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pilot-fee program to demonstrate the
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of managing public lands among those
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Under the new fee program, the parks will
be allowed to keep 90 percent of all new
fees collected above the previous fiscal
year (FY); the remaining 20 percent will
be deposited in a special account for use
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collected $2.5 million. The parks are still
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in the U.S. Treasury’s General Fund.
Yellowstone anticipates an estimated
$6-7 million in additional revenue during
the course of the three-year project;
Grand Teton anticipates an estimated
$4 million. Funds collected during the
project will remain available to the park
for a six-year period.

The additional funds generated by the
fee increases will be used to accomplish
projects the parks have been unable to fund
through yearly Congressional allocations.
Funded projects will increase the quality
of the visitor experience and enhance the
protection of park resources.

Some of the projects expected to be funded
include the protection of the parks’ road
investment through overlays, patching,
chipsal, drainage and erosion control;
enhancement of accessibility for the
physically challenged to park resources;
upgrading of park campgrounds and
amphitheaters; rehabilitation of park
structures; and repair of failing elements
in utility systems parkwide.

"We are very pleased that Yellowstone
and Grand Teton have been selected as two
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delay resource management and other
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visitors will benefit."

Yellowstone Entrance Fees

New entrance fees have been implemented in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National
Parks beginning December 20, 1996, as follows:

Private, noncommercial automobile $20 (7 days, both Yellowstone and Grand Teton)
Individual snowmobile, motorcycle $15 (7 days, both parks)
Single entry (foot, bike, ski, etc.) $10 (7 days, both parks)
Annual Permit, both parks $40 (one year from date of purchase)

NOTE: Remember to keep your admission receipt in order to re-enter the park.

The Golden Age and Golden Access
Passports remain the same (the Golden
Age Passport has a one-time $10 fee;
the Golden Access Passport is still offered
free of charge).

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User Fee

When you see this logo, your user
fee money is at work in Yellowstone.

Spring plowing
starts March 2
Throughout the park, grafted roads will
close to over snow vehicle (snowmobile
and snowcoach) traffic for spring plowing
as follows:
March 2 Mammoth to Norris
March 4 Madison to Norris to Canyon
March 9 All other park roads close
to over snow traffic.
Roads close at 8:00am on the days listed.

Caution, winter visitors
Yellowstone has many hidden and
unmarked hazards. Freezing, thawing,
and extreme temperatures can create
dangerous conditions. Take proper
precautions; use common sense and
extreme caution near canyons, waterfalls,
thermal areas, viewpoints, and wildlife.
Watch your children. Your hand and
your voice may be too far away once
your child leaves your side.

As well, road conditions on the stretch
of road open to automobiles—from
Gardiner, Montana, to Cooke City,
Montana—can be icy, snowpacked,
and hazardous. Snow tires or chains
are always recommended and may be
required to drive this road in the winter.

Please drive, walk, snowmobile, and ski
safely to protect your park and yourself.

Emergency—dial 911
Call a ranger—(307) 344-7381
[long distance from some park locations]
Internet enthusiasts can find our home page
at the National Park Service’s address:
http://www.nps.gov/yell

The Yellowstone Today, which is
distributed free of charge at park entrances, is published by the staff of
Yellowstone National Park. As a member
of the Yellowstone Association (YA), you
have contributed to the production costs
of this publication, a major source of
information for millions
of park visitors each year. YA operates
book sales facilities in visitor centers and
museums; YA staff provide information
and assistance to park visitors. Ultimately,
much of YA’s revenue is returned to the
park’s educational, interpretive and
research programs. As a YA member,
you are a part of the team striving to
preserve Yellowstone “For the Benefit
and Enjoyment of Future Generations.”

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WARNING!

Some things all visitors must know... hazards in Yellowstone National Park

Emergency—dial 911

Park information—(307) 344-7381

Temperatures
Daytime temperatures are usually in the 10°F to 90°F range (−12°C to 37°C) while nighttime temperatures often dip to between −12°F and −40°F (−29°C to −40°C). How cold can it get here? The lowest temperature ever recorded in Yellowstone was −66°F in 1933.

Yellowstone’s weather often seems to defy predictability; conditions at any given time may vary drastically from those forecast or from long term averages. Wind chill compounds severe temperatures. Be prepared for storms that can quickly drop temperatures. Before starting a snowmobile trip or ski tour, check on local conditions and get a weather forecast.

Drivers
The only roads plowed for the entire winter season—and not open to over-snow vehicles—are the 56 mile (90 km) stretch between the North Entrance and Cooke City, Montana, via Mammoth Hot Springs and Tower Junction, and a 1-1/2 (2.4 km) mile stretch from Mammoth Hot Springs to the parking area at the Upper Terraces. These roads are maintained only during daylight hours and may close during severe storms. Expect snow packed roads, icy spots, and frost heaves. High winds cause blowing and drifting snow. Snow tires or tire chains may be required and are always recommended.

Park roads are designed for slower-than-interstate speeds—45 mph (73 kph) maximum, lower where posted. Do not stop on the road and block traffic when viewing wildlife or scenery. PLEASE USE PULLOUTS.

Snowmobilers
Prepare for extremely cold conditions. Cold plus wind can be a deadly combination. For example, if you are travelling 40 miles per hour on a snowmobile and the thermometer reads 10°F, the wind chill factor is 37° below zero, cold enough to freeze exposed flesh within one minute! Dress warmly and stop often at warming huts to reheat. For regulations and information on planning a safe trip, see page 5.

Skiers & Walkers
Trails may be icy, making footing dangerous. Heed trail closures; even open trails may be hazardous. Fruited with caution at all times. Please watch your children very closely on all trails and overlook.

You face harsh conditions plus the effects of vigorous physical exertion. Be prepared for equipment problems, injury, rapidly changing weather, and other unplanned events that may occur whether your outing lasts several days or only a few hours! For more information on gear selection and ski trip safety, see page 6.

The large fires in Yellowstone during the summer of 1988 burned near or across many trails. These fires burned the tree trunks and root systems, creating hazardous standing snags which can fall with little warning. Be alert for this possibility. There is no guarantee of your safety. While in burned areas, stay on established trails.

Scalding water can ruin your trip
Stay on boardwalks and designated trails. Scalding water underlies most of the thin, breakable crusts; pools are near or above boiling temperatures.

Yellowstone’s thermal features, rare among the earth’s wonders, are extremely fragile. Boardwalks and trails protect you and preserve delicate formations.

Avoid these situations
Law enforcement rangers strictly enforce park regulations to protect you and the park. We do not want to have a negative contact with you. Please give special attention to park regulations and avoid these common problems:

—speeding (radar enforced)
—driving or snowmobiling while intoxicated
—passing bison or other wildlife
—approaching wildlife too closely
—feeding wildlife
—swimming in thermal pools
—littering
—removal of natural or cultural features
—approaching wildlife too closely

Unpredictable wildlife; keep your distance
Do not approach any wildlife. View from the safety of your vehicle. If an animal reacts to your presence, you are too close.

BISON may appear tame and slow but are unpredictable and dangerous. See page 5 for tips on passing bison or other wildlife on a snowmobile.

COYOTES can quickly learn bad habits like roadside begging. This may lead to aggressive behavior toward humans.

BEARS may be seen in early and late winter. Be alert for tracks and signs. Never approach animal carcasses. Report all bear sightings to a ranger.

Seeing animals in the wild inspires the photographer in all of us. However, wild animals, especially females with young, are unpredictable. Keep a safe distance from all wildlife. Each year, a number of park visitors are injured by wildlife when approaching too closely. Approaching on foot within 100 yards (91 m) of bears or within 25 yards (23 m) of bison, elk, bighorn mountain sheep, deer, moose or coyotes is prohibited.

If your camera is not equipped with telephoto lenses, do not attempt closeup photography.

You will see more of an animal’s natural behavior and activity if you are sensitive to its need for space. That need is most critical in winter. Cold and deep snow make it difficult to find food, and every movement costs precious energy. If you pursue an animal for a photograph, you may jeopardize its survival.

Watch your children
Your hand and your voice may be too far away once your child leaves your side. Please—protect your park and yourself.

Pets are prohibited in thermal areas. Swimming or bathing in thermal pools or streams whose waters flow entirely from a thermal spring or pool is prohibited. Thermal waters may contain organisms known to cause infections and/or amoebic meningitis which can be quickly fatal. Swim at your own risk; for more information, ask at any ranger station or visitor center.

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Planning is crucial for winter visit

Winter in Yellowstone is a time of extremes: boiling versus frozen water, the suspended animation of hibernating animals, and the struggle of others to find food, days of blazing whiteness versus days of pure sparkling colors. Transformed by cold, water assumes endlessly variable forms and shapes; waterfalls freeze into giant icicles, geyser spray falls as crystal sheets of ice. Yellowstone Lake freezes from shore to shore. Wildlife and people adapt to harsh conditions in ways both obvious and subtle. In the vast wilderness of Yellowstone, snow and cold combined with natural wonders create an incomparable winter experience.

Yellowstone’s season of winter operations runs from late December to early March. First, decide how you will get around the park. Heavy accumulations of snow limit driving; the only open road for year-round automobile travel is the Gardiner-Cooke City road (North Entrance to the park). All other park roads are closed to wheeled vehicles but you can walk, snowshoe or snowcoach travel. Snowshoes, rented or privately owned, and snowcoaches are permitted on groomed roads; downhill and off-road travel are illegal.

Snowcoaches—winter busses on skis and board—transport passengers through the bison and elk range. Park rangers provide a full range of services and facilities: lodging, meals, snowmobile rental, fuel, snowcoach service. A warming hut near Fishing Bridge Junction offers snacks and hot drinks. Another warming hut, without snacks, is located at West Thumb.

You may be surprised to see puffs of steam at random locations. Countless tiny thermal features elude detection by summer visitors, but winter reveals and highlights their presence. Other clues to thermal influence include patches of bare ground, ice-free streams or ponds, and frozen spray, where no waterfall exists, evidence of geothermal heat below. Yellowstone’s volcanic past (and future?), expressed in thermal activity, is more obvious now than at other times of year.

GRAND CANYON OF THE YELLOWSTONE

The world’s largest array of geysers is located in this canyon. For a century, people have marveled at Old Faithful, the world’s most famous geyser. It erupts predictably several times a day. Nowadays, Old Faithful and the other geysers—Anvil, Bead, Biscuit, Fairy, Hunters, Mist, Rainbow, Steamboat, and others—erupt even more predictably, as scientists and engineers have controlled the geyser cycle with precision.

The names of thermal features—Dragon’s Mouth, Mud Volcano, Black Dragon’s Caldron—hint at the unusual colors and textures. Water rises to boiling water. Stay on designated trails; hazards may occur outside the visible cone.

MUD VOLCANO

Located approximately 6 miles (9.6 km) north of Fishing Bridge Junction (10 miles (16.1 km) south of Canyon Junction). The names of thermal features—Dragon’s Mouth, Mud Volcano, Black Dragon’s Caldron—hint at the unusual colors and activity found here. Thin crust overlies boiling water; stay on trails to protect yourself.

Self-guiding trails

Take time to stretch your legs and linger in the beauty of the snowscape. Avoid your park to winter conditions; trails may be icy and snowpacked so walk with caution. For safety and courtesy to skiers, please do not walk in ski tracks. MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS TERRACES Paths wind over a hillside of active and inactive hot springs. These springs are noted for their rapid mineral deposition; up to two tons of limestone is added to the hillside daily. Formation are fragile and unstable. For their protection and your own, stay on designated boardwalks and trails. Trail guide leaflets are available for 25¢ at the visitor center or parking lot headstalls.

NORRIS GEYSER BASIN

Explore the hottest, most active thermal basin in the park. Trails begin at the museum. There are fragile and easily damaged by objects tossed into them or by off trail travel. This gives away to boiling water. Some trails are designated trails and boardwalks to preserve features and protect yourself.

FOUNTAIN PAINT POT

Located 8 miles (12.9 km) south of Madison Junction in Madison River Valley (12 miles (19.3 km) north of Old Faithful). Mud pot boil and churn, changing shape with each burst; minerals and “paint” are deposited. Active geysers not varicolored pools are also found along this short trail. Preserve delicate features and protect yourself from serious burns by staying on designated trails. Avoid disturbing wintering wildlife.

UPPER GEYSER BASIN

The world’s largest array of geysers is found here, including Old Faithful Geyser. Several miles of trail begin at the Old Faithful Visitor Center. Ski trail guide leaflets are available at the visitor center and at the Old Faithful Snow Lodge. Check on trail conditions and weather forecasts before starting out; hazards may cause restrictions or closures. Help preserve fragile formations and protect yourself from severe burns by staying on designated trails. Avoid disturbing wintering wildlife.

WEST THUMB GEYSER BASIN

Thermal features boil and churn near the shore of ice-locked Yellowstone Lake. Otters are occasionally spotted fishing in ice holes. Avoid damaging or destroying delicate features and plants on boardwalks and trails. Avoid disturbing wintering wildlife.

YELLOWSTONE LAKE

At an elevation of 7,733 feet (2343 m), Yellowstone Lake is North America’s largest body of water at a relatively high elevation. During winter, its 136 square miles (354 sq km) of surface free of ice reach from shore to shore (except for isolated spots of thermal activity). Ice-up is a major event in the park. For their protection and your own, stay on designated trails. Avoid disturbing wintering wildlife.

Yellowstone Today is published by the Division of Interpretation, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, (307) 344-2258, in cooperation with the Yellowstone Association.
Visitor Centers
Mammoth Hot Springs, Albright Visitor Center
Open year round, Winter hours 9:00 am-5:00pm daily.
Information, bookstore, and exhibits of the early history, exploration and establishment of Yellowstone National Park. A one-hour video on winter in Yellowstone is shown at 9:00am and 3:30pm daily; a 25-minute film on the National Park idea is shown on request during the remainder of the day. Check at the visitor center for more information or call (307) 445-2263.
Old Faithful Visitor Center
Open daily 9:00 am-5:00pm from December 17 through March 8.
Information, bookstore, and geyser eruption predictions are available. A short movie on geysers is shown throughout the day. Check at the center for more information or call (307) 545-2750.

Ranger-naturalist activities
Old Faithful
Evening programs are offered Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights (December 17–March 7) at 7:00pm in the Old Faithful Visitor Center Auditorium. Allow one hour. For program topics, check at the visitor center or call (307) 545-2750.

Roving ranger-naturalist
Look for ranger-naturalists at Yellowstone warming huts or near major park features. They are intermittently available to assist you, to answer your questions, and to tell you more about the winter wonderland of Yellowstone.

Concessioner activities
Park concessioners operate lodging and provide other services, including evening programs, snowcoach tours, guided ski and snowshoe tours, guided snowmobile tours, and wildlife bus tours. Detailed information is available at the Visitor Centers, Warming Huts, or ask for a copy of Discover Yellowstone. For more information call local Chambers of Commerce for activities starting outside the park or AmFac Parks & Resorts at (307) 344-7311 for activities starting both inside and outside the park.

Yellowstone Institute courses
As seasons change and winter moves in, Yellowstone country is transformed into a beautiful snowscape, offering visitors to the park rewarding experiences available to relatively few people. Yellowstone Institute winter courses provide an opportunity to learn about this special place in a stimulating, fun, and safe environment, full of the camaraderie that comes so easily at this time of year. Field courses offered this winter are:

- An Introduction to the Lamar Valley on Skis—January 2–4, 1998
- Wilderness First Responder—January 13–23, 1998


How Can You Help?
First, visit a Yellowstone Association educational bookstore, located in all park visitor centers. One hundred percent of the profit from your purchase is returned directly to Yellowstone to fund critical educational programs, scientific research, ranger-naturalist training and program supplies.

Second, become a member of the Yellowstone Association and provide substantial support to Yellowstone while receiving a year's subscription to Wilderness Profile, the Association's Yellowstone newsletter and to Yellowstone Today, the official park newspaper, both published quarterly. You will also receive a 15% discount on your purchases in Association park bookstores and a discount on Yellowstone Institute classes (see page 13). Members who join in the park will also receive a large, beautiful and reusable fabric book bag commemorating the wolf's return to Yellowstone in soft-toned natural shades of gray, olive and cream in appreciation for their contribution.

For more information on Association membership or activities, ask one of our helpful staff members at any park visitor center, or write PO Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190; or call (307) 344-2294 or write P.O. Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

Public appreciation and dedication have ensured Yellowstone's protection and preservation for the first 125 years of its history. The non-profit Yellowstone Association has dedicated itself to fostering this critical public support through education since its founding in 1933 and, with the help of visitors like you, has provided funding of over $5,000,000 to Yellowstone National Park in support of educational, historical, and scientific projects.

How Can You Help? Continued...

Yes, I want to become a Friend of Yellowstone

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Yes, I want to help preserve Yellowstone through education.

To receive all the benefits of membership, visit any park visitor center or complete and mail this form with your dues to: The Yellowstone Association, PO Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190; or call (307) 344-2296. We look forward to welcoming you as a member of Yellowstone National Park.
Snowmobiling and other information

ACCIDENTS
Report all accidents or injuries to park rangers at visitor centers or ranger stations.

WINTER CAMPING
Wheelied vehicles: winter camping is available only at Mammoth Campground (accessible via the North Entrance). Heated restrooms and water are available. Over-night camping or stopping outside of this designated campground is not permitted.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS
Permits are required for overnight backcountry use and may be obtained in person up to 48 hours in advance from any ranger station. Rangers will provide information on weather, trail and snow conditions, and alert you to any special winter hazards. Wood fires are only allowed in Mammoth Campground. So skis must carry stoves and fuel for cooking or melting snow.

Snowmobile regulations
Snowmobiling is one way to discover Yellowstone’s winter wonders. Snowmobile regulations are designed to protect park resources and you, and are strictly enforced.

• Snowmobiles may not be driven on a valid state motor vehicle driver’s license (see article below).
• Maximum speed limit is 45 mph. (75kph) or less when posted.
• Snowmobiles may be driven on designated roads only. Sidewilling is prohibited and carries a fine of up to $5,000.
• Stay on roads to avoid injuring yourself, damaging your machine or harming the environment.
• Operating a snowmobile while intoxicated is illegal for both drivers and passengers.
• All snowmobile operators in Yellowstone National Park are required to possess a valid state motor vehicle driver’s license (see article below).
• Wildlife have the right of way. Chasing, molesting, approaching or feeding any animal is prohibited (see article below).
• Snowmobiles must be registered according to the laws of the operator’s state of residence, Wyoming or Montana, and have a muffler in good working order.
• Snowmobile exhaust and muffler systems must be in good working order.
• The maximum noise allowed is 78 decibels when measured during full acceleration at a distance of 50 feet. Implementation of special noise systems meet this standard. "After-market" ('piped') exhaust systems often do not. Snowmobiles exceeding the decibel standard will be denied entry into the park.

Tips for passing bison and other wildlife on park roads
If bison or other wildlife are slowly walking toward you on the road; pull your machine over to the side of the road opposite the animal(s), as far as possible, and stop to the side of it, leaving the machine between you and the animal(s). Wait until they are completely past you before driving. Do not make any quick or load movements. Wildlife are generally not aggressive unless they have been provoked or surprised.

If animals are standing in the road:
Stop at least 25 yards (23 m) before reaching them, giving them time to move off the road. If they don’t move, and you want to pass them, assess their behavior.

License is needed to snowmobile
All snowmobile operators in Yellowstone National Park must have a valid state motor vehicle operator’s license. In addition, persons possessing a learner’s permit may operate snowmobiles on state roads classified as supervised one to one within line of sight (but not further than 100 yards) by a licensed parent or guardian 21 years of age or older. The policy change was implemented because of the park’s concern about the number of snowmobile accidents involving young operators.

Snowmobile use has increased dramatically in the park over the past decade. It is now common to have over 1,600 snowmachines a day, including track-conversion vehicles and snow coaches, operating on the park road system. Modern snowmobiles weigh 400-500 pounds and are capable of quick acceleration to over 70 mph. Between 1987 and 1992, youthful operators accounted for an average of 16 percent of the snowmobile accidents in the park, while composing an estimated 5 percent or less of the total number of snowmobile operators.

PACK IT IN—PACK IT OUT
All refuse must be carried out of the backcountry.

SANITATION
Latrine areas must be a minimum of 100 feet (30 m) from all water sources and out of sight from trails and camp areas. Burn toilet paper on top of the snow.

DEFAECING PARK FEATURES
Collecting natural or archeological objects, or removing, defacing or destroying any plant, animal, or mineral is prohibited. Travel into fragile thermal areas may result in serious injury or damage to the area.

FIREARMS
Firearms are not allowed in Yellowstone. However, unloaded firearms may be carried in a vehicle when the weapon is cased, broken down or rendered inoperable, and kept out of sight. Ammunition must be placed in a separate compartment of the vehicle.

Be aware of the activity at your campsite. Be prepared to act quickly. Also, make an effort to avoid running wildlife down the road, pushing them toward oncoming snowmobilers. And remember, there is no guarantee of your safety.

Keep your trip safe

• Travel in groups; emergencies are more easily handled.
• Dress for extreme cold. Conditions are similar to a highway driving situation than to the snowmobile and off-road vehicle trails found elsewhere. Under high speed highway conditions found in the park, most young snowmobilers are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their judgment, experience, and physical capabilities compared to a licensed driver. This rationale is reflected by the fact that the vast majority of accidents require persons operating motor vehicles on state roads to be licensed and at least 16 years old.
• The driver’s license requirement being implemented for snowmobiling in Yellowstone is not unprecedented. A number of states have implemented a provision of a valid driver’s license to operate a snowmobile on public lands or on public roads. Options for young visitors to the park during the winter include doubling up on a snowmobile operated by a licensed driver or using any of the authorized commercial snowcoach services that provide transportation in the park.

ATTENTION ANGLERS: Yellowstone’s Park Fishing season closes on the First Sunday in November and will not reopen until Saturday of Memorial Day weekend.

BEWARE OF HYPOPHERMIA AND FROSTBITE
Yellowstone’s weather is unpredictable; a calm, clear day may turn fiercely stormy. Without adequate clothing and gear an easy ski trip can turn into a battle for survival. Exposure to wind and cold can result in hypothermia. This rapid loss of body heat can cause death if not treated. Early warning signs include shivering, slurred speech, memory lapses, drowsiness, and exhaustion.

Exposure to cold and wind can also result in frostbite. Frostbite can permanently damage tissue and affect functional use of fingers, toes, nose, ears or other body extremities. Protect yourself with warm, layered clothing and frequent stops to warm up.

ATTENTION ANGLERS: Yellowstone National Park’s Fishing season closes on the First Sunday in November and will not reopen until Saturday of Memorial Day weekend.

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Cross country skiing information

Ski gear guide

Choose skis and boots made for touring or mountain skiing. Narrow racing skis won't give you enough surface area to break trail. Low shoes won't give you enough ankle support, and track is set only on a few Yellowstone trails. Before you rent or borrow equipment, check for fit and suitability for wilderness use. Equipment that fits both you and park conditions can make or break your trip.

Winter temperatures are severe in Yellowstone but you can be comfortable and confident if you are properly dressed. Prepare for changing conditions by wearing clothes in several adjustable layers. It is as important to prevent overheating as it is to prevent chilblains.

Be sure your clothing includes a windproof hooded outer layer with wool or other insulated garments underneath. Wool or synthetic trousers and long underwear will help keep your legs warm and dry in deep snow. Wind or rain pants are lightweight and provide extra warmth on windy days. Avoid cotton jeans and sweatshirts. Thick and provide extra warmth on windy days. Avoid cotton jeans and sweatshirts. Thick

Skiers who are planning extensive backcountry trips involving overnight camping should carry all of the above and the items below:

- Backpack
- Stove and pots
- Sleeping bag
- First Aid kit
- Maps
- Compass
- Avalanche cord
- Sack and pack
- Small tarp
- Knife
- Tent or bivouac bag
- Closed cell sleeping pad

Skiing safety

1. Evaluate your party's capabilities. Plan your outing so that the weakest group will enjoy and survive it.
2. Learn about your equipment's capabilities and weaknesses and be prepared to repair it.
3. Never closely approach geysers, hot springs or mud pots. You may fall through overhanging snow ledges or thin crust. Do not leave designated trails in geothermal areas.
4. Avalanche slides occur most frequently after heavy snowstorms or during warm periods. Slides occur most frequently after heavy snowstorms or during warm periods.
5. When crossing frozen lakes, use extra caution and check ice thickness by prodding with a ski pole. Ice, snow covered or not, may be thin, especially near inlets, outlets, and waters warmed by thermal activity. Crossing rivers may be dangerous; some have bridges and some do not. Ask a ranger about local crossings.

6. Do not approach wildlife. All wild animals are unpredictable; if they charge, you can't outrun them in deep snow. If they run, you are forcing them to use energy they need to survive.
7. Fires during the summer of 1988 burned near or across many ski trails and destroyed the trunks and root systems of many trees, creating hazardous standing snags which could fall with little warning. Skiers—be alert for this possibility, and, while in burned areas, stay on established trails.
8. Exertion in dry mountain air can dehydrate you. Carry and drink two quarts of water a day. Carry gear to melt water from snow or dip it out of a stream from a safe distance with a ski pole. Boil water from lakes or streams to reduce the chance of infection.
9. Learn as much as you can about winter survival. Talk with park rangers before you leave on any trip. Many good books are also available on this topic.
10. Basic ski etiquette: yield to those going downhill when skiing uphill on trails.
11. Hikers: please do not walk in ski tracks.
Bison in the Yellowstone ecosystem

Wild, free-ranging bison have been a part of the Yellowstone landscape since prehistoric times. Primarily because of poaching and market hunting, the bison population declined until just after the turn of the century when less than 50 bison were known to exist in Yellowstone National Park.

In this century, bison populations have made a remarkable recovery, now numbering over 150,000 animals in private and public herds nationwide. Bison are not listed as federally endangered or threatened. For the 1997/98 winter, the Yellowstone bison population numbers about 2,200. The current population is significantly lower than last year (3,000-3,500 animals), when it was the largest wild, free-ranging (unfenced) population in the world.

Maintaining a wild, inherently nomadic bison herd can present problems. Bison do not recognize boundaries and sometimes move to adjacent public and private land, especially during the winter. Increased numbers of bison, weather conditions, and human activities all affect distribution of animals; attempts to manipulate bison movements by herding or herding have met with very limited success.

Unfortunately, early in this century, bison were exposed to brucellosis; probably from domestic livestock. It was first detected in Yellowstone bison in 1917. Representatives of the livestock industry have concerns about the possibility of brucellosis transmission from bison to cattle. While no documented case exists of wild, free-ranging bison from Yellowstone transmitting brucellosis to domestic cattle, the small risk of transmission is of concern.

An Interim Bison Management Plan was developed and approved in August 1996. As provided for in the Interim Bison Management Plan, the NPS and State of Montana used a variety of methods along the north and west boundaries of the park to limit the distribution of bison and to maintain separation of bison and cattle on public and private lands. The primary management action was capture of bison, near the boundary or outside of Yellowstone National Park, and shipment to slaughterhouses. The State of Montana allowed some zero-negatives bison on certain public lands, outside of Yellowstone National Park in the West Yellowstone area. Additional bison were allowed outside the park on public lands northeast of Gardiner, Montana where cattle are not grazed. Last year's severe winter weather conditions and deep, crusty snow made high elevation winter range forage unavailable to bison inside Yellowstone National Park. Consequently, substantial numbers of bison moved to lower elevation wintering areas in and near public and private lands outside the park in Montana.

As part of the interim plan, over 1,100 were removed from the ecosystem, most being sent to slaughter or shot in the field and a small number being used for approved research projects. Habitat wildlife — never approach too close, and be alert for changes in wildlife behavior that could lead to a problem, for you or for them. All park animals are wild and potentially dangerous. Never feed or approach any park animals.

As a result of last year's management actions, the National Park Service and the U.S.D.A. Animal and Plant Health Service have proposed adjustments to the interim plan to reduce the number of bison potentially killed as part of the interim management actions this winter. These adjustments include holding, and releasing in spring these bison not exposed to brucellosis at the Stephens Creek facility near Gardiner Montana, instead of shipping them to slaughter. Another proposed adjustment includes allowing low risk untested bison (calves, yearlings, and males) to occupy public lands in the West Yellowstone area during winter instead of being shot in the field. The Interim Plan is designed to maintain a wild, free-ranging bison population and to assist the State of Montana in maintaining its brucellosis class-free status. The Interim Plan was implemented until a long-term bison management plan and environmental impact statement (EIS) is completed. A draft is scheduled for January 1998, with a final EIS anticipated in fall 1998.

Copies of the Interim Bison Management Plan and related documents are available from the Yellowstone Center for Resources, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, (307) 344-2213. To become informed and involved in the development of the EIS, write to the above address, c/o Bison EIS, or call the above number and request to be placed on the Bison EIS mailing list.

Habituation spells disaster

Yellowstone offers unique opportunities to view wildlife in their natural environment. Some birds and mammals live near park roads and developed areas, where they are particularly observable. However, this increases the likelihood that some individuals will become habituated—that is, used to people. Habituating animals is misleading—they may appear to be highly tolerant of humans, but they are still wild and unpredictable.

Approaching wildlife at close range can cause the animals stress. Be observant — many animals will show signs of increased alertness or fear. The animal(s) may move away, heads may perk up, or eyes widen and focus on nearby humans; the animal may flatten its ears, flare its nostrils, change body direction, stop eating, or rise from a resting stance. Habitat wildlife — never approach too close, and be alert for changes in wildlife behavior that could lead to a problem, for you or for them. All park animals are wild and potentially dangerous. Never feed or approach any park animals.

Human foods in an animal's diet may result in tooth decay, allergies, digestive problems, or failure to accumulate adequate fat reserves for the winter when food is scarce. Beggar birds and wildlife may become aggressive, and have occasionally injured park visitors. Please enjoy the opportunity to view and photograph park wildlife in their wild, natural state. The park is a zoo; animals live and die based on their species' adaptations and their individual ability to survive in this environment. Respect park wildlife — never approach too closely, and be alert for changes in wildlife behavior that could lead to a problem, for you or for them. All park animals are wild and potentially dangerous. Never feed or approach any park animals.

More about bison...

Bison are one of the most commonly seen animals in the park. In May and June, newborn bison calves can be viewed in the Firehole, Lamar, and Pelican Valleys. The small, gangly, reddish-colored calves stay close to their mothers and other young cows for protection from predators, such as wolves.

In summer bison feed on grasses and sedges in Yellowstone's lush, high-elevation woodlands. Bison also create appetites by lying on the ground and kicking up dirt, perhaps to deter insects. These patches of bare ground then provide resting places for the bison themselves.

During July and August, the bison mating season — or rut — occurs. At other times of the year, adult male bison often stay separate from the females and calves. But during the rut, vast herds of bison can be seen and heard stamping and socializing in the upper Lamar and Hayden valleys. Male bison competing for females often fight and gore each other, sometimes causing injury or death. Grizzly bears and other scavengers feed on and defend these carcasses from competitors.

In winter, bison migrate to geothermal areas and winter range at lower elevations. Wintertime death of the old, young, and sick may occur from the combined effects of climatic stress, food availability, and the condition of individual animals.

When walking or skiing, give bison a wide berth. Along roadways, watch the bison safely from your snowmobile or car!

Your opinion counts

Yellowstone is no stranger to complex, important, and often controversial issues. If you have comments on issues which affect the park and/or the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, please send them to Superintendent Mike Finley, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. 

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Life in the snow—some fascinating stories

Look closely, and you will see that the snowscape tells some fascinating stories. The following description relates to the illustration above, roughly left to right.

1. Many different types of snow pile up like a layer cake to make the snowpack. Here the bottom layer is composed of large, angular, bell-shaped crystals of temperature-gradient snow, weakly bonded to each other and therefore easy to dig through. An ice crust (melted and refrozen like a layer cake to make the snowpack) marks the uppermost snow layer. Owls rely on both sight and sound in locating their prey. If the snow is “noisy” (with an icy crust, for example), this owl will be more likely to catch the shrew than if the surface is soft, sound-muffling powder.

2. Shrews occasionally forage on the snow surface for wind-blown insects. Whether this shrew becomes a meal for a great grey owl may depend on the texture of the uppermost snow layer. Owls rely on both sight and sound in locating their prey. If the snow is “noisy” (with an icy crust, for example), this owl will be more likely to catch the shrew than if the surface is soft, sound-muffling powder.

3. Deep, soft snow and icy crust both favor smaller animals, which stay on the surface, and make movement difficult for large heavy animals, which sink or break through. Under such conditions wolves are more likely to bring down an exhausted cow moose, but a snowshoe hare is more likely to escape a pursuing lynx. If the snowpack is firm, the situation is reversed, and the larger animals have the advantage.

4. Unlike many other small rodents, voles do not hibernate, but remain active all winter in extensive tunnel systems beneath the snow. Voles usually stay near the ground surface since that is where the warmest temperatures and most plentiful food supplies are found (here a vole is raiding a squirrel midden under a fallen tree).

5. Partrigian (and grouse) seek shelter within the snowpack at night, flying straight in at full speed if the snow is soft. In hard snow they “walk” in, digging with their specially adapted claws.

—Illustration by Denise Casey.
—Adapted from text and concept by Kim Fadiman, a "freelance explainer," who has taught natural science courses at the Teton Science School and elsewhere.

This article and artwork have been reprinted with the permission of Biologue: A Journal of the Interpretation and Discovery in the Life Sciences, vol. 2, no. 2, Winter 1988, “Looking at Winter.” Back issues of Biologue are available from the Teton Science School, P.O. Box 68, Kelly, WY 83011, (307) 733-4765.
The winter use dilemma

Many of the staff who live in Yellowstone during the winter consider this their favorite season. Wildlife is more visible, the scenery is spectacular covered with snow, and thousands of thermal features are in their mostựcatic, wreathed in delicate ice formations and billowing steam.

We hope your visit is safe and memorable, and that Yellowstone lives up to your expectations. But while you are here, we would like you to think over a vexing dilemma we all face. The focus of our concerns revolves around the extraordinary wonders we all enjoy and their need for special consideration in the winter.

For all its beauty, winter is a time of extreme hardship for many of Yellowstone's wild residents. Winter controls the size of many animal populations, and those populations have evolved to survive in an extreme environment.

But human use of the park has skyrocketed in the past 20 years, and though we humans try very hard to use the land lightly, we have many effects that we only now are beginning to understand. As well, we have effects on each other; the more people there are, the less each person can be aware of the quality experience for which Yellowstone is so famous.

In 1990, after extensive public involvement, we issued a Winter Use Plan, aimed at ensuring the protection of park resources and the quality of the visitors' experience. This plan's estimates of winter use levels in the year 2000 were reached in the 1992-93 winter season.

Today, scientific studies are beginning to reveal the extent of our impacts upon resources such as air quality. Budgetary realities are that we no longer have staff or resources adequate to care for the growing winter use. Individuals and organizations are expressing concerns that the experience is slipping in quality. We in Yellowstone are searching for ways to address these problems.

In conjunction with Grand Teton National Park and the six national forests surrounding the parks (Gallatin, Targhee, Bridger-Teton, Beaverhead, Custer, and Shoshone), Yellowstone has launched an initiative to determine how best to manage winter use in the long run.

Among other things, we have contacted some of you with winter use surveys to learn more about your experiences here. We are continuing our research on recreational impacts on the park, and we are communicating extensively with our neighbors, our concessioners, and a variety of user groups.

We all want the chance to enjoy Yellowstone at its best, and we all want Yellowstone to last in good shape, not only for our next visit but also for future visitors. We hope you will be able to assist us in achieving those goals.

If you would like to comment about your winter experience in the national parks or forests, please do so by writing to our winter use team.

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Winter use concerns

As we described above, the rapid increase in winter visitor use is bringing a whole host of concerns for the managers and staff here at Yellowstone.

Some of these issues come from our own observations; most have been suggested by visitors like you. Some of the concerns that we face are:

Overcrowding: During peak use periods, parking areas, roads, warming huts, and restrooms are full, making it difficult for visitors to enjoy the areas they have come to see. Eating and shelter facilities are especially crowded in inclement weather.

Visitor Conflicts: Many winter visitors expect a quiet, serene experience, while others prefer a more social setting. There are many winter visitors to enjoy the areas they have come to see. Expecting a quiet, serene experience, while others prefer a more social setting. There are many winter visitors to the park, and we are communicating extensively with our neighbors, our concessioners, and a variety of user groups.

We all want the chance to enjoy Yellowstone at its best, and we all want Yellowstone to last in good shape, not only for our next visit but also for future visitors. We hope you will be able to assist us in achieving those goals.

If you would like to comment about your winter experience in the national parks or forests, please do so by writing to: Winter Use, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

Deerced Access: Outside the parks, snowmobiling to private property has displaced skiers and snowmobilers on some roads and trails. Alternative trails and parking areas have not been provided.

Visitor Behavior: Some visitors are unaware of wilderness mandates, impacts to resources, safety issues (such as avalanche danger), and appropriate behavior.

Operational Concerns: At the major developed areas in Yellowstone, all solid waste and sewage must be stored for the winter. Storage capacity in garbage trucks and sewage lagoons is limited.

Resource Damage: Rapidly increasing winter use may be adversely affecting wildlife and other resources. Snowmobile exhaust and noise levels raise health concerns for employees and visitors.

The NPS committed to prepare a new Winter Use Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the parks. Public scoping is slated for April 1998.

The National Park Service (NPS) is concerned with how snowmobile emissions affect the health of visitors, park service employees, and natural resources. The NPS initiated air quality monitoring in the winter of 1994-95. Monitoring efforts continued the following two winter seasons. This monitoring indicates that on peak-use days that coincide with cold, calm weather, high levels of carbon monoxide were noted. To further understand these results and corresponding impacts, the NPS is continuing its research on snowmobile emissions.

Some oil companies have recognized the problem and have developed biodegradable 2-cycle oils, including the Conoco oil, which reduces the emissions from snowmobiles. The Conoco oil, other low-particulate oils, and oxygenated fuels were tested by the Snowmobile Research Institute last winter. Tests will continue this winter.

In addition to the alternative fuels and lubricant studies, three other studies will address winter air quality issues during the 1997-98 winter season. The University of California at Davis will conduct a study to determine the effects of human exposure to ambient snowmobile emissions. A social science study conducted by the University of Montana and the University of Vermont will expand on last winter's work to develop appropriate indicators of carrying capacity such as air quality. This winter, a more detailed survey will include visitor reactions to emissions and willingness to change use patterns to protect the park.

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Winter Use Lawsuit

Some of the winter use concerns explained in the accompanying articles prompted a number of organizations and individuals (led by the Fund for Animals) to file a lawsuit against the Federal government in May 1997 regarding winter use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.

On September 24, 1997, a settlement agreement was signed by the plaintiffs, Department of Justice, and the National Park Service. The settlement agreement was signed by the plaintiffs, Department of Justice, and the National Park Service. The settlement agreement was approved by the judge on October 27, 1997.

The agreement did not preclude a decision to close any road in Yellowstone National Park. The agreement did not preclude a decision to close any road in Yellowstone National Park. The agreement did not preclude a decision to close any road in Yellowstone National Park. The agreement did not preclude a decision to close any road in Yellowstone National Park.
Yellowstone's weather—predictably unpredictable

Visitors to Yellowstone National Park may be surprised to encounter "winter" weather any time of year. If unprepared, the consequences range from uncomfortably inconvenient and inconveniences to life-threatening. During the coldest months, wind and snowfall affect all areas of the park, but the consequences range from uncomfortable to life-threatening.

Winter weather will average about five degrees cooler, the temperatures range from 7,000 to 8,500 feet, annual precipitation at the higher elevations and in the southern portion of the park; the lowest temperatures occur in the mountain valleys.

The observation site is located in the northern part of the park on the mountain slopes above the Gardner river.

Yellowstone's weather is well known for its unpredictability and sudden changes. Be prepared for a range of conditions, especially during summer, when cool air from western Canada will invade this area, causing snow. While not common, there are records of over 400 inches in the summertime.

The key to an enjoyable winter visit to Yellowstone's weather is knowing that extreme temperatures are possible, and knowing how to prepare for them.

Obtain information on current weather conditions and forecasts at visitor centers or ranger stations when planning outdoor activities.

Wind chill chart

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Yellowstone Park Medical Services

West Park Hospital, Cody, Wyoming, through its Yellowstone Park Medical Services Division, has been offering medical care to Yellowstone's visitors, employees and residents since 1980.

A board certified family practitioner provides year-round health care to the Yellowstone Park community, including bimonthly visits to the medical facility during the winter season. Experienced registered nurses and office staff complete the team offering courteous, professional family and emergency medical care.

In the summer, the operation grows to meet the needs of the park's increased number of visitors and the employees who serve them. Outpatient services are provided at Lake Hospital and Old Faithful Clinic, as well as at Mammoth Clinic.

Yellowstone Park Community Medical Services

A division of West Park Hospital—Cody, Wyoming

We're there when you need us!
Amfac Parks and Resorts—committed to hospitality excellence

Amfac Parks and Resorts has been Yellowstone's principal concessioner since 1979. Amfac Parks and Resorts operates the park's lodging, RV park, four campgrounds, restaurants, cafeterias, snack shops, cocktail lounges, gift shops, dinner cookouts, horse corrals, motorcoach sightseeing tours, self-guided auto tour rentals, and a full service marina. For details on the Winter in Yellowstone operation, see the advertisement at right.

Amfac Parks and Resorts is committed to hospitality excellence, and will do the utmost to assure that your visit to this park is a memorable experience; your comments are welcome.

Reservations for lodging, activities, and dinner at five hotel dining rooms are strongly recommended. Please inquire at any lodging front desk or activities desk as soon as your plans are made. Park visitors are advised to carry along appropriate outdoor gear when participating in any outdoor activity.

Snowmobilers: YPSS offers services, advice

Prior to the invention and proliferation of the snowmobile, the roads of Yellowstone Park were seldom travelled in the winter months. The resident winterkeepers, a few hardy souls on skis and snowshoes or in snowplanes, and an occasional ranger were about the only people out there among all of the winter wildlife and scenery. The tempo has changed over the past 15 to 20 years but the unique Yellowstone winter wilderness experience is still here.

Yellowstone Park Service Stations (YPSS) has offered basic services to snowmobilers in Yellowstone since 1972. You are encouraged to play it safe out there—Yellowstone can be very unforgiving in winter. Familiarize yourself with the location of warming huts, public telephones and other services in the park and know where you are as you travel. Dress intelligently and carry a tow rope, a flashlight, matches, an extra drive belt and spare spark plugs. Fill your fuel tank when you have the opportunity to do so. Travel at least in pairs if you can and watch each other for signs of hypothermia. Let someone know what your travel plans are, especially if travelling at night, and check back in with them when you arrive at your destination. Be on the lookout for animals on the road. Do not approach wildlife closely. The energy an animal expends running from you may seriously affect the animal's prospects for survival.

It is a privilege to be able to live and work here in the winter. All of us who do hope you enjoy your winter visit.

EXPLORER YELLOWSTONE

This Winter Season

A winter visit to Yellowstone will provide you with an unforgettable vacation where cross-country skiing and snowcoach touring are without equal. Enjoy all that Yellowstone has to offer during this season—wildlife in abundance, frozen lakes, icy waterfalls, the Old Faithful Geyser, thousands of other thermal features, and much, much more.

For more information, contact any hotel front desk or activity desk, or call (307) 344-7311.

Hamilton Stores—oldest park concessioner

The 1872 Act that set the Park aside "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, and the protection of the natural and scenic treasures therein" also granted leases for the various concessioners who served the public. For the first decade of the park's official existence, no lease to sell general store merchandise was issued. Then, in 1882, Henry E. Klamper applied for, and received, permits to provide fresh meat to camps and hotels, pasture and slaughter beef cattle, operate a dairy herd, and open a general store in the Old Faithful area of the park.

In 1915, a year after the Klamper General Store was purchased by Charles Ashworth Hamilton, horse transportation in the Yellowstone reached its zenith. Three thousand hayburners pulled Yellowstone wagons, coaches, survey wagons, and—grandest of all—double decker twenty-six passenger Tallyho stagecoaches. However, autos were allowed into the park for the first time that year, and Charles Hamilton quickly spotted the tire marks in the dirt. In the next five years he acquired store concessions at Lake and Fishing Bridge, and built filling stations at each location. This was the start of what was to become the oldest privately/family owned concession in the National Park System, serving the traveling public for over 75 years.

Hamilton Stores invites you to visit its locations during the summer season for a bit of that history—most especially, the original store at Old Faithful (the Lower Basin Store) and the General Store in the Lake area. The upper store at Old Faithful and the Fishing Bridge General Store also convey rustic charm. The newest store, Grant Village General Store, was built and decorated with the craft of many Montana artisans. The general store at Mammoth Hot Springs, open year round, can also be seen in historic photos from around the turn of the century featuring horse-drawn stagecoaches and people in period dress.

Mammoth General Store remains open year round for your convenience.
Yellowstone National Park winter facilities

**Visitor centers**
- Mammoth Hot Springs: Open year round
  - Old Faithful: December 17–March 8
- Warming huts: December 17-early March
  - Indian Creek, Madison Junction, Old Faithful, West Thumb, Fishing Bridge, Canyon
- Lodging
  - Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel: Dec. 21–March 2
  - Old Faithful Snow Lodge: Dec. 17–March 8

**Food service:**
- Dining Rooms: Mammoth Hotel, Dec. 21–March 2
  - Old Faithful Snow Lodge, Dec. 17–March 8
- Snack Shop: Old Faithful Four Seasons
  - Snack Shop, Dec. 17–March 8
- Light Lunches: Mammoth General Store
  - Open year round
- Snack Bars: Madison and Canyon Warming Huts, Dec. 17–March 8

**General store**
- Mammoth Hot Springs—Open year round

**Telephones**

**Restrooms**

Dates subject to change due to weather conditions and/or resource management concerns.

AmFic Parks & Resorts also offers full service ski shops, guided ski tours, ski shuttles, snowmobile rentals, and snowcoach tours at Old Faithful and Mammoth, and snowcoach tours/transportation out of West Yellowstone. Guided sightseeing tours, ice skate rentals, and hot tub rentals are also available at Mammoth. Dinner reservations are required; call (307) 344-7901. Reservations are strongly recommended for lodging and snowcoach tours. For AmFic Parks & Resorts information and reservations, call (307) 344-7311.

This map courtesy of Conoco—providing petroleum products since 1917—

All service stations in Yellowstone offer environmentally sensitive fuels, specially formulated by Conoco to reduce hydrocarbon emissions and decrease other pollution-related problems.