

YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Monday, November 2, 2015



Congratulations on 15 years of service Charissa Reid!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the weeks of Nov 2 and Nov 9, the Finance Office will only be staffed to receive checks and revenue on Mon, Tues, and Wed. Please plan accordingly. We thank you in advance, and apologize for any inconvenience.

Training Role Players Needed - We are looking for role players for a public information officer training simulation. The date is Thursday, November 5 from noon until 4 p.m. at the Mammoth Fire Cache. We will provide instructions and a simple script. If you are interested, please call Ed Folts or Laura Dooley at 344-2181.

The fall courier began this week and will happen on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** (except on weeks w/a holiday when there will be one run). The run will be rotated between divisions. During this time, mail and packages will be dropped at the winter mail drop areas. The run will be made as weather and road conditions permit, sometimes the mail may need to be shuttled by local staff, e.g., from Lake to Grant or, if arrangements are made the courier can meet your staff. The oversnow courier will begin when conditions allow, typically in December. Please keep in mind this courier is primarily conducted for personal and park mail – large items or supply orders should be

picked up in Mammoth. If you are in Mammoth or are traveling to an interior park location, it is helpful for everyone if you stop at the park Mail Room to pick up local area mail. If you have further questions, please call 344-2115.

Upcoming CPR classes!



Healthcare Provider CPR

Date/Time: Tuesday, November 10, 2015 12:30 pm

Location: MCC EMS classroom

Contact Beth Dreyer with questions at 344-2640

Heartsaver CPR and First Aid

Date/Time: Friday, November 13, 2015 8:30 am – 4:30 p.m.

Location: MCC EMS classroom

AND

Date/Time: Friday, November 20, 2015 8:30 am – 4:30 p.m.

Location: MCC EMS classroom

Contact Juanita Bueter with questions. Sign up on the P drive at <P:\Safety Office\First Aid and CPR Training\2015 First Aid and CPR sign up>. Space is limited.

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The Vandzuras are leaving! Come celebrate Jan and Boone's decades of service in Yellowstone as they set sail to Cape Hatteras National Seashore over a meal of hot soups, chili, and pulled pork sandwiches. Come send them off **Thursday, November 5th** from 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm in the Mammoth Hotel Map Room. Bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share...as well as a story or two about the Vandzura clan! Call Bonnie at 344-2103 with questions.



The Yellowstone Employee Safety Committee-Wellness Program is teaming up with the Yellowstone Federal Employees Association (YFEA) again this year to participate in **the Bridger Bowl Wellness Discount Ticket Program during winter 2015-2016**. This is an excellent opportunity to keep healthy and social over the winter months.

What it is:

This program offers \$43.00/day tickets (\$11.00 off the regular ticket price) to employees of eligible organizations (must have a Wellness Program in place). These ticket coupons may be used by employees, their spouses, and dependent children. **Coupons are not refundable and are not for resale outside the Yellowstone NPS family.** There are no "black out" days. Coupons are good through 2015-2016 season. Note: all ski days must be used on days off from work.

What we need:

Step 1: YELL must have a **minimum order of 100 coupons in order to participate in the program.** If you are interested in purchasing coupons, please go to here: P:\Safety Committee (Employee)\Wellness\Bridger Wellness Discount Ticket Program 2015-2016 and fill in the appropriate information. **We need this information by NO LATER THAN FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6th.**

Step 2: **IF** we get enough for the minimum order, I will send another email with specific instructions for payment. Checks for the exact amount will need to be made out to YFEA and delivered to a location in Mammoth the week of November 10th. Coupons would then be delivered prior to Thanksgiving. Please do not send any checks until you hear back from me.

IN THE NEWS

Greater Yellowstone's bears getting older, research shows

By BRETT FRENCH Oct 31, 2015

http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/greater-yellowstone-s-bears-getting-older-research-shows/article_1797eb11-17c3-5baf-84b9-4f858c6906e4.html

Like the baby boomer generation that helped drive protection of the animals, the population of grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is getting older.

“We’ve seen that first in Yellowstone and then radiate out to well beyond the recovery zone boundary,” said Frank van Manen, supervisory wildlife biologist and leader of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, which is based in Bozeman.

Van Manen is the lead author of a recently published article in the Journal of Wildlife Management that examines the GYE’s population in relation to the decline of whitebark pine, the nuts of which are a key food source for grizzlies, as well as the increasing bear density in the ecosystem. Other scientists contributing to the paper were from the University of Montana, Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Colorado State University.

The paper shows that since 2001, the GYE has seen an increase in the survival of male bears age 2 and older to where they are now on equal footing with female grizzly bears of the same age.

“For male survival to increase says a lot about the conservation efforts to preserve this species,” van Manen said. “In most populations male survival is lower.”

In comparison, cub survival was pretty flat until about 2002, and then began dropping. Yearling grizzly bear survival began falling much sooner, in about the late 1980s and early ’90s. The decline eased around 2002, but the survival trend for yearlings is still on a downward slide.

“What we typically see where bear density is high is that cub survival tends to be lower because they are more likely to be killed by big males,” van Manen said.

Similar trends have been documented in Scandinavia and Alaska, he added. The males kill cubs so that females go into estrus again.

It’s a trend common to bear populations where human-related mortalities are not a factor, van Manen explained. The population’s growth first starts slowing down in the survival of younger age classes, then reproduction declines. Then there’s a phase where there’s lower survival of adult females.

“Those internal mechanisms might reduce the population to a point where we see the cycle go up again,” he said. “That’s a natural regulation. In a managed population, hunting does that — it takes out the older animals. If hunting is done at a sustainable level, then you get recruitment of younger animals.”

The article in the Journal of Wildlife Management says the “annual population growth of the grizzly bear ... in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem ... has slowed from 4.2-7.6 percent during 1983-2001 to 0.3-2.2 percent during 2002-2011.”

By building complicated mathematical models, the researchers tried to tease out of the data whether the population decline was more attributable to the loss of whitebark pine or to an increasingly denser population of bears.

The research indicated that cub survival was worse where bear population density was greater. "Our analyses did not support a similar relationship for the index of whitebark pine mortality," the article stated.

The research has implications for the removal of grizzly bears from protection under the Endangered Species Act. Conservation groups had successfully halted a previous attempt to delist the bears saying that bear managers didn't have enough evidence that the huge declines in whitebark pine weren't a threat to the bears' survival.

"We found no evidence of a longer term downward trend in survival of independent bears associated with the decline of" whitebark pine, the article stated. "Data from our study support the hypothesis that slowing of population growth of grizzly bears in the GYE is a function of increasing grizzly bear density rather than the decline of a high-calorie fall food resource, whitebark pine."

The article goes on to say, "Our results suggest that this population is near or at carrying capacity and managers should not expect population growth rates similar to those observed during the 1980s and 1990s in core areas of the population."

The delisting of the grizzly bears is likely to be a topic of discussion at the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee's meeting in Jackson, Wyo., on Tuesday, van Manen said. But according to Chris Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Program coordinator, there will be no action on delisting grizzlies any time soon.

"There's still a lot of stuff that has to be done on up and down the line," he said.

New study finds good news for Yellowstone grizzly bears

Associated Press 23 hrs ago

BOZEMAN — A new study says grizzly bears in the Yellowstone National Park region are thriving and have the potential to continue to thrive in the long term.

The study by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team was published recently in *Molecular Ecology*.

It looked at 729 bears and found that estimates of the number of bears passing genes to the next generation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem has quadrupled since the 1980s. Researchers also found that genetic diversity in the population was stable.

The genetic variations are important for continued survival of the bears and their ability to adapt to environmental changes.

Geneticist Pauline Kamath says that the results are good for the grizzly bears and highlight their restoration as a "conservation success."

Yellowstone ecosystem grizzly 'management removals' up in 2015

Brett French Oct 31, 2015

http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/yellowstone-ecosystem-grizzly-management-removals-up-in/article_e27540e9-3d4f-5007-8d99-38c76c78473e.html

More [grizzly bears](#) have been euthanized by wildlife managers in 2015 in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem than at any time in the past five years.

Twenty-four grizzly bears have been killed by wildlife managers so far in 2015, mainly for killing livestock or becoming habituated to human food sources. The information is posted on the [Interagency Grizzly Bear Study](#)

[Team's website](#). When the repeat offender bears are killed it is called a management removal in the IGBST reports.

The reason for the increase isn't one specific thing, said Frank van Manen, supervisory wildlife biologist and leader of the IGBST. And it comes on the heels of two relatively quiet years for grizzly bear managers.

But at the center of the increasing number of management removals is a larger population of bears pushing to the fringes of its core recovery area and a reduction in the availability of natural food sources.

This year has seen relatively low whitebark pine cone production, van Manen said. The seeds of the cones are a great protein source found at high elevations, keeping bears away from more populated rural areas. In addition, it was a poor fall berry crop for chokecherries, another bear staple. Bear biologists don't track other vegetative food sources or small mammals, which also make up a portion of the big bear's varied diets. But van Manen said, "It's clear that a number of valuable food resources are in low supply this year."

Cattle predators

Thirteen of the bears killed by wildlife managers, the majority of them adult males captured in Wyoming, were euthanized for preying on livestock. That's out of a known 47 grizzly bears that have been killed or removed from the GYE in 2015. The other causes of death range from intraspecies killings by other bears to collisions with vehicles.

In the past five years, including 2015, a total of 72 grizzly bears have been euthanized by managers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem after they killed cattle, destroyed property or became a nuisance by seeking food at homes and ranches. Those bears accounted for about one-third of all grizzly bear deaths in the GYE between 2011 and 2015.

Out of the 72 killed by wildlife managers in the last five years, 40 were removed from the population for killing cattle and sheep, or just over half.

"We definitely haven't seen an increase in cattle in areas where we have grizzly bears, it's just because of grizzly bear expansion," said Daniel Thompson, large carnivore section specialist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Thompson said it's not unusual for management removals to climb and then recede. He pointed to 2010 as another busy year for biologists. That year, 15 bears were killed for repeated offenses, one was killed accidentally while being handled and six live bears were removed from the population. Even more grizzlies were killed that year by hunters, homeowners and maliciously — 18 bears.

"We have a high year like this, then it quiets down," Thompson said.

That's partly because the chronic, repeat offenders have been removed from the population. And although the public only hears about the problems, Thompson said rural homeowners have done a great job of bear-proofing their property to keep incidents low. It's just hard to prove those tactics are working since there are no reports backing up the conclusion, he added.

More bears

Another reason for an increase in management removals is that there are simply more bears crowded into a confined area. Since bears need large home ranges and are territorial, young, old and female bears will often move to the fringes of prime habitat to avoid fights with large, dominant males.

"Grizzly bears are moving into areas outside the recovery zone," van Manen said. "They are getting into more and more of those areas where the potential for conflicts are greater."

Thompson said his staff has seen bears in a lot of places this year where they haven't been in about 100 years.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem includes Yellowstone National Park as well as mountainous national forests in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho that border the park. Altogether, it's a region that encompasses about 9,200

square miles. Inside that boundary the grizzly bear population was estimated last year at about 760 bears, which van Manen said is known to be an underestimate.

“This year it will be slightly lower, an indication of a population that’s reaching capacity,” he said.

Still protected

Listed as a [threatened species](#) in the lower 48 states in 1975, grizzly bear populations have climbed to new highs in the GYE. Back in 1975 it was estimated only about 140 grizzlies were left in the region. Since 2007, wildlife managers have been trying to have the bears removed from the threatened species list, but the attempts have so far been successfully halted by court challenges.

“It’s a very controversial situation,” Thompson said. “It’s a very iconic species to people.”

Some of that controversy is about states enacting hunting seasons for the big mammals if the grizzly bear is removed from ESA protection.

“The discussion has switched more to hunting in the future and that clouds the issue of the notable recovery of an animal,” Thompson said. “That was the goal of (the ESA). This should be a very positive story, but there’s a lot of arguing in the background. And it ignores the sacrifices of the people on the ground who live in grizzly bear country.”

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

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

[Last Update:](#) 754 AM MST MON NOV 2 2015

Today: Snow...then numerous snow showers...possibly mixed with rain showers late in the afternoon. Snow accumulation of 3 to 5 inches. Highs 32 to 38. Chance of precipitation 80 percent.

Tonight: Cloudy. Numerous snow showers...possibly mixed with rain showers in the evening...then numerous snow showers after midnight. Snow accumulation of 2 to 4 inches. Lows 24 to 30. Chance of precipitation 70 percent.

Tuesday: Breezy. Numerous snow showers. Snow accumulation of 3 to 4 inches. Highs 30 to 36. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph shifting to the south 15 to 25 mph in the afternoon. Chance of snow 70 percent.

Tuesday Night: Colder. Numerous snow showers. Snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Lows 17 to 23. West winds around 15 mph in the evening. Chance of snow 70 percent.

Wednesday: Cloudy. Numerous snow showers in the morning...then scattered snow showers in the afternoon. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Total snow accumulation 11 to 17 inches. Highs 24 to 30. Chance of snow 70 percent.

Wednesday Night: Cloudy. Lows 11 to 17.

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Contribute to the park's social media!

The Social Media Team invites you to contribute photos and ideas to share with Yellowstone's followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and flickr! The park posts photos and information on current conditions, noteworthy sightings, park activities, timely messages, and photos and stories of staff doing their jobs. Any photos sent should be in the public domain, not copyrighted. Please email them to yell_socialmedia@nps.gov. Thank you!

Yellowstone Wellness Incentive program (WIP)

All employees are encouraged to participate in the [Wellness Incentive Program](#) (WIP). Full program details can be found by clicking the link above or here: [P:\Safety Committee \(Employee\)\Wellness\Wellness Incentive Program Current](#). You may begin participation at the beginning of any month. Simply complete a certification form and submit it to Stacey Gunther by the fifth day of the following month (i.e. send by April 5th for wellness participation during March). Five names will be drawn each month for an award.

Interested in receiving the latest health and wellness updates?

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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!

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Tuesday, November 3, 2015

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IMPORTANT! The RideShare bus will be leaving TODAY at 3:30 p.m. (instead of the typical 5:30 p.m. departure) due to the continued snow accumulation. Any employees that must leave early on the RideShare bus will get Administrative Leave for the remaining two hours of their workday. Thank you.

For the weeks of Nov 2 and Nov 9, the Finance Office will only be staffed to receive checks and revenue on Mon, Tues, and Wed. Please plan accordingly. We thank you in advance, and apologize for any inconvenience.

Drivers needed for park's RideShare bus program! Do you have an interstate CDL with passenger endorsement? Do you live in Livingston? Would you like to make an additional \$40/day? Then your help is needed to assist with the park's commuter bus program! Please contact Colleen Curry, program administrator, (307-344-2262, Colleen_Curry@nps.gov) for additional information.

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Last Update: 109 PM MST TUE NOV 3 2015

Today: Breezy. Widespread rain showers early in the afternoon. Widespread snow showers through the day. Scattered rain showers late in the afternoon. New snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Highs 32 to 38. Southwest winds 15 to 25 mph. Chance of precipitation near 100 percent.

Tonight: Breezy. Cloudy with numerous snow showers. Snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Lows 19 to 25. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph in the evening. Chance of snow 70 percent.

Wednesday: Cloudy. Numerous snow showers in the morning...then scattered snow showers in the afternoon. Snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Total snow accumulation 3 to 7 inches. Highs 25 to 31. Chance of snow 60 percent.

Wednesday Night: Cloudy with scattered snow showers. Lows around 14. Chance of snow 30 percent.

Thursday: Cloudy with scattered snow showers. Highs 23 to 29. Southwest winds around 15 mph in the afternoon. Chance of snow 30 percent.

Thursday Night: Cloudy with scattered snow showers. Lows 13 to 19. Chance of snow 40 percent.

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YNP@Work

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Education Rangers continue to visit schools in the region to share Every Kid in a Park activities and public lands access vouchers with 4th graders such as these students in Cody, WY who spent some time with ranger Mike Coonan.

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Need office dividers? Come to the NR-MABO contracting office and take a look. #344-2080

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WARREN MILLER FILM! Join us for a night of skiing inspiration, beer, raffle prizes and silent auction - all at the MCC. Doors open at 6 pm, Warren Miller film starts at 7 pm. Beer and popcorn for sale. Silent Auction (need not be present to win) and raffle items too! Tickets are \$10 (5 and under are free) and sold at the door. More info here: mammothcommunitycenter.weebly.com



Mammoth Clinic Open House to welcome Dr. Linda Haney

November 19, 2015

2:00pm to 4:00pm

Mammoth Clinic-next to the Post Office



Medcor is excited to announce the arrival of Dr. Linda Haney to the Mammoth Clinic, as our permanent fulltime provider. Dr. Haney brings a wealth of experience to the primary care, occupational health and urgent care practice at our clinic. Please help us welcome her to the community by stopping by for a visit and some refreshments.

Yellowstone attendance tops 4 million for 2015

By RUFFIN PREVOST Yellowstone Gate | Posted: Thursday, November 5, 2015 2:15 pm

The record summer season at Yellowstone National Park finished with a bang, as October brought more than a quarter-million visitors, pushing the annual total to more than 4 million people so far – a milestone never reached before at the world’s first national park.

Numbers posted by the National Park Service show that 252,013 people visited Yellowstone in October, an increase of more than 29 percent over last year, which was previously the busiest October on record, with 194,804 visitors.

Visitation is up nearly 17 percent overall this year over 2014, with 4,066,191 visitors through the end of October.

Lower gas prices and warm fall weather were contributing factors to the busy fall in Yellowstone, but park officials say an influx of foreign visitors and a growing interest in national parks is also playing a role in the higher traffic.

The previous busiest year on record in Yellowstone was 2010, with 3.6 million visitors.

Park officials are already making plans for how to handle what is expected to be another busy year in 2016, when the National Park Service celebrates its centennial.

Superintendent Dan Wenk and other managers visited gateway towns around the park last month to hear about how the increased traffic affected local businesses.

Wenk said during an Oct. 29 meeting with tourism leaders in Cody that Park Service “resources were stretched to their limits in terms of being able to provide for visitor safety, visitor use and protection of resources.”

Park officials are working on decreasing delays at entry gates around the park, improving parking at key attractions, and easing congestion at restrooms and elsewhere in the park.

Wenk said he had no immediate plans to restrict traffic in the park, but that many other national parks do so, and the matter needed to be studied in Yellowstone.

Most roads through Yellowstone closed to auto traffic for the season on Nov. 2 in preparation for the winter travel season, which begins Dec. 15. Much of the park saw heavy snow this week, making travel difficult on the road from Mammoth Hot Springs to Cooke City, the only road open to autos during winter.

Winter visitation makes up only a small part of the park’s annual total, usually topping out at around 6 percent.

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More Chinese tourists heading to Yellowstone region

Associated Press Updated 10 hrs ago

http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/more-chinese-tourists-heading-to-yellowstone-region/article_82448c62-3d00-5601-bcbf-00f46910e099.html

JACKSON, Wyo. — Merchants in downtown Jackson say they noticed an increase in the number of Chinese tourists who are making the Yellowstone National Park region a destination.

Throughout the peak of this year's tourist season, Chinese groups booked five to 10 rooms for one to three nights "several times a week," said Heather Falk, director of sales and marketing at the Lexington Hotel and Suites.

"They're getting very savvy," Falk said. "A lot came through Expedia and Booking.com."

While there were some challenges with cultural and language barriers, Falk said, nearly every group had at least one English-speaker and the Lexington had a part-time employee who had experience with Chinese people and customs.

Guests "were very excited, very grateful," and they were spending money in downtown shops and restaurants, Falk said.

Andy Nichols at Alaska Fur Gallery said he enjoyed brisk business from Chinese travelers, especially in the early and late parts of the summer season. He went so far as to guess that Chinese tourists accounted for up to a quarter of his summer sales this year.

"That translates to quite a large amount of revenue," he said.

Brian Riley, who runs a business that markets the Yellowstone National Park region in China, said Asian visitors are paying more to spend a whole day and night in nice lodges in Jackson like the Lexington or the Rustic Inn on North Cache.

The next step will be to promote Jackson Hole's winter activities in China, Riley said

Anna Cole, communications manager at Jackson Hole Ski Resort, said she has seen a few Chinese skiers on the snow, but at this point China is still an "exploratory market."

"We're trying to learn more about it," she said. "This winter there could be potentially more, knowing some of the contacts we made last year. We're kind of learning and see where it comes from. It is a market where things are happening."

Riley is less reserved, saying it is going through the "roof."

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 639 AM MST MON NOV 9 2015

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Tonight: Breezy...snow. Snow accumulation of 2 to 3 inches. Lows 17 to 23. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. Chance of snow 80 percent.

Tuesday: Breezy. Chance of snow early in the morning...then snow likely in the late morning and afternoon. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Highs 22 to 28. West winds 15 to 20 mph. Chance of snow 60 percent.

Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. A 50 percent chance of snow. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Total snow accumulation 4 to 6 inches. Lows 12 to 18.

Veterans Day: Mostly cloudy. Slight chance of snow in the morning...then isolated snow showers in the afternoon. Highs 19 to 25. Southwest winds around 15 mph. Chance of snow 20 percent.

Wednesday Night: Breezy. Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of snow. Lows around 12.

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YNP@Work

A Newsletter for NPS Employees of Yellowstone National Park

Thursday, November 12, 2015

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nov 12-13, the Finance Office will only be staffed to receive checks and revenue on Mon, Tues, and Wed. Please plan accordingly. We thank you in advance, and apologize for any inconvenience.



Need office dividers? Come to the NR-MABO contracting office and take a look. #344-2080

You are invited to attend a special presentation, November 16, 2015, from 3:00 to 3:30 pm in the YCR Conference room.

Near-surface geophysical imaging of hydrothermal systems, Yellowstone National Park
Dept. of Geology and Geophysics, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY

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WARREN MILLER FILM! Join us for a night of skiing inspiration, beer, raffle prizes and silent auction - all at the MCC this **Saturday, November 14th**! Doors open at 6 pm, Warren Miller film starts at 7 pm. Beer and popcorn for sale. Silent Auction (need not be present to win) and raffle items too! Tickets are \$10 (5 and under are free) and sold at the door. More info here: mammothcommunitycenter.weebly.com

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Location: MCC EMS classroom

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Drivers needed for park's RideShare bus program! Do you have an interstate CDL with passenger endorsement? Do you live in Livingston? Would you like to make an additional \$40/day? Then your help is

needed to assist with the park's commuter bus program! Please contact Colleen Curry, program administrator, (307-344-2262, Colleen_Curry@nps.gov) for additional information.

IN THE NEWS

U.S. official: Thinking big can save big-game migration routes

Updated Nov 9, 2015

http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/u-s-official-thinking-big-can-save-big-game-migration/article_0cebd4d2-c79d-5182-86d9-d3c96e275300.html

LARAMIE, Wyo. — More cooperation between government and private landowners, such as that which has kept the greater sage grouse off the endangered species list, can help protect big-game migration corridors in Wyoming, a federal official who oversees the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service said Monday.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Robert Bonnie made a pitch for federal programs that encourage private landowners to conserve wildlife habitat. They include the USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which he said recently allocated \$372 million for conservation nationwide.

"We have to think bigger. But the paradox is even while we think bigger, we have to understand that all conservation is local," Bonnie said at a wildlife migration forum hosted by the Ruckelshaus Institute at the University of Wyoming. "We have to be successful in a lot of small locations."

He pointed to the Interior Department's announcement in September that the greater sage grouse didn't need protection under the Endangered Species Act as a success made possible by cooperation between landowners and government. Sage grouse range can be found across Wyoming and all or part of 10 other states.

Others who made presentations at the forum outlined the scope of the conservation challenge with elk, mule deer and pronghorn migration maps made possible by new tracking technology.

From elk in Canada's Banff National Park to the wildebeest of Tanzania, animals thrive when they migrate and suffer when they can't, said John Fryxell, a professor at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. "Migration is a very important mechanism if you want to sustain, abundant, rich, natural resources. And losing that motion means that you lose a large part of that natural heritage," Fryxell said.

Several species migrate between summer ranges in Yellowstone National Park to winter habitat at lower elevations of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, said Arthur Middleton, a Yale University research scientist. "We have to understand migrations to understand key attributes of this system," Middleton said.

Middleton's doctoral work involved trying to find out why calf mortality had increased among the elk that migrate between the eastern part of Yellowstone and the lower elevations west of Cody. After tracing elk migration patterns and exploring several theories, he learned that a big part of the answer wasn't on winter range.

The killing and consumption of elk calves by grizzlies in the elk summer range in Yellowstone increased three- to fourfold between 2003-2005. Research suggested grizzlies switched diets away from Yellowstone's dwindling cutthroat trout, he said.

"That's why we have to take migration into account if we're going to understand population changes on our landscapes," Middleton said.

More recent work piecing together previously collected data has enabled the mapping of nine major elk migration routes, like spokes on a wheel, into and out of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, he said. About 20,000 to 25,000 elk take part in the migrations.

"For me, these migrations have come to seem like the veins and the arteries, the blood, of the greater Yellowstone," Middleton said.

The elk sustain not only scavengers, but tourism and hunting worth tens of millions of dollars to Wyoming's economy every year, he said.

In many cases, elk winter on private land in Wyoming.

Bonnie suggested Wyoming could be eligible for funding through upcoming Regional Conservation Partnership Program awards. "You have everything sitting in this room to put together a pretty good proposal," he said.

Park visitors peak, for now

Managers are trying to get a grip on steadily increasing tourist numbers.

Posted: Wednesday, November 11, 2015 4:30 am

[Park visitors peak, for now](#) By Mike Koshmrl

Twice as many people made the trip to Yellowstone National Park last month as did in October six years ago. And weighing this October against last, there were 56 percent more buses that drove into Yellowstone this year — and the buses contained, on average, 46 percent more people than a year ago.

Those are just a few snippets of the types of visitation data that are prompting managers of northwest Wyoming's two national parks to plan for a busier future.

With two months remaining in 2015 the two parks have breezed by what were their annual visitation records, and both just set their all-time records for numbers in October. In Grand Teton recreational visitors so far this calendar year are up 12 percent to 3.05 million, and Yellowstone's visitors exceed last year's 10-month total by 17 percent, with 4.07 million.

This year the crowds came earlier and stayed later.

Grand Teton park ranger Clay Hanna could see the effects of the visitation in the parking lot of the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve, which has space for only about 50 vehicles.

"We definitely saw longer lines this summer," Hanna said of the parking wait times. "We filled [the lot] the day that we opened for the season and we filled the day that we closed for the season."

"It kind of shows that the shoulder seasons are starting to look a lot more busy," he said. "Those seasons are beginning to look a lot like June, if not July and August."

Visitation was up every month of the year in Teton park, but the percentage increases were most abrupt in September and October.

Interpretive ranger Kristen Dragoo said park staff at the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center in Moose didn't encounter the slow times typical of the shoulder season.

"We didn't see a drop-off in visitation until the last week or two we were open, when some of the nastier weather started to set in," Dragoo said. "Staff was sort of anticipating that drop-off in visitation, and it took a lot longer to come."

With more visitors came more accidents and, in turn, more search and rescue operations. So far in 2015 there have been 81 incidents that required emergency personnel, a 23 percent increase over the 66 search and rescues logged all last year.

Meanwhile, Grand Teton park's staff "didn't grow in any significant way," spokesman Andrew White said.

Both Wyoming parks are in the throes of planning for what's widely expected to be an even busier 2016.

Next year is the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service. Gasoline prices are staying low, and the May 2016 edition of National Geographic will be a special issue wholly devoted to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

At some of its gateway communities Yellowstone has held “listening session” meetings this fall about the growing throng. In coming months Yellowstone staffers will identify some short-term steps that could better accommodate and ease the effect of the burgeoning crowds, Yellowstone park spokeswoman Amy Bartlett said.

“Nothing is off the table at this point,” Bartlett said. “I’m sure if changes end up being major, there will be a much more public process.”

Learning lessons from this summer, Teton park managers have already identified some simple steps to help with the increasing number of people.

“We were caught off guard on the amount of publications,” said Mike Nicklas, Grand Teton’s deputy chief of interpretation. “We ran out of our souvenir park unigrid map.

“We’re placing an order now for that map and all the other publications reflecting a 20 percent increase,” Nicklas said.

Park planners are also bracing for high demand to visit Jenny Lake, which next year will have a third fewer parking spaces because of construction. About 70 percent of Grand Teton visitors — likely more than 2.1 million people this year — have some form of Jenny Lake experience during their time in the park, Nicklas said.

Next year visitors will be urged to spread out a bit to ease congestion at Jenny and String lakes.

“If folks want to have that national park lake experience, we’ve got a lot of different lakes in the park,” White said, “whether it’s Bradley-Taggart lakes, up to Two Ocean and Emma Matilda lakes.

“We’re working on how we can message that,” he said.

When East meets West, toilet seats take a beating

By Mike Koshmrl | Posted: Wednesday, November 11, 2015 4:30 am

[When East meets West, toilet seats take a beating](#)

There were plenty of examples from the past year of Asian tourists in Jackson Hole finding trouble as a result of cross-cultural misunderstandings.

A lack of true wildlife in heavily populated Asian countries led to some visitors getting too close the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem’s not-always-so-docile megafauna.

There were tales of foreign visitors who didn’t know English filling their gasoline-powered rental cars with diesel fuel.

The scornful looks line-cutting Chinese tourists sometimes drew undoubtedly were a result of Westerners not understanding how things work when crowds gather a hemisphere away.

But perhaps the most unexpected consequence of the lingual and cultural barriers for Chinese and other Asian visitors who flocked to northwest Wyoming this year played out in the pit toilets around Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks.

“Our maintenance staff was seeing basically broken toilet seats, especially in the vault toilets,” Teton park spokesman Andrew White said.

In all, about a dozen of the 42 vault toilets in Grand Teton park wound up broken this summer, he said.

What was happening, park officials discovered, is that tourists from Asian countries were squatting, with their feet on the lids, and the shuffling of legs bearing a body’s full weight was causing toilets to snap where the hinges connect the lid to the bowl.

While it may sound bizarre, it’s how they poop in public places back in their home countries, White said.

“They’re used to squatting on the toilets,” the spokesman said. “That’s a cultural expectation in China for a public restroom, which is obviously very different from our expectations.”

The park worked with a Chinese student this summer, and the foreign visitor helped the park crack the toilet mystery. The broken seats were typically being found in high-use places where tour buses unload, such as Schwabachers Landing, White said.

Visitation from Asia is anticipated to keep climbing, and estimates were that around a half million Chinese and other Asians came through this year.

To plan ahead, Grand Teton’s sign shop will make signs this winter that will illustrate proper use of a lidded, elevated toilet. They will be installed at all 42 vault toilets, White said.

“Obviously this is not the only things we’re doing to make the parks more welcoming to international visitors,” White said.

One Jackson Hole resident who has worked to smooth over the visits of Chinese to the valley wasn’t surprised to learn of their propensity to squat while doing their business.

“Have you ever seen the public toilets in China?” real estate agent Bruce Simon said. “They’re on the floor and you squat. And the Chinese and other Asians grew up using them, so they’re comfortable.”

With proper signage — and with a willingness to use Mandarin in park newsletters and food menus — Simon was confident that misunderstandings due to cultural divides could be reduced.

“The Chinese are really smart,” Simon said. “They are well educated, they’re eager to learn and they’re really good on their mobile devices.

“It’s just a matter of education,” he said.

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 524 AM MST THU NOV 12 2015

Today: Breezy. Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of snow until late afternoon...then partly cloudy late in the afternoon. Highs 21 to 27. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph.

Tonight: Breezy. Partly cloudy. Lows 13 to 19. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph.

Friday: Not as cold. Partly cloudy. Highs 29 to 35. Southwest winds around 15 mph.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy. Lows around 18. Southwest winds around 15 mph.

Saturday: Partly cloudy in the morning then becoming mostly cloudy. Highs 31 to 37. Southwest winds around 15 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy. Lows around 20.

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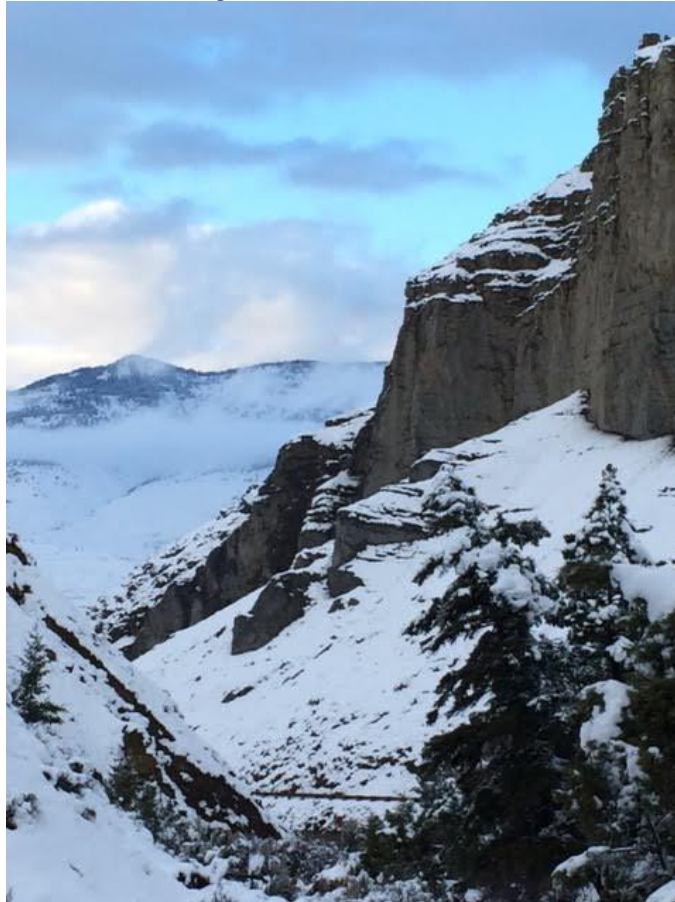
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YNP@Work

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Monday, November 16, 2015



Looking through the Gardiner Canyon. (photo by Temia Keel)

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Near-surface geophysical imaging of hydrothermal systems, Yellowstone National Park

Dept. of Geology and Geophysics, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY

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Winter is quickly approaching if not already here in some places. This is a reminder that all individuals that will be operating a snowmobile must have training initially and annually thereafter. There are snowmobile trainers (listed below) at each location. They may be contacted directly for training schedules.

Sign-up sheets for Mammoth training are posted on the p drive at <P:\Safety Office\Snowmobile Training\Snowmobile Training 2015-2016 Sign-up>

Mammoth - Brandon Lipke

Canyon - Shelby Coy

Lake/East - Brad Ross and Dave Whaley

Grant/South - Steve Roper

Old Faithful - Colleen Rawlings

West - Rich Jehle, Alex Moldenhauer, and Jamie Hanson

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Wednesday: Breezy...cloudy. Snow showers likely in the morning...then chance of snow showers in the afternoon. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Total snow accumulation 2 to 3 inches. Highs 26 to 32. West winds 15 to 25 mph. Chance of snow 60 percent.

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Location: MCC EMS classroom

Heartsaver CPR and First Aid

Date/Time: Friday, November 20, 2015 8:30 am – 4:30 p.m.

Location: MCC EMS classroom

AND

Date/Time: Friday, December 4, 2015 8:30 am – 4:30 p.m.

Location: MCC EMS classroom

Contact Juanita Bueter with questions. Sign up on the P drive at <P:\Safety Office\First Aid and CPR Training\2015 First Aid and CPR sign up>. Space is limited.

IN THE NEWS**Second gold exploration planned in Park County within a mile of Yellowstone Park**

By Michael Wright Bozeman Chronicle

http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/second-gold-exploration-planned-in-park-county-within-a-mile/article_bcf830cc-9ab0-5a16-81f5-322db0ea5ee1.html

Another mining company has plans to look for gold in Park County, just a stone's throw from Yellowstone National Park, and is now busy haggling over road access.

Park County Commissioners tabled an initial agreement that would ultimately let the Spokane, Washington-based Crevice Mining Group make improvements to a county road so the company can explore in an area near Jardine.

The company, headed by Michael Werner, has filed an application with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality for work on Crevice Mountain. Werner has a small miner exclusion, which requires the surface disturbance of the mine be smaller than 5 acres, but is now asking DEQ for an exploration permit also. He hopes to combine those two operations.

Representatives from environmental groups, the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce and some residents raised concerns at the county commission meeting about what a mine would mean for the area and said cutting a road deal with Werner would be a step in the wrong direction.

"This is not just opening up access to a cabin on Crevice Mountain," said Charles Drimal of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "This is opening up and enabling access to a potentially large scale mining operation within a mile of Yellowstone National Park."

After the meeting, Werner deflected that, saying the only application he has out now is for exploration. He said he is an entrepreneur and has worked all over the world, and that he sees an opportunity on Crevice Mountain.

To do any of that work, he needs to get to those claims, which is why he went to the Park County Commission hoping to strike a deal that would ultimately let his company do some upkeep on Crevice Mountain Road.

On Tuesday, the commission looked over a memorandum of understanding that would indicate it was willing to work with him in the future, meaning he could apply to the county for specific road improvements he wanted to make.

But, after some debate and public comment, the three-man panel decided to table the idea until January, insisting that Werner first work with the U.S. Forest Service on securing access to the Sin Nombre Road, which also provides access to his claims.

"Let's see how the negotiations with the Forest Service works out," said commissioner Clint Tinsley.

Walt Allen, the Gardiner district ranger, said he is working with Werner to get a proposal together that lines out what kinds of vehicles will be running on the road during what seasons and what kind of maintenance he will do, among other things.

Werner said he thought the idea to use their road was "brilliant." But, he isn't confident that those negotiations will go in his favor.

"There's no certainty in getting Sin Nombre Road," he said.

Access and potential conflicts with the forest's travel plan could stand in the way, so he wanted the county road available to him.

The commission also worried that if Werner fixes up the road, the county will have to take care of it after he leaves the area. Commissioners said their road budget is already stretched pretty thin. Still, they decided not to completely reject the idea, instead putting it off until Jan. 20.

Drimal said he would have liked to see the commission fully reject the idea, rather than leaving the door open for a deal to happen in the future.

Mining began in the Crevice district in 1879 and continued into recent years, including projects in the 1990s done by TVX Gold Inc., a company Werner worked for.

DEQ spokeswoman Lisa Peterson said the department is looking at ways that Werner's two permits could be combined so that he can explore in the area.

She also said there is no formal public comment period scheduled for the application because it isn't required for exploration proposals. But, she said, the department could choose to open one up if there's a lot of interest in the project.

That happened earlier this summer, when DEQ held a formal comment period on an exploration proposal filed by Lucky Minerals Inc.

Wasting disease nears parks

By Mike Koshmrl | Posted: Wednesday, November 18, 2015 4:30 am

http://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/wasting-disease-nears-parks/article_eb032168-c312-5016-8be8-618768518264.html

For the first time chronic wasting disease has been found in Wyoming deer hunt units 171 and 112. The latter hunt area at its nearest comes within 10 miles of Yellowstone National Park and falls within a migration corridor used by mule deer that spend summers in Grand Teton National Park.

An always-fatal neurological disease that infects elk, deer and moose continues to encroach on northwest Wyoming and has been discovered closer than ever before to Yellowstone National Park.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department sent word this week that a buck whitetail deer harvested in hunt area 112 east of Yellowstone tested positive for chronic wasting disease, or CWD. The infected whitetail was killed Nov. 1 near the South Fork of the Shoshone River southwest of Cody in an area that's used as a migration corridor for mule deer that spend summers in Grand Teton National Park.

Given occurrences of CWD in deer hunt areas not far to the east, the new detection of the degenerative malady wasn't surprising to Game and Fish wildlife disease specialist Hank Edwards.

"We do see, at least in some of our areas, that CWD kind of follows some of the drainages," Edwards said. "That's not true exclusively, but in some instance we do see that."

The infected whitetail was harvested about 25 miles east of Yellowstone, but the surrounding hunt area comes within 10 miles of the park at its closest point.

Yellowstone biologists did not respond to interview requests for this story, but P.J. White, the park's chief of wildlife, touched on the topic at a July conference about another ungulate disease: brucellosis.

"Brucellosis isn't the only disease issue in town," White said at a National Academies of Science meeting in Bozeman. "We have CWD about 40 miles from the park in mule deer, which means it's probably actually already in the park."

"We haven't detected it yet," he said, "but there are other issues [besides brucellosis]."

A cousin of mad cow disease, CWD is basically a misfolded brain protein that causes weight loss, listlessness and eventually death. It's not known to be contractible by humans.

There have been five other hunt areas added to the CWD-endemic zone in Wyoming this year: deer units 1, 100 and 171 and elk units 12 and 21. Those hunt units, all near or adjacent to where CWD has been detected before, are spread around the state and represent first-time detections in places such as Devils Tower National Monument and near Baggs.

There was no specific location noted in documents Edwards had for an infected whitetail buck killed in early October in unit 171. That area, on the Wind River Indian Reservation, is large and reaches from the Continental Divide on the west side to Boysen Reservoir in the east.

Game and Fish's surveillance program was responsible for both of the new detections in northwest Wyoming deer units, Edwards said.

Monitoring is focused on the leading edges of the disease, in places such as the Bighorn and Green River basins and Jackson Hole. Last year 110 of 1,632 lab tests came back positive, and seven deer hunt units and one elk unit were added to the list of areas that are known to harbor CWD, according to the latest Game and Fish surveillance report.

Hunters can get instructions for testing their deer, elk or moose for CWD, which takes a few weeks to get results, by contacting the Wyoming State Veterinary Lab at 307-766-9925.

News of the westward expansion of CWD comes as Game and Fish nears the release of a revised management plan for the disease. A draft of the document, which was last revised in 2006, is expected to come around the end of the year, Game and Fish spokesman Renny MacKay said.

One Jackson Hole conservationist who has tracked the expansion of CWD for years said the new detections give impetus to having an "appropriate" management plan in place.

"There are tools in the tool box that could have been used years ago to mitigate the impacts of CWD," said Lloyd Dorsey, the Sierra Club's Wyoming conservation director, "such as the conservation of predators throughout the state of Wyoming."

Establishing regulations that prohibit backyard feeding and phasing out winter elk feedgrounds are two other tools that could be employed, Dorsey said.

Accounting for overlapping positive deer and elk tests, 3.2 million acres have been added this year to Wyoming's CWD endemic zone, Dorsey said. That far exceeds the 1.8 million acres that are added to the zone on average each year, he said.

WEATHER

NWS Forecast for: Yellowstone National Park

Issued by: National Weather Service Riverton, WY

Last Update: 123 AM MST WED NOV 18 2015

Wednesday: Windy. Mostly cloudy. Snow likely. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Total snow accumulation 2 to 4 inches. Highs 20 to 26. West winds 25 to 35 mph. Chance of snow 60 percent.

Wednesday Night: Breezy...colder. Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of snow. Lows 9 to 15. West winds 15 to 25 mph.

Thursday: Snow likely. Snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Highs 22 to 28. Southwest winds around 15 mph.

Chance of snow 70 percent.

Thursday Night: Cloudy. Snow likely in the evening...then chance of snow after midnight. Snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Total snow accumulation 2 to 4 inches. Lows 7 to 13. West winds around 15 mph. Chance of snow 60 percent.

Friday: Mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of snow in the morning. Highs 19 to 25.

Friday Night: Colder. Partly cloudy. Lows 5 below to 1 above zero. Wind chill readings 13 below to 23 below zero.

WE WANT YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Have something to share with other NPS employees in the park? We are 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*

Contribute to the park's social media!

The Social Media Team invites you to contribute photos and ideas to share with Yellowstone's followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and flickr! The park posts photos and information on current conditions, noteworthy sightings, park activities, timely messages, and photos and stories of staff doing their jobs. Any photos sent should be in the public domain, not copyrighted. Please email them to yell_socialmedia@nps.gov. Thank you!

Yellowstone Wellness Incentive program (WIP)

All employees are encouraged to participate in the [Wellness Incentive Program](#) (WIP). Full program details can be found by clicking the link above or here: [P:\Safety Committee \(Employee\)\Wellness\Wellness Incentive Program Current](#). You may begin participation at the beginning of any month. Simply complete a certification form and submit it to Stacey Gunther by the fifth day of the following month (i.e. send by April 5th for wellness participation during March). Five names will be drawn each month for an award.

Interested in receiving the latest health and wellness updates?

Access the free wellness newsletter from Mayo Clinic that will come directly to your email inbox. Sign up by pasting this link into your internet browser: <https://newslettersignup.mayoclinic.com/> and following the subscription instructions. There are some great topics for weekly tailgate safety/wellness sessions.

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!

For Mammoth Community Center (MCC) information and to book your public, private or work events contact us at:

<http://mammothcommunitycenter.weebly.com>, mammothboardyellowstone@gmail.com Mammoth Community Center (MCC) PO Box 503, YNP WY 82190