

YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Monday, December 2, 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please support the **Gardiner Community Center** by purchasing raffle tickets! Buy your tickets today at the Gardiner Market. \$5 each or 5/\$20. We need to make building improvements on this 103 year old building. Drawing to be held December 5th at the Christmas Stroll Craft Fair for Todd Fredericksen's "September Bull" signed and numbered canvas print #12 of 50. Need not be present to win. All proceeds go towards building improvements. For more information, please contact Kristie Wiederholt at extension 2327. To view the print online go to <http://www.wildlifeartisttoddfridericksen.com/gallery/> go to paintings2 to view the "September Bull"

In December, **Martha Powell will celebrate her 40th anniversary at Yellowstone Federal Credit Union!** Please join us at Yellowstone Federal Credit Union **today**, to celebrate this milestone. We will be serving refreshments between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

A group of kids from the Gardiner School, along with their advisor Dorothy Dears, has collected clothing to ship to **those in need in the Philippines** on behalf of Dana Jordan, a Peace Corps volunteer from community who's work there was highlighted in YNP@work last week. Unfortunately, shipping costs were higher than anticipated (\$1500 for 15 boxes) and donations are needed. You may designate whether you would like these donations to go directly to the effort as cash or whether or not you'd like them to go towards shipping. The Destination Imagination kids raised \$600 at a bake sale this weekend but would welcome any help that the community feels moved to offer. For more information contact Dorothy Dears at 406-546-2898 orddears@gardiner.org. Thank you.

Please join us to wish **JEN BASEDEN a fond farewell!** December 10, 2013 10AM in the YCR Conference Room. Please bring a baked good to share. Tea and coffee provided.

The **Bridger Bowl Wellness Discount Ski Coupons have arrived**. If you purchased coupons and you have not already received them in hand, you may stop by the Albright VC in Mammoth to pick them up.

Little People's Learning Center and Snoopy School are teaming up and need your help for the **Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive** benefitting Pajama Program, a nonprofit organization that provides new pajamas and books to children and teens in need—especially those living in group homes, shelters, foster care, and orphanages.

Since 2009, groups have risen to the challenge and donated nearly 250,000 pairs of new pajamas. The Scholastic Reading Club has more than matched those numbers with nearly 600,000 new books donated to Pajama Program.

If you are able to participate, please bring in a new pair of pajamas to the All Employee Meeting and Holiday Party on December 12 or arrange a drop-off or pick-up with Mary Kay Woodin x2059.

Here are some simple guidelines for the pajamas:

Pajamas must be brand-new.

Pajamas in all sizes are needed—from newborn to adult.

Pajamas must be in complete sets or nightgowns.

Pajamas in children's sizes must be manufactured as pajamas—this ensures that they are flame-retardant and safe.

Our goal is to donate 50 pajamas to the local Pajama Program.

Thank you for helping us share the gift of a good night's sleep and a great book!

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Come find out what Little People's Learning Center is all about at **our next board meeting**, Wednesday December 4th at 5:30 p.m. and help the smallest members of our community. You do not need to be a parent to be involved (we have had several board members without children).

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The **Federal Benefits Open Season** began Monday, November 11th. A simple checklist has been compiled a checklist to make enrolling and changing your FEDVIP plan(s) simple and easy. View the checklist today at www.BENEFEDS.com/2013.

Below are some important FEDVIP Open Season updates:

- First, there are more FEDVIP plan choices than ever this year. With 10 dental and 4 vision FEDVIP plans, you're certain to find one that's right for you.
- Second, we redesigned BENEFEDS.com to make researching, enrolling, and changing your FEDVIP plan(s) even easier. We also introduced BENEFEDS Mobile, providing you secure account access and the ability to compare FEDVIP plans while on the go.
- Third, keep in mind you do not have to do anything if you prefer to keep your current enrollment as it was for 2013. Your FEDVIP enrollment will automatically continue into the 2014 plan year, even if you retire.
- Finally, if you are currently enrolled in a FEDVIP dental plan, we recommend you research your 2014 plan to determine whether your FEDVIP dental rating region, and therefore your premium, is changing in 2014. (A rating region is a group of zip codes that corresponds to a particular rate charged by a dental plan. Vision plans have the same premium nationwide.)

Remember, the 2013 Federal Benefits Open Season (for the 2014 plan year) runs from Monday, November 11, through Monday, December 9, 2013. During this time, you can make qualified changes to your Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Plan (FEDVIP) by visiting BENEFEDS.com.

We appreciate your participation in FEDVIP. For questions, please visit our new Education and Support section at BENEFEDS.com. If you have specific questions about your enrollment, please email us at Service@BENEFEDS.com.

IN THE NEWS**Federal budget battles leave lingering scars on parks, gateway towns**8 hours ago • By RUFFIN PREVOST yellowstonegate.com

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Congress is not an institution that most Americans would characterize as particularly productive. But the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day is typically even less productive than usual — if that's possible.

Unfortunately, the new year brings two congressional deadlines that loom large in the minds of travel and tourism workers in the greater Yellowstone area. Jan. 15 marks the end of government funding under the current continuing budget resolution, and Feb. 7 is the projected date when the nation's debt ceiling will again need to be raised.

In a region hit hard by government spending squabbles that started the tourism season with park budget cuts under sequestration and ended the season with a 16-day partial government shutdown that closed Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, fears linger that ongoing congressional dysfunction will again cause chaos for travelers and lost revenue for parks, business owners and workers.

Despite recent assurances from congressional leaders that a shutdown won't happen in January, tourism industry insiders and park managers say the new normal of governing by crisis will continue to inflict economic harm on the parks and their gateway communities.

No one appears optimistic that the new year will bring a new approach in Congress that leads to a broad consensus on spending — or even passing a budget.

"It's ridiculous the way Congress is creating inefficiencies," said Joan Anzelmo, spokeswoman for the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees. Anzelmo was a National Park Service senior public affairs specialist in Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Washington, D.C., and retired in 2011 after serving as superintendent of Colorado National Monument.

"The agencies try and plan in advance and know what they can budget. In a normal world, budgets are passed a year out," she said. "We haven't had a budget for four years now, so it's budget by crisis, with continuing resolutions and threats of shutdowns. It's no way to run the federal government."

Anzelmo said the economic toll to parks from the October closures is huge, and equally harsh for gateway towns.

Yellowstone National Park lost nearly \$300,000 in revenue from entrance fees, permit fees and campsite rentals during the shutdown, according to spokesman Al Nash.

The Yellowstone Association, the park's official fundraising partner, lost an estimated \$140,000 in gross revenue over the same period, said Daniel Bierschwale, director of sales and marketing. The association sells books at several stores in the park and donates profits for underfunded projects identified by the superintendent.

But that pales in comparison to more than \$5.5 million in lost revenue for concessioners inside Yellowstone.

Superintendent Dan Wenk said the park lost out on franchise fees from concessioners, and the state of Wyoming failed to collect up to \$1 million just from lost sales taxes and gasoline taxes inside the park.

The bigger picture is even bleaker. A comprehensive analysis by the National Parks Conservation Association shows the shutdown cost the parks and communities more than \$12.3 million in total lost tourism and recreation spending in and around Grand Teton National Park and \$8.8 million for Yellowstone.

That amounts to \$21.1 million in lost revenue for a regional economy where 90 percent of tourism spending goes directly to small-business owners.

For restaurant owner Schalene Darr in Gardiner, October revenues were about half what they should have been.

"If the park is closed, who's going to come where we are at the end of the road?" said Darr, who opened the Yellowstone Grill in May as a family business.

Darr said she's not politically active, and sees no point in complaining to her representatives in Washington.

"Talking to those people doesn't accomplish anything. It just (ticks) me off," she said. "It's disheartening that these are the people running our government."

Aaron Van Egmond found work at Darr's restaurant after he was released early from his job as a barista at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, which was closed throughout the shutdown.

Van Egmond left his Utah home in April to work for the season under contract for Xanterra Parks and Resorts, the concessioner that operates hotels inside Yellowstone. Despite what Van Egmond said was every effort by Xanterra to take care of workers during the shutdown — including free meals and lodging — the hotel ended up closing early, costing him hundreds in lost wages through the end of the season.

Rick Hoeninghausen, director of sales and marketing for Xanterra in Yellowstone, said the company had 1,300 workers at the time of the shutdown, and "worked hard to give them what they would have had if the shutdown had not happened."

"It was the right thing to do," he said. "They committed to us through the end of the season, and this was no fault of their own."

Hoeninghausen said Xanterra's winter bookings are up 20 percent over last year, despite lingering concerns of another shutdown or budget battle that complicates life in the parks.

"It's always been the indecision that's the problem, so all you can do is plan for business as usual," he said.

Business as usual in recent years has meant an unnecessarily complex planning process for park managers struggling to budget for the long term based on stopgap measures from Congress.

"Our management team has meetings upcoming this month and next month to take another in-depth review of our fiscal situation," Nash said. "We have to have really deep discussions about potential funding scenarios and how we would respond and prioritize our spending."

Park Service employees have faced a more personal level of uncertainty during ongoing budget wrangling, as well as the unwanted spotlight that comes with political gamesmanship revolving around national parks, Anzelmo said.

"They were very demoralized and they're tired of being used as pawns in partisan political games. The last thing an employee of the National Park Service wants to do is to stop welcoming visitors or stop taking care of those resources," she said.

Anzelmo said parks offer a strong illustration of the effects of a government shutdown, and become a focus of media scrutiny and congressional haggling.

Some Yellowstone workers said their paychecks were delayed and that back pay was not reimbursed at the same level as if they had been working during the whole shutdown.

Not even Yellowstone's superintendent was immune to personal complications from the shutdown. Dan Wenk's daughter had planned a wedding inside the park, but had to find another location at the last minute.

Wenk said his daughter and her groom "didn't want themselves or their wedding to be treated any differently than anyone else, and they took it in stride."

"We had no cancellations, and it turned out just fine," he said. "It wasn't the wedding they had planned, but it was a great event."

Moving a wedding site is a hassle, but moving mountains of snow on short notice and with a stunted budget is a virtual impossibility.

Opening Yellowstone on time this spring remains a concern in Wyoming gateway towns like Jackson and Cody, both of which chipped in to cover the cost of snowplowing after budget cuts under the sequester threatened to delay this year's spring opening.

"It seems like it's always a budget fight and Yellowstone, being a flagship park, takes a high-profile hit," said Scott Balyo, executive director of the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce.

Balyo said local business leaders are already talking with the Park Service about ways to ensure an on-time Yellowstone opening regardless of what Congress decides.

"Our people in Congress understand the importance of Yellowstone and Grand Teton, but there's such polarization, they can't even make the statement that this is going to get better," he said.

"The clock is ticking, so I'm really hoping that behind the scenes, there's some serious negotiations," Balyo said. "Otherwise, we're right back in the same situation."

Read more: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/federal-budget-battles-leave-lingering-scars-on-parks-gateway-towns/article_d4c44838-5a42-57eb-8076-6a8626ab2813.html#ixzz2mKemQYio

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Gardiner's housing crunch

Vacation rental boom squeezing hourly-wage renters

Published: Fri, 11/29/2013 - 3:55pm Liz Kearney Livingston Enterprise Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on the dwindling pool of affordable year-round rental units in Gardiner. Today's story focuses on the problem and some of the consequences for individuals. Monday's story will focus on some of the solutions, all provided by the private sector.

When a small mountain town gets discovered by outside money, there's a common cry heard throughout the West: "We don't want to end up like Jackson!"

Gardiner is experiencing a housing crunch — a dwindling pool of reasonably priced year-round rental units. Property owners, who many residents described as “out-of-staters,” are converting long-term rentals to short-term rentals, known in the business as “vacation rental by owner,” or VRBO for short.

The town just lost eight more apartments, a tidy complex on Stone Street, residents learned in late October. A new owner is converting at least some of the units to vacation rentals, the property’s manager, Paul Anderson, said this week. Eight longtime tenants have until Feb. 1 to find new housing.

Myrtle “Myrt” Hatch has lived in the complex for 16 years. She works in Human Resources for Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Yellowstone National Park’s main concessioner. She has lived in a two-bedroom apartment. She feels lucky to have found a place about three miles outside of town. She’s pleased with it, but it’s smaller. She rented a storage unit for the stuff that won’t fit.

The news that the apartment complex had been sold was unexpected, she said. She said she understands that no laws have been broken and that owners have the right to do whatever they like with their property.

“But can’t they be responsible?” she asked.

She said she’s heard about people in Jackson, Wyo., having to live in Driggs, Idaho, on the other side of Teton Pass, in order to find an affordable place to live. She’s heard of workers in Aspen, Colo., also having to live far away.

Residents are concerned that a community of vacation rentals, many of which are empty most of the year, is no community at all.

“It’s really changed the flavor of my neighborhood,” said Ashea Mills, a Gardiner homeowner, who lives not far from the Stone Street apartment complex.

Walter Wiese who has lived in Gardiner since 2007 and is employed year-round at Parks’ Fly Shop, also lives in the complex. He estimates he’s seen 22 units convert to vacation rentals over the past three years.

He’s concerned the uncontrolled growth of the VRBO market will affect the nature of life in Gardiner.

“It’s gutting the community,” he said last week. “Quality people aren’t going to want to live here.”

Wiese said he was drawn to Gardiner because the town felt like a community. He attributes that community feeling to the number of residents who have good-paying, year-round jobs “up the hill” at Mammoth Hot Springs. Their jobs are not directly tourist-related. Mammoth is the headquarters for Yellowstone National Park, both for the National Park Service and the park’s largest concessioner, Xanterra Parks & Resorts.

Wiese chose Gardiner not just for the fishing on the Yellowstone, but because it wasn’t like West Yellowstone or Jackson.

“This town feels more like a community than a tourist trap,” he said.

But for property owners, it can make economic sense to convert to short-term rental. They can make in three or four days what they used to collect in a month, Michael McNeil, owner of Yellowstone Gateway Inn, explained earlier this week.

“It’s a no-brainer,” he said.

Wiese said he thinks the solution — and which he’s skeptical of it ever happening — is for Gardiner to incorporate and adopt zoning regulations.

Why now?

Gardiner, “landlocked” by the federal lands surrounding it, has always had high property values and a tight rental market. What’s driving the increased demand for vacation rentals?

Hatch thinks the current recession is a factor. Americans aren’t traveling to Europe, so more of them are taking trips in the U.S.

McNeil mentions globalization. More people from all over the world are traveling. Yellowstone’s visitation continues to climb. At least 20 years ago, annual visitation was 2.2 million. In 2012, the most recent year for which total visitor numbers are available, the figure was 3.3 million, with about 600,000 of those accessing the North Entrance.

Wiese thinks the Internet is partially responsible.

“Vacation rentals are easy to find,” he said.

VRBOs

Where tourists used to call a toll-free number and book a room at a national hotel chain, today they can search the Internet for a vacation rental. One of the biggest sites is www.vrbo.com.

Not only is the website easy for tourists to use, it’s also easy for a property owner to get listed on the site and find customers, McNeil said. McNeil’s Yellowstone Gateway Inn is a complex that rents multi-room suites with full kitchens.

Vacation rentals are attractive to tourists because they often include a kitchen and multiple bedrooms. They cost more per night than a single motel room, but can provide big savings for a larger family or other group traveling together. For the cost of a couple of standard motel rooms, the group can stay in a whole house, which allows further savings on food if the group cooks most of its own meals.

“I’ve had visitors tell me they save \$50 to \$100 a day” on food by staying in a unit with a kitchen, McNeil said.

And it also saves time by not having to sit down to restaurant meals, he said. A family can cook breakfast, pack a lunch, and be off to see Yellowstone.

And Mills said she can see the advantages of renting a whole house. When she got married this year and family came to town, they took advantage of the choices and went with a vacation rental.

Monday: Local property owners, businesses, the National Park Service as well as renters, are coming up with creative solutions to Gardiner’s lack of affordable, long-term rentals.

<http://www.livingstonenterprise.com/content/gardiniers-housing-crunch>

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Fearsome Foursome: Four Lady Bruins get All-State honors

Published: Fri, 11/29/2013 - 5:00pm Anthony Varriano – Livingston Enterprise Staff Writer

The Gardiner volleyball team added some individual accolades to go along with their Class C State Championship: Juniors Hannah Dean and Tess Thomas, and seniors Kelly Harbach and Ashley Kilwine all received All-State honors this week.

“All of our girls deserve the recognition they got,” said Gardiner head coach Carmen Harbach. “They worked hard this season, and they worked hard in the offseason.”

The Montana Class C high school coaches rank 11 players for the All-Conference first teams and 11 more the second teams. The top 22 in the state are named to the All-State first team and the next 22 are second-team honorees, coach Harbach explained.

Carmen’s daughter Kelly has been an All-State honoree her entire high school career, receiving first-team recognition the last two years.

“It’s a huge honor,” said Harbach.

Harbach said she has applied to Montana State University-Billings, Rocky Mountain College, Montana Tech and Grand Canyon College in Arizona.

“I’m really undecided about college,” Harbach added. “If I could play volleyball, then I would (stay in-state).”

Kilwine, a second-team All-Conference and All-State selection, shares her classmate’s sentiment.

“I don’t quite know where I’m going,” Kilwine said, “but I’ll probably go to college in Montana.”

Kilwine wants to major in finance and has been accepted by Montana State. She also has applications being reviewed at MSU-Billings and University of Montana-Western.

When asked if she would try out with the Montana State Bobcats, Kilwine said, “I haven’t really thought about it much. It doesn’t feel like it’s over yet.”

Dean received the most votes of any player in Class C, said coach Harbach. Kelly Harbach and Thomas were easy first-team selections, with Harbach continuing her stellar serving and Thomas emerging as one of the best setters in the state.

Tess’ sister sophomore PJ Thomas was also selected to the All-Conference second team.

“She’s a great, well-rounded player,” said coach Harbach of PJ. “She reminds me a lot of Kelly because she’s an effective hitter and can move all around.”

Size was never an issue for PJ, since she worked as an effective outside hitter who could score kills much like her sister — by finding holes in an opponent’s defense. PJ has emerged as an adequate replacement for Kilwine at libero, and coach Harbach expects her to be an All-State honoree next year.

“Some of our girls that didn’t get recognized I could see being recognized next season,” Harbach said. “It really shows the strength of our players with our conference taking first and third at state.”

Though the “Fearsome Foursome” will have only two remaining Lady Bruins next year, expect Harbach to coach her young players to compete for a third state championship and play at a caliber worthy of All-State honors.

<http://www.livingstonenterprise.com/content/fearsome-foursome-four-lady-bruins-get-all-state-honors>

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:26 am MST Dec 2, 2013

Today: Snow with areas of blowing snow. High near 31. Windy, with a west southwest wind 20 to 30 mph, with gusts as high as 41 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100%. Total daytime snow accumulation of 2 to 4 inches possible.

Tonight: Snow with areas of blowing snow before 11pm, then snow likely with areas of blowing snow after 11pm. Low around 4. Wind chill values as low as -10. West northwest wind 11 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 24 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100%. New snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches possible.

Tuesday: Areas of blowing snow and a chance of snow. Cloudy and cold, with a high near 9. Wind chill values as low as -20. North northeast wind 10 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50%. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Tuesday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -19. Wind chill values as low as -35. North northeast wind 6 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Wednesday: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly before 11am. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near -1. North wind around 6 mph becoming calm in the afternoon.

Wednesday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -26. Light northwest wind.

Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

Do you see something we could do to improve safety in Yellowstone OR do you see a co-worker who has done something positive about safety?

Use the [Safety Recognition Program](#) to report a hazard occurring in the park or nominate a Safety Champion. Full program details can be found using the link above. We want to hear from YOU!

WE WANT YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Have something to share with other NPS employees in the park? We’re especially interested in items occurring outside Mammoth, and in getting digital photos of employees at work! Please remember to send your text or photo submissions for the newsletter to us at YELL_Public_Affairs@nps.gov (not individual’s email), so that whoever is doing the newsletter that day has access to it. Thanks!

Back issues of the newsletter are available at [P:\YNP@Work Published Issues](#)

YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dana Jordan, our fearless Peace Corps volunteer who's been sending us updates from the Philippines, has been put on mandatory leave for 45 days and is headed back to **Yellowstone through January**. She arrives in Bozeman **THIS Thursday at 10 AM** and is looking for a ride. Anybody heading that way please give Charissa Reid a call at x2260. Thank you.

Please support the **Gardiner Community Center** by purchasing raffle tickets! Buy your tickets today at the Gardiner Market. \$5 each or 5/\$20. We need to make building improvements on this 103 year old building. Drawing to be held December 5th at the Christmas Stroll Craft Fair for Todd Fredericksen's "September Bull" signed and numbered canvas print #12 of 50. Need not be present to win. All proceeds go towards building improvements. For more information, please contact Kristie Wiederholt at extension 2327. To view the print online go to <http://www.wildlifeartistoddfredericksen.com/gallery/> go to paintings2 to view the "September Bull"

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Thank you for helping us share the gift of a good night's sleep and a great book!

Don't forget about the **MCC potluck tonight at 6:00 p.m.** Bring a dish to share and come enjoy a craft project and some community bonding.

Come find out what Little People's Learning Center is all about at **our next board meeting**, tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. at Little People's Learning Center and help the smallest members of our community. You do not need to be a parent to be involved (we have had several board members without children).

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IN THE NEWS

Gardiner's housing crunch

More businesses providing housing for their employees

Published: Mon, 12/02/2013 - 4:09pm Liz Kearney Livingston Enterprise Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This is the second installment of a two-part series on the dwindling pool of affordable year-round rental units in Gardiner. Friday's story focused on the problem and some of the consequences for individuals. Today's story features some solutions, all provided by the private sector.

Gardiner's rental market, always tight, is getting tighter.

"It's not a 'crunch,' it's a 'crisis,'" Missy Miculka, a Gardiner property owner, said recently about the town's dwindling supply of affordable rental housing.

Property owners, responding to increased visitation to Yellowstone National Park and higher demand for short-term rentals of houses and condos, are converting homes and apartments to vacation rentals. The changeover, while profitable for owners, is squeezing hourly-wage workers out of affordable housing.

Affordable housing is an issue all across Montana, but especially in scenic areas like the Bitterroot and Madison Valleys and Gardiner, explained Penny Cope, a public relations staffer with the Montana Department of Commerce Housing Division.

An area with "incredible scenic beauty" becomes popular and out-of-state money comes in, driving up property values and driving out the locals, who can no longer afford to live there, she said.

"What if it progresses to where no one can afford to live there and work in the gas stations and coffee shops?" Cope asked.

The National Park Service has gotten involved, too. For several years, Yellowstone National Park has operated a bus that runs from Livingston to Mammoth Hot Springs four days a week. Park officials have said in the past that providing the bus is more cost effective and has a lower impact on the park environment than building more employee housing within the park.

And the private sector is stepping up to the plate. Gardiner residents have taken it upon themselves — with no government mandates or zoning regulations — to do something to alleviate the shortage of affordable rental housing.

Former Gardiner resident Carolyn Duckworth moved out of state about two years ago. When she put her house on the market, her ad said, "No speculators." She wanted to sell her house to someone who would live in it, she said in an email. She could have gotten more money selling to a developer, but she made "enough" on the sale selling to a family.

Rhonda Creiglow is a year-round Xanterra Parks & Resorts employee. She has lived in Gardiner for 14 years, and recently bought a small house she had been renting, also owned by Duckworth. It took about a year to put the sale together, Creiglow said. She found a company that would lend her the money, but the interest rates were too high, making her monthly payment unaffordable. Creiglow wasn't impressed and didn't take it.

"Those payments were truly too high for me, and they were going to give me the loan," Creiglow said, sounding disgusted.

But then interest rates dropped enough, and she found a loan she could afford.

Creiglow and Duckworth had done a lot of work to the little house, which had been built in 1903.

Duckworth gave her a good deal but made enough on the house "that she could sleep," Creiglow said.

Building employee housing

Betty DeWeese and her husband, Dennis, own and operate the Yellowstone River Motel, a 38-room unit they run in the summer only. Her in-laws purchased it in 1970. She said sometime in the early '70s, her inlaws were debating whether to buy a house in Bozeman or a rundown apartment building in Gardiner. DeWeese recalls some motel guests, contractors from Jackson, Wyo., who strongly suggested they invest in housing for their motel employees. Betty recalls that a housing shortage in Gardiner seemed preposterous at the time. But the family bought the apartment unit, and in recent years, they turned it into employee housing.

Now, more than 40 years later, the DeWeeses decided it was time for a major overhaul. They demolished the old complex, located on U.S. Highway 89 South across the street from the Gardiner Market, and they're rebuilding a new six-unit compound.

Interest in renting one is already high, even though all the units are earmarked for her employees.

"People are hounding me for them," DeWeese said.

DeWeese tells people searching for housing they should be talking to their employers. She thinks employer-provided housing is the wave of the future. Otherwise, Gardiner could find itself without a quality work force, or even any workforce, she said.

DeWeese has had to hire international students in recent years, even after the recession hit in 2008, and the students live in their housing. Many of the students are from Eastern Europe, and are desperate to make as much money as they can, doubling up in their apartments and taking second and third jobs. Students taking jobs in businesses that don't provide housing means DeWeese is on some level subsidizing those other businesses.

DeWeese isn't getting any deals for building housing, and she says it's incredibly expensive. But she's going the extra step to provide a parking space for each unit. She said parking in Gardiner is a "divisive issue." There are no laws or zoning regulations that require a builder to provide parking spaces for a residence or business. The DeWeese's lot is small and narrow but she dug in and insisted on making parking spaces.

"We don't have to, but it's the right thing to do," she said.

Wants to build apartments

Another family-owned business is the Calamity Jane Trailer Court, located off U.S. 89 behind the Corral Drive Inn. Missy and Sean Miculka bought it from her grandparents a couple of years ago.

The trailer court has 11 spaces, Missy explained in a recent phone interview. She has a couple of mobile homes she rents out to year-round tenants. She said another business, the Super 8 Motel, rents a mobile home for their employees. They rent it year-round, whether they have an employee living there or not. And their own house is on the property as well.

Miculka also has several tenants living in their own RVs year-round. Some are on fixed incomes, she said. She has a couple of remaining RV spaces that most often end up being rented out for the summer to a seasonal worker. Then, if she happens to have any spaces remaining, she will rent those to overnight visitors.

Miculka said she would like to build an apartment on her property. She has room to build a six-to-eight unit apartment, but the numbers don't work. Her bank told her that the cash flow from the rent she wants to charge, ranging from \$400 to \$600 per month, wouldn't be enough to pay back the loan she would need to build.

**Tax credits,
federal programs**

But there are tax credits and other federal programs for builders like the Miculkas who want to build affordable housing, Cope, the Housing Department spokeswoman said, but navigating the federal application process is complicated.

Gardiner had an affordable housing apartment complex, called Parkview Apartments, from the 1980s up until 2010. If the complex was officially a federal Housing and Urban Development project, Cope could not find a record of it last week, she said.

Typically, affordable housing developments are built with a contract that they remain affordable for a set period of time. The time frame can vary, she said. When it ages out, the owner is free to sell it on the open market.

Cope said the owners typically sell because they're ready to retire, or an aging compound needs major repairs and revamping — and there may not be much cash flow from affordable housing. Collecting rent from low-income tenants, as well as maintaining the property, can sometimes be a challenge. Add in the rising property values of a highly scenic area, and there's often a strong temptation to sell, she said.

Affordable housing unit

And that's what happened with the Parkview Apartments. It was purchased in 2010 by a local businessman, Michael McNeil, who converted it into a vacation rental, Yellowstone Gateway Inn.

McNeil said when he bought the unit, it had not been official low-income housing since 2005. It had not always been fully occupied, and it needed a lot of work. He remodeled, creating a compound of well-maintained units all with kitchens — vacation rentals.

"I was the bad guy," McNeil said, sardonically.

But McNeil, who looks at the big picture and likes to talk about economic theories, said a number of forces are at work in Gardiner's economy. The demand for rental housing is always going to be much higher in the summer than in winter, which can leave owners with empty units in the winter months. There's also very low demand for high-end, year-round rentals — there aren't enough people with good-paying jobs to create enough demand for them, McNeil said.

"The economic engine that would drive apartment-building isn't in this area," he said.

He believes the solution is for employers to provide housing for their employees.

He said there is an interplay between "systems" and "people." When the system isn't working, people look around for other people to blame, he said.

But he doesn't think it's an issue of anyone trying "to do anything to anyone else."

"Everyone is just trying to do a good job," he said.

<http://www.livingstonenterprise.com/content/gardiniers-housing-crunch-0>

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Bighorn sheep mingle with Gardiner domestic sheep

Posted: Tuesday, December 3, 2013 12:15 am

LAURA LUNDQUIST, Bozeman Chronicle Staff Writer

[Bighorn sheep mingle with Gardiner domestic sheep](#)

On Thursday, Kevin Hurley was thankful for many things, but the sight of a bighorn ram within 6 feet of a flock of domestic sheep was not one of them.

On Thanksgiving Day, Hurley, conservation director for the Wild Sheep Foundation, was driving to Gardiner from Livingston on his way to visit friends.

North of Yankee Jim Canyon, he detoured to the west side of the Yellowstone River where he saw a gaggle of photographers snapping pictures of 60 to 70 bighorn sheep.

After returning to the highway and entering the Gardiner Basin, he glanced over at a field with a herd of domestic sheep and slowed.

“I caught a motion out of the corner of my eye and saw a ram coming off the hill,” Hurley said. “He crossed over to the fence and hopped over at a low spot like he knew right where to go.”

The ram had jumped into a pasture where Jardine resident Bill Hoppe has moved his sheep.

Wildlife advocates voiced concern last spring when Hoppe bought sheep for the first time and put them on the pasture that borders the Yellowstone River about eight miles north of Yellowstone National Park.

Wolf advocates protested after Hoppe shot one of two Yellowstone wolves that killed eight of his lambs.

Others worry because domestic sheep carry disease that can affect bison and wild sheep.

Domestic sheep can carry a few different strains of respiratory bacteria that can be deadly to bighorn sheep if they touch noses with domestics.

Entire herds can die from pneumonia such as they have in Nevada and California. Montana had an outbreak in 2009 when 20 percent of bighorn sheep were wiped out.

Gardiner wildlife photographer Deby Dixon said photographers have noticed bighorn sheep lambs coughing and choking in past weeks. She has reported it to Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

“It's analogous to when the Europeans spread smallpox to the Native Americans — Europeans had immunity just like Old-World sheep have immunity after living among other livestock for centuries,” Hurley said. “But the bacteria are still novel in the western U.S.”

Hurley, a Wyoming Game and Fish bighorn biologist for 30 years, said the ram was initially startled by the sound of the bells on Hoppe's sheep. But the urges of the breeding season caused the ram to get within about 6 feet of the sheep.

Hurley yelled at the ram, which eventually jumped out of the pasture. Hurley then chased the ram back up the hill.

Hurley drove on to his holiday dinner but returned a few hours later to see if the ram stayed away. He counted 27 bighorn sheep standing outside the pasture.

"This is the single biggest wildlife issue in much of the West," Hurley said. "It's a difficult situation because it's private land. But everyone is really concerned."

Montana chapter executive director Jim Weatherly said he tried to call Hoppe, but his calls weren't returned.

Weatherly talked to Hoppe in April to propose some alternatives such as helping Hoppe find a different pasture or installing a double fence around the pasture.

Weatherly said Hoppe wasn't receptive to any alternatives.

"I even talked to him about the danger of predators and it wasn't two days later that the wolves killed his lambs," Weatherly said.

FWP warden Sam Sheppard said no FWP employees have seen any bighorn sheep in Hoppe's pasture and that Hoppe also hadn't seen any.

Sheppard said FWP would continue to monitor the situation. He said nothing could be done after the fact but asked people to report any similar incidents so wardens can respond.

Hurley said he tried to report it but no one was around on the holiday.

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Landing on his Feet: Gardiner's Wilkinson talks running, basketball and future

Published: Mon, 12/02/2013 - 5:00pm Anthony Varriano – Livingston Enterprise Staff Writer

Gardiner cross country runner Wyatt Wilkinson finished seventh in the State Class C race to earn All-State honors as a junior this year, and set a personal best in Townsend a week before the state meet, but it wasn't as easy as Wilkinson made it look.

"I had some injuries this year, and it felt good to persevere through that," Wilkinson said. "I think I surprised myself a little bit."

He has struggled with a misalignment in his back that causes pain in his legs, but it should be corrected if he goes to the chiropractor, which he does every Thursday, Wilkinson said,

Wilkinson doesn't expect the back problem to bother him during the basketball season, and so far hasn't had any trouble despite practicing twice a day.

Wilkinson plays small forward for the Bruins and said head coach Jordan Featherman has been focusing a lot on conditioning — Wilkinson's specialty.

"We've been practicing really hard and we're on the right path to accomplishing our goals," Wilkinson said.

Despite his busy sports schedule, Wilkinson isn't letting athletics get in the way of academics.

"I've been studying hard for classes and getting much better grades than I usually do," he said.

It's important Wilkinson continue to thrive academically because cross country isn't exactly a sport that receives a lot of attention from college recruiters. Scholarships are few and far between, especially in Montana, but Wilkinson isn't ruling out running in college.

"I'm not really quite sure what I want to do yet," Wilkinson said. "I think I'll always keep running, but I don't know if it would be at the collegiate level."

Running track is another option for Wilkinson, and he says he'd consider it, but his strength is obviously long-distance running.

Another strength of Wilkinson's you may not know about is his writing ability.

"I really enjoy writing on the creative level," Wilkinson said, "so I would probably find a job in creative writing."

When asked if he would go into journalism, Wilkinson said he hadn't given it much thought but would consider it.

"I do know (the University of Montana) is a good school for journalism," he said.

Wilkinson will continue writing while working in Yellowstone National Park, which is his backup plan if college doesn't work out right away. Regardless of his decision, the standout runner should land on his feet.

<http://www.livingstonenterprise.com/content/landing-his-feet-gardeners-wilkinson-talks-running-basketball-and-future>

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:41 am MST Dec 3, 2013

Today: A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy and cold, with a temperature falling to around -3 by 5pm. Wind chill values as low as -15. North wind around 7 mph. Total daytime snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Tonight: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -17. Wind chill values as low as -25. Northeast wind 3 to 5 mph. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Wednesday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 0. Wind chill values as low as -25. Light north wind.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -23. Wind chill values as low as -35. Light and variable wind.

Thursday: A 20 percent chance of snow after 11am. Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near -1. Calm wind becoming north northwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly cloudy, with a low around -19. North wind around 5 mph becoming light and variable in the evening.

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Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

Do you see something we could do to improve safety in Yellowstone OR do you see a co-worker who has done something positive about safety?

Use the [Safety Recognition Program](#) to report a hazard occurring in the park or nominate a Safety Champion. Full program details can be found using the link above. We want to hear from YOU!

WE WANT YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Have something to share with other NPS employees in the park? We're especially interested in items occurring outside Mammoth, and in getting digital photos of employees at work! Please remember to send your text or photo submissions for the newsletter to us at YELL_Public_Affairs@nps.gov (not individual's email), so that whoever is doing the newsletter that day has access to it. Thanks!

Back issues of the newsletter are available at [P:\YNP@Work Published Issues](#)

YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dana Jordan, our fearless Peace Corps volunteer who's been sending us updates from the Philippines, has been put on mandatory leave for 45 days and is headed back to **Yellowstone through January**. She arrives in Bozeman **TOMORROW at 10 AM** and is looking for a ride. Anybody heading that way **please** give Charissa Reid a call at x2260. Thank you.

Please support the **Gardiner Community Center** by purchasing raffle tickets! Buy your tickets today at the Gardiner Market. \$5 each or 5/\$20. We need to make building improvements on this 103 year old building. Drawing to be **tomorrow** at the **Christmas Stroll Craft Fair** (in the Gardiner Community Center) for Todd Fredericksen's "September Bull" signed and numbered canvas print #12 of 50. Need not be present to win. All proceeds go towards building improvements. For more information, please contact Kristie Wiederholt at extension 2327. To view the print online go to <http://www.wildlifeartisttoddfridericksen.com/gallery/> go to paintings2 to view the "September Bull"

Please join us to wish **JEN BASEDEN a fond farewell!** December 10, 2013 10AM in the YCR Conference Room. Please bring a baked good to share. Tea and coffee provided.

Where did content on the website go?



You may occasionally stumble across a page on our website that appears to have missing content because the page looks blank. The content didn't disappear completely -- there is a known problem service-wide with the NPS content management system that the WASO Web Team is working on. If you notice a page that looks blank, like the screenshot here, please let David Restivo or Peggy Olliff know -- we can manually refresh the page so the content displays again.

We hope to see you **tomorrow** between 5-8pm for **Gardiner's 7th Annual Christmas Stroll**.
Stop by the Gardiner Community Center to say hello to Santa and local artisans.

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EMT Refresher will be held in the Mammoth EMS classroom in the MCC Monday December 16th through Wednesday the 18th from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Contact Boone Vandzura for further information or to sign up for the refresher at 344-2148.

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All Employees Meeting and Holiday Party

Dec 12 - Following the 2:30 All Employees Meeting
Judy Jensen/Sonya Anderson co-chair party planners

Each division will have a food table or two to decorate appropriately to reflect something fun for the holiday theme and/or about their division.

There will be a panel of judges to pick which division has the best decorated serving table, so put your thinking caps on and let's see who wins the prize.

Each division will bring the following:

Administration:	Desserts/Sweets
Concessions:	Main Dishes & Meats
MABO & SHRO:	Breads, Dinner Rolls
Maintenance:	Main Dishes & Meats
R&VP Rangers:	Appetizers
Res Edu & Y Prog:	Salads/Fruits/Vegetables
Superintendent:	Drinks
YCR:	Salads/Fruits/Vegetables

If you have folks in your division that would prefer to chip in a few dollars instead of cook we will purchase the paper plates and plastic ware for the dinner with the money.

If you have table cloths you don't mind sharing that we could use on the dinner tables (not the serving tables), please let Judy or Sonya know.

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Initial Snowmobile training is scheduled for:

December 10, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 10, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.
December 11, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 18, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 18, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.
December 19, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 19, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

There are still several available openings on the sign-up sheets for **Initial Snowmobile Training**.

Sign-up sheets can be found on the P drive [at P:\Safety Office\Snowmobile Training\Snowmobile Training 2013-2014 Sign-up\Mammoth\2013-14 Initial Training](P:\Safety Office\Snowmobile Training\Snowmobile Training 2013-2014 Sign-up\Mammoth\2013-14 Initial Training)

Come find out what Little People's Learning Center is all about at **our next board meeting, TONIGHT** at 5:30 p.m. at Little People's Learning Center and help the smallest members of our community. You do not need to be a parent to be involved (we have had several board members without children).

Little People's Learning Center and Snoopy School are teaming up and need your help for the **Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive** benefitting Pajama Program, a nonprofit organization that provides new pajamas and books to children and teens in need—especially those living in group homes, shelters, foster care, and orphanages.

Since 2009, groups have risen to the challenge and donated nearly 250,000 pairs of new pajamas. The Scholastic Reading Club has more than matched those numbers with nearly 600,000 new books donated to Pajama Program.

If you are able to participate, please bring in a new pair of pajamas to the All Employee Meeting and Holiday Party on December 12 or arrange a drop-off or pick-up with Mary Kay Woodin x2059.

Here are some simple guidelines for the pajamas:

Pajamas must be brand-new. Pajamas in all sizes are needed—from newborn to adult. Pajamas must be in complete sets or nightgowns. Pajamas in children's sizes must be manufactured as pajamas—this ensures that they are flame-retardant and safe. Our goal is to donate 50 pajamas to the local Pajama Program.

Thank you for helping us share the gift of a good night's sleep and a great book!

The **Federal Benefits Open Season** began Monday, November 11th. A simple checklist has been compiled a checklist to make enrolling and changing your FEDVIP plan(s) simple and easy. View the checklist today at www.BENEFEDS.com/2013.

Below are some important FEDVIP Open Season updates:

- First, there are more FEDVIP plan choices than ever this year. With 10 dental and 4 vision FEDVIP plans, you're certain to find one that's right for you.
- Second, we redesigned BENEFEDS.com to make researching, enrolling, and changing your FEDVIP plan(s) even easier. We also introduced BENEFEDS Mobile, providing you secure account access and the ability to compare FEDVIP plans while on the go.
- Third, keep in mind you do not have to do anything if you prefer to keep your current enrollment as it was for 2013. Your FEDVIP enrollment will automatically continue into the 2014 plan year, even if you retire.
- Finally, if you are currently enrolled in a FEDVIP dental plan, we recommend you research your 2014 plan to determine whether your FEDVIP dental rating region, and therefore your premium, is changing in 2014. (A rating region is a group of zip codes that corresponds to a particular rate charged by a dental plan. Vision plans have the same premium nationwide.)

Remember, the 2013 Federal Benefits Open Season (for the 2014 plan year) runs from Monday, November 11, through Monday, December 9, 2013. During this time, you can make qualified changes to your Federal

Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Plan (FEDVIP) by visiting BENEFEDS.com.

We appreciate your participation in FEDVIP. For questions, please visit our new Education and Support section at BENEFEDS.com. If you have specific questions about your enrollment, please email us at Service@BENEFEDS.com.

IN THE NEWS

Y'stone tour operator on edge over permits

Historic ranch fears it's at a disadvantage vying for Yellowstone winter contracts.

Posted: Wednesday, December 4, 2013 12:15 AM

By Mike Koshmrl – Jackson Hole News and Guide

http://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/y-stone-tour-operator-on-edge-over-permits/article_6e8b950a-4462-5a0a-95ba-996c37ab2515.html

Employees of at least one small business that runs snow coach and snowmobile tours in Yellowstone National Park fear their days of guiding in the world's first national park are running short.

Changes to Yellowstone's winter-use plan could give an advantage to large businesses that can afford to buy new equipment and eliminate the competition, said Jim Moulton, operations manager for Triangle C Ranch.

"I've got extreme concerns because one entity can acquire all the permits for the South Entrance," Moulton said. "I'm really worried for us small businesses."

Last week Yellowstone released a prospectus for 23 contracts, including 10 for the South Gate, that will be good through the winter of 2023-24.

Triangle C Ranch, located on the Dubois side of Togwotee Pass, holds one of the five currently available permits for the South Gate. It expires this spring.

When Triangle C submits its proposal to renew the contract, it will be going up against "huge international corporations," Moulton said.

"I think you've got a huge divide between the corporate and the individual proprietors," he said.

Other companies that now hold current South Gate snow coach guiding contracts include Togwotee Snowmobile Adventures and Rocky Mountain Snowmobile Adventures, which are both owned by Philadelphia-based Aramark.

Scenic Safaris, another contract holder, is a subsidiary of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Forever Resorts, which has operations in 11 states.

One contract is currently unissued.

Preferential treatment out

Triangle C is the only small business with a valid South Gate contract, Moulton said.

An additional dozen companies, some with ties to existing permit holders, have "commercial-use authorizations" that allow them to guide people on snowmobiles into Yellowstone.

Wholesale changes to how Yellowstone manages over-snow tours have made it impossible to retain “preferential rights” for existing contract holders, said Dale Reinhart, Yellowstone’s branch chief of operations in concessions management.

“It’s because the old contracts just offered snow coaches, and now with the new final rule, the new operators have to provide what we call ‘transportation events,’” Reinhart said last week. “That’s enough material change where we couldn’t keep the preferential right.”

National Park Service concessionaires that make less than \$500,000 a year ordinarily have the opportunity to match bids from outsiders when contracts are up.

Triangle C isn’t pleased about losing the chance to match, Moulton said.

“How would you like to be told, after 10 to 12 years of running a business, that you have no rights for preference,” he said. “You’ve run a business, you’ve established a branding and then you’re told that none of that means anything, technically.”

Choice based on five criteria

Yellowstone will choose its 23 contract holders based on five main criteria.

One of those factors gives weight to Triangle C’s history and other companies that have track records guiding over-snow tours in Yellowstone, Reinhart said.

“Hopefully, their experience will shine in these offers,” he said.

Another criteria in Yellowstone’s prospectus assesses how well companies’ proposals would protect, conserve and preserve park resources. A second requirement seeks businesses that can ensure a good overall visitor experience and provide reasonable rates. A third assesses each company’s financial ability to carry out the proposal. And the last takes into account proposed franchise fees, which puts money into the Park Service’s coffers.

The minimum franchise fee is 4 percent of the first \$200,000 in revenue and 5 percent for revenue exceeding \$200,000. Companies can, however, offer higher rates.

Contracts will go first to businesses that can provide both snowmobile and snow coach tours, Reinhart said.

“We’re going to try to look for [businesses] that can do both,” he said. “They’re going to have to find out if they can team up with somebody, or expand or subcontract [out the service].”

That means Triangle C would either have to add snowmobiles to its fleet or cut a deal with another business.

“We’re the [South Gate’s] only stand-alone snow coach operator, currently,” Moulton said.

One pro-snowmobile group doesn’t see any major losers coming out of the contracting process Yellowstone has devised.

“The Park Service has done a good job in the whole process and the regulation,” said Jack Welch, spokesman for the Blue Ribbon Coalition. “They will be as fair as the regulations allow.”

Moulton's fears — that a large company could out-bid and be awarded all the contracts — has played out in the past, Welch said.

“Many years ago, at West [Yellowstone], one operator did momentarily receive all the contracts,” he said.

A lawsuit, Welch said, put an end to the monopoly at the West Gate of Yellowstone.

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Park plan would reduce power outages

Posted: Wednesday, December 4, 2013 12:15 am

[Park plan would reduce power outages](#)

LAURA LUNDQUIST, Bozeman Chronicle Staff Writer

NorthWestern Energy needs to update its radio system in Yellowstone National Park, so the company also wants to improve power availability.

Yellowstone National Park is requesting public input on a plan to upgrade aging electrical substations at seven park facilities.

NorthWestern Energy started providing power to the park in the 1950s, and very little has been upgraded since. When power lines snap, it takes a while for NorthWestern Energy employees to find the problem and fix it, especially during the winter.

“In the 1950s, power outages weren't as big a deal, but visitors have a greater expectation in this day and age. And our dependence on electricity is obviously more,” said park spokesman Al Nash. “This is what is appropriate, given the available technology.”

NorthWestern Energy claims upgrades are needed to deal with power outages in the park.

In 2012, more than 200 power outages occurred, caused by everything from equipment failure to falling trees to severe weather.

Many happened in the late spring and summer when NorthWestern Energy employees are stationed in the park.

But some happen during the winter, creating a difficult situation for maintenance workers who have to travel into the park. An automated system could provide backup power while employees work on the problem.

The preferred alternative would upgrade radio equipment at six developed sites from an analogue land/mobile radio system to a digital VHF narrow-bandwidth system to allow NorthWestern Energy to monitor the status of power systems in the park.

On Jan. 1, the Federal Communications Commission implemented the VHF-UVHF Narrowing Bandwidth Mandate, which requires radio systems to use less bandwidth nationwide. As a result, NorthWestern Energy abandoned an older radio system that had a repeater high on Mount Washburn inside the park.

The new narrow-band radio system would require the six radio receivers to keep the same coverage. The upgrade would also include the installation of 60-foot-tall metal lattice towers at most developed sites in the park, including Norris, Canyon Village, Lake, Grant Village, Old Faithful and Madison Junction. Mammoth would have a 30-foot-tall tower.

To provide power backup, propane tanks and small outbuildings containing propane-fueled generators and the radio equipment would be installed. The generators could be triggered by the new communications system.

The seven substations, including a repeater station north of the park, could talk to each other and send continuous information to NorthWestern Energy, creating an automated system.

Public scoping in May yielded 32 comments, and most negative comments dealt with visual impacts from the tall towers and hazards to wildlife.

Nash said visibility of unnatural structures is an issue, but the park would make towers as unobtrusive as possible.

Another alternative would require essentially the same upgrades plus the installation of 90 miles of fiber-optic cable to provide real-time information from each site because it would not include the automation controls of the preferred alternative.

The 50 and 69 kilovolt transmission lines won't be changed.

The comment period is open until Dec. 21.

The environmental assessment is available online at parkplanning.nps.gov/NWEPlan.

A hard copy can also be requested by calling 307-344-7147 or by writing to Compliance Office, Attention: Electric Transmission/Distribution System-Communication & Automation EA, National Park Service, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

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Speaker highlights Yellowstone's rich skiing history

Posted: Monday, December 2, 2013 12:56 pm

[Speaker highlights Yellowstone's rich skiing history](#)

By MIKE MOORE West Yellowstone News

It's no secret that Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding gateway communities have a rich winter history. In the early days, these remote, isolated communities and park interior were cut off from the outside world for months out of the year, and the only way to get around was either by ski or snowshoe.

On Tuesday, Yellowstone Historic Center employee Thor Godar took a group of 30 attendees back in time as he explained how skiing and snowshoeing made life possible for the few that braved our area's harsh winters in the

late 1800s and early 1900s. Through descriptive stories and photographs, those who attended gained an appreciation for those brave individuals.

“We don’t get that much snow here; we average 171 inches a year,” Godar said as he began the talk. “The secret of keeping snow is the ferocious low temperatures. We tend to keep snow, and we get it early.”

Average temperatures in West Yellowstone for the months of January and February are right around 0 degrees; however, on many days, the town gets above 30 degrees for a couple of hours, but then plummets back to sub-zero temperatures during the nighttime hours.

Godar explained that the coldest temperature ever recorded in the Lower 48 states came from just a few miles to the northeast at Riverside Ranger Station back in 1933. West Yellowstone frequently gets down to 40 below zero and colder, but those extreme temperatures haven’t been seen in the past few years.

“Last year we saw 38, 37, 36 (below zero) in one week and it was considered a warm winter,” he said.

After discussing just how cold the area can be in the winter months, Godar transitioned to the unique history this area has when it comes to skiing and snowshoeing.

In 1908, the Union Pacific Railroad began bringing visitors to the west entrance of the park, which sparked the start of what is now the small mountain town of West Yellowstone. The railroad used a rotary plow on the front of the train to clear the track, and started bringing tourists to the west entrance from mid-June through mid-September.

“By November, town was isolated and there was no way in and no way out,” he said.

Godar explained that Native Americans had explored the park many years earlier, but that the first known white man to explore Yellowstone in the winter was John Colter. Later, Uncle Billy Hofer was the first to circumnavigate the park on skis, and later trained other explorers how to use skis.

In 1887, arctic explorer Frederick Schwatka and Frank Haynes set off from Mammoth for an expedition throughout Yellowstone in the winter. The winter of 1887 is still known today as an extremely harsh winter, with temperatures varying from -10 to -50 degrees Fahrenheit. Schwatka only made it to Norris before leaving the expedition, but Haynes and the others completed the trip and captured the first photographs of Yellowstone in the winter.

“They made it around the park, but barely,” Godar said. “They are the first people that can be proven to circumnavigate the park.”

Around the same time, poaching of animals was becoming a serious problem for the park, and in 1886, the U.S. Army brought in troops to watch over Yellowstone.

“The hotbeds of poaching were Island Park, Cooke City and West Yellowstone,” Godar said. “Poaching was worse in the winter because winter furs were the biggest and best, and that was when the park was least patrolled.”

The U.S. Army didn’t think about how harsh the winters were here, and sent in troops that had been stationed in Arizona and had no experience on skis. Fortunately, the troops learned how to ski from a few people that remained in the area, and essentially saved the park’s wildlife.

“I attribute soldiers on skis for putting an end to poaching,” he said.

The park’s hotels had winter keepers back in the late 1800s and early 1900s that shoveled snow from the roofs to keep the buildings from collapsing.

One of those keepers was Sam Eagle, who was stationed at the Fountain Hotel.

“In the summer he caught trout for dinner, taught fly fishing to the dudes and in the evening he was a bartender,” Godar said.

The Fountain Hotel is where Eagle met his wife Ida, and the two saved up their money to move to what is now West Yellowstone when the Union Pacific Railroad came to town in 1908.

“They purchased a lease at the corner of Canyon and Yellowstone for \$10 a year,” he said. “I consider him to be a true hero and founder of the town.”

Godar went on to talk about how skis served a critical role in town for transportation, as vehicles were useless during the winter months. Even when the New Deal economic program brought snow plows to town in the 1930s, cars were still essentially useless due to the bad roads, and most were still put up on blocks until summer rolled back around.

Overall, Yellowstone and the town of West Yellowstone have a rich history of winter exploration and survival. Even though town hasn’t seen the extreme temperature drops of the past recently, town still draws in the masses in the winter for its reliable snow conditions and abundant recreational activities in the park and the areas surrounding it.

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 8:41 am MST Dec 4, 2013

Today: A 20 percent chance of snow before 4pm. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near -3. Wind chill values as low as -25. Light and variable wind becoming north 5 to 7 mph in the afternoon.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -22. Light west wind.

Thursday: Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near -2. Wind chill values as low as -25. Calm wind becoming west around 6 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -18. West wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Friday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 2. Calm wind becoming southwest 5 to 7 mph in the afternoon.

Friday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -11. South wind 3 to 5 mph.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Thursday, December 5, 2013



Don't forget to support your local community at the stroll tonight!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supply Center News: There will be no town run carried out on Wednesday December 11th due to staff shortage and no requests to date. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we continue to get our operations set up in the Canteen.

Please support the **Gardiner Community Center** by purchasing raffle tickets! Buy your tickets today at the Gardiner Market. \$5 each or 5/\$20. We need to make building improvements on this 103 year old building. Drawing to be **tonight** at the **Christmas Stroll Craft Fair** (in the Gardiner Community Center) for Todd Fredericksen's "September Bull" signed and numbered canvas print #12 of 50. Need not be present to win. All proceeds go towards building improvements. For more information, please contact Kristie Wiederholt at extension 2327. To view the print online go to <http://www.wildlifeartisttoddfridericksen.com/gallery/> go to paintings2 to view the "September Bull"

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Dec 12 - Following the 2:30 All Employees Meeting
Judy Jensen/Sonya Anderson co-chair party planners

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There will be a panel of judges to pick which division has the best decorated serving table, so put your thinking caps on and let's see who wins the prize.

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Concessions:	Main Dishes & Meats
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Community Christmas Tree Lighting and Potluck Dinner

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When: Tuesday December 17, from 5:30 – 7:00pm

Where: Map Room, Mammoth Hotel

I hear Santa might even make an appearance!

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IN THE NEWS**Gardiner bighorn herd known to have disease**

Posted: Thursday, December 5, 2013 12:15 am

[Gardiner bighorn herd known to have disease](#)

LAURA LUNDQUIST, Chronicle Staff Writer

A Fish, Wildlife & Parks veterinarian said any pneumonia in bighorn sheep in the Gardiner area would not necessarily have been contracted from a domestic sheep herd that has moved into the area.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, people witnessed bighorn rams entering a pasture near the Yellowstone River where Jardine resident Bill Hoppe has moved his domestic sheep.

Over the summer, Hoppe kept his sheep on his Jardine property but moved them to the Yellowstone River property at the beginning of October. Hoppe's wife said they moved the sheep to avoid predation by grizzly bears.

Almost all grizzly bears have now entered hibernation.

Wildlife advocates have voiced concern because bighorn sheep are highly susceptible to strains of pneumonia carried by domestic sheep. Rams that come into contact with domestic sheep can bring the disease bacteria into the bighorn population and entire herds can be wiped out.

So more reports of bighorn lambs in the Gardiner area coughing and choking are attracting attention.

FWP veterinarian Jennifer Ramsey said biologists started receiving reports before Thanksgiving about bighorn sheep showing symptoms of pneumonia in the Gardiner area, but such sightings aren't new.

"There have been issues down there for a long time," Ramsey said. "It'll have sick animals, but we haven't seen the die-offs there that we see in other populations."

The population could have originally contracted disease from sheep herds farther north in the Paradise Valley, Ramsey said.

She said biologists started sampling the population last year to see what makes the population different than others.

"If animals start dying, we'll collect data on the dead animals," Ramsey said.

Other than that, FWP biologists just monitor the situation. FWP has no authority to require Hoppe to move his sheep.

Montana Department of Livestock executive director Christian MacKay said the DOL has no authority over livestock producers or wildlife when it comes to most interactions.

If the interaction involved bison, the Interagency Bison Management Plan would allow DOL riders to haze the bison away.

If it involved predators such as wolves, the DOL could request the assistance of Wildlife Services to remove the predators.

MacKay said the bighorn sheep situation in Gardiner is unique.

“I'm not aware of another situation like this where you had an established herd of bighorns and a domestic herd was moved in. I think if it was an introduced herd of bighorns, they'd have to eliminate it. It's a complex situation,” MacKay said.

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 7:41 am MST Dec 5, 2013

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Tonight: A 20 percent chance of snow after 11pm. Partly cloudy, with a low around -15. Calm wind.

Friday: A 40 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11am. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 3. Wind chill values as low as -15. Calm wind becoming west southwest around 6 mph in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Friday Night: A 40 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -12. Calm wind. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 2. Calm wind becoming west northwest around 5 mph in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly cloudy, with a low around -17. Calm wind becoming northeast around 5 mph after midnight.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Friday, December 6, 2013

Brrrr.....GOT COLD?

Official Overnight Lows Thursday

Pahaska -19
Mammoth -21
Lake -23
South Entrance -24
Tower Fall -27
NE Entrance -33
West Yellowstone -33
Grant Village -34
Grebe Lake -34
Old Faithful -36



**Courtesy Canyon Rangers and Pat Navaille

TRAVEL UPDATE: The following reported conditions & restrictions as of 9 am Dec 6th:

Oversnow Vehicle Travel, rubber tracked or snowmobile ONLY (no metal cleats):

- Mammoth to Norris Jct - groomed Norris to Indian Creek; Swan Lake still thinly covered
- Norris to Madison Jct - not groomed, but covered & in fair condition
- Madison Jct to Old Faithful - being groomed from OF to Fountain Paint Pots today
- Canyon to Lake (Hayden Valley) - groomed/packed to Mud Volcano, rubber tracks only

Oversnow Vehicle Travel, any type:

- Flagg Ranch to West Thumb - groomed, in good condition
- West Thumb to Lake - packed, in good/fair condition for all types of oversnow travel
- West Thumb to Old Faithful (Craig Pass) - being groomed today
- West Entrance to Madison Jct - covered, not groomed yet, some ruts, but in fair shape
- Norris Jct to Canyon - groomed to Norris, in good condition

Closed to all travel:

- Canyon Junction to Tower Junction - CLOSED
- Pelican Creek to East Entrance (Sylvan Pass) - CLOSED; being evaluated for control operations; MAY open to Admin travel Sat or Sun after packing

The "back road" from Mammoth up to Golden Gate is OPEN for snowmobiles with caution for bare spots & thin snow coverage. A little new snow was received last night. Rubber Tracked rigs can use the road...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Business Shuttle** is now available for booking for winter travel in the park. For reservations contact me at [Jennifer Morey@nps.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Morey@nps.gov) or at 344-2271. Becky Wyman can also assist. She can be reached at [Becky Wyman@nps.gov](mailto:Becky.Wyman@nps.gov) or 344-2278. Please refer to the attachment for the booking procedure and use guidelines. The Shuttle will begin operating 12/9/2013. Reminder: The Business Shuttle may only be used for work related travel needs.

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Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 8:40 am MST Dec 6, 2013

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Tonight: A 40 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -15. Wind chill values as low as -30. South wind 6 to 11 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday: A 40 percent chance of snow. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 6. Wind chill values as low as -30. Southeast wind 6 to 8 mph becoming north northeast in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow before 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -16. Wind chill values as low as -25. Light and variable wind becoming north around 5 mph after midnight.

Sunday: A 40 percent chance of snow after 11am. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 0. Light northwest wind becoming west northwest 5 to 10 mph in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Sunday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly before 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -14. West wind 7 to 9 mph.

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Monday, December 9, 2013

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Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:56 am MST Dec 9, 2013

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Tonight: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -5. Wind chill values as low as -25. Southwest wind around 14 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Tuesday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 7. Wind chill values as low as -25. Southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph. New snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches possible.

Tuesday Night: A 40 percent chance of snow, mainly before 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -6. Wind chill values as low as -20. Southwest wind 8 to 11 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Wednesday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly sunny, with a high near 17. West southwest wind 6 to 9 mph.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 2. West southwest wind around 6 mph.

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Tuesday, December 10, 2013



The Grant crew out grooming the roads. (Photos by Willie Burkhardt)

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The Supply Center (old location) has a lot of **3-ring 3" capacity binders** (notebooks) available for government use. The color choices are red, black, and white. If you have any interest, please walk inside the door of the Supply Center and keep going straight and you will see them in boxes on the floor.

Please pick up by Thursday Dec. 12th. If you are located outside of Mammoth, please shoot me an email and I will save you some so you won't have to pick them up by Dec. 12th.

Thanks,
Barb Agle
Supply Center
x2085

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Please see eHint for links to green purchasing ideas for the holidays: <O:\YNP@Work\2013\December\images>.

- - - - -

All Employees Meeting and Holiday Party

Dec 12 - Following the 2:30 All Employees Meeting
Judy Jensen/Sonya Anderson co-chair party planners

Each division will have a food table or two to decorate appropriately to reflect something fun for the holiday theme and/or about their division.

There will be a panel of judges to pick which division has the best decorated serving table, so put your thinking caps on and let's see who wins the prize.

Each division will bring the following:

Administration:	Desserts/Sweets
Concessions:	Main Dishes & Meats
MABO & SHRO:	Breads, Dinner Rolls
Maintenance:	Main Dishes & Meats
R&VP Rangers:	Appetizers
Res Edu & Y Prog:	Salads/Fruits/Vegetables
Superintendent:	Drinks
YCR:	Salads/Fruits/Vegetables

If you have folks in your division that would prefer to chip in a few dollars instead of cook we will purchase the paper plates and plastic ware for the dinner with the money.

If you have table cloths you don't mind sharing that we could use on the dinner tables (not the serving tables), please let Judy or Sonya know.

- - - - -

Initial Snowmobile training is scheduled for:

TODAY at 1:00 p.m.
December 11, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 18, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 18, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.
December 19, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
December 19, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

There are still several available openings on the sign-up sheets for **Initial Snowmobile Training**. Sign-up sheets can be found on the P drive <at P:\Safety Office\Snowmobile Training\Snowmobile Training 2013-2014 Sign-up\Mammoth\2013-14 Initial Training>

Intersection Between Roads and Wildlife

Join us for a free screening of “Division Street”, a film which explores the impact of roads on wildlife and searches for the spot in Yellowstone that is furthest from a road in the lower 48. Free food and beverages will be provided. A discussion about wildlife-vehicle collisions and safety on US Highway 89 between Livingston and Gardiner, where 50% of collisions involve wildlife, will follow the film.

Dec. 11th in Gardiner 6pm at the Yellowstone Association 115 S 3rd St

Dec. 12th in Livingston 6pm at the Danforth Gallery 106 N, Main St

Community Christmas Tree Lighting and Potluck Dinner

Please join us for an evening of holiday festivities and community potluck dinner

When: Tuesday December 17, from 5:30 – 7:00pm

Where: Map Room, Mammoth Hotel

I hear Santa might even make an appearance!

WEATHER**NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park**

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 9:25 am MST Dec 10, 2013

Today: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 9. Wind chill values as low as -10. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph. Total daytime snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible.

Tonight: A 20 percent chance of snow before 11pm. Partly cloudy, with a low around -8. Wind chill values as low as -25. Southwest wind around 7 mph.

Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 16. Wind chill values as low as -25. Southwest wind 3 to 7 mph.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 2. Wind chill values as low as -10. Southwest wind 5 to 9 mph becoming light south southwest after midnight.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 25. Light south wind becoming southwest 8 to 13 mph in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 5. South wind 6 to 11 mph.

Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

Do you see something we could do to improve safety in Yellowstone OR do you see a co-worker who has done something positive about safety?

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YNP@Work

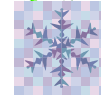
A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

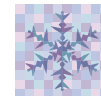
ANNOUNCEMENTS



Come One, Come All
To The
Employee Holiday Party



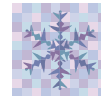
Good Food
Special Entertainment



After the All Employee Meeting @ 2:30 p.m.
tomorrow
Mammoth Community Center



Prize for the best decorated table by Division



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The Supply Center (old location) has a lot of **3-ring 3" capacity binders** (notebooks) available for government use. The color choices are red, black, and white. If you have any interest, please walk inside the door of the Supply Center and keep going straight and you will see them in boxes on the floor.

Please pick up by Thursday Dec. 12th. If you are located outside of Mammoth, please shoot me an email and I will save you some so you won't have to pick them up by Dec. 12th.

Thanks,
Barb Agle
Supply Center
x2085

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- - - - -

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TONIGHT Gardiner 6pm at the Yellowstone Association 115 S 3rd St
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- - - - -

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IN THE NEWS

Yellowstone report: Climate, invasive species affect ecosystem

Posted: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 6:01 pm

[Yellowstone report: Climate, invasive species affect ecosystem](#)

LAURA LUNDQUIST, Bozeman Chronicle Staff Writer

Yellowstone National Park was created by slow changes in geothermal conditions, but now it's being reshaped by rapid changes in climate and human pressures, according to a new report.

After enduring for almost 150 years, Yellowstone National Park is changing under human pressures as documented in the 2013 issue of “Vital Signs,” a biennial report released Tuesday by the Yellowstone Center for Resources.

Because one of the park's goals is to minimize human interference, a network of scientists and federal and state agencies have, for the past five years, tracked the status of two-dozen ecological indicators, such as climate and populations of various species, in an effort to separate human influences from natural ones.

Center for Resources chief David Hallac said the next step could be to establish management targets rather than just reporting results, but that could be challenging in a rapidly changing world.

While some indicators haven't changed in decades, many have changed in just two years or when compared to reference conditions established before 2000.

Some indicators weren't sampled since the last report issued in 2011.

Climate data show trends toward warmer and drier conditions.

The annual average temperature is 3 degrees higher than it was between 1971 and 2000, mainly due to rising low temperatures.

Precipitation and snowpack have decreased, leaving the park in a drought condition.

Fires are expected to burn more of the park as a result. The park is managed as a natural ecosystem so most wildfires are left to burn themselves out.

In 2012, more than 5,600 acres burned in 18 wildfires, six of which were human-caused.

The odds are that people will cause more fires as the number of visitors continues to climb, hitting 3.4 million in 2012.

While the number of visitors is increasing, the populations of some native species are decreasing, including amphibians, which are most sensitive to drier conditions caused by climate change.

Populations of elk, trumpeter swans, Arctic grayling and westslope and Yellowstone cutthroat trout have also declined, although elk populations appear to be stabilizing.

The native cutthroat trout are struggling due to lake trout, one of several invasive species tracked by the study.

While the removal of more than a million lake trout over the past decade has reduced the population density in Yellowstone Lake, invasive mud snails and whirling disease are harder to control and remain ensconced in the few streams that they've invaded.

The same goes for more than 200 invasive plant species that thrive along the roads after brought into the park by vehicles.

Mountain goats are nonnative and seem to be one of the larger species that is doing well. The population has grown to between 200 and 300 after becoming established in the 1990s.

Seven native species saw little population change, although some, such as whitebark pine trees, are already at low levels.

Some, such as wolves, bison, bald eagles and grizzly bears are park success stories after being almost extinct or regionally absent just decades ago.

The park's geothermal features depend on natural groundwater and heat, but that could be compromised by energy and groundwater development outside the park.

Park staff monitor the amount of chloride flowing out of the park via rivers because most chloride comes from underground sources. If chloride amounts were to decrease significantly, that would indicate that less groundwater was burbling up into park features.

That hadn't happened as of 2010, but samples weren't available for this report and energy companies continue to push for more development.

Some good news was that winter air quality has improved noticeably since 2002 due to changes in the number and efficiency of snowmobiles and snow coaches allowed in the park.

This report is the first where managers added three cultural indicators – historic structures, archeological sites and museum collections – because the park's mission also includes their protection.

Most historical structures have been well maintained, but archeological sites — some of which date back 10,000 years — and museum collections have languished due to small park budgets.

Even with high visitation, almost 80 percent of historic structures are still in good condition and just 2 percent have degraded to poor condition.

Two-thirds of 1,400 archeological sites are in good condition, but more than 200 sites haven't been assessed. It's believed that many others remain to be discovered.

Two-thirds of 4 million museum items have not been assessed or cataloged

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:11 am MST Dec 11, 2013

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 18. Wind chill values as low as -10. Southwest wind 5 to 9 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 5. Southwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 24. Calm wind becoming southwest 5 to 7 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 6. Southwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Friday: A 40 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 23. Calm wind becoming west 5 to 7 mph in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly before 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 8. West southwest wind around 6 mph.

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YNP@Work

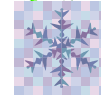
A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Thursday, December 12, 2013

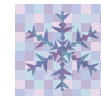
ANNOUNCEMENTS



Come One, Come All
To The
Employee Holiday Party



Good Food
Special Entertainment

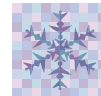


After the All Employee Meeting @ 2:30 p.m.
TODAY!

Mammoth Community Center



Prize for the best decorated table by Division



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TONIGHT in Livingston 6pm at the Danforth Gallery 106 N, Main St

Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 22, 2013

Participate in a century-old tradition! Spend a morning or longer counting and enjoying birds in the Mammoth-Gardiner area. If you like birds, this free event is for you. Beginning birders will count with more experienced birders. To receive a driving or walking route for counting birds:

WHEN: 7:00 a.m.

WHERE: Best Western in Gardiner

Bring Binoculars, warm clothing, water or hot beverage and snacks. For more information or to sign up for a route, please call Woody Martyn at 406-224-1476 or contact Katy Duffy at 307-344-2296, katy_duffy@nps.gov

- - - - -

Initial Snowmobile training is scheduled for:

December 18, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

December 18, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

December 19, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

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- - - - -

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony!

Tuesday, December 17

5:30 – 7:00

Mammoth Hotel Map Room

Please come celebrate the Holiday Season at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. There will be performances by our community's littlest people (Little People's Learning Center and Snoopy School). This event is a community potluck so please bring a dish to share. Santa will make a special appearance and free photos will be available. There will also be a silent auction featuring artwork by the kids as well as many other great items (museum memberships, getaway just in time for Christmas. Feel free to stop by and look even if you can't stay for the festivities!! Donations to the Gardiner food pantry will also be collected. Hope to see you there for this annual celebration! Happy Holidays!

- - - - -

HOLIDAY SCAM PREVENTION TIPS From Yellowstone Federal Credit Union

We've already seen several scams making the rounds in the last week or so, including an alleged Wal-Mart secret shopper offer complete with counterfeit check, so it doesn't hurt to remind everyone of these common scams and safeguards:

- Phishing scams-Don't fall for the emails, text messages or phone calls asking for personal or financial information or asking you to send money.

- Don't open attachments or click on links contained in unsolicited emails since the attachment or linked website could be infected with a virus or malware. This is particularly important when doing you holiday shopping online.
- Download free applications to your tablet or smartphone only from trusted sites. The application could be infected with a virus or malware.
- Make sure your home computers, laptops and tablets are protected with antivirus, anti-spyware
- Remember to exit and close the shopping site or turn off your computer, tablet, or mobile device when you are done browsing or shopping online.
- Watch for purchase offers of fake anti-virus software to trick you to purchase it.
- Social media scams-may involve a phony Facebook/Twitter site/promotion/contest.
- Be suspicious when asked to send money because you are a winner! Don't respond or send anything.
- Beware of scammers advertising popular holiday awards, such as you won a gift card.
- Research the seller of items before you buy.
- Don't fall for the mystery shopping scam asking you to earn money while evaluating a merchant.
- Coupon scams-don't provide personal or financial information.
- Charity scams-know who you are making the donation to. If not-don't donate.
- Funding scam on a prepaid card number-beware of being asked to purchase a MoneyPak (GreenDot) scratch off and asked to provide the scratch off number to a caller.
- Gift card purchases-beware when purchasing a gift card from a store where the card may have been compromised. Best advice is to purchase a gift card at your credit union!
- Monitor daily account information, transactions and balances to help identify any unauthorized
- If using an ATM-survey the ATM surroundings for safety and anything suspicious.
- Use well lighted parking lots-Make sure you have your car keys in your hands before entering the parking lot. Survey the area for any unusual activity.
- Vacation scams-Don't post news on an upcoming holiday trip or photos.
- If an offer sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam!

Be smart, be safe, and have a great holiday season!

IN THE NEWS

Paddling bill makes waves

Kelsey Dayton, WyoFile, December 10, 2013

The first time Aaron Pruzan visited the Grand Canyon, he did a typical driving tour, stopping at pullouts. At one point, he looked down at the river. New to kayaking, he vowed to return and experience the canyon from the river. He came back four years later and ran the river. Paddling, he realized, has the power to provide a deeper connection with the landscape.

It's an experience he wants for himself and others in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, the two national parks that don't allow paddling on most of their rivers.

A bill recently introduced by Rep. Cynthia Lummis could change that. [H.R. 3492](#) is meant to grant the park service the authority to study and consider paddling in the parks, Pruzan said. But not everyone sees it that way. Some see it as an affront to the land managers and a dangerous precedent that uses legislation to circumvent decisions user groups don't like. Some worry about paddling in the parks ruining view sheds, backcountry experiences and even having adverse environmental impacts.

The two-page bill isn't written clearly, said Scott Christensen conservation director with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. The coalition interprets it as stripping decision-making authority away from the park service.

The National Parks Conservation Association also "strongly opposes" the bill as written, said Bart Melton, Yellowstone program manager.

"Forcing the park service into a position where they have to consider a specific user group is not what congress had in mind when they set Yellowstone and Grand Teton aside in the first place," Melton said.

The bill isn't meant to take power away from the park service, but instead allow it to consider opening rivers to non-motorized boating, said Pruzan, owner of Rendezvous River Sports in Jackson. Paddlers have been told that park staff can't evaluate paddling because regulations are already in place that prohibits it, he said.

"I don't think anyone wants to take away management responsibility from the managers on the ground," Pruzan said. "This is more giving it back to them."

The bill is currently under revision, said Kevin Colburn, National Stewardship Director with American Whitewater. He hopes the new language is clear in that it's meant to allow the park service to consider and study paddling, not mandate management.

"We don't think any use should be legislatively required by congress," he said.

The park service has not finished studying the proposed bill and its ramifications, so it does not have an official stance, said James Doyle, the National Park Service's Intermountain Region Chief of Legislation.

Doyle didn't offer a reason as to why paddling is not allowed on most of the rivers in the parks, but did say the park service supports recreation opportunities and boating is allowed on much of the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park.

That stretch of river isn't enough, paddlers say. At stake are stretches of scenic water and world-class whitewater runs like in the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone where there are 27 miles of class three, four and five whitewater, Pruzan said. The water runs trailside for much of stretch, and there are already campsites in the area.

"(Banning boats on it) is a little like saying people can't climb the Grand Teton," Pruzan said. "It's hard to say any kayaker is more impactful than a fisherman, walking along the riverside or on the river bottom."

Yellowstone is a roadside park for most visitors. Boating offers a new way for people to connect with the landscape and get a new generation excited about rivers, parks and conservation, he said.

"I don't think we are ideologically opposed to paddling," said Christensen with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Christensen is a paddler himself. The worry is that it's a complex issue that shouldn't be dealt with legislatively.

"These are some of our most pristine waterways in the park, and if any new use is going to be allowed they need to be carefully studied," he said.

The problem, paddlers argue, is the park service won't study it.

Paddlers, as a user group, are ignored, said Thomas Turiano, vice president of the American Packraft Association. Yellowstone conducted a brief and limited study in the 1980s, but other than that the park service has refused to consider it in the two parks. There are numerous rivers, including those with wild and scenic designation, that

flow through wilderness or sensitive areas that allow paddling, even if its restricted with a small number of permits.

“Every other park and every other forest has figured this out, and Yellowstone can too,” Turiano said.

Pruzan wants a discussion about the paddling ban, which went into place in the 1950s to protect overfished rivers. Fishing has since been allowed again on the rivers, but boating hasn’t.

Jesse Logan, a retired scientist who taught at Colorado State University and Virginia Tech and worked for the Rocky Mountain Resource Station, called the bill “horrible.” He lives in Emigrant, Mont., near Yellowstone National Park.

One of his biggest environmental concerns is with packrafting, where backcountry users carry inflatable boats in backpacks and can move to different areas by boating and hiking. Moving the boats from one drainage to another allows for the introduction of exotic species that cling onto the boats. It also deprecates some of the last truly wild areas in the United States, he said. Right now, visiting the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone, people get to see what Lewis and Clark first saw – untrammeled wilderness.

“Rafting is really a game changer,” Logan said. “I’m of an opinion that wildness in wilderness has a place in this world. There is a value of wildness and wilderness in and of itself, and it’s becoming increasingly valuable because it’s becoming increasingly rare.”

While no one is asking for commercial guiding, Logan is certain that will follow. Other parks might allow paddling, but that doesn’t mean Yellowstone must. It’s a different and fragile ecosystem, he said.

Colburn, with American Whitewater, understands people are uncomfortable with a bill to address paddling. At the root of the issue is simply the chance for people to float or paddle down a river in some of the area’s most special places.

“That is why we are having this conversation,” he said. “That experience is really valuable and powerful.”

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 8:41 am MST Dec 12, 2013

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 25. South southwest wind 8 to 13 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 6. Wind chill values as low as zero. Southwest wind 3 to 5 mph.

Friday: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 23. Wind chill values as low as zero. West southwest wind 3 to 8 mph.

Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 8. Wind chill values as low as -5. West southwest wind 6 to 8 mph.

Saturday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly sunny, with a high near 23. West southwest wind 7 to 9 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 11. Southwest wind 9 to 15 mph.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly sunny, with a high near 27. Southwest wind 9 to 13 mph.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly cloudy, with a low around 13.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Friday, December 13, 2013

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!



Psssst, Mr. Wenk...Mr. Wenk...do you think we could chat a bit about that whole Grizzly De-Listing thingy when you get a moment?.....Mr. Wenk????

.....cuz I can't seem to get anywhere with THESE people!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Food Drive for the Gardiner Food Pantry during the recent Yellowstone Association Book Sale and Xanterra Gift Shop Sale was a success! **Over 100 pounds of food was donated to the GFP and \$376.00 in cash was raised!** Great job to everyone that donated and on behalf of the Gardiner Food Pantry – Thank you!

Ticket winners:

Binoculars donated by Yellowstone Association – Ticket #656729
Frosty Fun package donated by Xanterra Parks & Resorts – Ticket # 656378

Good Luck!

Winners – please email Lisa Dean at ldean@xanterra.com or call to claim your prize at 307-344-5208.

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I would like to **thank everyone** who stopped by to share some treats and congratulate me on my 40 years with the Credit Union. I had a lot of fun reminiscing and visiting. A very big thanks to the ladies I work with and my Board and committee members, who put it all together. I couldn't do this job without you! (Yes, 40 yrs is a long time-no wonder I feel old and decrepit!)

Martha Powell

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Avalanche Awareness Class: Thursday, December 19, 7-8 p.m. at the Yellowstone Association in Gardiner. Call Zachary for more info at: 406-848-2850.

- - - - -

The **Business Shuttle** is now available for booking for winter travel in the park. For reservations contact me at [Jennifer Morey@nps.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Morey@nps.gov) or at 344-2271. Becky Wyman can also assist. She can be reached at [Becky Wyman@nps.gov](mailto:Becky.Wyman@nps.gov) or 344-2278. Please refer to the attachment for the booking procedure and use guidelines. The Shuttle will begin operating 12/9/2013. Reminder: The Business Shuttle may only be used for work related travel needs.

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WHERE: Best Western in Gardiner

Bring Binoculars, warm clothing, water or hot beverage and snacks. For more information or to sign up for a route, please call Woody Martyn at 406-224-1476 or contact Katy Duffy at 307-344-2296, katy_duffy@nps.gov

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Initial Snowmobile training is scheduled for:

December 18, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

December 18, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

December 19, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

December 19, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

There are still several available openings on the sign-up sheets for **Initial Snowmobile Training**.

Sign-up sheets can be found on the P drive at <P:\\Safety Office\\Snowmobile Training\\Snowmobile Training 2013-2014 Sign-up\\Mammoth\\2013-14 Initial Training>

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Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony!

Tuesday, December 17

5:30 – 7:00

Mammoth Hotel Map Room

Please come celebrate the Holiday Season at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. There will be performances by our community's littlest people (Little People's Learning Center and Snoopy School). This event is a community potluck so please bring a dish to share. Santa will make a special appearance and free photos will be available. There will also be a silent auction featuring artwork by the kids as well as many other great items (museum memberships, getaway just in time for Christmas. Feel free to stop by and look even if you can't stay for the festivities!! Donations to the Gardiner food pantry will also be collected. Hope to see you there for this annual celebration! Happy Holidays!

HOLIDAY SCAM PREVENTION TIPS From Yellowstone Federal Credit Union

We've already seen several scams making the rounds in the last week or so, including an alleged Wal-Mart secret shopper offer complete with counterfeit check, so it doesn't hurt to remind everyone of these common scams and safeguards:

- Phishing scams-Don't fall for the emails, text messages or phone calls asking for personal or financial information or asking you to send money.
- Don't open attachments or click on links contained in unsolicited emails since the attachment or linked website could be infected with a virus or malware. This is particularly important when doing your holiday shopping online.
- Download free applications to your tablet or smartphone only from trusted sites. The application could be infected with a virus or malware.
- Make sure your home computers, laptops and tablets are protected with antivirus, anti-spyware
- Remember to exit and close the shopping site or turn off your computer, tablet, or mobile device when you are done browsing or shopping online.
- Watch for purchase offers of fake anti-virus software to trick you to purchase it.
- Social media scams-may involve a phony Facebook/Twitter site/promotion/contest.
- Be suspicious when asked to send money because you are a winner! Don't respond or send anything.
- Beware of scammers advertising popular holiday awards, such as you won a gift card.
- Research the seller of items before you buy.
- Don't fall for the mystery shopping scam asking you to earn money while evaluating a merchant.
- Coupon scams-don't provide personal or financial information.
- Charity scams-know who you are making the donation to. If not-don't donate.
- Funding scam on a prepaid card number-beware of being asked to purchase a MoneyPak (GreenDot) scratch off and asked to provide the scratch off number to a caller.
- Gift card purchases-beware when purchasing a gift card from a store where the card may have been compromised. Best advice is to purchase a gift card at your credit union!
- Monitor daily account information, transactions and balances to help identify any unauthorized
- If using an ATM-survey the ATM surroundings for safety and anything suspicious.
- Use well lighted parking lots-Make sure you have your car keys in your hands before entering the parking lot. Survey the area for any unusual activity.
- Vacation scams-Don't post news on an upcoming holiday trip or photos.
- If an offer sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam!

Be smart, be safe, and have a great holiday season!

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 8:41 am MST Dec 12, 2013

Today: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly after 3pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 23. West wind 6 to 8 mph.

Tonight: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 7. Wind chill values as low as zero. West southwest wind 3 to 5 mph.

Saturday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Partly sunny, with a high near 22. Wind chill values as low as zero. Southwest wind 3 to 8 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow after 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 10. Wind chill values as low as zero. West southwest wind around 7 mph.

Sunday: Partly sunny, with a high near 27. Southwest wind 6 to 11 mph.

Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 12. Southwest wind around 10 mph.

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Back issues of the newsletter are available at [P:\YNP@Work Published Issues](#)

YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Monday, December 16, 2013



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Safety Services will be conducting a fresher snowmobile training at the garage in the light side (the south bays) TOMORROW, December 17, at 4:00 pm. There will not be a pre-class sign-up. If you need the course feel free to show up.

There are four more initial classes left. If you need the refresher side of the course materials here is an opportunity to get it done as well.

Initial Class

December 18, 8:00 am and 1:00 pm

December 19, 8:00 am and 1:00 pm

Avalanche Awareness Class: Thursday, December 19, 7-8 p.m. at the Yellowstone Association in Gardiner. Call Zachary for more info at: 406-848-2850.

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The **Business Shuttle** is now available for booking for winter travel in the park. For reservations contact me at [Jennifer Morey@nps.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Morey@nps.gov) or at 344-2271. Becky Wyman can also assist. She can be reached at [Becky Wyman@nps.gov](mailto:Becky.Wyman@nps.gov) or 344-2278. Please refer to the attachment for the booking procedure and use guidelines. The Shuttle will begin operating 12/9/2013. Reminder: The Business Shuttle may only be used for work related travel needs.

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Give yourself the gift of a healthy, strong body this year!

Join the new Body Sculpt class Thursdays, 5:45am-6:45am at the Mammoth Community Center Studio!

This strength training class targets major muscle groups using just your own body weight. Mats provided, be sure to bring a bottle of water.

Starts this Thursday!

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Due to lower participation in the **Wellness Incentive Program** during the month of November, a combined drawing will be held in January for both November and December. Thank you to those employees who continue to participate on a monthly basis. Full program details can be found here: <http://inpyellshare/emsc/Wellness%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Femsc%2FWellness%20Program%2FYNP%20Wellness%20Program%20Documents%2FYellowstone%20Wellness%20Incentive%20Program&Folder>

As a reminder, you may begin participation in this program as any time by sending a completed form to Stacey Gunther. Awards are drawn on a monthly basis. Keep up the good work over the holidays.

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Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 22, 2013

Participate in a century-old tradition! Spend a morning or longer counting and enjoying birds in the Mammoth-Gardiner area. If you like birds, this free event is for you. Beginning birders will count with more experienced birders. To receive a driving or walking route for counting birds:

WHEN: 7:00 a.m.

WHERE: Best Western in Gardiner

Bring Binoculars, warm clothing, water or hot beverage and snacks. For more information or to sign up for a route, please call Woody Martyn at 406-224-1476 or contact Katy Duffy at 307-344-2296, katy_duffy@nps.gov

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Mid-Winter Bald and Golden Eagle Survey Saturday January 11, 2014

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Routes: 1) Mammoth & Jardine to Point of Rocks (drive)
 2) Mammoth to Cooke City - drive
 3) Canyon to Fishing Bridge - snowmobile
 4) South Entrance to West Thumb - snowmobile
 5) West Entrance to Madison – snowmobile
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Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony!

TOMORROW, December 17

5:30 – 7:00

Mammoth Hotel Map Room

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- Vacation scams-Don't post news on an upcoming holiday trip or photos.
- If an offer sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam!

Be smart, be safe, and have a great holiday season!

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:26 am MST Dec 16, 2013

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 29. West wind 11 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 9. Wind chill values as low as -5. West southwest wind 10 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tuesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 32. Wind chill values as low as -5. South southwest wind 10 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 14. Wind chill values as low as zero. South southwest wind around 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 32. Southwest wind 8 to 13 mph.

Wednesday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 10. Southwest wind 6 to 10 mph.

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YNP@Work

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Tuesday, December 17, 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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TODAY

5:30 – 7:00

Mammoth Hotel Map Room

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There is a **NPS Network Outage** scheduled on Tuesday 12/17 7:00pm to 11:59pm. NPS and Verizon will be installing some network equipment in the DOI Menlo Park Gateway. The outage is scheduled for 5 hours, but will more than likely not take that long. This outage will affect all areas of YELL and most of the IMR Parks. Our local network should continue to function, but there will be no connectivity to the outside world\internet.

Safety Services will be conducting a fresher snowmobile training at the garage in the light side (the south bays) TODAY at 4:00 pm. There will not be a pre-class sign-up. If you need the course feel free to show up.

There are four more initial classes left. If you need the refresher side of the course materials here is an opportunity to get it done as well.

Initial Class

December 18, 8:00 am and 1:00 pm

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- If an offer sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam!

And finally...A little holiday gem resurrected from 1995 (another "rough budget year")

Be smart, be safe, and have a great holiday season!
Twas the night before Federal Budget was due
House, Senate & Clinton tried working it through

But the money was still not where it should be
To save all the jobs for you and for me
Ao argue they did well into the night
And around two or so it broke into a fight
“What about money . . . ?” for this cause or that
It got real ugly, much more than a spat
And way far away in our nation’s first park
The wolves hear the news and began to talk-bark
“How will we eat if there’s no one about?
Can Doug or Mike feed us? Or will they be out?
The National Guard was called out to the gate
To keep out the tourists, they’ll just have to wait
Finley and Sholly and Tim was there too
Discussing the list of essential Who’s Who
Edna was kept busy for most of the day
Trying to keep the concessioners at bay
Joanne was checking her cc:Mail
Waiting for word but to no avail
Varley & Sacklin tried every trick in the book
But neither of them could get us off the hook
And through all the parks there arose such a clatter
They did all they could but it just didn’t matter
So . . . go Admin, go Interp, leave Rangers, leave Maint
Now Concessions, now YCR – necessary you ain’t
Keep checking the phone line as you did before
That way you’ll know when there’s funding once more
Will we have an extra long Christmas & New Year?
Valentine’s? Saint Pat’s? Perhaps even Easter?
We wrote this poem to decorate our door
We’ll return for our prize after the budget war!
And if we return and did not win the prize
Happy Christmas to all! Hey, ADP really tried!

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:56 am MST Dec 17, 2013

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 34. Southwest wind 13 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 13. Wind chill values as low as zero. Southwest wind around 11 mph.

Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 33. South southwest wind 8 to 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: Snow likely after 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 12. Southwest wind 7 to 9 mph.
Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible.

Thursday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 19. North wind 5 to 7 mph. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -1. North wind 5 to 9 mph becoming calm in the evening.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Wednesday, December 18, 2013

Happy Holidays!!!



Santa Invades, Kids Go Nuts
(Story at 11)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mammoth Clinic holiday hours: Closed on Tue 12/24, Wed 12/25, Tue 12/31 and Wed 1/1. Merry Christmas everyone!

Avalanche Awareness Class: TOMORROW, December 19, 7-8 p.m. at the Yellowstone Association in Gardiner. Call Zachary for more info at: 406-848-2850.

The winter version of our **phone book** is ready. You can pick them up from the Work Center. If you are not in Mammoth, email Judy at yell_office_services@nps.gov and she will send them out to you. As usual we have the large, complete directory and the staff listings. If you are ordering for your work group, please let the others know so we don't double up on orders.

The **Business Shuttle** is now available for booking for winter travel in the park. For reservations contact me at Jennifer_Morey@nps.gov or at 344-2271. Becky Wyman can also assist. She can be reached at Becky_Wyman@nps.gov or 344-2278. Please refer to the attachment for the booking procedure and use guidelines. The Shuttle will begin operating 12/9/2013. Reminder: The Business Shuttle may only be used for work related travel needs.

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House, Senate & Clinton tried working it through
But the money was still not where it should be
To save all the jobs for you and for me
Ao argue they did well into the night
And around two or so it broke into a fight
"What about money . . . ?" for this cause or that
It got real ugly, much more than a spat
And way far away in our nation's first park
The wolves hear the news and began to talk-bark
"How will we eat if there's no one about?
Can Doug or Mike feed us? Or will they be out?
The National Guard was called out to the gate
To keep out the tourists, they'll just have to wait
Finley and Sholly and Tim was there too

Discussing the list of essential Who's Who
Edna was kept busy for most of the day
Trying to keep the concessioners at bay
Joanne was checking her cc:Mail
Waiting for word but to no avail
Varley & Sacklin tried every trick in the book
But neither of them could get us off the hook
And through all the parks there arose such a clatter
They did all they could but it just didn't matter
So . . . go Admin, go Interp, leave Rangers, leave Maint
Now Concessions, now YCR – necessary you ain't
Keep checking the phone line as you did before
That way you'll know when there's funding once more
Will we have an extra long Christmas & New Year?
Valentine's? Saint Pat's? Perhaps even Easter?
We wrote this poem to decorate our door
We'll return for our prize after the budget war!
And if we return and did not win the prize
Happy Christmas to all! Hey, ADP really tried!

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:41 am MST Dec 18, 2013

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 32. Wind chill values as low as zero. Southwest wind 10 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tonight: A 40 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11pm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 10. Southwest wind 5 to 8 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Thursday: Snow likely, mainly before 11am. Cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 14. Wind chill values as low as -5. Light and variable wind becoming north northeast 5 to 8 mph in the morning. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around -4. Wind chill values as low as -20. North northeast wind around 6 mph becoming south southwest in the evening.

Friday: A 20 percent chance of snow after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 15. Southwest wind 8 to 11 mph.

Friday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 4. Southwest wind 7 to 10 mph.

Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

Do you see something we could do to improve safety in Yellowstone OR do you see a co-worker who has done something positive about safety?

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WE WANT YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Have something to share with other NPS employees in the park? We're especially interested in items occurring outside Mammoth, and in getting digital photos of employees at work! Please remember to send your text or photo submissions for the newsletter to us at YELL_Public_Affairs@nps.gov (not individual's email), so that whoever is doing the newsletter that day has access to it. Thanks!

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Thursday, December 19, 2013

[Happy Holidays!!!](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mammoth Micro Hydro celebrates its first birthday!



On Dec 19th 2012, we threw the switch and connected the 170 kW micro hydro unit to Northwestern Energy's grid. Sentimental project manager Peter Galindo says it's been operating pretty much non-stop every day since. It offsets about \$7,500 a month in NPS electrical costs. It will be taken out of service for a couple days in the spring to facilitate an inspection.

***December 19** is here, and all too quickly. Even though it's time to leave my friends here at YCR and Yellowstone, I have to tell all of you what a wonderful three years I've had and how great you all have made it to work and live here. No one warned me the people would be so hard-working yet even more enjoyable than the critters—and the geothermals--and the landscape...heck, you guys even beat the supervolcano! SO: thanks, from the bottom of my heart. May you all be well and enjoy friends, family, the holidays and life to the fullest. I'll remember you always (especially the great nickname).*

--Timex (a.k.a. Jen Baseden)

We just wanted to say **“Thanks”** to each of the divisions for the awesome way you responded to the decorating contest and for the wonderful food contributions you brought to the employee Christmas Party. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to help make it a success! A special thank you to the Electric Shop for the lights; Kirby’s crew for setting up chairs and tables; the “entertainment elves” for the awesome performance; Steve, Doug and Jen for judging; and to each and every one of you who helped to set up and clean up.

Sonya and Judy

- - - - -

A big **thank you** to all of those who donated pajamas! We collected 40 pairs for children and families in Park County. Happy Holidays!!

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Located at the **"OLD" Supply Center** you will find the following, for GOV USE

- Used Copy Paper boxes
- Used Record boxes
- Used Chairs and Work Tables
- Used size Medium, 1 Piece, Snowmobile Suits - these will need to be washed

Available until 3pm Friday!

- - - - -

Mammoth Clinic holiday hours: Closed on Tue 12/24, Wed 12/25, Tue 12/31 and Wed 1/1. Merry Christmas everyone!

- - - - -

Avalanche Awareness Class: TODAY, 7-8 p.m. at the Yellowstone Association in Gardiner. Call Zachary for more info at: 406-848-2850.

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The winter version of our **phone book** is ready. You can pick them up from the Work Center. If you are not in Mammoth, email Judy at yell_office_services@nps.gov and she will send them out to you. As usual we have the large, complete directory and the staff listings. If you are ordering for your work group, please let the others know so we don't double up on orders.

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The **Business Shuttle** is now available for booking for winter travel in the park. For reservations contact me at [Jennifer Morey@nps.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Morey@nps.gov) or at 344-2271. Becky Wyman can also assist. She can be reached at [Becky Wyman@nps.gov](mailto:Becky.Wyman@nps.gov) or 344-2278. Please refer to the attachment for the booking procedure and use guidelines. The Shuttle will begin operating 12/9/2013. Reminder: The Business Shuttle may only be used for work related travel needs.

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Give yourself the gift of a healthy, strong body this year!

Join the new Body Sculpt class Thursdays, 5:45am-6:45am at the Mammoth Community Center Studio!

This strength training class targets major muscle groups using just your own body weight. Mats provided, be sure to bring a bottle of water.

Starts this Thursday!

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Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 22, 2013

Participate in a century-old tradition! Spend a morning or longer counting and enjoying birds in the Mammoth-Gardiner area. If you like birds, this free event is for you. Beginning birders will count with more experienced birders. To receive a driving or walking route for counting birds:

WHEN: 7:00 a.m.

WHERE: Best Western in Gardiner

Bring Binoculars, warm clothing, water or hot beverage and snacks. For more information or to sign up for a route, please call Woody Martyn at 406-224-1476 or contact Katy Duffy at 307-344-2296, katy_duffy@nps.gov

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Mid-Winter Bald and Golden Eagle Survey Saturday January 11, 2014

Join this national effort to see how many bald and golden eagles winter in our area. This is an ongoing national citizen science effort that Yellowstone has participated in since 1987. Surveys begin ~ 8am and end at noon or earlier. All skill levels welcome. To sign up send Lisa Baril (Lisa_Baril@partner.nps.gov) an email with your preferred area (see below) by January 6. Observers must provide their own transportation, but we will help coordinate rides among volunteers.

Routes: 1) Mammoth & Jardine to Point of Rocks (drive)

2) Mammoth to Cooke City - drive

3) Canyon to Fishing Bridge - snowmobile

4) South Entrance to West Thumb - snowmobile

5) West Entrance to Madison – snowmobile

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HOLIDAY SCAM PREVENTION TIPS From Yellowstone Federal Credit Union

We've already seen several scams making the rounds in the last week or so, including an alleged Wal-Mart secret shopper offer complete with counterfeit check, so it doesn't hurt to remind everyone of these common scams and safeguards:

- Phishing scams-Don't fall for the emails, text messages or phone calls asking for personal or financial information or asking you to send money.
- Don't open attachments or click on links contained in unsolicited emails since the attachment or linked website could be infected with a virus or malware. This is particularly important when doing your holiday shopping online.
- Download free applications to your tablet or smartphone only from trusted sites. The application could be infected with a virus or malware.

- Make sure your home computers, laptops and tablets are protected with antivirus, anti-spyware
- Remember to exit and close the shopping site or turn off your computer, tablet, or mobile device when you are done browsing or shopping online.
- Watch for purchase offers of fake anti-virus software to trick you to purchase it.
- Social media scams-may involve a phony Facebook/Twitter site/promotion/contest.
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- Research the seller of items before you buy.
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- Coupon scams-don't provide personal or financial information.
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- Funding scam on a prepaid card number-beware of being asked to purchase a MoneyPak (GreenDot) scratch off and asked to provide the scratch off number to a caller.
- Gift card purchases-beware when purchasing a gift card from a store where the card may have been compromised. Best advice is to purchase a gift card at your credit union!
- Monitor daily account information, transactions and balances to help identify any unauthorized
- If using an ATM-survey the ATM surroundings for safety and anything suspicious.
- Use well lighted parking lots-Make sure you have your car keys in your hands before entering the parking lot. Survey the area for any unusual activity.
- Vacation scams-Don't post news on an upcoming holiday trip or photos.
- If an offer sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam!

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:41 am MST Dec 19, 2013

Today: A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly before 2pm. Partly sunny, with a temperature falling to around 7 by 5pm. Wind chill values as low as -5. North wind around 8 mph. Total daytime snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around -5. Wind chill values as low as -20. North northeast wind 5 to 7 mph becoming calm.

Friday: A 40 percent chance of snow after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 15. Wind chill values as low as -20. Southwest wind 10 to 14 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Friday Night: Snow likely, mainly before 11pm. Cloudy, with a low around 4. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind 8 to 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Saturday: A 40 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 21. West southwest wind 6 to 9 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday Night: A 40 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 7. West southwest wind around 7 mph.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Friday, December 20, 2013

Happy Holidays!!!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Listen to the Lake Sing!

On her first winter visit to the interior, Yellowstone VIP Jennifer Jerrett was not only lucky enough to hear the lake sing, but to have sound gear with her. Check it out at <http://go.nps.gov/sonics>, and keep an eye/ear on that page for more of Jennifer's recordings.

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Located at the "**OLD**" **Supply Center** you will find the following, for GOV USE

- Used Copy Paper boxes
- Used Record boxes
- Used Chairs and Work Tables
- Used size Medium, 1 Piece, Snowmobile Suits - these will need to be washed

Available until 3pm TODAY!

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Mammoth Clinic holiday hours: Closed on Tue 12/24, Wed 12/25, Tue 12/31 and Wed 1/1. Merry Christmas everyone!

- - - - -

The winter version of our **phone book** is ready. You can pick them up from the Work Center. If you are not in Mammoth, email Judy at yell_office_services@nps.gov and she will send them out to you. As usual we have the large, complete directory and the staff listings. If you are ordering for your work group, please let the others know so we don't double up on orders.

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Starts this Thursday!

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WHEN: 7:00 a.m.

WHERE: Best Western in Gardiner

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HOLIDAY SCAM PREVENTION TIPS From Yellowstone Federal Credit Union

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- Vacation scams-Don't post news on an upcoming holiday trip or photos.
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WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:41 am MST Dec 20, 2013

Today: Snow likely, mainly after 4pm. Partly sunny, with a high near 15. Wind chill values as low as -10. West wind 10 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 22 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. Total daytime snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Tonight: Snow likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 2. Wind chill values as low as -15. Northwest wind 11 to 16 mph becoming northeast after midnight. Winds could gust as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches possible.

Saturday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 20. Wind chill values as low as -15. North wind 6 to 10 mph becoming west in the morning. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

Saturday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 9. Wind chill values as low as -5. West wind 8 to 11 mph becoming south southeast in the evening. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Sunday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 22. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.

Sunday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 11. West southwest wind around 9 mph.

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Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Monday, December 23, 2013



“Psst, hey Bullwinkle...stay still and maybe they won’t see you.” Can you spot the second moose?
(photo by Tom Schwartz)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Listen to the Lake Sing!

On her first winter visit to the interior, Yellowstone VIP Jennifer Jerrett was not only lucky enough to hear the lake sing, but to have sound gear with her. Check it out at <http://go.nps.gov/sonics>, and keep an eye/ear on that page for more of Jennifer's recordings.

The **courier run** tomorrow will be by Rachel Cudmore. Claire Stout will be doing the courier run on Friday, Dec 27 so if you need anything, please let her know at claire_stout@nps.gov or get in touch with someone in VSO.

Thanks and Happy Holidays!

Need a last minute gift? Yellowstone Art Work Calendars created by the community's littlest people available for \$15. Please contact Mary Kay Woodin X2059 or Becky Wyman X2278 if you would like one. Happy Holidays!!

Supply/Property News: There will be a "**Town Run**" carried out on Thursday December 26th. If you have any stops, please send an email to the NPS YELL Supply in box or contact Barb Agle at 344-2085.

Judy Bischoff is giving an 8 hour **ATR refresher** on January 8, 2014 from 8:30 am to 4:30 PM MST. Please contact her if you would like to participate. Her email is Judy_Bischoff@nps.gov

Mammoth Clinic holiday hours: Closed on Tue 12/24, Wed 12/25, Tue 12/31 and Wed 1/1. Merry Christmas everyone!

The information that follows should be disseminated throughout the National Park Service (NPS) to **all motor vehicle operators**.

The General Services Administration has notified the Department of the Interior (DOI) Fleet Manager of having received a recent list of Federal vehicles that shows 308 EZ-Pass toll violations have accumulated in the State of Massachusetts for the month of November alone. This very morning, dozens of drivers have been informed that they bear the responsibility of the expense and therefore paying a tremendous amount of money in both tolls and fines. States are increasingly using cameras, license plate scanners, and other technology to identify those vehicles running toll lanes, red lights, as well as to also identify those vehicles operating at excessive speeds and those not adhering to posted parking notices and restrictions. It must be clearly understood that this use of new technology will greatly increase the likelihood of receiving a violation notice for those drivers who fail to operate their vehicles both safely, and not within the State and local motor vehicle traffic laws.

The Federal Management Regulation (FMR) 102-34.235 and the DOI, Motor Vehicle Management Handbook, provide the policy to comply with State and local motor vehicle laws. The following (NPS Personal Property Management Handbook #44, Section 11.21) is consistent with the FMR and DOI policies:

All NPS motor vehicle operators:

1. Are reminded of their responsibility to comply with State and local motor vehicle traffic laws.
2. Are personally responsible (not the NPS or the Federal Government) for State or local jurisdiction traffic violations committed.
3. Must not use "EZ-Pass Only" toll lanes, if the vehicle is not registered and equipped with an EZ-Pass transponder.

Regions/centers, parks and offices are responsible for the financial costs incurred by registering vehicles with EZ-Pass or like systems throughout the United States and its territories.

The winter version of our **phone book** is ready. You can pick them up from the Work Center. If you are not in Mammoth, email Judy at yell_office_services@nps.gov and she will send them out to you. As usual we have the large, complete directory and the staff listings. If you are ordering for your work group, please let the others know so we don't double up on orders.

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WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 5:41 am MST Dec 23, 2013

Today: Snow likely. Cloudy, with a high near 25. West northwest wind 10 to 13 mph becoming south southwest in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 70%. Total daytime snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches possible.

Tonight: Snow likely before 11pm, then snow with areas of blowing snow after 11pm. Low around 11. Wind chill values as low as zero. Blustery, with a west northwest wind 16 to 25 mph, with gusts as high as 36 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New snow accumulation of 2 to 4 inches possible.

Tuesday: Areas of blowing snow and a chance of snow before 11am, then a slight chance of snow after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 21. Wind chill values as low as -5. Breezy, with a west wind 17 to 22 mph becoming west 10 to 15 mph in the morning. Winds could gust as high as 31 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50%. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -1. Wind chill values as low as -15. West wind around 11 mph becoming south after midnight.

Christmas Day: Partly sunny, with a high near 20. West wind 6 to 8 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 3. Southwest wind 3 to 5 mph.

Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Tuesday, December 24, 2013



Santa visits the interior children on the Christmas Eve day courier run!!!

The hiding moose from the image yesterday was in the tree to the right of the main moose.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 24, 2013

Good Morning: Please see below a message from the NPS Acting Director allowing three (3) hours of leave today, with supervisory approval, to all employees who are working today.

I wish you a warm and safe holiday season with your family and friends.

All the best to you in 2014.

Dan Wenk
Superintendent

Computer Support will be closed on Friday, December 27th. Happy holidays!

Listen to the Lake Sing!

On her first winter visit to the interior, Yellowstone VIP Jennifer Jerrett was not only lucky enough to hear the lake sing, but to have sound gear with her. Check it out at <http://go.nps.gov/sonics>, and keep an eye/ear on that page for more of Jennifer's recordings.

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Claire Stout will be doing the **courier run on Friday, Dec 27** so if you need anything, please let her know at claire_stout@nps.gov or get in touch with someone in VSO.

Thanks and Happy Holidays!

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There is still time! Wonderful Yellowstone inspired art work and a calendar in one! What more could you ask for! Yellowstone Art Work Calendars created by the community's littlest people available for \$15. Please contact Mary Kay Woodin X2059 or Becky Wyman X2278 if you would like one. Happy Holidays!!

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Supply/Property News: There will be a "**Town Run**" carried out on Thursday December 26th. If you have any stops, please send an email to the NPS YELL Supply in box or contact Barb Agle at 344-2085.

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Judy Bischoff is giving an 8 hour **ATR refresher** on January 8, 2014 from 8:30 am to 4:30 PM MST. Please contact her if you would like to participate. Her email is Judy_Bischoff@nps.gov

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Mammoth Clinic holiday hours: Closed **TODAY AND TOMORROW**, Tue 12/31 and Wed 1/1. Merry Christmas everyone!

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The information that follows should be disseminated throughout the National Park Service (NPS) to **all motor vehicle operators**.

The General Services Administration has notified the Department of the Interior (DOI) Fleet Manager of having received a recent list of Federal vehicles that shows 308 EZ-Pass toll violations have accumulated in the State of Massachusetts for the month of November alone. This very morning, dozens of drivers have been informed that they bear the responsibility of the expense and therefore paying a tremendous amount of money in both tolls and fines. States are increasingly using cameras, license plate scanners, and other technology to identify those vehicles running toll lanes, red lights, as well as to also identify those vehicles operating at excessive speeds and those not adhering to posted parking notices and restrictions. It must be clearly understood that this use of new technology will greatly increase the likelihood of receiving a violation notice for those drivers who fail to operate their vehicles both safely, and not within the State and local motor vehicle traffic laws.

The Federal Management Regulation (FMR) 102-34.235 and the DOI, Motor Vehicle Management Handbook, provide the policy to comply with State and local motor vehicle laws. The following (NPS Personal Property Management Handbook #44, Section 11.21) is consistent with the FMR and DOI policies:

All NPS motor vehicle operators:

1. Are reminded of their responsibility to comply with State and local motor vehicle traffic laws.
2. Are personally responsible (not the NPS or the Federal Government) for State or local jurisdiction traffic violations committed.
3. Must not use “EZ-Pass Only” toll lanes, if the vehicle is not registered and equipped with an EZ-Pass transponder.

Regions/centers, parks and offices are responsible for the financial costs incurred by registering vehicles with EZ-Pass or like systems throughout the United States and its territories.

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The winter version of our **phone book** is ready. You can pick them up from the Work Center. If you are not in Mammoth, email Judy at yell_office_services@nps.gov and she will send them out to you. As usual we have the large, complete directory and the staff listings. If you are ordering for your work group, please let the others know so we don't double up on orders.

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Give yourself the gift of a healthy, strong body this year!

Join the new Body Sculpt class Thursdays, 5:45am-6:45am at the Mammoth Community Center Studio!

This strength training class targets major muscle groups using just your own body weight. Mats provided, be sure to bring a bottle of water.

Starts this Thursday!

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Mid-Winter Bald and Golden Eagle Survey Saturday January 11, 2014

Join this national effort to see how many bald and golden eagles winter in our area. This is an ongoing national citizen science effort that Yellowstone has participated in since 1987. Surveys begin ~ 8am and end at noon or earlier. All skill levels welcome. To sign up send Lisa Baril (Lisa_Baril@partner.nps.gov) an email with your preferred area (see below) by January 6. Observers must provide their own transportation, but we will help coordinate rides among volunteers.

Routes: 1) Mammoth & Jardine to Point of Rocks (drive)
2) Mammoth to Cooke City - drive
3) Canyon to Fishing Bridge - snowmobile
4) South Entrance to West Thumb - snowmobile
5) West Entrance to Madison – snowmobile
6) Swan Lake Flat to Madison - snowmobile

IN THE NEWS

About 50 antelope lingering in Teton Valley

34 minutes ago • Associated Press

JACKSON, Wyo. — About an eighth of the Teton Valley's pronghorn antelope could end up spending the winter there, facing conditions that are tough even in average years.

About 50 antelope were spotted on the southeast corner of the National Elk Refuge last week. The Jackson Hole Daily (<http://bit.ly/1a5RPES>) reported Tuesday that it remains to be seen whether they will ultimately make the migration to the Pinedale Anticline gas field with the rest of the herd or stay in the valley.

Pronghorn are poorly equipped to deal with extreme cold or hard snow. They're also at the bottom of the feeding hierarchy in competing for alfalfa pellets distributed for elk at the refuge.

Read more: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/about-antelope-lingering-in-teton-valley/article_a799d914-cd3f-50f7-9779-5a0f319c1fe1.html#ixzz2oPVEXfTX

Endangered Species Act's 40th anniversary draws celebration, critics

23 hours ago • By [ROB CHANEY Missoulain](#) (Billings Gazette)

MISSOULA — Last Thursday, a bald eagle devoured a goldeneye duck on the ice beside Brennan's Wave, just downstream of Missoula's Higgins Avenue Bridge.

Such a sight was inconceivable 40 years ago, when the nation's mascot was disappearing from its skies and just 12 breeding pairs were known in Montana. The bald eagle was one of the "charismatic megafauna" that helped pass the Endangered Species Act, which soon had more than 1,200 plants and animals under its protection.

In the next few months, people in 10 states will be gathering for bus tours and field trips arranged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to see bald eagles in celebration of the act's anniversary. Missoulians living, working or studying along the Clark Fork River need only look out their windows. The threatened grizzly bear is the University of Montana's mascot, and recent GPS data confirm at least two grizzlies have tiptoed right up to the northern edge of the city limits. The confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers east of the city was historically known to the Salish Indians as the "Place of the Big Bull Trout" — another species enjoying ESA protection.

President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law on Dec. 28, 1973, he noted "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

The bald eagle came off the ESA list on July 9, 2007. So have the American alligator, two kinds of peregrine falcon, the brown pelican and 31 other species. Seven species, including the Santa Barbara song sparrow, blue pike and dusky seaside sparrow, have gone extinct since they were given ESA listings.

John Melcher was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives when the ESA passed Congress. He was one of 355 votes in favor to four against in the House. In the Senate, the bill passed 92-0.

“It was something that turned out right,” Melcher, who also represented Montana in the U.S. Senate, said from his Rattlesnake home last week. “Nixon signed it – it was one of his better sides. I think he felt good that day. He knew the rationale was right.”

Melcher said the act won such overwhelming support because people understood it provided balance in the natural world.

“I know some people want to get rid of wolverines – it’s not a pleasant animal, but it balances out the rest of the animals,” he said. “It’s a mean son-of-a-gun. It’s not easily liked, but we have to have them. And if you’re not careful, you get out of balance and lose the species.”

We knew so little about that mean son-of-a-gun that the wolverine spent years in the limbo of “warranted but precluded” from ESA protection. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last week announced it is six months away from making a final decision on a wolverine listing. The best available science estimates there are between 250 and 650 wolverines in the continental United States. The biggest slice of that population lives in Montana.

Grizzly bears have grown numerous enough to rattle the ground along the political fault line that runs through the Endangered Species Act. Two weeks ago, a roundtable of state and federal wildlife officials that share grizzly recovery duties formally recommended delisting the bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem around Yellowstone National Park.

Federal estimates put the Greater Yellowstone grizzly population somewhere between 629 and 740 bears. FWS grizzly recovery coordinator Chris Servheen argued before the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee that for both biological and political reasons, the grizzly was ready to stand on its own.

“If we don’t delist when the bears are recovered, that public and political support will evaporate,” Servheen told the committee. “We have to signal a touchdown has been made.”

FWS also is working on a draft delisting rule for grizzlies in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem between Glacier National Park and Missoula, where an estimated 930 bears live. Work on that project stalled after independent grizzly advocates blocked the Greater Yellowstone delisting in court in 2009.

Meanwhile, a couple of critters not currently on the Endangered Species Act demonstrate another facet of its influence. Arctic grayling fish and sage grouse are both going through the FWS review process to decide if they should join the list. Making the ESA triggers lots of impacts, including critical habitat designations, required interagency consultations before projects can happen on public land, and prohibitions of the deliberate or accidental taking of the listed species.

The potential for a grayling listing encouraged farmers and ranchers along the Big Hole River in Montana to work together on a water-sharing system that keeps more in-stream flow in tributary creeks where the grayling lives. Landowners who participated in the program earn exemptions from further obligations if the fish receives federal protection.

A similar drama may play out with landowners in sage grouse country. As the bird populations have collapsed through loss of habitat and West Nile virus infection, several states and conservation groups have started recovery programs on their own. They’ve used tactics such as encouraging energy companies to forego leasing for exploration in sage grouse country and buying up underused grazing allotments on public land.

“It’s a good incentive for people to come to the table and craft solutions to keep species from disappearing,” said Derek Goldman of the Endangered Species Coalition in Missoula. “The threat of listing brought all those livestock producers to the table. Sometimes these efforts work. Sometimes it’s too little, too late.”

Or too much, too soon. Kerry White of Citizens for Balanced Use argues the Endangered Species Act does more harm than good.

"I see it more being used to stop resource development, stop agriculture and take private property rights by environmental groups," White said from his office in Bozeman. "Take sage grouse. They want to list those, but they have absolutely no idea how many sage grouse are in the state of Montana. If you don't know how many there are, you don't know how many you need to hit that target."

White said the ESA's limited track record for getting animals and plants restored didn't give him confidence the sacrifices made to save something would ever be repaid.

"I think it's well overdue to be repealed, done away with or revamped," White said. "It's really having an effect on people's lives and the economics of small communities."

Both White and Goldman pointed to the 2010 delisting of the Rocky Mountain gray wolf to make their points. For White, it was how the wolf stayed on the Endangered Species List for years after reaching its recovery threshold of 30 breeding pairs in both Idaho and Montana, because of lawsuits blocking the delisting.

"It finally took an act of Congress to legislatively remove wolves from the ESA," he said, recalling the rider by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont. that exempted Montana and Idaho wolves from further judicial review in 2011.

Goldman agreed congressional intervention was a poor precedent.

"But a big piece of the story that's lost in the hoopla is the amazing success – we recovered a large carnivore that's difficult to live with," Goldman said. "It's too bad that story is kind of lost in the controversy between wolf lovers and wolf haters."

Read more: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/endangered-species-act-s-th-anniversary-draws-celebration-critics/article_8ceb9bf3-3ddf-5bde-8ba7-dfb6ab99cdb6.html#ixzz2oPTljJSQ

24-hour rule questioned in wolf hunt quota

Posted: Tuesday, December 24, 2013 12:45 am

[24-hour rule questioned in wolf hunt quota](#) LAURA LUNDQUIST, Bozeman Chronicle Staff Writer

After a hunting area near Yellowstone National Park closed two days after a quota was filled, some wolf advocates are arguing that timing is everything.

Last Wednesday, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks announced that the quota of four wolves had been filled in hunting district 313 just north of Gardiner and Yellowstone National Park.

FWP reported that on Tuesday evening, a hunter killed a 3-year-old female gray wolf believed to be a member of the park's Canyon pack. He reported the kill on Wednesday morning.

Hunters have 24 hours to report harvesting a wolf.

FWP regulations say that when a hunting quota is reached, the hunting season will close "upon a 24-hour notice."

FWP issued an alert at noon on Wednesday that the wolf hunt would close in area 313 but not until a half hour after sunset on Thursday.

FWP spokesman Ron Aasheim pointed to the “upon a 24-hour notice” clause.

“You have to be fair to the folks who are out there. We didn’t think we could close it the same day,” Aasheim said. “Some people aren’t going to like that and we understand that.”

Some wolf advocates said they expected the hunt to close Wednesday night and were shocked when they saw hunters out in the Jardine area northeast of Gardiner on Thursday.

Jardine resident Bill Hoppe said he saw just “a couple of people wandering around.”

But other residents reported that hunters showed up on Thursday that hadn’t been in the area the day before.

Reports from wolf watchers were that both the Canyon and Blacktail packs had come out of the park and were in the Jardine area. Some thought they might have been attracted by electronic wolf calls, which are legal in Montana.

“I counted seven rigs lined up on the Jardine road, and the hunters were glassing the hill like crazy,” said Wolves of the Rockies spokeswoman Kim Bean. “With a quota, there’s supposed to be a mandatory closure within 24 hours. We’re (upset) with the slow closure.”

FWP biologist Abby Nelson said no wolf kills were reported after the fourth wolf was killed. But if there had been a fifth wolf killed, it would have been legal as long as it was shot before Thursday evening.

“When the quotas were developed, they were created with the notification time in mind,” Nelson said.

Three wolf hunting districts have quotas: the North Fork Flathead near Glacier National Park has a limit of two wolves, and north of Yellowstone National Park, the Gardiner area has a quota of four and the Absaroka area to the east has a quota of three.

The Absaroka area is still open with two wolves killed.

As of Monday, hunters this season had killed 109 wolves and trappers had taken 12.

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 6:24 am MST Dec 24, 2013

Today: A chance of snow before noon, then a slight chance of snow after 3pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 21. South southeast wind 10 to 15 mph becoming west in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 23 mph.

Chance of precipitation is 50%. Total daytime snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -3. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind 11 to 13 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Christmas Day: Partly sunny, with a high near 22. Wind chill values as low as -20. West southwest wind 8 to 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -2. Wind chill values as low as -15. Southwest wind around 8 mph.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 27. West wind around 6 mph.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 3. Southwest wind 3 to 6 mph.

Yellowstone Safety Recognition Program (SRP)

Do you see something we could do to improve safety in Yellowstone OR do you see a co-worker who has done something positive about safety?

Use the [Safety Recognition Program](#) to report a hazard occurring in the park or nominate a Safety Champion. Full program details can be found using the link above. We want to hear from YOU!

WE WANT YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Have something to share with other NPS employees in the park? We're especially interested in items occurring outside Mammoth, and in getting digital photos of employees at work! Please remember to send your text or photo submissions for the newsletter to us at YELL_Public_Affairs@nps.gov (not individual's email), so that whoever is doing the newsletter that day has access to it. Thanks!

Back issues of the newsletter are available at [P:\YNP@Work Published Issues](#)