spring and fall

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT



Last year, more than 2.5 million vehicles rolled through Yellowstone National Park, in the form of tour busses, family cars, campers, park vehicles and more, often bumper to bumper during peak visitation periods. But for several weeks every spring and fall, many of the park's roads close to motorized vehicles and open for bicyclists.

Yellowstone typically opens for the first day of spring biking in late March or early April, and the fall season generally runs for three weeks in November—ending when plowing operations stop so that snow can begin

accumulating on the roads to support winter over-snow travel. While bicyclists often have the roads to themselves, minimal traffic from park employees should be expected.

“It’s a really unique experience because you kind of get the whole park to yourself,” said Kelli Hart, co-owner of Freeheel and Wheel bicycle and ski shop in West Yellowstone. “There’s usually still snow on the sides of the road [in spring] and it’s a great chance to see wildlife.”

Bar T 5 Covered Wagon Cookout and Show



"I've never had a close encounter, but I have had to wait for bison to move along before zipping past them," said Big Sky local Morgen Ayres, who describes biking in the park as one of her favorite things to do.

"When you are pedaling through Yellowstone, the 360 degree views, the fresh spring air and the quiet peace is unforgettable," Ayres said. "You can take your time and bike through all the pullouts to watch the herds of bison and elk or get a lot of miles in for a great workout."

Beginning at the park's West Entrance, cyclists can travel 14 miles east to Madison Junction and continue north to Mammoth Hot Springs, a 49-mile ride. Depending on spring snow removal efforts, cyclists might also be able to access the park from the East Entrance, traveling six miles into the east end of Sylvan Pass, and from the South Entrance to West Thumb Junction. The road from the North Entrance traveling to Cooke City is open to automobiles as well as cyclists all year, weather permitting.

In addition to dictating road closures, the weather also impacts bicycle travel.

"Watch out for the weather. It changes quickly. You can start off the ride in the sun and end up finishing in the snow. Bring your layers, gloves, hat and jacket," Ayres said, adding, "Don't forget your bear spray."

During the spring and fall bicycling periods, internal services are closed in the park and cyclists should be prepared with their own food and water. Mammoth Hot Springs is the only campground open during these times and any other overnight stays in the park require a backcountry camping permit. The Park Service stresses that cell phone coverage is sparse and unreliable for communicating emergencies.

For road closure updates and information about biking in Yellowstone, call Freebeel and Wheel at (406) 646-7744 or visit <https://nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/spring-fall-biking>. Updated road information is available 24 hours a day at (307) 344-2117.

Each spring and fall the National Park Service closes the roads in Yellowstone to motorized use so that cyclists can tour the park in relative silence. NPS PHOTO

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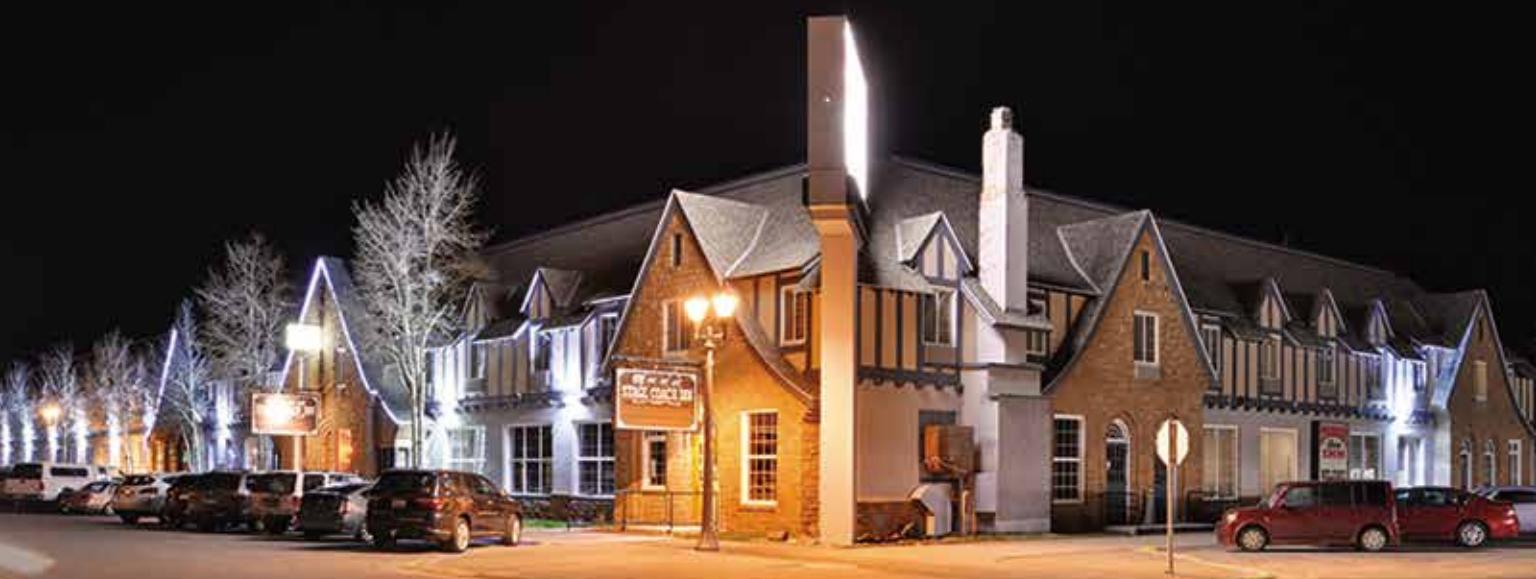
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YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

ANIMAL GUIDE

Which animals can you spot in the park? Check them off as you see them!

BIGHORN SHEEP



Their horns can weigh up to 40 lbs. which makes up 8-12 percent of their body weight.

Bighorns are herbivores and eat grasses, sedges and woody plants.

Their skulls have two layers of bone that function as a shock absorber for collision of head-on fighting.

BISON



Adult males can weigh up to 2,000 lbs. That's a TON!

They may live 12-15 years, and few up to 20 years.

They feed primarily on grasses and sedges.

Bison can be aggressive, and can run up to 30 mph.

COYOTE



They weigh less than their wolf relatives, between 25-35 lbs.

They will eat almost anything from rodents to fish, to fruit.

Also known as "song dogs," communicating with each other by different long-range vocalizations.

They can run up to 40 mph.

GRIZZLY BEAR



Adult males can weigh between 200-700 lbs.

Grizzlies lose up to 40 percent of body fat during hibernation.

Grizzlies can locate food from miles away. They have a better sense of smell than a hound dog.

They eat about 35 lbs. of food in a typical day.

BALD EAGLE



Adult eagles' wingspan can reach up to 7 feet!

Eagles primarily eat fish, carrion, birds and rodents.

Their distinctive white head doesn't develop until they reach 4-5 years old.

They may use the same nest year after year.

ELK



Adult males stand about 5 feet high at the shoulder.

Their antlers begin growing in the spring and usually drop in March or April of the next year.

They feed on grasses, shrubs, bark of aspen trees, conifer needles and aquatic plants.

They can run up to 45 mph.



Beavers transform unsuitable habitats by building dams.

They have webbed rear feet, and large, flat tails that aid in swimming.

Beavers can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes, and have a set of transparent eyelids they use like goggles.



Adult males weigh 300 or more lbs.

There are more than 200 individuals in and adjacent to Yellowstone.

In the spring you can find them on south and west facing cliffs and in the summer you can find them in meadows, ravines, forests and on cliffs.



Adult males can weigh between 210-315 lbs.

Their food includes rodents, insects, elk calves, cutthroat trout, pine nuts, grasses and other vegetation.

Considered true hibernators.

Black bears can live between 15-30 years.



Martens are usually 18-26 inches long.

They eat primarily small mammals, as well as birds and eggs, reptiles, insects and fruit.

They are active year-round and hunt mostly on the ground.



Adult males weigh close to 1,000 lbs, and females can weigh up to 900 lbs.

There are fewer than 200 that live in Yellowstone National Park.

A moose can keep his head underwater for three minutes!



Their long tail takes up 1/3 of their 40- to 54-inch body.

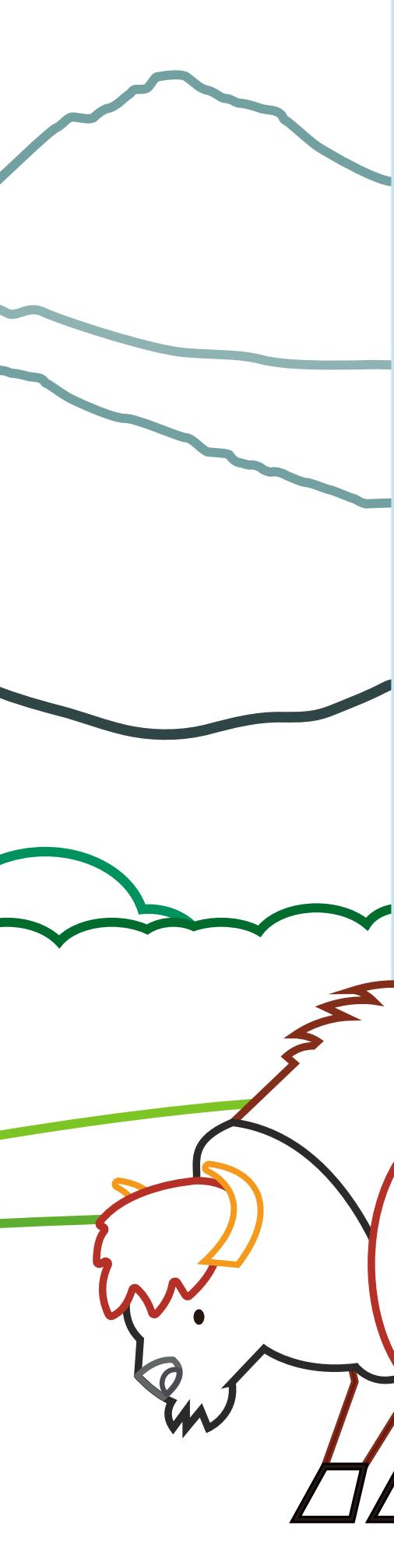
Otters eat crayfish and fish, frogs, turtles and sometimes young muskrats or beavers.

Their ears and nostrils close when underwater, and their whiskers help them find their prey.

DID YOU KNOW?

Yellowstone National Park has 67 mammal species, 258 bird species, 16 fish species, 5 amphibian species, and 2 threatened species.





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EXPEDITION YELLOWSTONE

An adventure like no other

■ BY JEREMY HARDER



Ranger Trudy Patton leads an Expedition Yellowstone group at Lost Lake near Roosevelt Lodge. NPS PHOTO

Expedition Yellowstone, affectionately termed “EY” by our fourth graders in Big Sky, Montana, is a curriculum-based, residential, outdoor program offered by the National Park Service for students, teachers and chaperones. Each year, Ophir School’s fourth graders earn the right to call this expedition their own.

The program, originally guided by former fourth grade teacher Alec Nisbet, has been part of Ophir’s curriculum since 1998. I took the reins when I accepted the fourth-grade position in the fall of 2000, and I completed my 17th trip to Yellowstone this spring.

Starting in January, my co-teacher Renee Zimmerman and I prepare students by setting up weekly clan challenges. Clans are small groups of students who work together on learning activities, meal preparation and camp clean up. Each clan also performs a legendary skit the last night of their adventure. Weekly challenges stretch the students’ ability to problem solve, practice collaboration and compromise—necessary skills for the students’ time in Yellowstone.

A typical day on the expedition includes waking up early to prepare meals, sitting down together for breakfast, attending morning and evening classes, hiking through the park, researching pH levels of the hot springs, finding evidence of ecological niches and discovering the impact of humans throughout the centuries.



An Expedition Yellowstone lesson held near Mammoth Hot Springs. NPS PHOTO

I've found that the greatest lessons are learned as students clean up after each other, pack their own backpacks for the day, fill their water bottles, and otherwise develop a sense of personal responsibility without the over-indulgence of help from adults. When students realize they are a part of something larger than themselves, it's really cool to watch. I like to term this "human ecology."

The expedition does allow for chaperones or guides to attend the trip to help the students manage these life skills. Some of the most difficult choices Zimmerman and I must make center on choosing the right adult chaperones for the expedition. Luckily for us, Big Sky is filled with hundreds of qualified leaders.

Many of the guides are parents of students at Ophir, but not of students participating in EY that year. I adamantly support my stand on not bringing family members of current students, as it disturbs the natural dynamics of the group.

Other chaperones include local business owners, avid outdoors people and, of course, adults who have strong managerial skills and are a positive influence on young

students. My list becomes longer every year, as many local residents desire to go on this once-in-a-lifetime trip. Similar to the students' reactions to the oddities of the natural world, I see the same "ah-ha!" moments in the adult guides.

One of the secrets behind such an amazing and seamless experience is the extraordinary assistant I've found in Lone Peak High School social studies teacher Tony Coppola. He has attended more than a dozen times and plays a crucial role in the success of the trip.

Finally, this trip could never happen without generous community and family support with fundraisers and preparations. The financial component of this trip is mostly overseen by the Big Sky Parent Teacher Organization, while the supplemental costs are raised by the students in various "fun"-raisers such as a bowl-a-thon, hat sale and read-a-thon.

It's a community effort, and I've found it to be a life-changing event for our attendees.

Jeremy Harder is a fourth-grade teacher at Ophir Elementary School in Big Sky, Montana.

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NEW YOUTH CAMPUS PLANNED FOR MAMMOTH



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EXPLORE YELLOWSTONE STAFF

Yellowstone National Park plans to construct a new youth campus at Mammoth Hot Springs to replace and improve the park's existing education facilities. National Park Service Intermountain Regional Director Sue Masica approved the project in October 2017.

The current campus was constructed in 1978. Functionally out of date, the inadequate dormitory, classroom and office space do not meet the needs of today's students and staff, according to the Park Service. Additionally, accessibility, energy efficiency and parking are deficient at the existing educational facilities.

Yellowstone's new youth campus will be able to house 140 students at a time, more than doubling the capacity of the current campus.



The new buildings will meet the Living Building Challenge, a rigorous green-construction certification.

The new campus buildings will be designed and constructed to meet the Living Building Challenge, a green building certification program and sustainable design framework that requires performance standards demonstrated over 12 consecutive months. For example, 105 percent of the campus's energy needs must be supplied by on-site renewable energy on a net annual basis, without the use of on-site combustion.

The new campus will cover 49,000 square feet, with 10 buildings on the 15-acre site, and will utilize natural grading and native landscaping. This regenerative campus of living buildings will be the first of its kind in a national park.



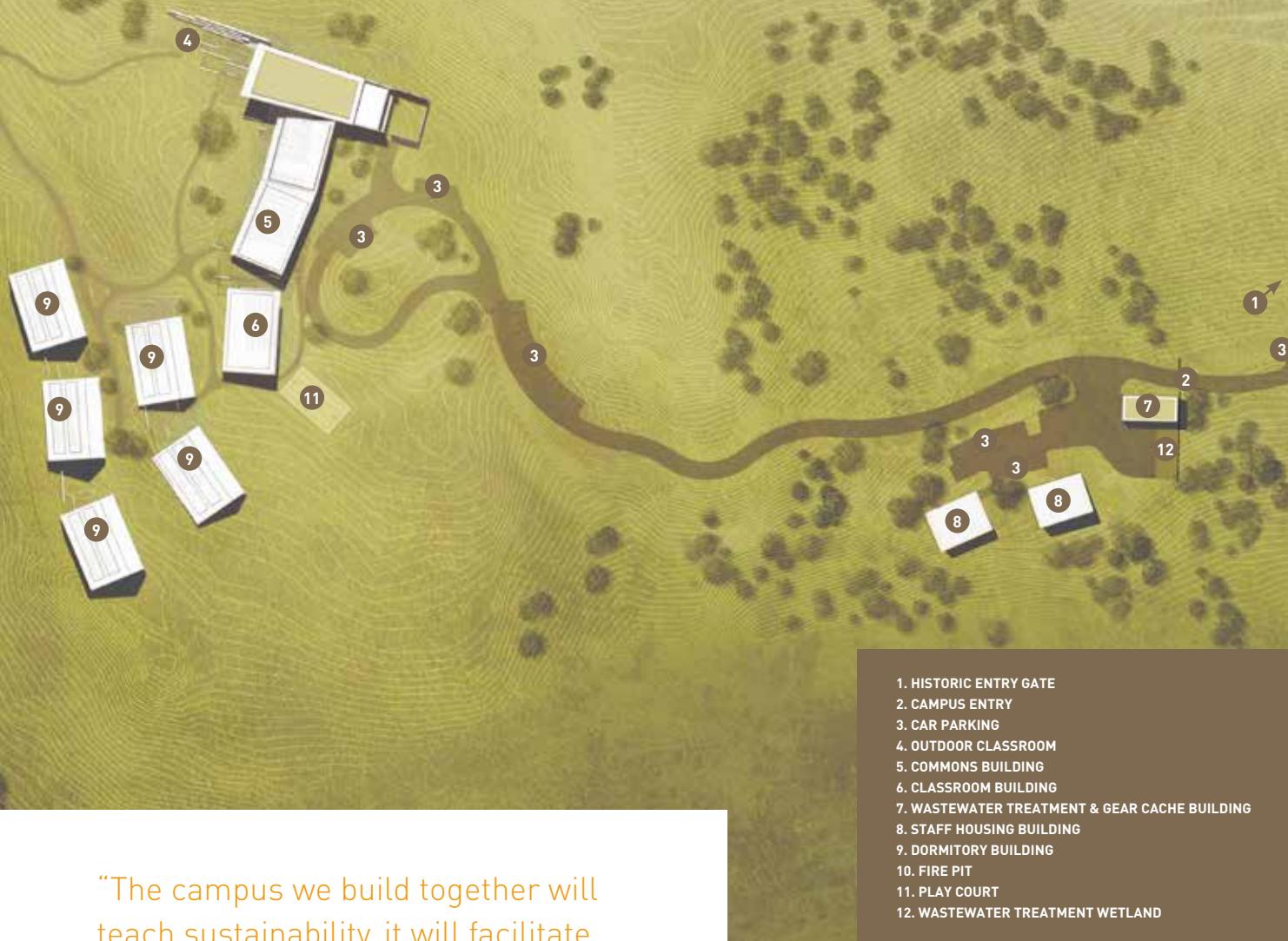
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"The campus we build together will teach sustainability, it will facilitate high-quality learning experiences and inspire students to be life-long learners and stewards of Yellowstone."

The development will allow for overnight stays for up to 140 students at a time, which is more than double the capacity of the current facility.

"The youth campus will be funded through a combination of philanthropic donations received by our nonprofit partner, Yellowstone Forever, and federal support," said Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk in a press release.

"The campus we build together will teach sustainability," he said. "It will facilitate high-quality learning experiences and inspire students to be life-long learners and stewards

The campus will cover 49,000 square feet, and include 10 buildings on the 15-acre site.

of Yellowstone long into the National Park Service's second century."

The anticipated completion date for the new campus will be 2022, Yellowstone's 150th anniversary.

Documents associated with this decision, including an environmental assessment and a finding of no significant impact, can be found through the Planning, Environment and Public Comment system at parkplanning.nps.gov.

Learn more about the project at yellowstone.org.



IMAGE COURTESY OF KALON BAUGHAN

'THE ARTISTS FIELD GUIDE'

Nature guide set to promote conservation in the Greater Yellowstone

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT

Lyrical words of storytellers and poignant details from scientists are joined by the sometimes whimsical, sometimes bold, sometimes ever-gentle strokes of artists and creatives in a book titled *The Artists Field Guide to Greater Yellowstone*, slated to be published in fall 2019.

The collection is a collaborative display dedicated to appreciating our world, and is also a naturalist's guide to Yellowstone's wildlife. Fifty of the region's most

distinguished writers and artists have collaborated to create this field guide, which is pending publication by Trinity University Press.

From the Indian paintbrush and Yellowstone cutthroat trout, to thermophilic bacteria, greater sage-grouse and the grizzly bear, 30 plants and animals of Greater Yellowstone are featured in *The Artists Field Guide*.

The book was borne out of a wider movement called the Home to Roam Collective, founded by Bozeman resident Katie Christiansen. Christiansen says her goal is to promote conservation through art. “I’m hoping to use art to bring people together around the values of nature,” she said.

After moving to Bozeman in 2010, Christiansen was startled by the area’s fast-paced growth. “It’s growing so fast, we don’t have time to ask if it’s good or bad,” she said. With this in mind, Christiansen set out to find like-minded individuals willing to share their own perspectives on living within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. “It turns out there are lots of other people on the same page,” Christiansen said.

Artist Jennifer Lowe-Anker of Bozeman said she was honored to contribute to *The Artists Field Guide*.

“Katie impressed me with her knowledge and compassion for the wild places of Greater Yellowstone and I was instantly smitten with her idea of combining artists and writers who champion our precious remaining wild,” Lowe-Anker said. “The Greater Yellowstone ecosystem harbors a wealth of diversity that is now a rare thing in our lower 48 as humanity is ever expanding its footprint, and climate change is an ever growing and imminent threat to many species.”

Lowe-Anker’s piece will appear in the front section of the nature guide, and depicts a peaceable kingdom, with a variety of species from the Greater Yellowstone gathered together.

“If we cannot take notice of the incredible vital balance of life and care for it more deeply and carefully, we stand to be the demise of our own hand,” Lowe-Anker said. “In my painting, those gathered are a testament to the miracle of diverse life and the shared challenges they face to survive. They pose the question: Can we gather together to save life as we know it on our precious planet Earth? Another miracle is in order.”

Kalon Baughan, an artist and self-taught naturalist and photographer, also hopes to inspire conservation with his work. Baughan produced an illustration of a wolverine that will appear in the field guide, having been captivated by the animal since he was a young man growing up in Michigan.

“In addition to my art, I strive to support wildlife conservation by applying my skill as a self-taught naturalist and photographer to the study of rare carnivores, using remotely triggered trail cameras,” he said. “To date, I’ve taken hundreds of thousands of photographs of a minimum of seven individual Montana wolverines.”

Often, field guides are objective, Christiansen said. But speaking about *The Artists Field Guide*, she explained that everyone has a different take on the ecosystem and the book tries to capture that by placing readers in the ecosystem as well. “Readers can see plants and animals through so many new lenses. What I hope is that people can see themselves as a part of this project.

“Just by planting two feet on the ground in Bozeman, you’re in this ecosystem,” she added.

Illustrating her point, Christiansen turned to several prints from the book, pointing out the whimsical nature of some pieces, set alongside others that are much more representational.

The text also supports the belief that experiencing the ecosystem is inherently subjective. Christiansen described some authors’ approach as practical and scientific, while others might be more lyrical.

For the mountain lion entry, as an example, Red Lodge, Montana-author Gary Ferguson writes of two experiences meeting a lion on the trail. “Each time all I got was a glimpse—a small wink of tawny elegance floating across the trail,” Ferguson writes. “Since then I’ve come to think of them as figments, chimeras, less fur and muscle than whisper and dance.”

In some cases, Christiansen paired whimsy with practicality, partnering artists and writers together to focus on a single plant or animal. Speaking of the different approaches, she said, “They’re both real and genuine. They produce two different pieces, but both have reverence and respect.”

Beyond publishing the field guide, Christiansen hopes the Home to Roam Collective can provide platforms for discussion. As the book nears publication, Christiansen would like to display prints from the artwork in the guide at a variety of locations throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, including within Yellowstone National Park.

“I’m not expecting this to change the world,” Christiansen said. “But maybe it can start a conversation.”

To learn more about The Artists Field Guide to Greater Yellowstone, visit artistsfieldguide.com.

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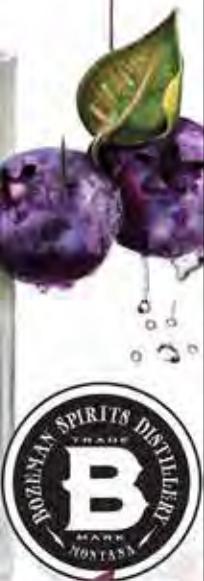
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TO KILL A GRIZZLY

■ BY TODD WILKINSON



Government agencies say Greater Yellowstone grizzly bears are biologically recovered, but should they now become trophies in proposed sport hunts? Even the sporting community is divided.

NPS PHOTO

For two generations, it's been illegal to trophy hunt grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1975 seized control over grizzly management from Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, invoking its authority under the Endangered Species Act.

Back then, the entire Greater Yellowstone grizzly population was estimated to number no more than 136, if not fewer. Most of those bruins were clustered in Yellowstone National Park. Many biologists feared that without emergency measures implemented to prevent conflict and stop humans from killing them—including the government meting out harsh penalties to poachers—they would disappear from the region just as wolves had.

"I never thought we would have the numbers and distribution of bears we have today," Christopher Servheen, the Fish and Wildlife Service's former grizzly bear recovery coordinator, told me. "I thought we would be lucky to have any grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem."

That's how bleak it was and many say the turnaround orchestrated by Servheen and others ranks among the grandest achievements in wildlife management history.

Yet even now, less than 2,000 grizzlies roam the Lower 48, down from 50,000 that used to inhabit the West historically. Sizable, viable numbers—enough to ensure grizzlies persist for the foreseeable future—exist in just two regions south of Canada: the Greater Yellowstone and the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem that includes Glacier National Park and federal wilderness in northern Montana.

"Our culture, ever since Lewis and Clark came through in the early 1800s, has had such a distorted view of grizzlies. We treated them as expendable—as things we needed to eradicate," said Joe Gutkoski, a former landscape architect for the U.S. Forest Service, who was 48 years old when grizzlies were listed. "I think we're smarter in that we know more about grizzlies than ever before. ... We know they are not the bloodthirsty creatures they were portrayed to be by our ancestors. But I still wonder, are we wise enough to co-exist with them?"

In summer 2017, with grizzly numbers having rebounded in recent decades to somewhere around 700 in Greater Yellowstone, the Fish and Wildlife Service came full circle, relinquishing its control and giving management back to the states. Servheen says the Endangered Species Act proved it worked in moving the grizzly population out of the biological emergency room and into recovery.

While Montana has put a potential hunting season on hold until next year, Wyoming has approved a fall 2018 season that could

result in up to 22 bears being taken. Idaho is planning a limited 2018 hunt that would allow for a single male to be killed—the state only has a very small portion of the Yellowstone population's habitat within its borders.

Still, there remain several significant concerns clouding the outlook for grizzly survival, including the deepening impacts of climate change; bears dying in alleged incidents of human self-defense, often involving big game hunters; and rising human population pressure affecting the spaces bears need to persist.

But paramount, and indeed the major point of contention for hundreds of thousands of Americans who oppose giving states management authority, relates to hunting.

Should the most iconic population of wild bears on Earth again be targeted as animals killed for sport, trophies and thrill alone? All three states have expressed their desire to begin selling bear tags in the coming months or years.

Matt Hogan, the Fish and Wildlife Service's deputy regional director in Denver, told me it is not his agency's prerogative to instruct the states on what to do going forward. He added that if the grizzly population falls below minimal numbers that the states agree to, the bear can be relisted and control again wrested away.

Gutkoski is a living legend to those who savor Montana's wild backcountry. A solitary wanderer, his hardiness has earned him comparisons to a wolverine. Today, after seven decades of exploration, Gutkoski's name appears in the summit registers of peaks scattered throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and points well beyond.

He served in the Navy during World War II and following school at Penn State University, was hired as the first landscape

Joe Gutkoski in his Bozeman home in November 2017.
PHOTO BY JENNINGS BARMORE



“Our culture, ever since Lewis and Clark came through in the early 1800s, has had such a distorted view of grizzlies. We treated them as expendable—as things we needed to eradicate.”

architect in the history of the U.S. Forest Service’s flagship Northern Region in Missoula.

In 1964, Gutkoski transferred to Bozeman and completed his 32-year tenure of civil service fighting misguided timber sales and attempts to cover mountainsides with mazes of logging roads. He’s also been a river protector, a wilderness crusader and a catalyst in pushing to re-establish free-ranging bison herds on the high plains.

But of all his passions, none comes close to matching his zealous enthusiasm for stalking big game animals in the fall. Since the late 1940s, Gutkoski has cut the tracks of every major mammal in the Northern Rockies, including mountain lions, wolves, imperiled Canada lynx and wolverine. He’s taken black bears with his rifle, cooking them as roasts for supper.

He has never eaten grizzly; the mere thought causes him to recoil. Indeed, for most hunters, grizzlies have never been thought of as animals killed for sustenance; bringing down a Great Bear has always been treated instead as the ultimate wildlife trophy.

Gutkoski, now 91, is among the few living Montanans who, when they purchased elk tags as young men, were also told they could take a grizzly, no questions asked. Reflecting on a couple of attempts to shoot an elusive massive boar in the South Fork of the Flathead River drainage, Gutkoski offers this solemn confession: “I’m glad I failed.”

Had he succeeded, “driven by my personal ego in downing a grizzly for nothing more than the thrill of the chase,” Gutkoski says, he’d feel ashamed today.

Few issues in modern wildlife conservation have stirred raw emotion and vehement disagreement over what the ethical and legal objectives should be in rescuing a high-profile animal from the brink of regional annihilation.

Nowhere in the Endangered Species Act does it state that animals brought back from near oblivion in a given location will or will not be hunted once restored. For example, Americans do not legally hunt bald eagles for sport, nor are peregrine falcons classified as game birds available for wing shooting, even though they could make intriguing trophies mounted on a wall.

Passions are even higher because today no species is more synonymous with Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks than *Ursus arctos horribilis*.

Wildlife watching is one of the ecosystem's key attractions, appealing to people from around the world. Between Yellowstone and Grand Teton alone, more than \$1 billion is generated annually through nature tourism, according to Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics. Seeing a grizzly ranks even higher on visitor wish lists, according to one survey, than witnessing an eruption of Old Faithful Geyser.

In Jackson, Wyoming, a 23-year-old bruin given the identity Grizzly 399 by researchers, is said to be the most famous mother bear in the world. She spends most of her time within the environs of Grand Teton National Park but could be in peril if Wyoming commences grizzly hunting in the adjacent national forest where she dens.

Global outrage erupted over the trophy killing of Cecil the African lion in 2015, downed by an American bow hunter after the big cat was lured

out of Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park. The possibility of something similar happening to beloved Yellowstone and Grand Teton grizzlies is, for many, unthinkable.

The bulk of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem exists in Wyoming and that state has aggressively noted that if and when hunting commences again, it will exploit its authority to generate revenue off bear licenses. The state plans to charge out-of-state hunters \$6,000 for a grizzly tag and \$600 for Wyoming residents.

Scott Weber, a member of an organization called Wyoming Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, put up a billboard in his town in 2016 at the height of summer tourist season showing a camouflage-clad hunter posed next to a dead grizzly. He told the local Cody Enterprise newspaper, "The greatest trophy in the Lower 48 is a male grizzly. Now you won't have to go to Alaska to get a grizzly."

During an interview with the *Jackson Hole News & Guide*, another Wyoming outfitter named Paul Gilroy, a Safari Club member who lives near Wilson, Wyoming, said he sees a commercial opportunity for his business. "It would be a very popular hunt and easily advertised and easily booked. We have some very large bears here, which would make for commendable trophies," Gilroy said. "It would be nice to be able to whack one that's causing problems."

Randy Newberg of Bozeman is an international celebrity in hunting circles. He is host of the Sportsman Channel's *Fresh Tracks With Randy Newberg* and also oversees one of the most popular web podcasts devoted to public-lands hunting in America.

Years ago, Newberg killed a grizzly in Alaska, part of a dream hunt he took with his 82-year-old grandfather. "It was the thrill of a lifetime," he says. Having done it once, he told me he has no compelling need to repeat it again.

Almost two decades ago, he served on a blue-ribbon panel of citizens in the Greater Yellowstone that examined whether the scientific goals used to gauge bear recovery had been met. He concluded that they had.



Bozeman's Randy Newberg on a bison hunt in Jackson, Wyoming. He hosts a show on the Sportsman's Channel and oversees a popular web podcast devoted to public-lands hunting. PHOTO BY STEVEN DRAKE

Newberg supported the measure to remove grizzlies from federal protection in 2017, just as he had in 2007 when the Greater Yellowstone population was temporarily delisted from safeguarding under the Endangered Species Act. But lawsuits from environmental groups stalled delisting for a decade.

Newberg is torn when pondering where hunts should occur—on the far outlying edges of the ecosystem or closer to the national parks where there are higher concentrations of bears and people and thus likely more conflict. The states have said they first intend to target “problem bears”—for example, those that get into conflict with livestock, chronically wander into communities or get into trash.

Any hunts, if they target grizzlies that would otherwise be destroyed, relocated or sent to zoos, need to be carefully orchestrated and involve only highly skilled and qualified hunters, guides and close involvement with wardens and biologists on the ground, Newberg says.

Newberg worries about bear hunting being captured on camera and posted on social media. It would create a firestorm. He witnessed the black eye Montana incurred when Yellowstone bison were gunned down in the snow right along the park border.

Should a popular bear get accidentally killed, should a bruin get wounded and die with agony, should a female grizzly be slain because a hunter mistook her for a male, it would be a public relations nightmare that would have internationally negative consequences for the image of hunting, he says.

“As someone concerned about hunting and its positive role in society, I am deeply concerned that hunting of grizzlies in Greater Yellowstone could make the backlash caused by Cecil the lion look like a 1.0 on the Richter scale,” he said. “The moment somebody shoots a bear like Grizzly 399, by accident, out of spite or stupidity, this will turn into a disaster for the hunting community of an order of magnitude like the San Francisco earthquake of 1906.”

He offers an advisement to fellow hunters. “If we want to make sure hunting is embraced for future generations and not have society turn against it, then we need to respect the millions of people who value grizzlies and not talk about the animals with an attitude of defiance or hostility like ‘Let’s just go shoot the bastards.’”



A grizzly bear near Wapiti Lake Trail. NPS PHOTO

Some claim that if grizzlies aren’t allowed to be hunted, there will be more poaching. A counterargument is that poachers who break the law need to receive harsh sentences. There is fear among conservationists that the states will be lenient if more bears start dying due to claims of hunter self-defense.

From his home in Kelly, Wyoming, Ted Kerasote has clear views looking west toward the breathtaking Teton Range. Behind him is the Bridger-Teton National Forest, an area where he has hunted for decades. Grizzlies and wolves amble through his backyard and he routinely finds fresh tracks. When he moved permanently to Jackson Hole in 1986, grizzlies were incredibly rare and wolves were absent from Greater Yellowstone.

Kerasote is, in his own way, legendary. For many years, he wrote a couple of widely read columns for *Sports Afield magazine* and he is author of the acclaimed book, *Bloodties: Nature, Culture and the Hunt*. Like Gutkoski and Newberg, he is a passionate defender of hunting when it is done to put meat on the table.

“People try to tell me that if I’m not in favor of killing grizzlies, then I’m anti-hunting. I’ve been called that



"We have some very large bears here, which would make for commendable trophies. it would be nice to be able to whack one that's causing problems."

even though I've shot more elk than those people who are making the claim," he said. "There's an atmosphere of tremendous polarization in this country. It's based on the belief that unless you are wholeheartedly with us, you are against us. Those who say we need to kill grizzlies for fun are on the wrong side of history. And they're not doing the cause of hunting any favors."

The states can't argue that hunting is an essential management tool because it isn't, Kerasote says. Grizzlies have been stewarded successfully in Greater Yellowstone without hunting for four decades. Further, they can't claim that revenues generated through the sale of bear licenses will fix funding woes. Wyoming is in a severe budget crisis because of falling revenues from declining coal markets.

"Wyoming or Montana or Idaho are not going to maneuver their way through larger fiscal crises on the backs of dead bears," he notes. "You can't kill that many bears through hunting, on top of the number already dying through a variety of causes, and not have a negative impact on the bear population."

The deaths of a relatively small number of breeding female grizzlies can, over time, mean the difference between a rising or falling population. States say they won't target female bears in sport hunts.

Kerasote has traveled around the world and he has heard predictions that by the middle of this century, many large carnivores, including tigers in India and lions in Africa, could be rendered extinct in the wild. Given the trend-lines of the global human population rising from 7 billion to 10 billion by mid century, the prospects are not good for species that need big spaces and human tolerance.

Grizzlies are America's version of the tiger and lion, and showing the rest of the world how species can be ushered forward through this century with compassion and stewardship gives hope that it can be done in other areas, Kerasote says.

"I honestly don't understand why Wyoming keeps insisting that grizzlies need to be hunted. In practical terms, there's just no good reason other than appeasing a few people who just want the thrill of saying they killed a Greater Yellowstone bear," he adds. "To pander to that kind of mentality just makes the state look puerile. Is that the image that Wyoming really wants to project to the rest of the world?"

The values of the West have shifted markedly since 1975 when grizzlies were given federal protection. "There are many people who moved here who think that having bears



A grizzly sow and cubs near Roaring Mountain in May 2016. NPS PHOTO

is pretty cool. There is a large wild bear constituency that did not exist generations ago,” Kerasote said. Aldo Leopold, in his age-old classic, *A Sand County Almanac*, writes about how the spirit of wildness left a mountain called Escudilla in the American Southwest after the last grizzly was slain by a trapper enlisted to protect livestock interests. In gazing at that place, pondering the mere existence value of grizzlies, he observed:

“There was, in fact, only one place from which you did not see Escudilla on the skyline: that was the top of Escudilla itself. ... No one ever saw the old bear, but in the muddy springs about the base of the cliffs you saw his incredible tracks. Seeing them made even the most hard-bitten cowboys aware of bear. ... We spoke harshly of the Spaniards who, in their zeal for gold and converts, had needlessly extinguished the native Indians. It did not occur to us that we, too, were the captains of an invasion too sure of its own righteousness. Escudilla still hangs on the horizon, but when you see it you no longer think of bear. It’s only a mountain now.”

Joe Gutkoski says that Greater Yellowstone is like a modern manifestation of Escudilla. “You don’t need to possess an individual grizzly in order to know and appreciate its power,” he says. “You don’t need to claim its life for

your own one-time personal benefit. I’ve run into grizzlies on hunts in the Gallatin and I’ve had profound moments of satisfaction seeing them and knowing they are there and may be there next time. They make me feel more alert and when you are more alert you feel more alive.”

To him, no creature distills the essence of wildness more than a griz. “In this day and age, we are trying to hold onto that raw edge of nature as it slips away from us. Why would you want to kill an animal that is the emblem of the very thing we are trying to save?”

He believes the relationship between people and apex predators has come around full circle and it’s time to chart a different course going forward.

Newberg, who has an audience of millions, doesn’t disagree with Gutkoski’s assessment.

“The grizzly is unique. States should take a lot of pride in the fact they’ve played a role in recovery,” Newberg said. “But grizzlies need to be treated like the special species they are, whether we manage them for hunting or not hunting. If we mess this up, then shame on us. The public will never forgive us if we do.”



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Swollen Rivers, Boot Ban, Native Species

YELLOWSTONE'S 2018
FISHING SEASON

■ BY PATRICK STRAUB



Fishing Nez Perce Creek under
the cover of fog. NPS PHOTO

DATELINE: June 18, 1996

LOCATION: Yellowstone National Park's Firehole River, near Fountain Flats

SIGNIFICANCE: My first trip as a fly-fishing guide on the Firehole River

TRIP REPORT: Several fish to hand, all on size-14 Royal Trudes, happy clients, and an even happier young, rooking fishing guide. Unfortunately, I spent all my tip money that night buying dinner and beers for my fellow fishing guides.

This winter was a big one for snowfall in the region, with the Upper Yellowstone River drainage receiving more than 130 percent of its average annual precipitation. Anglers will need to plan for a long runoff and adjust their plans accordingly. Fishing in Yellowstone National Park has also seen some dramatic changes since my first guided trip in 1996, yet many things have stayed the same. Here's what you need to know if you're planning to wet a line in the park this season.

The Park Service announced in March that felt-soled boots are now banned permanently from Yellowstone National Park. Beginning in 2009, several states started banning felt-soled wading boots to fight the spread of aquatic invasive species. Felt can trap and transfer harmful invasive organisms, such as New Zealand mud snails, didymo (or "rock snot"), and other harmful non-native species.

Felt takes considerable time to dry, allowing organisms to survive for long periods in the wet material. In several research studies, felt has proven to hold organisms considerably longer than rubber. In one study, after 36 hours of non-use, there was a significant yield of cells on the felt boots, compared to zero on the rubber-soled boots.

Felt-soled boots are not the only agent of transport—shoe-laces, waders, clothing, and anything contacting water can transport invasive species. Always clean, inspect, and dry your gear anytime you travel from one stretch of water to the next. And if you don't have a pair of rubber-soled wading boots, now is the time to buy some.

The rivers on the park's west side will likely run high well into June, but will still be fishable. A day spent wading the Firehole River as geysers and fumaroles bubble and boil around you needs to be experienced to be appreciated. If the weather is overcast and cool, look for hatches of Blue Winged Olives, when a well-presented size-18 Purple Haze should work. If

it's sunny and warm, hatches of caddis can occur try a size-16 White Miller Caddis or tan Parachute Caddis.

With near record snowpack in the Lamar River, Soda Butte Creek and Slough Creek drainages, these waters will be high and present challenging fishing conditions until July. The Yellowstone River above its confluence with the Lamar River typically runs clear during runoff; however, it will be high for the first part of the summer, and fishing this stretch is for experienced anglers and waders only. Due to its rugged nature and higher flows, do not fish this water alone.

Lakes are always an option, and my first two years spent guiding in the park were also during heavy snowpack years. Until July, many rivers and creeks were not fishable. Trout Lake, Cache Lake, Cascade Lake, and a few others are open, offering anglers looking for clear water and a backcountry experience the best of both worlds.

Before fishing in the park, be sure you understand the park rules and regulations related to non-native trout. All native fish species are protected throughout the park, and they include Yellowstone cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, and Arctic grayling. The park is divided into Native Trout Conservation and Non-native Tolerance areas. It is important to understand the rules about fishing in these areas by reading the current regulations. For example, in the Lamar River drainage, including portions of Slough and Soda Butte creeks, all rainbow trout, brook trout, and identifiable cutthroat/rainbow hybrids, must be killed—it is illegal to release them alive.

In nearly a quarter-century of guiding in Yellowstone National Park I've seen lots of changes—from tens of thousands of Yellowstone cutthroat trout migrating out of Yellowstone Lake into the Yellowstone River, to seeing that number drop to as low as ten individual trout, and then seeing them rebound substantially in the past few years. Managing non-native trout and banning felt-soled boots are more recent changes to keep this world-class fishery healthy, long into the future.

Fishing in Yellowstone National Park is an experience to cherish, and thankfully another season is underway.

Pat Straub is a 20-year veteran guide in Yellowstone National Park. He has fished the world over, founded the Montana Fishing Guide School, and has authored six books, including The Frugal Fly Fisher, Montana On The Fly, and Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fly Fishing. He and his wife own Gallatin River Guides in Big Sky, Montana.

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L'eggo my Rainbow

Competing for dinner with Yellowstone's hostile fauna

■ BY EDNOR THERRIAULT

What better way for my wife and me to celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary than going full-on tourist mode and camping our way, sans kids, through Yellowstone National Park?

Shannon and I dropped our two high schoolers off at summer camp in Powell, Wyoming, and drove the 60 miles from Cody to the east entrance of the park. Our elderly 4Runner bristling with bikes, rocket box, camping equipment and a canoe, we were looking forward to a

leisurely second honeymoon, moseying around Yellowstone and just digging each other.

What we didn't count on was being thrust into a shocking, *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* moment.

We'd spent four nights in the tent before we finally found some appropriate water for the canoe. Yellowstone Lake? Not a chance. Those massive whitecaps looked like they'd cause the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

I'd begun to think that we were just giving our battered 16-foot Coleman a sightseeing tour around the West, but on our last day in the park we decided to try our luck at Lewis Lake. Located in the southern end of the park, the lake is far away from the famous thermal features like Old Faithful, which attracts crowds of thousands who gather around waiting for the chance to look at their cell phones.

We set up the tent in a secluded campsite, unfolded our chairs and cracked open a couple of adult beverages to toast our good fortune. We sipped, looking out over the road to the gorgeous little valley bisected by the winding Lewis River, which, like the lake, was named for Meriwether Lewis—a generous gesture, seeing as how Lewis and Clark never came within 50 miles of Yellowstone. The iconic duo are so revered in the West that I wouldn't be surprised if they got credit for building Devils Tower and installing Old Faithful.

After lunch it was time to launch the canoe. The lake was empty save for a couple of boats laden with ice chests and camping gear. Shannon and I discussed the challenges of canoe camping, and decided that it wasn't for us. For one thing, the canoe would be tough to handle with a couple of bikes strapped to it. No, we like the relative comfort of our queen-size air mattress lying in our big tent, just a short extension cord away from the 4Runner stuffed with half of our possessions.

We like to get away from it all, as long as we can bring most of it with us.

Shannon sat on the back seat, languidly paddling as I cast a tiny spinner from the front of



the boat. Yes, I'm a spin-fisherman and I don't care who knows it. The fishing regs in the park require barbless hooks, and cutthroats and a few other species are strictly catch and release.

I had dutifully snipped off two of the three points on the lure's tiny treble hook, and squeezed the remaining hook's barb shut with pliers. This would give the trout a fighting chance, and almost certainly guarantee that we'd be eating canned chili for dinner.

We talked quietly, soaking in the beautiful late July weather and the good luck that had been following us around the park that week. It was the first time we'd camped without the kids since before we took our 10-month-old son and his playpen to Branham Lakes near Sheridan, Montana. Now that baby was about to start his last year of high school and we were getting a tantalizing glimpse of the empty nest that lay ahead.

I was looking back at Shannon out of the corner of my eye, entertaining the idea of an afternoon tent siesta when I got a bite. I set the hook and reeled in a small rainbow trout, maybe 10 inches. At the shoreline, a magnificent bald eagle lifted off from the snag where he'd been watching our progress. He soared overhead, then banked wide and returned to his perch. I released the trout with an admonition to dive down and send his big brother up.

"He wants your fish," Shannon said. She turned the canoe to float past the spot where I'd hooked the trout, and I made another cast. I got a bite right away, and he was a fighter. Shannon maneuvered the canoe to keep the fish in front of me, and I was finally able to play him into the net.

It was another rainbow, bigger than the first, but I'd foul-hooked it through the gill. I removed the hook and it was bleeding pretty good. The trout went limp, and I leaned over the side, holding it underwater and moving it back and forth to resuscitate it. It twitched, so I released my grip and let it slide away.

“Hey, babe,” I said over my shoulder, “you should grab the...”

I didn't get the word “camera” out because the eagle swooped down on us like a kamikaze coming out of the sun at Pearl Harbor. Shannon dropped her paddle and scrambled for the camera. The canoe rocked violently as I twisted in my seat and ducked, covering my head with my arms. Somewhere a little girl screamed, and I realized it was me.

My spinning rod clanged off the gunwale and somehow bounced back into the boat as I kicked over my just-opened can of Hamm's. The eagle streaked past the canoe, 6 feet away, and plunged its talons into the water with a mighty splash. We felt the wind from its broad wings as it lifted off the water, the wounded rainbow firmly in its grasp.

We were scrambling and jabbering, trying not to capsize the canoe, as “Circle of Life” from *The Lion King* was playing in my head. The bird pumped the air with its

enormous wings and hauled the hapless prize up to his roost. I might have spilled my beer, but I was still having a better day than that trout.

“Whoa,” I said to Shannon as I grabbed my hat from the puddle of warm Hamm's. “Did you see that?”

She looked at me as if I might have taken a paddle to the melon, and just shook her head, smiling. She hadn't had time to grab the camera, and the whole episode was over so quickly that we weren't sure we believed our own eyes. Did this really just happen? We looked up to the eagle atop his snag, and on the tree a few yards away sat a second eagle.

“He's new,” Shannon said. “Think he wants a fish too?” She grabbed the paddle and propelled us toward the pair of opportunistic raptors. “At least somebody's eating fish tonight.”

Ednor Therriault, a seasoned outdoorsman, lives in Missoula, Montana, with his adventurous wife.

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Old faithful erupts under a blanket of stars.
NPS PHOTO

YELLOWSTONE'S OTHER HALF

VIEWING THE PARK'S NIGHT SKIES

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT

Nighttime summer skies in the Greater Yellowstone are a stargazer's paradise and in an effort to highlight the area's night skies, Yellowstone National Park offers astronomy programs throughout the summer.

This programming, held in cooperation with the Museum of the Rockies and known as Stars Over Yellowstone, is designed to help park visitors find and locate constellations, share stories, and view celestial objects through the lens of a telescope.

On select evenings in June and July, the National Park Service will offer thematic educational astronomy classes in the Madison Amphitheater, and topics include cosmic updates, water and life, and touring the night sky. Each course will be followed by a night sky observation session at the Madison Information Station parking lot, weather permitting.

Evening educational sessions begin at 9:30 p.m. and observation begins at 10:30 p.m. on June 15 and 16 and July 13 and 14. The Park Service will also host observation sessions of the sun on June 16 and July 13 at 12 p.m. at the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center.



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The aurora borealis paints the sky above the Upper Geyser Basin. NPS PHOTO



While the Park Service astronomy programming is held on select days during the summer, park visitors can gaze at the sky each and every night on their own. According to former Yellowstone National Park spokesman Jonathan Shafer, there are just a few simple tips that beginners need to know.

The first, Shafer said, is being aware of light pollution. “Here in Yellowstone, there are fewer artificial lights than you might find in a big city, but the [lights] we have can still have a significant impact on dark sky experiences.” Shafer added that natural light can impact star observation, and it can be helpful to check what time the moon will rise and set, and time stargazing for moonless periods.

“Visitors should allow their eyes to adjust to the darkness by keeping all lights turned off after they pick a spot to stargaze,” Shafer added. “Far more stars are visible when your eyes get used to the darkness.”

While difficult to predict, cloud and smoke conditions can drastically impact star visibility as well.

The best stargazing can be done at large, empty areas in the park, well away from developed areas, where views of the sky will be unobstructed. Several locations that are easily accessible and recommended by Shafer include the open area beneath National Park Mountain, behind the

Junior Ranger Station at Madison Junction; Swan Lake Flats, about 6 miles south of Mammoth Hot Springs on the road toward Norris Geyser Basin; Hayden Valley between Canyon Village and Lake Village; or along the shores of Yellowstone Lake away from Fishing Bridge or Lake Village.

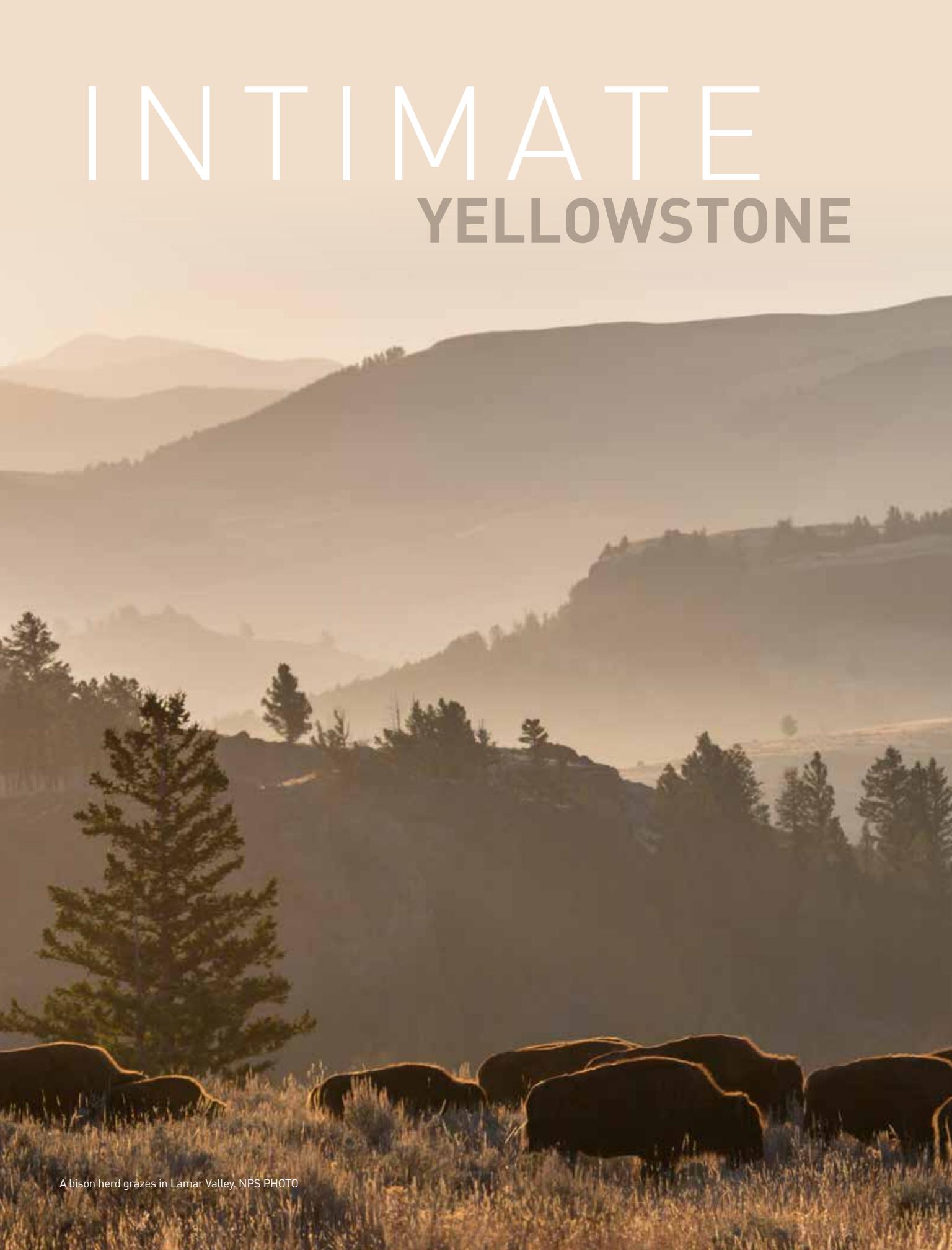
Another way to see the sky is to embark on moonlit hikes. “Full moon viewings of geysers and other thermal features will help visitors avoid daytime crowds and see the park in a new light,” Shafer said. “Be ready for nighttime chills, though. Yellowstone’s nighttime temperatures can dip below freezing in any month of the year.”

It’s important for visitors to park legally in pull-outs or parking lots, and to never stop in the middle of the road, he said. And visitors should also carry bear spray on walks at night.

“If conditions allow, visitors who stargaze will be rewarded with spectacular views of the park’s ‘other half’ in the skies above,” Shafer said.

To learn more about night skies in our national parks, visit nps.gov/subjects/nightskies.

INTIMATE YELLOWSTONE

A scenic landscape of mountains and bison at sunset. The foreground features a herd of bison grazing in a field of tall grass. In the middle ground, several large, dark bison are silhouetted against the warm, golden light of the setting sun. The background consists of majestic, misty mountains under a clear sky.

A bison herd grazes in Lamar Valley. NPS PHOTO

TOUR COMPANY TAKES SMALL GROUPS TO THE PARK

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT

For Laura Callaghan and Mikala Kearney the best part of Yellowstone National Park is showing it to others.

After seven years guiding tours for outfitters in the park, as well as in locations in Montana, Tennessee and North Carolina, Callaghan is leading tours under the business name Yellowstone Scenic Tours this summer. Callaghan and Kearney, her business partner, celebrated the opening of their new start-up in Big Sky, Montana, in May 2017.

"I'm excited to be in the park more," said Kearney, who enjoys watching wildlife and has a personal goal to visit all 58 National Parks in the United States. To date, she has visited 14. "I want to teach people to love the park as much as I do," she said.

Yellowstone Scenic Tours, which is certified by the Department of Transportation as a woman-owned small business, will offer group or private tours for up to 10 guests, who will pile into a 2017 Ford Transit Passenger Wagon to tour the park's lower or upper loop.

Alternatively, guests can opt for a fully customized trip that could integrate less driving time and more walking, in order to see areas of the park beyond Old Faithful and Mammoth Hot Springs. The small group size allows Yellowstone Scenic Tours to access locations that many tour buses cannot.

The Lower Loop tour takes visitors through Yellowstone's largest geyser basins, and includes the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, Hayden Valley, Lake Hotel, Old Faithful, Fountain and Artist paint pots and Grand Prismatic Spring. This tour is approximately 270 miles roundtrip, Callaghan said.

The Upper Loop traverses the northern region of the park. Offered as a private tour option, the Upper Loop highlights Norris Geyser Basin, Mammoth Hot Springs, Lamar Valley, Tower Fall and the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone.

Tours are scheduled as a full day of sightseeing and are available seven days a week, May through October.

The duo picks up their clients at any location in Big Sky or West Yellowstone, coming directly to their doorsteps, and every trip includes a picnic sack lunch. "Everybody wants to have a picnic in the park," Kearney said.

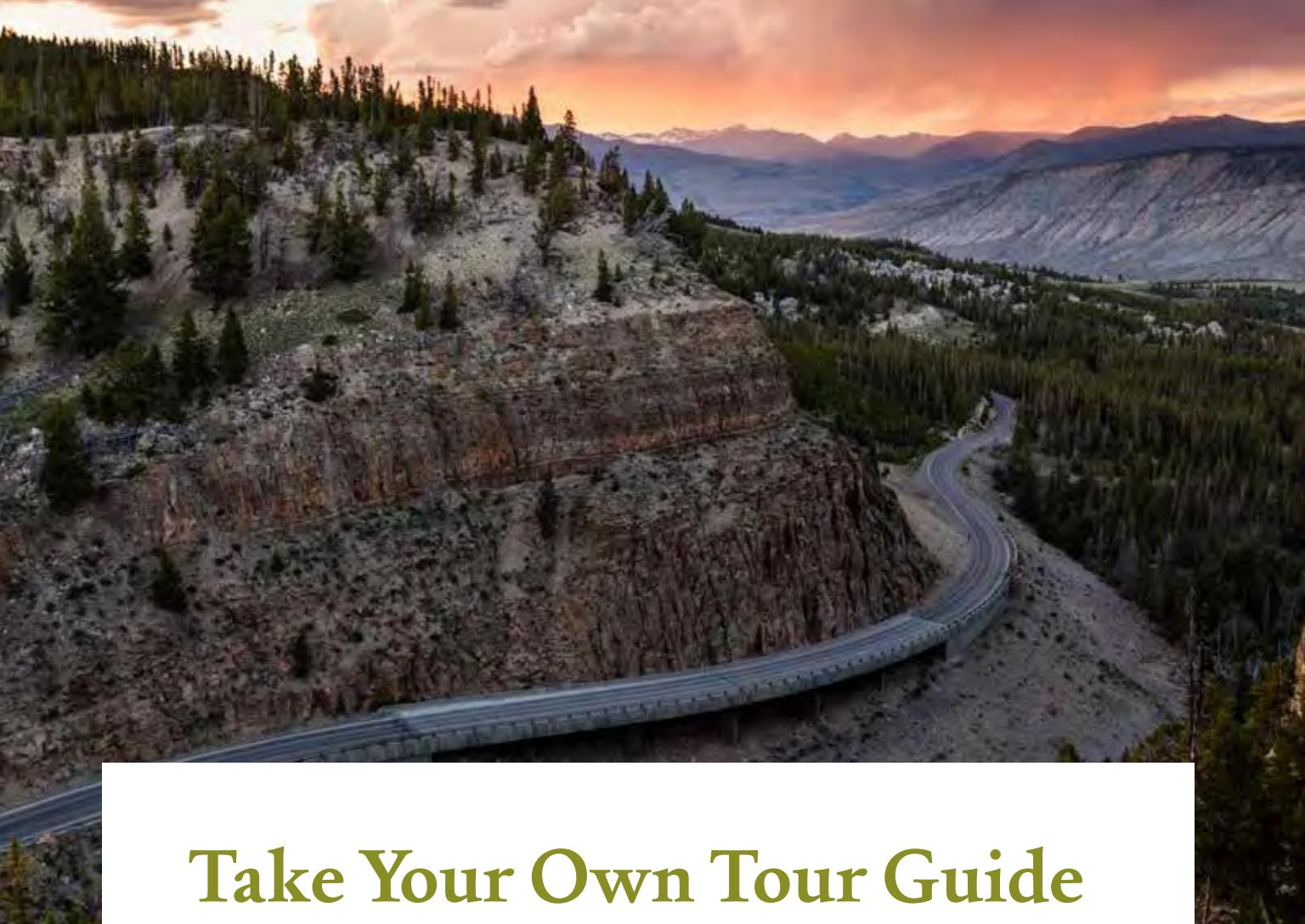
Already an experienced guide, Callaghan is excited to be more involved with the entire process, she said. "I'm looking forward to being there at every step of the tour, including booking."

Prior to each scheduled trip, Callaghan and Kearney will speak with their clients in order to plan an itinerary that meets client goals and expectations. They have also been doing their homework, so to speak, and are prepared to share stories about the park's history, attractions and wildlife.

"There's always something new to learn [about Yellowstone]," Callaghan said. "Most people who come to the park know nothing about it."

Both women have taken the five-day Yellowstone Forever course, *A Guide's Guide to Yellowstone*, which is taught by area experts and covers the geology, wildlife and human history associated with many of the attractions in the park.

To learn more about Yellowstone Scenic Tours, visit yellowstonescenictours.biz.



Take Your Own Tour Guide

GaperGuide offers custom adventures
in Yellowstone, Grand Teton

■ BY CAITLIN STYRSKY

Imagine exploring Yellowstone National Park on a clear summer day with your own personal tour guide. Your knowledgeable escort points out geysers, hiking trails, and the nearest restrooms, while educating you about the fascinating ecosystem, and providing entertainment in a calm, measured voice when you get stuck in traffic behind a herd of bison.

“People like it, they can tolerate my voice,” said Will Ferguson with a laugh. Ferguson is the co-founder and narrator of GaperGuide, a self-paced audio tour of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National parks that uses GPS technology to

point out notable highlights and provide useful tips for comfortably car-bound travelers.

A desire to learn more about the Greater Yellowstone region led Ferguson and co-founder Katie Lee to come up with the GaperGuide concept during a 2005 hike in Grand Teton, and their first guide hit the market in summer 2007. The original version was geared toward families and featured 16 different character voices, including fish, moose, and even a crazy scientist. But Ferguson found that utilizing multiple characters distracted visitors from the beauty of their natural surroundings. So, when recording

a new version of the audio tour in 2011, he drew from his personal experiences, area knowledge, and matter-of-fact voice.

The complete GaperGuide tour covers every paved road within the parks, with the exception of the stretch of Highway 191 between West Yellowstone and Big Sky. The full tour is a comprehensive 188,000-word adaptable program that can accommodate visitors on an afternoon drive or a multi-day excursion.

Users simply plug the device into their vehicle's cigarette lighter or charging port, and travel through the parks at their own pace. The simple, three-button interface won't distract sightseers from the majestic views or abundant wildlife. The GPS technology enables GaperGuide to direct users from lookout points to picnic areas, even when cell phone service is unavailable.

"It follows you, so you don't have to do a single thing," Ferguson said. "It's directional, so it knows when something's going to be on the right or left."

Whether visitors opt to cruise through the popular highlights or journey off the beaten path, GaperGuide includes recommendations for users to optimize their national park experience. The guide provides time estimates for taking a particular route and offers helpful information, such as service station locations, and RV accommodations on narrow park roads. GaperGuide can even recommend the best route for the time of day, and make real-time recommendations such as catching the sunset at Old Faithful.

Stuck in a bison jam or an endless avenue of lodgepole pine? The guide contains more than 100 fun facts about the history, geology, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone



LEFT: The Grand Loop Road at sunset. NPS PHOTO

ABOVE: GaperGuide leads users on customized tours of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. PHOTO BY CAITLIN STYRSKY

area to keep listeners entertained and alert. Information about wildlife habitats can be especially helpful for spotting moose, elk, wolves and bears. The guide's well-timed narration gaps also allow passengers to carry on a conversation and plan the next stop along the route.

GaperGuides are available to rent in several locations around Jackson, Wyoming, and in the Yellowstone gateway towns of Gardiner, Cody, Cooke City and West Yellowstone. Visitors can rent a guide at one location and return it to another, allowing for maximum flexibility, convenience, and control over their journey—at a fraction of the price of human-led tours. Check the GaperGuide website, gaperguide.com, for up-to-date information about pricing and locations.

In addition to the physical device, the full GaperGuide tour will be available on the TravelStorysGPS app

this summer. The repackaged tour will be broken out into Grand Teton, and the northern and southern loops of Yellowstone. Users will be able to download separate tours at a reduced price or take advantage of combined pricing to piece together a custom route.

GaperGuide's success has encouraged Ferguson in his mission to help people foster an appreciation for national parks and a desire to protect public lands. A new tour for Glacier National Park is currently under development and he hopes to complete a guide to Rocky Mountain National Park within the next year.

"My goal is to give [people] enough information ... so that they can get out of the park what they really want," Ferguson said.

Caitlin Styrsky is a freelance writer based in West Yellowstone, Montana.



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YELLOWSTONE'S HOT WATER WILDLIFE

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT

For author Robert Lindstrom, Yellowstone National Park is as much a preserved ecosystem as it is a living laboratory.

The West Yellowstone resident, and former National Park Service research coordinator, spent years learning about Yellowstone from some of the premier researchers of the time.

He recalls collecting samples in the '90s from mud vents with Karl Stetter and Martin Keller for the biotechnology

company Diversa. Researchers from NASA have also spent time in Yellowstone, trying to understand some of the park's unique biology and predict where life could be found in space.

"They were basically studying astrobiology by looking at what we have here on Earth, because they can study microbes that survive in some of the harshest climates," Lindstrom said.



At one point in his career, Lindstrom found himself coordinating up to 60 different projects exploring the uses of microbes, from developing alternative fuels, to dissolving rock for acid leach mining, and cleaning up pollution.

The microbes in question are known as thermophiles, or microorganisms that grow in extreme environments and hot temperatures. These organisms can be found in every hydrothermal feature in the park and are the cause of Yellowstone's lauded vibrant colors, as found in Grand Prismatic Spring.

Lindstrom refers to the microbes as "hot water wildlife," explaining that Yellowstone's incredible color palate indicates the kind of environment different microbes live in. "Each hot spring is its own ecosystem ... [and] has its own habitat and evolution," he said.

Lindstrom retired from the Park Service in 2009, and decided to gather his notes from years in Yellowstone to piece together a story about bioprospecting in the park. In 2017, his work came to fruition in the form of the book *Laboratory Yellowstone and the DNA Revolution: A Field Guide to Thermophiles*, published by Lindstrom's own company, Johnson Creek Publishing.

"It's a really interesting story of how one of the microbes in the park became worth a billion dollars and won a Nobel Prize," Lindstrom said.

In addition to including the discovery of *Thermus aquaticus*, the first organism known to science to survive above 72 degrees Celsius, and how the microbe allowed for DNA sequencing, Lindstrom includes a chapter on bison and how the advances in understanding DNA—thanks to *Thermus aquaticus*—could be used to test for microbial issues like brucellosis, a contagious disease that causes abortion in bison, elk and cattle.

The last half of *Laboratory Yellowstone* is possibly the largest colored field guide to the park's thermophiles.

To depict some of life's smallest, most extreme organisms, Lindstrom worked closely with Bozeman photographer Jill Scaron, who also edited and designed the publication. Scaron has been photographing Yellowstone's thermophiles for more than 10 years. In 2016, a selection from her photography exhibition "Painting with Fire and Ice: The Thermal Features of Yellowstone," was published in *National Geographic* magazine's special Yellowstone edition.

Inspired after working in Yellowstone for two years, Scaron began photographing the park's microbes. "I wanted to photograph them like any other feature you come to Yellowstone to see, like Hayden Valley, buffalo or wolves," she said. "Most people would look at me very strange when I was laying on my stomach on the boardwalk for hours."

To capture many of Scaron's pieces, she had to use specialized micro equipment and lenses. Most of the shots were captured while working in very hot temperatures. Scaron said she wants to make people stop and appreciate the thousands of organisms within one single thermal feature and "give it an artistic twist so that people are drawn into the picture and want to know what they're looking at."

Speaking about her work with Lindstrom, Scaron said, "He was really interested in making sure the science was accessible to anyone. ... The book is definitely written for anyone to take out on the boardwalks. People love the colors of Yellowstone, they should be able to understand what creates them."

Visit jscarsonphotography.com/laboratory-yellowstone to learn more, or to order the book.

Filamentous bacteria at
Mammoth Hot Springs.
NPS PHOTO

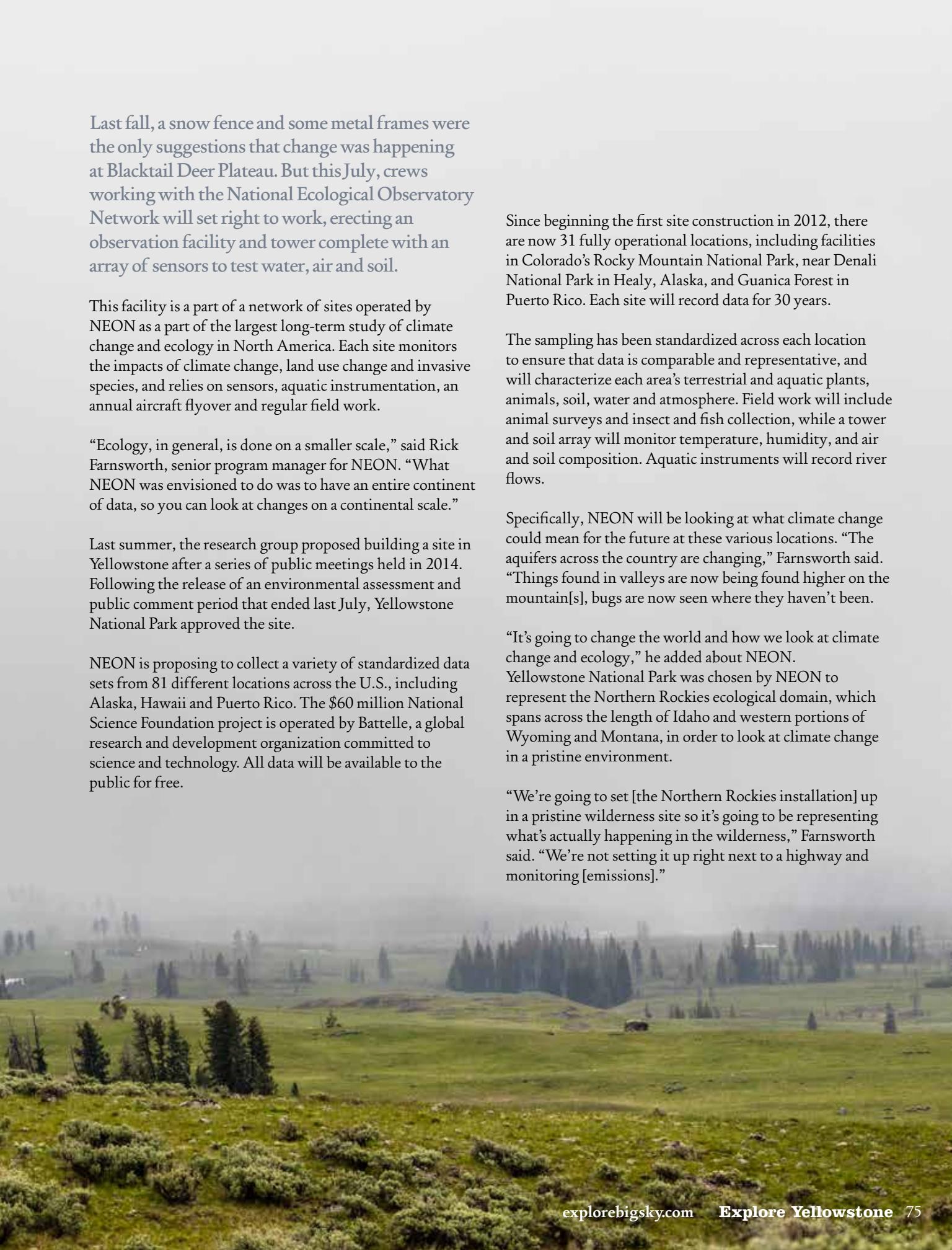
A wide-angle photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, there's a field of low-lying green shrubs. Beyond them, a series of green hills roll towards the horizon. In the background, large, dark mountain peaks rise, some with patches of snow or ice clinging to their slopes. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day.

Mapping a Changing

C L I M A T E

■ BY JESSIANNE WRIGHT

A storm rolls over Blacktail Deer Plateau, where the National Ecological Observatory Network facility is being built in the park.
NPS PHOTO



Last fall, a snow fence and some metal frames were the only suggestions that change was happening at Blacktail Deer Plateau. But this July, crews working with the National Ecological Observatory Network will set right to work, erecting an observation facility and tower complete with an array of sensors to test water, air and soil.

This facility is a part of a network of sites operated by NEON as a part of the largest long-term study of climate change and ecology in North America. Each site monitors the impacts of climate change, land use change and invasive species, and relies on sensors, aquatic instrumentation, an annual aircraft flyover and regular field work.

"Ecology, in general, is done on a smaller scale," said Rick Farnsworth, senior program manager for NEON. "What NEON was envisioned to do was to have an entire continent of data, so you can look at changes on a continental scale."

Last summer, the research group proposed building a site in Yellowstone after a series of public meetings held in 2014. Following the release of an environmental assessment and public comment period that ended last July, Yellowstone National Park approved the site.

NEON is proposing to collect a variety of standardized data sets from 81 different locations across the U.S., including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The \$60 million National Science Foundation project is operated by Battelle, a global research and development organization committed to science and technology. All data will be available to the public for free.

Since beginning the first site construction in 2012, there are now 31 fully operational locations, including facilities in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, near Denali National Park in Healy, Alaska, and Guanica Forest in Puerto Rico. Each site will record data for 30 years.

The sampling has been standardized across each location to ensure that data is comparable and representative, and will characterize each area's terrestrial and aquatic plants, animals, soil, water and atmosphere. Field work will include animal surveys and insect and fish collection, while a tower and soil array will monitor temperature, humidity, and air and soil composition. Aquatic instruments will record river flows.

Specifically, NEON will be looking at what climate change could mean for the future at these various locations. "The aquifers across the country are changing," Farnsworth said. "Things found in valleys are now being found higher on the mountain[s], bugs are now seen where they haven't been.

"It's going to change the world and how we look at climate change and ecology," he added about NEON. Yellowstone National Park was chosen by NEON to represent the Northern Rockies ecological domain, which spans across the length of Idaho and western portions of Wyoming and Montana, in order to look at climate change in a pristine environment.

"We're going to set [the Northern Rockies installation] up in a pristine wilderness site so it's going to be representing what's actually happening in the wilderness," Farnsworth said. "We're not setting it up right next to a highway and monitoring [emissions]."



Sunrise over Blacktail Pond. NPS PHOTO

Kathy Kirby, NEON project manager for the Yellowstone location, said they worked closely with the park in order to minimize the impacts to the area. Following the initial public meetings in 2014, Kirby said major concerns included tower height and terrestrial sampling.

Speaking of the latter, she said part of the concern was trail development as field technicians return to the same location for sampling. According to the environmental assessment, “operational crews would be advised to tread lightly in and around existing vegetation taking care not to create social trails.”

Kirby said the tower needs to extend above the tree canopy in order to get complete and accurate readings of the air. The Yellowstone tower will be 59 feet tall and it will also be powder-coated to blend in with the surroundings.

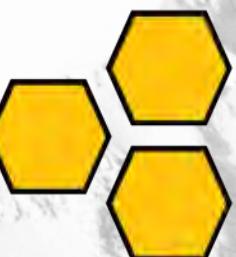
Doug Madsen, Yellowstone’s outdoor recreation planner, worked as the liaison between NEON and the park. “Most visitors probably won’t even know this is going on,” Madsen said. The most visible structures will be the aquatic instruments in Blacktail Deer Creek, he said, adding that visitors

may also notice the tower from a distance at select locations on the Grand Loop Road.

“[The NEON site] is going to offer the park a very long-term data set,” said Madsen, adding that in general, ecological surveys are short. “Five years is considered a long study.” Having data collected over the span of 30 years, which is publicly available and comparable in the way it was gathered with other national sites, would be very valuable, Madsen said. “The park sees that as being a very useful thing going into the future.”

Construction began last November with the installation of the snow fence, some metal frames and anchors for the tower and instrumentation hut. The tower will be fully operational by the end of 2018. Observation sampling began this spring, with water samples collected from Blacktail Deer Creek.

To learn more about the NEON site in Yellowstone, visit parkplanning.nps.gov/ynpneon.

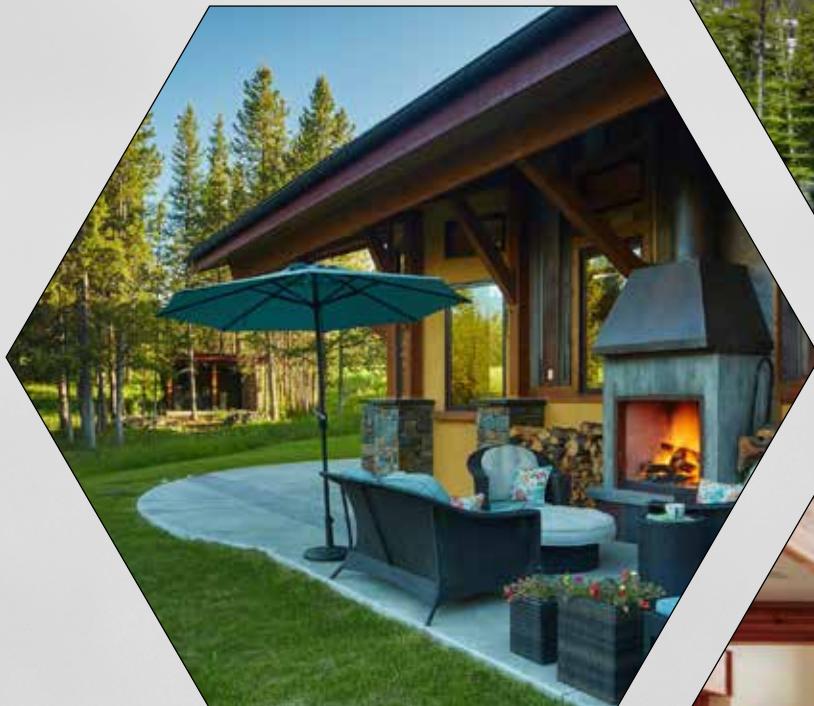


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MSU scientists' discovery in Yellowstone 'extremely relevant' to origin of life

■ BY EVELYN BOSWELL

Montana State University scientists have found a new lineage of microbes living in Yellowstone National Park's thermal features that sheds light on the origin of life, the evolution of archaeal life and the importance of iron in early life.

Professor William Inskeep and his team of researchers published their findings May 14 in the scientific journal *Nature Microbiology*.

"The discovery of archaeal lineages is critical to our understanding of the universal tree of life and evolution-

ary history of the Earth," the group wrote. "Geochemically diverse thermal environments in Yellowstone National Park provide unprecedented opportunities for studying archaea in habitats that may represent analogues of early Earth."

Archaea is one of the three domains of life, the others being bacteria and eukaryotes. Like bacteria, archaea are single-cell organisms. The eukaryote domain contains more cellularly complex organisms, such as humans, other animals, plants and fungi.

LEFT: Montana State University professor Bill Inskeep, drives a scanning electron microscope in the Image and Chemical Analysis Laboratory on campus, in May 2018. Inskeep has been published in the *Nature Microbiology* scientific journal for his research on Marsarchaeota, geothermal iron-oxide microbial mats found in Yellowstone National Park. PHOTO BY ADRIAN SANCHEZ-GONZALEZ

ABOVE: Iron-oxide terraces within the outflow channels at Echinus Geyser in Yellowstone's Norris Geyser Basin contain members of the Marsarchaeota as well as other thermophilic archaea and bacteria. PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL INSKEEP



The scientists called the new archaeal lineage Marsarchaeota after Mars, the red planet, because these organisms thrive in habitats containing iron oxides. Within Marsarchaeota, they discovered two main subgroups that live throughout Yellowstone and thrive in hot, acidic water where iron oxide is the main mineral.

One subgroup lives in water above 122 degrees Fahrenheit, and the other lives in water above 140 to 176 degrees. The water is about as acidic as grapefruit juice, and their microbial mats are red because of the iron oxide.

"It's interesting that the habitat of these organisms contains [iron] minerals similar to those found on the surface of Mars," Inskeep said.

He added that microbes produce iron oxide, but the Marsarchaeota do not. They might be involved in reducing iron into a simpler form, "which is important from an early Earth standpoint. Iron cycling has been implicated as being extremely important in early Earth conditions."

The Marsarchaeota live fairly deep in microbial mats, but they still require low levels of oxygen, Inskeep said. The subgroups are so abundant that, together, they can account for as much as half of the organisms living within a single microbial mat.

The scientists studied microbial mats throughout Yellowstone. Microorganisms in these "microbial beaver dams" produce iron oxide that creates terraces, which, in turn,



The Great Fountain Geyser at sunset. NPS PHOTO

block streams. As water that's only a couple of millimeters deep runs over the terraces, oxygen is captured from the atmosphere and supplied to the Marsarchaeota.

"Physics comes together with chemistry and microbiology," Inskeep said. "It's like a sweet spot of conditions that this group of organisms likes."

In addition to learning more about life on early Earth and the potential for life on Mars, Inskeep said the research can help scientists understand more about high-temperature biology.

"Knowing about this new group of archaea provides additional pieces of the puzzle for understanding high-temperature biology," he said. "That could be important in industry and molecular biology."

The work that resulted in the *Nature Microbiology* paper was the culmination of research that took place over the past decade, said Inskeep, who has studied the geochemistry and microbiology of Yellowstone's high-temperature environments for the last 20 years. Inskeep is a professor of geomicrobiology in MSU's Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences in the and co-founder of MSU's Thermal Biology Institute.

The lead authors of the *Nature Microbiology* paper earned their doctorates at MSU and were part of NSF's Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program while at MSU. Zackary Jay is now a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at MSU. Jacob Beam is now a postdoctoral researcher at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences at East Boothbay, Maine.

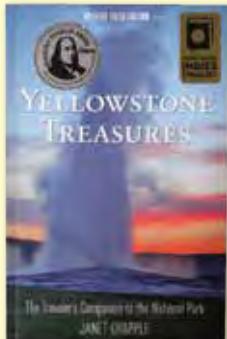
"In the end, after many years of work, it's exciting, and a relief, to have our team's work recognized and published, particularly in a high impact journal," Jay said.

Other co-authors were Mensur Dlakic from MSU's Department of Microbiology and Immunology; Douglas Rusch from the Center for Bioinformatics at Indiana University; and Mark Kozubal from the Thermal Biology Institute, MSU's Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences, and Sustainable Bioproducts in Bozeman.

The Yellowstone research was a collaboration involving the Thermal Biology Institute, the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and the Yellowstone Center for Resources.

Evelyn Boswell is a writer and editor for Montana State University News Service in Bozeman, Montana.

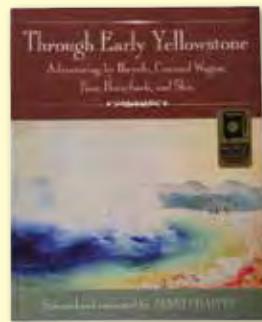
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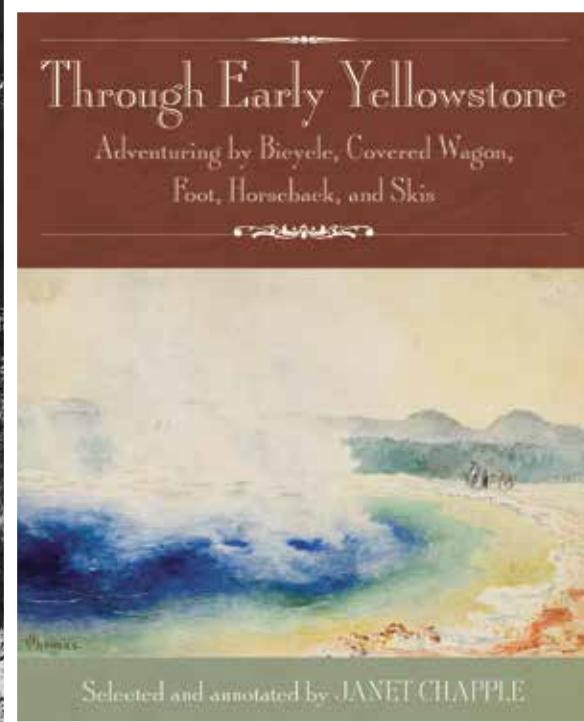
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'Through Early Yellowstone'

Book recounts old stories of the park

A view of Tower Fall from near its base, taken in July 1871 by William Henry Jackson. PHOTO COURTESY OF NPS



■ BY AMANDA EGGERT

With record-breaking visitation in recent years, it can be difficult to imagine what Yellowstone National Park looked like in its early days as a park, when there were more ungulates than humans, lending the area a mystique that favors the unknown and little-known.

Just as captivating as the descriptions of geothermal features in *Through Early Yellowstone: Adventuring by Bicycle, Covered Wagon, Foot, Horseback, and Skis* is the portrayal of those who called the area home. The accounts of how it changed travelers who ventured into it are particularly enjoyable. Thomas Whitmell, who visited Yellowstone in 1883, 11 years after it became the country's first national park, put it this way:

"Yes, one's face is blistered with the fierce noons; one is a little stiff from the freezing nights, slightly bruised by the dislocating gait of the faithful 'cayuse.' One has had enough of rice and prunes under canvas and of cold meat in the 'corrals;' but where were there brighter skies and blither air? That it has been give to one to see the beauty, the grandeur, and terror of this region of 'wonder-beauty' before the tourists troop through it in unbroken procession, laus Deo."

Whitmell's description is one of 11 narratives compiled by Janet Chapple, an Oakland, California-based editor who selected and annotated travel accounts published from 1871 to 1928. A scholar and lover of Yellowstone history, Chapple worked on the project for nearly 15 years.

The artwork that accompanies the text—a gallery of watercolors from 1884 by T.H. Thomas, never before seen outside of Wales—is also stunning, and provides for another captivating window into the area.

In June 2017, *Through Early Yellowstone* won honorable mention in the travel category of the 19th annual *Foreword* magazine Indies Book of the Year awards.

PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE

‘People of Yellowstone’

■ BY SARAH GIANELLI

PHOTOS BY STEVE HORAN



There are countless books about Yellowstone National Park, the large majority of which focus on its trails and sights, history, wildlife, scientific intrigue or sublime beauty. In 2017, they were joined by a book that celebrates an often-overlooked aspect of the park—the myriad individuals at its heart, for whom it also lies at theirs.

Through the black and white photography of Steve Horan and profiles written by Ruth W. Crocker, both of whom have relatives in the book, *People of Yellowstone* casts an egalitarian lens on the gamut of lives happily entangled in sustaining and preserving the park for past, present and future generations.

Among the 87 individuals featured between its coffee-table book covers are the obvious park heroes—rangers, rescuers and scientists—as well as the creatives and resident eccentrics. But you'll also find the less glamorously employed, equally integral park players who work in hospitality, trail maintenance, retail and construction.

Touting a “range of people as wide as the park’s ecosystem,” one spread might introduce you to Suzanne Lewis, who retired as Yellowstone’s first female superintendent in 2011 after 34 years in the Park Service, and another to John Salvato, grateful to have escaped New York nearly 30 years ago to become bell captain at the Old Faithful Inn and a snow coach driver.

Flipping through *People of Yellowstone* you’ll become acquainted with the park’s official cellist, grizzly and wolf experts and conservationists, as well as a transportation dispatcher, civil engineer, farrier, wrangler, backcountry chef, hunting guide, and a U.S. magistrate judge at Mammoth Hot Springs.



Disparate as these individuals may seem, the tie that binds them is a shared sense of privilege to live, work and play within, or just outside of, the gates of Yellowstone.

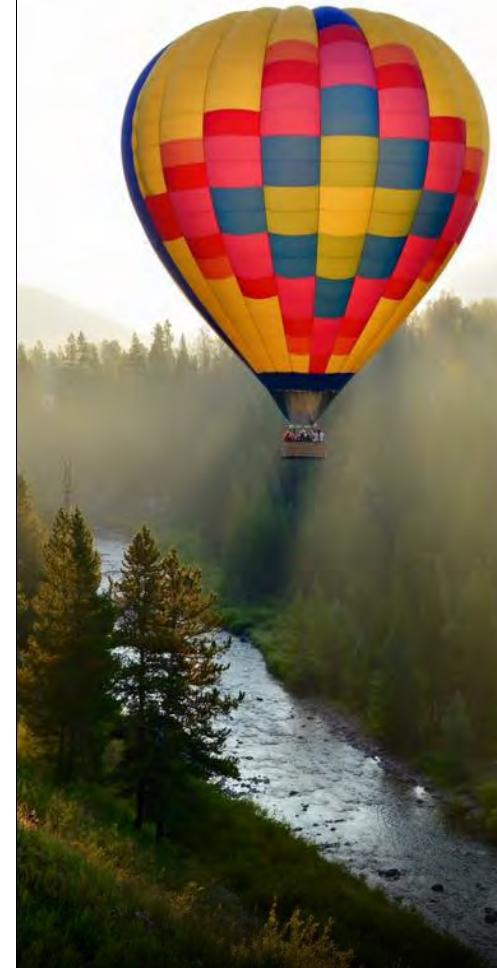
Horan's thoughtful photography aims to capture his subjects in a natural habitat that conveys their personality and purpose. Through his leveling yet respectful eye, each individual exudes a distinct authenticity worthy of the spotlight.

Crocker's brief biographies provide a written snapshot of each individual's life and connection to Yellowstone, with a focus on illuminating a different facet of an insider's view of the park.

In its diversity, *People of Yellowstone* is a delightfully refreshing addition to the common tomes and glossy picture books that dominate park bookstores, and provides an inclusive, living history of the many different kinds of people—and the many means—by which they have forged a lifelong connection to the nation's first national park.

Visit peopleofyellowstone.com for more information.

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The first ‘resorts’ of Gallatin Canyon

Homesteaders, prospectors and dude ranches

■ BY ANNE MARIE MISTRETTA

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, trappers, prospectors and loggers trekked into the relatively untouched and pristine Gallatin Canyon—just to west of what is now Yellowstone National Park—to harvest its resources.

The earliest residents traveled through the unforgiving Gallatin and Jack Creek drainages in the 1880s searching for good land for grazing and potentially profitable homesteads. Ranching here was challenging for homestead families, who were often crammed into log structures that were poorly insulated against a harsh climate. Dryland farming in high altitudes tested homesteaders’ hardiness, self-sufficiency and spirit.

As early as the first decade of the 20th century, some residents began to realize that, rather than mining and timbering, it was the area’s landscape and tourism possibilities that held the promise of an economic motherlode. At that point, change was truly underway in the Gallatin Canyon, culminating later in the century with the opening of Big Sky Resort.

Tom Michener, among Gallatin Canyon’s first champions, hoped his slog up the riverbed road would be rewarded by the mineral fortune that surely lay in the mountains and streams.

“The Gallatin Basin ... is destined someday to become one of the main wealth producing parts of the county,”

Michener wrote in a Seattle magazine in 1908. “The most important part ... is its undeveloped mineral resources.” Michener established and sold stocks in the West Fork Mining Company, owned by Hercules Dredging Company and Eureka Improvement Company of Spokane and Seattle.

Walter Cooper, another entrepreneur, sought riches in timber standing in the Upper Gallatin watershed. Backed by Helena money, he formed the Cooper Tie Company in 1904 and set up a tie hacker camp in Eldridge on the Taylor Fork, supplying railroad ties to the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Michener’s West Fork Mining Company failed to produce much gold, and mining in general didn’t “pan out” here, so to speak. Cooper Tie folded four years after it began.

Many homesteaders abandoned their ranches and moved on. But some ranchers continued to work hard to eke out a living and build a community.

Although the canyon developed first, the West Fork drainage saw successful homesteading in the early 1900s. The Crail Ranch, a section and a half (960 acres), dominated what is now known as Big Sky Meadow Village, through two generations of Crails. Clarence Lytle, a Crail neighbor who ranned an adjacent quarter section (160 acres), sold out to Julius Butler and Don Kilbourne (the B Bar K) in 1926. Henry Johnson sold his 160-acre homestead on the South Fork of the Gallatin in the 1950s to the McBrides.



Lilian Crail and her Chicago friends prepare the 1915 Dodge camper for their trip into Yellowstone National Park, circa 1920s. PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC CRAIL RANCH

DUDE RANCHES: ENTERTAINING YELLOWSTONE'S EARLY VISITORS

As early as 1906, ranchers along the Gallatin supplemented their finances by enticing Yellowstone visitors to extend their vacations “dude ranching.” Sam Wilson, owner of Buffalo Horn Ranch and Resort (now the 320 Ranch), collaborated with Michener, who owned a ranch near the current Big Sky Conoco gas station, to regulate rates for the dude ranches. For \$12 a week—plus another \$6 for a horse—vacationers could escape urban stress by renting a cabin, donning chaps and tackling ranch chores.

Many of the area’s current resorts opened their doors to tourists throughout the early 1900s. The Lemon Family purchased the Dew Drop Inn in 1919, renaming it Half-Way Inn (now Rainbow Ranch). They offered lodging, a café, a gas station and convenience store, and “dude” activities. The B-K evolved into a boys’ camp and eventually became the Lone Mountain Ranch.

Pete Karst, mail and supply freighter for Cooper Tie camp, acquired the Cold Springs Ranch when Cooper’s operation folded. The 1910 railroad extension to Gallatin Gateway was a boon for the Karst Kamp and other dude ranches, such as Elkhorn and Covered Wagon, that cropped up along the improved “Gallatin Way to Yellowstone.” Buck and Helen Knight relocated from Paradise Valley to build a resort on the old Stillman ranch in 1945.

Eventually the Crail Ranch, which operated as a ranch for a half century, succumbed to dude ranching under new owners in the 1950s. It was the intact Crail Ranch, along with the timberlands of Andesite, which became core elements of famed NBC newscaster Chet Huntley’s vision for Big Sky Resort.

When Huntley’s Big Sky Resort opened in December 1973, he reached across the country, inviting visitors to experience this exhilarating environment of unique natural resources that had lured and satisfied tourists for nearly a century.

As Michener predicted, this area has become an economic engine not only for Gallatin County but also for the Greater Yellowstone region. Michener had foreseen the value of tourism, but real estate and resort resources have exceeded his wildest visions.

Anne Marie Mistretta is the chair of the Historic Crail Ranch Conservators, and has been active with Crail Ranch preservation since 2003.

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CHEERS TO SUMMER IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE



Festivals celebrate the region's craft beer culture

EXPLORE YELLOWSTONE STAFF

Wildlife watching, scaling high peaks and geyser-gazing can all work up a thirst that water can't always quench. Fortunately, the craft beer industry has exploded in the Greater Yellowstone during recent years and there are a number of festivals celebrating the fermenting culture that you should put on your calendar this summer. We've rounded up some of our favorite events where beer takes center stage and music, games and family friendly activities are sure to enhance any visit to Yellowstone.



Cody, Wyoming

YELLOWSTONE BEER FEST

Saturday, July 21, 3-8 p.m. Featuring 50-plus nationwide breweries and tribute bands The Petty Breakers and Close, but no Seger. yellowstonebeerfest.com



Big Sky, Montana

BREWFEST AT BIG SKY RESORT

Saturday, July 21. The 13th annual Brewfest features breweries from Montana and across the nation. The whole family is invited to enjoy live music, fresh food, and free kids activities. bigskyresort.com



Virginia City, Montana

DOG AND GROG MONTANA MICROBREW FESTIVAL

Friday, July 20, 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 21, from noon to 7 p.m. at the Bale of Hay Saloon. The 15th annual festival features 10 Montana breweries offering more than 30 beers, and live music by Left on Tenth and the Chad Ball Band. virginiacity.com



Gardiner, Montana

BREWGASS FEST

Saturday, July 21, from 3 p.m. to dusk. The Yellowstone gateway community of Gardiner hosts BrewGrass Fest in Arch Park. The event will showcase regional breweries and wineries and many family friendly games and activities, as well as live bluegrass music, and food and art vendors. visitgardiner.com



TOP LEFT: PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRAND TARGHEE RESORT
RIGHT/BOTTOM: PHOTOS BY GABE PRIESTLEY



Virginia City, Montana **BALE BEER FEST**

Saturday, Aug. 4, from noon to 5 p.m. Bale of Hay Saloon hosts its second summer beer festival on during the sixth annual Bale Beer Fest. The event features some of Montana's newest breweries, including Elk Ridge Brewing from Deer Lodge, Bozeman's Mountains Walking, as well as Lockhorn Hard Cider, and live music will be provided by Dirk Allen under the big tent. virginiacity.com



Alta, Wyoming **GRAND TARGHEE RESORT OKTOBERFEST**

Saturday, Sept. 15, from noon to 5 p.m. Grand Targhee Resort closes out the summer season with a day of beer, brats, games, a classic car cruise-in, family fun and more at their second annual Oktoberfest celebration. Enjoy live music from The Hoff Band and don't miss the Gelande Quaff competition, while sampling craft brews by Grand Teton Brewing, Wildlife Brewing, Snake River Brewing, Deschutes Brewing Co., Melvin Brewing, Roadhouse Brewing Co., Dead Ringer, and spirits from Teton Distillery. grandtarghee.com

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LAST LIGHT





A hazy sunrise over Yellowstone Lake in July 2017, seen
from West Thumb Geyser Basin. NPS PHOTO

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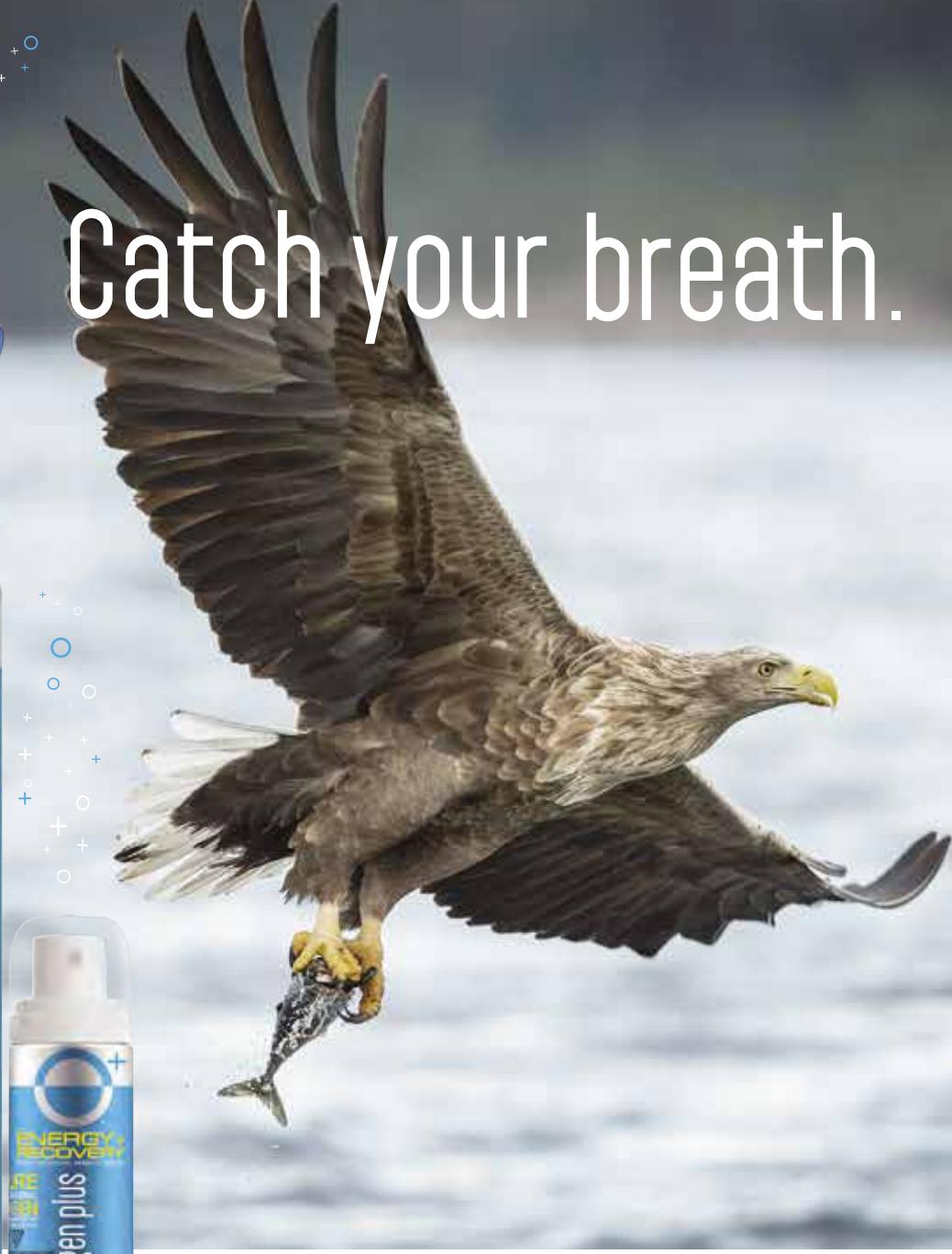
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