

Backcountry Trip Planner

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Yellowstone National Park was created by Congress to preserve the resources and provide for their enjoyment in such a manner as to keep them unimpaired for future generations. Your help is needed to accomplish this goal. Yellowstone is one of the few large, natural areas remaining in the lower 48 states of the United States. Here you meet nature on its terms, not yours. The National Park Service wants your backcountry trip to be as safe and rewarding as possible. For your benefit, backcountry rangers have compiled the following information which will help you in planning your trip.

Yellowstone National Park

Hiking in the backcountry of Yellowstone is an opportunity few people enjoy. Most visitors rarely travel beyond the roadways and developed areas known as the "frontcountry". Yellowstone has over 1000 miles of trails and over 300 designated backcountry campsites. All offer some of the most unusual and exciting wilderness found anywhere in the world. Perhaps the hardest decision in preparing for a trip is choosing when and where to go. We have no trails or destinations that we recommend over others. There is no "best hike". Many people select their itinerary based on activities of interest to them, such as fishing, seeing mountain vistas or watching wildlife. All of Yellowstone's trails offer a rewarding adventure in some of this country's most spectacular wilderness.

Plan Ahead

The key to a successful trip is careful planning and preparation. Please read this publication thoroughly. When planning your itinerary, keep in mind the time of year, difficulty of terrain, possible river crossings, closed areas, elevation changes, and the physical condition of *everyone* in your party. Remember you can only travel as fast as the slowest person in your group. See page 12.

We recommend using topographic maps and reading a good hiking guide to assist you in planning. Guide books and topographic maps with trails and backcountry campsites are available at all permit issuing stations, and may be purchased at visitor centers. To order them ahead of time contact the Yellowstone Association, P.O. Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, (877) 967-0090, or on the web at www.YellowstoneAssociation.org. See the enclosed publications list.

Your Backcountry Use Permit

A Backcountry Use Permit is required for all overnight trips in the backcountry. The permit is valid only for the itinerary and dates you select. Permits are not required for day hiking; however, day hikers must observe all backcountry regulations. At the time you receive your permit, you will receive important information on current trail and campsite conditions, hazards, and any restrictions or closures.

All Backcountry Use *Permits* must be obtained in person and not more than 48 hours in advance of the first date of the trip. However, the backcountry *campsites* can be reserved more than 48 hours in advance of your trip. See Backcountry Campsite Reservations.

Backcountry Campsites

For safety and resource concerns, especially regarding bears, camping is almost exclusively restricted to designated campsites only. See undesignated camping below. Each campsite has restrictions on group size, stock use, boating access, wood fires, and length of stay. The maximum number of nights one can remain at a single site is three. These restrictions are listed on the campsite lists on pages 6-11. With the exception of nine campsites, we allow only one party at each campsite. The multiparty sites are identified on the campsite listing. We join the national Leave No Trace program in urging backpackers to keep their group size small. If your party size exceeds the campsite limit, you will need to divide into smaller groups and obtain a second reservation/permit. Please be prepared to cook and sleep as separate groups.

Camping in undesignated sites is occasionally allowed under certain circumstances and with special approval on a case-by-case basis. Stringent policies govern this privilege, and adherence to Leave No Trace skills and ethics is required. Camping in designated campsites is not required during the winter season. For more information about camping in undesignated sites and/or for a booklet about winter camping, contact our Backcountry Office.

Trails and Trailheads

Maintained trails are marked by orange metal tags on trees and posts. Some trails may be hard to follow due to infrequent use, missing markers, recent fires, or large meadows where the trail tread is not clear. We strongly recommend that you carry a compass and topographic map and know how to use them. Distance and directional signs are at most trail junctions. Yellowstone has very few designated loop trails, however, loops can be devised by combining several existing trails. Doing this generally requires some segments of backtracking or entering and exiting at different trailheads. Leaving a vehicle at one trailhead and coming out at a different trailhead requires two vehicles or a shuttle. Hikers can arrange a shuttle from one trailhead to another from another visitor or from a commercial shuttle service. Currently Back Country Sports is the only such service. Their email address is backsports@fretel.com and their phone is (208) 652-3385.

Parking is available at all trailheads, however overnight camping at trailheads is not allowed. Trailheads are differentiated from campsites by having either a K or an N as their second character.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail (NPNHT) utilize parts of Yellowstone's trail system. For further information on these trails, contact the backcountry office.

Fires

Open wood fires are permitted only in established fire-rings at designated campsites. Only dead and down material may be used for firewood. Make certain the fire is cold before leaving your site. At some sites fires are not permitted; backpacking stoves are allowed at all campsites. Those sites which do not allow wood fires are specified with the initials NWF.

The following are prohibited in the backcountry:

firearms, weapons, traps and nets, pets, motorized equipment, wheeled vehicles, and hay. We do allow wheelchairs and some types of service animals in the backcountry. Due to personal safety concerns, please contact the backcountry office for further information before taking a wheelchair or service dog into the backcountry.




Backcountry Campsite Reservations

Yellowstone National Park has a reservation service for backcountry campsites. Below are some things you should know about our reservation system.


- Booking begins on April 1 and continues throughout the season. Reservation requests received before April 1 will be held until then. On April 1 the requests will be booked in random order determined by a computerized random number generator. After 4/1, the requests are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are requesting sites in one of our more popular areas such as Slough Creek or Yellowstone and Shoshone Lakes, your chances of getting your first choices are best if you submit your request by April 1.

WHERE TO GET YOUR PERMIT

For the best information on trail conditions, obtain your permits from the ranger station or visitor center closest to where your trip begins. During the summer season, Backcountry Use Permits are available 7 days a week between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (some stations close for lunch) at the following locations:

- Bechler Ranger Station
- Canyon Ranger Station/Visitor Center
- Mammoth Ranger Station/Visitor Center
- Old Faithful Ranger Station
- Tower Ranger Station
- West Entrance Ranger Station
- Grant Village Backcountry Office 
- South Entrance Ranger Station 
- Bridge Bay 

In addition, Backcountry Use Permits may sometimes be obtained at the Northeast and East Entrances. However, the rangers there have other responsibilities and may not be available. During the spring, fall, and winter, ranger station and visitor center hours may vary. To obtain a Backcountry Use Permit during these seasons, call the park phone number at (307)344-7381.

 Permits for boating trips must be obtained at one of these locations

- Requests for reservations will be accepted ONLY by mail, or in person. We can't accept requests over the phone or by fax. Requests should be submitted on the Trip Planning Worksheet (enclosed). If you did not receive a worksheet with this planner, call the backcountry office at (307) 344-2160 or email us at YELL_Backcountry_Office@nps.gov. Worksheets are also available for download via the internet at <http://www.nps.gov/yell/publications/pdfs/backcountry/index.htm>
- Each trip reservation costs \$20.00. The fee is for one reservation regardless of the number of nights or number of people in a single trip. A trip is defined as an itinerary with campsites along a trail from the entry trailhead to the exit trailhead. If the party returns to the road and travels to another entry trailhead, this constitutes another trip. Consult the campsite listing for party-size limits for each site.
- The fee must accompany the reservation request and can be made with cash, check, or money order. The fee is for *obtaining a reservation*, not for taking a trip. Once the reservation has been made the fee is no longer refundable even if the trip is cancelled. There's no charge for amending or cancelling reservations.
- Please, submit only one request per party. Multiple requests from the same party slow down the reservation process and may lead to false reservations and unused sites.
- A confirmation notice, not a permit, will be mailed to the camper. This confirmation notice is then exchanged for the actual Backcountry Use Permit which must be obtained in person at a ranger station in the park, not more than 48 hours before the first camping date.
- You must pick up your permit or contact the backcountry office before 10:00 a.m. on the day of your trip or your site(s) will be released to other campers. If you are delayed, you may hold your reservation by calling the 24-hr. phone number shown on the confirmation notice.
- Only a portion of backcountry campsites will be reserved in advance. We leave some sites open in each area each night for people without reservations. Consequently, if you can be flexible in your choice of campsites, you may decide to wait until you arrive in the park to reserve your site(s) and obtain your permit.

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2 Hiking and Camping in Bear Country

To learn more about bears, read one of the numerous books that are available at visitor centers in the park or from The Yellowstone Association. To fear bears is quite reasonable, but be aware that many bear stories are greatly exaggerated. Your chances of being injured on the way to Yellowstone are actually far greater than being injured by a bear. However, people have been injured and killed by bears in Yellowstone. Your safety is not guaranteed. Read the information below to learn good bear avoidance behavior

Attacks are caused mainly by surprising a bear, getting between a mother bear and her cubs, or getting too close to a bear with food.

The chances of being attacked by a bear can be reduced by avoiding the above situations and taking the following precautions:

- **Be Alert:** Watch for tracks, excrement, diggings or other bear sign. Carry binoculars and scan ahead periodically. If you see a bear cub, the mother is close by.
- **Don't Hike Alone or at Night:** Plan your itinerary so you do not travel at night. Bears travel (often on the trails) and feed mainly at night. Statistics show that parties of three or more are safer than solo hikers. Groups tend to make more noise and appear more formidable to a bear. Also, if there is an attack, members of the group can assist the injured while others go for help.
- **Make Noise:** Talk, sing, clap hands, shake pebbles in a can, anything to let a bear know your presence. Don't rely on bells; usually they are too quiet. Shout often, especially when traveling upwind, near streams or in thick brush.
- **Stay On Marked Trails:** You increase your risk of surprising a bear when hiking off-trail.
- **Avoid Carcasses:** Report dead animals near a trail or campsite to the nearest ranger station. Never camp in a campsite that has a carcass nearby. It is very risky to approach a carcass; a bear may be out of sight guarding its food.
- **Avoid Bringing Smelly Food:** Leave bacon, tuna, ham, scented deodorants and other odorous items behind. A bear's acute sense of smell can detect odors from great distances. Dry foods are lighter to carry and not as aromatic.

If you encounter a bear:

- Stay Calm
- Do not run or make sudden movements
- Back away slowly
- Talk quietly to the bear, do not shout
- Do not drop your pack
- Avoid looking directly at the bear

If you encounter a bear and it does not see you, keep out of sight and detour as far away as possible behind and downwind of the bear. Climbing a tree is popular advice, but not always practical in many settings. All black bears, all grizzly cubs, and some adult grizzlies can climb trees if the spacing of the branches is right. Climb a tree *only* if it is nearby, and the bear is far away. Running to a tree may provoke a bear to chase you. **You cannot outrun a bear!** If you do climb a tree, make sure you choose one in which you can climb at least 15 feet.

If you are charged: If the bear charges you, freeze. Some bears may bluff charge, then veer off or stop abruptly allowing you to slowly back away.

If a bear makes physical contact: Drop to the ground, lie face down and clasp your hands behind your neck; wearing your pack may shield your body. It may take all the courage you have, but lie still and remain silent, resistance will only provoke the bear. Before moving, listen and look around carefully to make sure the bear is no longer nearby.

Night attacks while in a tent are extremely rare, but if this happens you should defend yourself aggressively. A bear attacking at night or stalking is not being protective or defensive - rather it is possibly treating humans as food. Fight back, do not play dead - use anything available to defend yourself. If you carry pepper spray, keep it accessible in your tent and be prepared to use it.

Food and Bears

Don't let your actions cause a bear or other animal to be destroyed. A bear has an acute sense of smell. If you leave food out and unattended, you are inviting a bear into your camp. Bears that get food and/or garbage from people will likely continue to seek this easy source of food. Repeated incidents may mean a dead bear. Why? A bear conditioned to human food is more likely to be aggressive and subsequently, to injure or kill people in an attempt to obtain food. When such a bear injures someone, it is often necessary to destroy that bear.

Samples of odorous items which you are required to hang include all food, garbage, empty or full beverage cans, coolers, lip balm, sunscreens and lotions, toothpaste, food panniers, horse feed, some medications, clothes worn while cooking, eating utensils which have not been properly cleaned, and any article that has an odor. Keep all food and odorous items out of sleeping bags, tents and their stuff sacks.

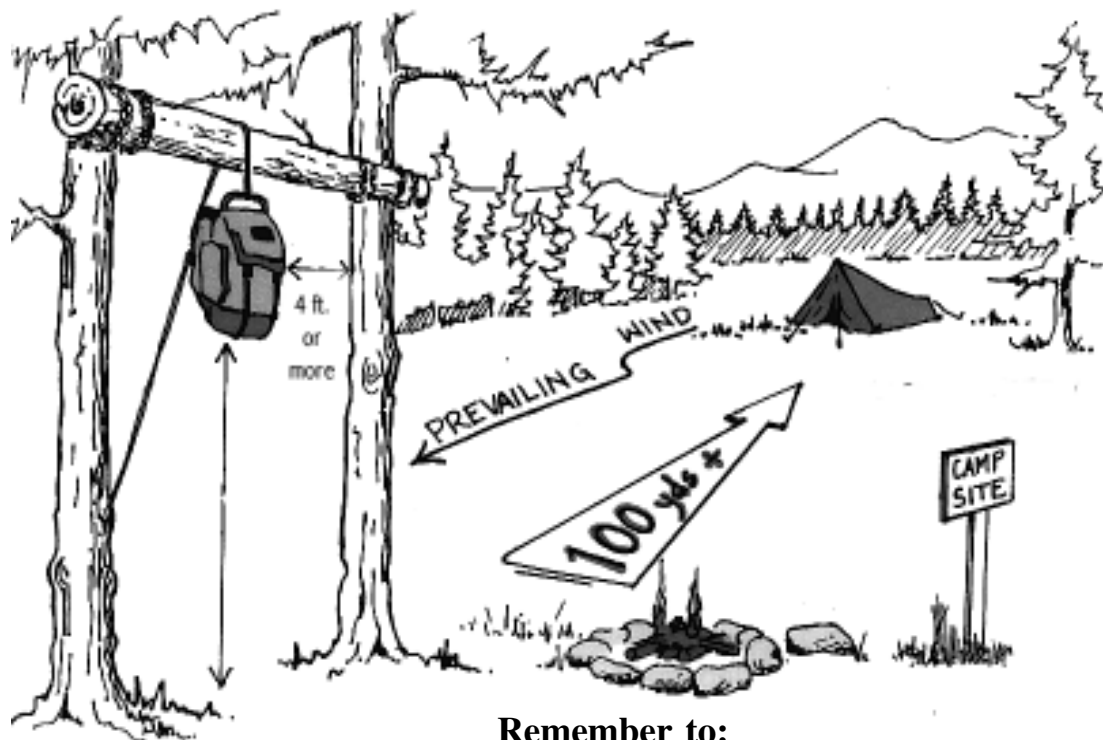
Before setting out on a day hike or backcountry trip check at a Visitor Center or Ranger Station for any recent bear sightings or warnings. Look for posted warning signs at the trailhead. Report bear sightings or encounters to the nearest Ranger Station or Visitor Center.

*Those who have
packed far up into grizzly
country know that the presence of even
one grizzly on the land elevates the mountains
deepens the canyons, chills the winds, brightens the stars,
darkens the forest, and quickens the pulse of all who enter it. They
know that when a bear dies, something sacred in every living thing
interconnected with that realm ...also dies.*

John Murray

Recommended camp setup in bear country

A food storage pole is provided at most campsites, so that food and other attractants can be suspended. You need to provide your own rope (35' recommended).



Remember to:

- Suspend items 10 feet above ground and 4 feet out from tree trunks
- In addition to food and garbage, suspend all odorous items including toothpaste, deodorant and lotion
- Keep a clean camp - pack out all garbage
- Don't sleep in the same clothes worn while cooking
- Store food in airtight containers
- Where possible, keep your sleeping area 100 yards from your cooking & food-storage area
- Strain food particles from dishwater and pack out. Scatter dishwater at least 100 yards from tent site
- Bring at least 35 feet of rope to hang food
- Line your pack or panniers with plastic bags
- Never eat or store food in your tent
- Sleep in a tent, not under the stars

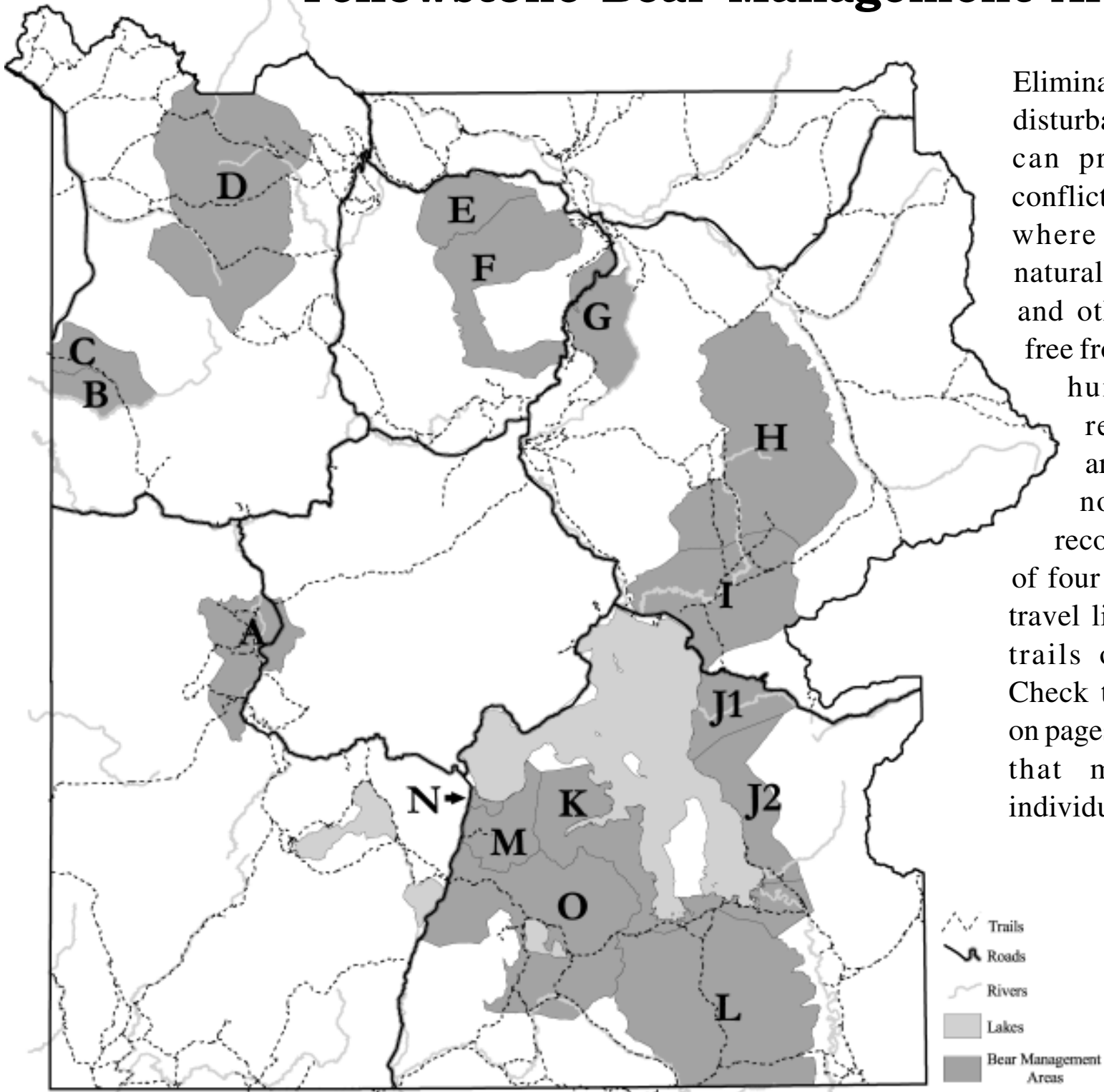
Bear Pepper Sprays

The best way to avoid being injured by a bear is by taking all the necessary precautions. However, if precautionary measures fail and you are charged by a bear, your reactions can, in many cases, defuse the situation. Bear spray is a good last line of defense that has been highly effective in the reported cases where it was used. The use of bear spray is especially appropriate if you are attacked in your tent at night. If you successfully use pepper spray to stop a bear, leave the area immediately. The spray is effective for a short time and is less effective the second time around. Bear spray is effective only at distances of 10-30 feet and is adversely affected by wind, cold temperatures, and age. Carefully read the instructions, know how to use the spray and be aware of its limitations. Be sure to check the expiration date. **If you decide to carry bear spray, the canister must be immediately available, not in your pack.**

In choosing a pepper spray please consider the following: Purchase only products clearly labeled "for deterring attacks by bears" • Concentration should be between 1 and 2% capsaicin • Minimum net weight of 225 grams or 7.9 oz. • Spray delivered in a shotgun-cloud pattern • Minimum range of 25 feet • Spray should be EPA approved.



Although bear sprays have been highly effective at stopping charging bears, there are some indications that the residue from some oil-based sprays may possibly act as a bear attractant. **Use your spray only as a last ditch deterrent on the bear. Do not spray around your campsite, tent, camping gear, or in any bear habitat.**



Eliminating human entry and disturbance in specific areas can prevent human/bear conflicts and provides areas where bears can pursue natural behavioral patterns and other social activities free from the disturbance of humans. Types of restrictions include: area and trail closures, no off-trail travel, a recommended party size of four or more people, and travel limited to established trails or daylight hours. Check the campsite listings on pages 6-11, for restrictions that may apply to an individual campsite.

To reduce human related impacts on bears in high density grizzly bear habitat, we have established the following areas and restrictions:

A Firehole: Area (including Firehole Freight Road and Firehole Lake Road) is closed March 10 through the Friday of Memorial Day weekend. The Mary Mountain Trail from the Nez Perce trailhead to Mary Lake is closed March 10 through June 15. Through travel from the Canyon trailhead is not allowed, however, travel is allowed from the Canyon trailhead to Mary Lake and back. Streamside use is allowed from the point where Nez Perce Creek crosses the main road to a point one mile upstream along Nez Perce Creek.

B Richard's Pond: Area is closed March 10 through the Friday of Memorial Day weekend. From the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend through September 30, Duck Creek, from the park boundary upstream to the Campanula Creek/Richard's Creek fork, is open to streamside travel. The area upstream from Campanula Creek/Richard's Creek fork is closed from March 10 through September 30.

C Gneiss Creek: Area is closed March 10 through June 30. From July 1 through November 10, travel is allowed only on designated trails (off-trail travel is prohibited).

D Gallatin: From May 1 through November 10, travel is allowed only on designated trails (off-trail travel is prohibited). A minimum group size of four or more is recommended for hiking and camping.

E Blacktail: Area is closed March 10 through June 30.

F Washburn: Area is closed August 1 through November 10. From March 10 through July 31, the area is open by special permit only. Contact the Tower Ranger Station for permit information.

G Antelope: Area is closed March 10 through November 10. The Dunraven Road and related turnouts are open. From May 25 through November 10, foot travel is allowed on the Old Road Trail from Tower Falls Campground to the Buffalo Picnic Area.

H Mirror Plateau: From May 15 through November 10, the area is open to day use only with the exception that from July 1 through August 14 overnight camping is permitted for a combined total of 14 nights per summer at the 3O1 and 5P7 campsites.

I Pelican Valley: Area is closed April 1 through July 3. From July 4 through November 10, the area is open to day-use only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

J1 Clear Creek: From April 1 through August 10, travel is only allowed on the east shore from Nine-mile trailhead to Park Point. All other trails are closed and off-trail travel is prohibited. On August 11 all trails open and off-trail travel is permitted.

J2 Clear Creek: from April 1 through July 14, travel is only allowed on the east shore trail from Park Point to Beaverdam Creek. All other trails are closed and off-trail travel is prohibited. Open campsites are 5E2, 5E3, 5E4, and 5E6 (no travel away from campsite). All other campsites are closed. On July 15, all campsites open and off-trail travel is permitted.

K Lake Spawn: From May 15 through July 14, no off-trail travel allowed and the Trail Creek Trail between Cabin Creek and Outlet Creek is closed. Open Campsites are 7L5, 7L6, 7L7, 7L8, 7M3, 7M4, 7M5, 6A3, 6A4, and 6B1 (no travel away from campsite). On July 15 all campsites open and off trail travel is permitted.

L Two Ocean: From March 10 through July 14 and August 22 through November 10, travel is allowed only on designated trails (off-trail travel is prohibited). From July 15 through August 21, a permit is required for persons wishing to travel away from designated trails. Contact the South Entrance Ranger Station for permit information.

M Middle/Solution: Area is closed April 30 through July 14.

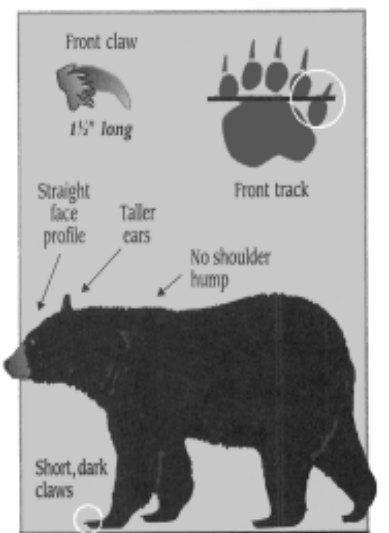
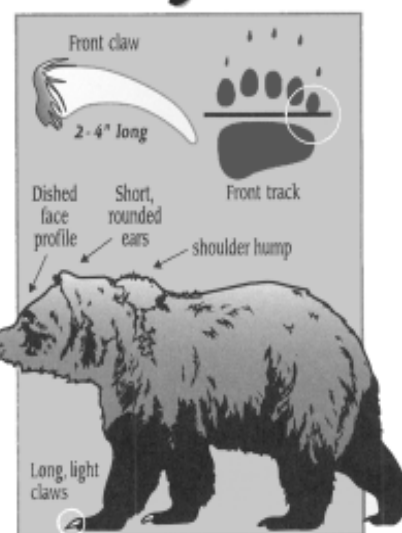
N Grant Village: Campground opens June 20 or earlier if bear use of the area spawning streams is over prior to that time. If bears are still frequenting the spawning streams after June 20, the campground loops adjacent to the stream(s) will remain closed until bear activity ceases. Campground closes October 16.

O Heart Lake: Area is closed April 1 through June 30. Access to the area on July 1 may be delayed if conditions warrant.

Do you know your bears?

Grizzly Bear

Black Bear



Look for a combination of characteristics. Color and size are sometimes misleading.

Identifying bear tracks: A line drawn under the big toe across the top of the pad runs through the top half of the little toe on black bear tracks and through or below the bottom half of little toes on grizzly tracks.

Seasonal Weather Table

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| Data based on a Ten-year average | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Average Maximum Temperature | 27 | 33 | 41 | 49 | 58 | 68 | 75 | 76 | 67 | 53 | 35 | 27 |
| Average Minimum Temperature | 0.3 | 4 | 12 | 21 | 29 | 36 | 39 | 37 | 29 | 22 | 10 | 0.7 |
| Average Precipitation | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 1.7 |

Pay attention to the weather - Yellowstone's is highly unpredictable

Many warm sunny days turn abruptly into fierce stormy afternoons. Strong, gusty south to southwest winds are common each afternoon in Yellowstone. What can follow is sudden wind, rain, and lightning storms. If you are boating or hiking on a ridge when these storms approach, get off the water, ridges, shores, and open places. Thick forests of equal height offer better protection than meadows.

Backpackers to Yellowstone may be surprised to experience winter-like weather any time of year. Rain, wind, sleet and snow can be deadly if proper precautions are not taken. Always bring raingear and extra clothes for warmth. Nighttime temperatures can drop into the 30s and 40s. Depending on elevation, temperatures may even fall into the 20s with a light freeze.

Daytime temperatures are usually in the 70s or 80s. June can be cool and rainy; July and August tend to be drier, with afternoon thundershowers common. High water from spring runoff can make stream crossings hazardous and some trails wet and muddy until mid-July. Consult current conditions before venturing into the backcountry.

For Your Safety, please read this page

Thermal Features and Geyser

Basins

Burns from thermal features are a common cause of serious injury and death in the park.

- Be extremely cautious in thermal areas due to thin, fragile crusts overlying boiling water
- Be alert for bears in geyser basins in spring and early summer
- **Don't travel through thermal areas after dark**
- Stock are not permitted in thermal areas
- To swim, bathe or soak in waters that are entirely of thermal origin is prohibited
- No food or smoking allowed in thermal areas

Following large animal tracks through geyser basins is no insurance of safety. Check at a ranger station before you go exploring; some areas may be restricted.

Don't approach or short-cut through geyser basins after dark. In the darkness, there is greater chance of stepping into a hot spring.

For your safety and for the protection of thermal features in Yellowstone, it is illegal to swim or bathe in any thermal water that is entirely of thermal origin. Many springs and pools in Yellowstone are extremely acidic or very alkaline; only a small number are neutral. The hot springs and pools found in Yellowstone's thermal basins contain algae, bacteria and fungi that are found no where else in the world. These delicate life forms could be destroyed by soaking or wading in the pools.

Altering the status of any thermal feature is prohibited. Please don't put rocks, sticks or any objects into them. Doing so may clog the vents and cause their extinction.

Ticks and Mosquitoes

From mid-March to mid-July, grassy, brushy, low elevation areas (4000-6500 feet) are ideal **tick** habitat in Yellowstone. Wear repellent even on shoes socks, cuffs and pant legs. Tuck your pant legs into your socks and your shirt into your pants. Check your clothes and your body often.

During the summer season, **mosquitoes** are common and widespread, especially in wet areas, around lakes and streams. They are most intense during June and July and tend to diminish in mid to late August. Repellents, netting, and wearing protective clothing with long pants and sleeves are your best options. After that, patience and forbearance are required.

River Crossings

Few of Yellowstone's rivers or streams have bridges, and many are not fordable until July or later. Even in late summer, water levels can rise quickly after rainstorms or on warm afternoons from snowmelt in the high country. The water can be cold, fast, and over thigh-deep, making any attempt to ford very perilous. Trying to ford deep, swift water has resulted in loss of gear, injury, and death. Carefully check your itinerary on a topographic map for stream crossings, then ask about ford conditions at a ranger station before beginning your trip. Don't be afraid to turn around if conditions are dangerous. Before you cross make sure all members (especially smaller members) of your party are comfortable with fording.

- During the spring and early summer, stream depths are likely to change from morning to afternoon.
- Seal important items in plastic bags and put dangling items inside your pack before crossing.
- Search up and downstream to find the safest place to ford. You don't have to cross where the trail meets the river. Wider sections are generally slower and shallower.
- Do not ford barefooted, stay sideways to the current, and beware of deceptive currents. Don't look at moving water when crossing; keep your eyes set on the approaching bank
- Use a long sturdy stick to make your crossing safer. If you are part of a group, hold hands or interlock arms.
- Use extreme caution if you use a fallen tree or logjam; they can be very slippery.
- Undo the waist and chest straps of your pack. You must be able to get out of it quickly should you fall. If you fall while fording in deep water, discharge your pack and swim - a full pack could drag you down.

Water Treatment

Even though backcountry waters can look, smell and taste good, Giardia and other contaminants may be present. Giardiasis is an intestinal disorder caused by a microscopic protozoan. It is carried in the feces of humans and some domestic and wild animals. As a safeguard against Giardiasis, other parasites and bacteria, we recommend that you boil, filter or chemically treat all drinking water. Any water brought to a boil, even at high altitudes, should be safe. For additional assurance boil water for one minute. Some charcoal filtration systems may or may not remove Giardia. Therefore, when shopping for a filtration system, make sure the package says "Effective against Giardia" and is capable of removing particles of 1 micron or smaller.

Hypothermia (Exposure)

Hypothermia is the major killer of unprepared recreationists. It is the lowering of a person's inner-core temperature, followed by rapid, progressive mental and physical collapse. Each year outdoor recreationists die from it. Most of these deaths could have been prevented with prior knowledge and appropriate action. To avoid hypothermia: Stay dry, stay out of the wind, avoid getting chilled. Put on rain gear before you get wet and warm clothes before you start shivering. Use a hat and gloves to conserve vital body heat.

When a person is wet, the body is cooled rapidly as moisture evaporates; a breeze increases the rate of heat loss dramatically. When clothes get wet, they lose much of their insulating value: cotton and down lose the most, wool loses less, synthetic piles lose the least and dry out quickly. Most hypothermia cases happen in air temperatures between 30 and 50° Fahrenheit.

Warning signs of hypothermia:

- Uncontrollable shivering
- Immobile, fumbling hands
- Slow, slurred speech
- Stumbling, lurching gait
- Exhaustion
- Memory lapses, incoherence and drowsiness.

Watch yourself and others for symptoms. Be aware of the "denial syndrome" in which the victim negates any problems, "I'm OK, really!"

If you cannot stay warm and dry, assess and alter your plans. Remember that you are only as strong as the weakest person in your group. Persistent or violent shivering is a clear warning that you are on the verge of hypothermia. Find shelter from the storm and make camp. Get out of wind and rain. Remove wet clothing. Get into dry clothing and a sleeping bag. Administer warm drinks. Never give alcohol.

Cell phones

Cell phone coverage throughout the park is variable and intermittent. Three different companies provide coverage all in different areas. Being able to transmit a call depends on your carrier and your location. Coverage in the backcountry is even more unpredictable. Backcountry cell phone users should not count on their cell phones as a reliable means of communication in case of an emergency.

Edible Plants, Berries and Mushrooms

Edible plants, berries and mushrooms may be picked for your daily consumption. Make certain you know which varieties are edible. If you're not certain, don't eat them - better safe than sorry. People have died in Yellowstone from eating poisonous plants.

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Leave No Trace

Developed by the National Outdoor Leadership School, the principles of **Leave No Trace** are an extension of the National Park Service mission to preserve a vast system of resources "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations", and

challenges individuals to become active stewards in its preservation. The program builds awareness, appreciation and respect for the land and provides a foundation for applying minimum-impact techniques.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Careful preparation for your trip helps avoid unnecessary impacts. Thoughtful preparation includes: repackaging food and supplies, having proper equipment, and obtaining knowledge about the area assists in knowing what to expect. You have already begun your preparation by reading this information packet. As you continue planning your trip, please keep the following in mind:

• **Group size** Think small! A large crowd is difficult to organize and keep together as you travel. In addition, human waste disposal and proper food storage becomes difficult. As you look through the campsite list in this planner, please note the party size limit that pertains to each campsite. If your group size exceeds these limits, you will need to camp and cook as smaller groups in separate campsites with separate permits. Another alternative would be to consider going to a "frontcountry" campground in the park that is equipped with toilets, tables, and paved paths designed to accommodate larger numbers of people — large groups are not appropriate in the backcountry.

• **When to go** Most people visit Yellowstone in July and August. If trails are dry, you might enjoy a late-spring or early-fall trip to avoid summer crowds. The trade-off of visiting the park during these less busy times may mean dealing with more mosquitoes or less favorable weather conditions.

• **Food Packaging** Plan your meals carefully. Repackage food into reusable containers or plastic bags as this will reduce the amount of potential trash or litter you bring into the backcountry. Carefully plan your food to reduce waste and leftovers.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Yellowstone's designated campsite system concentrates impacts in a limited number of areas leaving most of the backcountry pristine. When on the trail, walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet and muddy. Staying on the trail, even when tempted to shortcut switchbacks, prevents erosion and slopes marred by numerous trails.

Leave What You Find

Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects of interest as you find them. Walk lightly - avoid damaging trees and plants around your campsite. All plants, animals, animal parts, mineral features, archeological sites,

and cultural artifacts in the park are protected. Removing, disturbing, and/or damaging them is prohibited.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

It is evident that building wood fires causes undesirable impacts. Where fires are permitted, the proliferation of fire rings causes accumulation of ash, charcoal, blackened rocks, and partially burned garbage. Living trees and picturesque snags, home to many birds and small animals, are stripped and hacked. Undesired trails develop around campsites in the quest for wood.

To safeguard the pristine environment, backcountry users should strive to use only portable stoves. At campsites where wood fires are prohibited, stoves are the only source of fire. They provide their users with the convenience of fire while protecting the resource.

Where it is legal to build a fire, keep it small. In popular areas, natural processes cannot supply dead wood fast enough to feed camp fires. Moreover, revegetation at old fire rings is very slow or unlikely.

Use only small sticks and branches which burn more completely and provide a bed of hot coals for cooking. When you leave, you will not have partially burned logs to tend to.

Respect Wildlife

ALL Animals are Wild and Potentially Dangerous

- Do not approach wildlife
- Feeding, disturbing or harassing wildlife is prohibited
- Females with young are especially dangerous
- Remember: **Wildlife + Distance = Safety**

Observing Yellowstone's wildlife can be one of the biggest thrills for the backcountry traveller. Unfortunately if people feed, or unnecessarily disturb animals, encounters between humans and animals can be dangerous.

You can avoid many harmful conflicts with the following knowledge and guidelines. Respect the needs of wildlife for undisturbed territory. These precautions are particularly important near breeding, nesting or feeding areas. In addition, backcountry use may be restricted during certain times of the year to minimize disturbance of wildlife. Some animals may be quite curious, but resist the temptation to feed them. Unnatural feeding of wildlife can alter their migration, feeding habits, and reproduction levels. Detour around large animals such as moose, bison, and elk, especially during mating season or when young are present. While large animals cause the greatest concern, remember that small rodents and other animals can ruin your tent or pack in their quest for food. Properly secure your food, trash and odorous items at night and when unattended.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Carry plastic bags for hauling and pack out all trash, leftover food and litter. Never bury it or dump it in pit toilets. Where

fires are permitted you may burn paper or leftover food. Do not burn glass, plastic, styrofoam or aluminum foil. Before leaving, sift through the ashes and remove all unburned material.

- To avoid polluting lakes and streams, wash yourself, your dishes or clothes, by carrying wash water 100 feet from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Strain out food particles and pack out or burn the residue. Scatter the strained water. Residue from scattered water will break down more quickly and be less of an attractant to animals and flies. Consider soapless dishwashing and bathing while in the backcountry. In high altitude lakes and streams even biodegradable soaps might not

degrade. Soap of any kind can alter the water's delicate pH balance, and affect aquatic life.

- Human waste disposal can be a health hazard and a substantial repulsion if done incorrectly. Bury solid human waste in catholes dug 6" – 8" deep and at least 100 ft. from water, camp and trails. Select a spot at least 100 feet away from any water course, out of sight of any trail or campsite. Carefully remove the sod, dig the hole, then fill in the hole with loose soil and replace the sod. Burn toilet paper only if fires are allowed, or pack it out. Large groups who are staying in a specific area for a longer time may consider digging a latrine. Dig it at least one foot deep and cover it in the same manner mentioned earlier. Individual catholes are generally recommended because smaller amounts of fecal matter will decompose faster.

In many of the more heavily used sites, wooden box-style toilets are provided and a few sites have outhouses. It's okay to dispose of toilet paper in these holes, but we encourage you to reduce the amount of paper used and use white, unscented toilet paper. Do not dispose of tampons in pit toilets; burn them completely or pack them out.

Check your campsite for litter before leaving.

Carry plastic bags for hauling and hanging trash

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Yellowstone's backcountry offers visitors a chance to escape the crowds and experience a quieter side of the park. Many visitors list solitude and relaxation as goals for overnight backcountry trips. Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience by being courteous & yielding to other users on the trail. Avoid loud voices & noises when other users are nearby. When fishing, be courteous and respect each others need for adequate space.

For additional ideas on techniques and practices that will help you to follow these Leave No Trace guidelines, ask a ranger or contact: National Outdoor Leadership School 288 Main St. Lander, WY 82520

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Please keep the following criteria in mind when setting up your tent:

- If possible, select a tent site that is 100 yards or more from the food preparation and storage area
- Whenever possible select a tent site that is not visible from trails, other campsites and lakeshores
- Pay attention to hazard trees – particularly dead leaning trees – and set up your tent away from these hazards (if you note a hazard in a commonly used tent site, please report it to a ranger)
- Do not dig a trench around your tent
- Avoid leveling of the tent site

Fishing in Yellowstone

Yellowstone National Park offers some of the finest trout fishing in America. Whether seeking a place where children can experience their first fishing expedition or where an expert with a fly rod can find challenging angling, you can find it in Yellowstone. But as important as fish are to anglers, they are even more important to the park's native residents. Bald eagles, osprey, pelicans, otters, grizzly bears and other wildlife depend on fish for a major portion of their diet. Additionally, all fish are wild (there is no stocking), so populations must have sufficient numbers of adult fish to reproduce and maintain populations, and assure genetic diversity. In Yellowstone, we place less emphasis upon providing fish for human consumption and more on the overall quality of recreational fishing. Anglers, in turn, have the opportunity to fish for *wild* trout in a natural setting.

Fishing regulations in the park have evolved in the direction of preserving or restoring the natural abundance and distribution of native species. The native sport fish, cutthroat trout, grayling, and mountain whitefish, are catch and release only in ALL park waters. These regulations more effectively achieve our goals of (1) preserving and restoring native fishes and their habitats, (2) managing fish as an essential part of the total park ecosystem, and (3) providing quality recreational fishing opportunities for park visitors.

Fishing Permits A current Yellowstone Fishing Permit is required. Anglers 16 years of age and older are required to purchase either a ten-day or a season permit. Anglers 12 to 15 years of age are required to obtain a non-fee permit. Permits are available at all ranger stations, visitor centers, general stores in the park and many vendors in our gateway communities. *State* fishing licenses are not required in the park and are not a substitute for a Yellowstone Fishing Permit.

Exotic Threats In 1994, the discovery of non-native lake trout in Yellowstone Lake caused great alarm among biologists throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area. Because of the lake trout's history of displacing species such as cutthroat trout in other western lakes, an expanding lake trout population has ominous implications for the continued viability of the Yellowstone Cutthroat. Additionally, other species, such as eagles, otters, pelicans, and grizzly bears, who depend on the cutthroat as a significant food source, could be adversely affected. To provide more protection for the cutthroat, regulations now require anglers to release **all** cutthroats regardless of their size.

Two other potentially damaging exotic organisms threaten Yellowstone fisheries. Whirling disease has been implicated in the decline of numerous wild trout populations. And the New Zealand Mud Snail which occurs in the Firehole and the Madison Rivers, may harm aquatic insect communities. Please help prevent further spread of these invaders by thoroughly cleaning mud, plants, and debris from your fishing equipment, and inspecting footwear before leaving your angling site. Drain livewells and only clean fish in the same body of water in which they were caught. Please report sightings of the tiny (less than 1/4 inch) black snails to a park ranger.

Fishing Seasons With some exceptions, Yellowstone's fishing season begins on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and continues through the first Sunday of November. Some exceptions to these dates are Yellowstone Lake's tributary streams and the Yellowstone River (above the falls), which open July 15. **Consult current fishing regulations for other exceptions and further information.**

Non-Toxic Fishing Yellowstone National Park has implemented a non-toxic fishing program. Nationwide, over three million waterfowl die each year from lead poisoning through ingestion. Fishing tackle such as leaded split-shot sinkers, weighted jigs (lead molded to a hook), and soft lead-weighted ribbon for nymph fishing are no longer allowed. Only non-toxic alternatives to lead are allowed. For further information, contact the Chief Ranger's Office, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.