

# Yellowstone & Grand Tetons National Parks

September 14-21, 2020

Yellowstone is our nation's oldest National Park. Established in 1871, it is an extraordinary treasure in wildlife habitats, geologic displays, premier scenery, and peaceful wild places. Contained within its 2.2 million acres one can find an amazing diversity of natural delights including lush meadows, roaring waterfalls, and bubbling geothermal areas. The unparalleled array of wildlife such as bison, moose, grizzly bear and elk only add to the attraction of this truly diverse wild place. Include the striking jagged granite peaks and picturesque broad canyons of the Grand Teton National Park to the south, and we have an area known as the "Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem". A perfect place for a Sarett Nature Center natural history tour.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is a unique place where one can observe the forces that have shaped and continue to shape our earth. Volcanoes have played an important part in Yellowstone and even now in many areas hot molten rock lies only a few miles below the surface. As water seeps down through cracks in the earth's crust, it is heated and sent back to the surface in the form of geysers, hot springs, mud pots and thermal features that change daily. The majestic Grand Teton mountains act as another display of geologic forces at work. These grand peaks are composed of very old rock – three billion years old. Nine million years ago the mountains were thrust up along a deep crack in the earth's surface due to shifting in the earth's plates. The result is very young mountains made from very old rock. Glacial erosion has also sculpted the Teton landscape. We will discover the Yellowstone area is full of dynamic geologic wonders.

The "Grand Canyon" of Yellowstone, carved out of volcanic rock by the mighty Yellowstone River, is yet another example of a force that has changed the landscape. This 23-mile-long canyon is a masterwork of erosion. Uneven erosion has resulted into two waterfalls. The lower waterfall being almost twice as high as Niagara Falls.

The wildlife of Yellowstone is unparalleled in the lower 48 states. Along with concentrations of large hoofed animals such as moose, elk, bison, pronghorn, mule deer, and bighorn sheep, there are predators including grizzly bear, black bear, coyote and wolf. Trumpeter swans, osprey, eagles, sage grouse, rosy finches and dippers all find suitable habitat in the Yellowstone area as well.

Join Sarett naturalist as we explore this fascinating natural area of Yellowstone and the Grand Teton National Parks.

## **Monday, September 14, SARETT TO GRAND TETON**

7:00 AM Departure from Sarett Nature Center to O'Hare in Chicago. Arrive in Jackson Hole, WY at 12:30 PM.

After arriving in Jackson Hole, we will pick up our rental vans and continue our journey to Colter Bay on Jackson Lake in Grand Teton National Park. Our cabins are in Colter Bay Village, just a short walk to the lakeside. These comfortable accommodations consist of a bedroom and private shower/bath. The village offers a variety of accommodations including: dining, grocery store, museum, marina, launderette and the National Park Service.

There will be an evening outing to look for the region's incredible wildlife.

- Overnight at Colter Bay Cabins.

## **Tuesday, September 15, WILDLIFE EXPEDITION**

Our morning is going to start early for a full day of exploration. We will have an early breakfast so we can meet our guides from Wildlife Expeditions of Teton Science School for an early morning wildlife sight-seeing tour. Our expedition leaders will offer a three-hour introduction to the wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This sunrise tour will take advantage of the time when animals are most active. We will be there at the start of the elk rut. If we are lucky, we should witness the males bugling. The expedition leaders will know the best wildlife viewing areas and will help us maximize our observation opportunities. Our knowledgeable guides will also explain the geology and history of the area.

After we leave our wildlife guides, we will have a break for lunch and a rest period or free time. We will then be off to explore some areas close to our lodging. Christian Pond Trail is a relatively flat trail with ample opportunity to see meadows, wildlife, and good views of the Tetons. Trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes, beaver and moose are all possibilities. Then it will be on to Signal Mountain Road to a panoramic view of the Teton Range, Jackson Hole valley and Jackson Lake.

- Picnic lunch provided
- Overnight at Colter Bay Cabins.

## **Wednesday, September 16, OLD FAITHFUL**

Today we'll head north to Yellowstone National Park. This drive will have us entering the park on the South Entrance Road and exploring the west side of the park and the geyser basins. The most active "geothermal area" in the world, Yellowstone contains over 10,000 hot springs, mud pots, fumaroles and steam vents. It is here that one can see some of the raw and explosive forces that shaped our world. Water, which seeps down through porous layers of rock, is superheated by molten rock just 3-5 kilometers below the surface, sending it back to the surface causing many beautiful and sometimes violent spectacles. Probably the most famous geyser is "Old Faithful". Old Faithful may not be the tallest geyser or even the most predictable, but it is an impressive feature with 17 to 20 eruptions a day, each lasting two to five minutes.

It will be a day of many stops and short hikes to view all these geologic wonders. There are several self-guiding trails in the area that we will take advantage of, which may include Fountain Paint Pot, Firehole Lake Drive, Great Fountain Geyser, Grand Prismatic Spring, Excelsior Geyser, Kepler Cascades, and much more.

- Picnic lunch provided. Overnight at Lake Yellowstone Cabins in Lake Village.

### **Thursday, September 17, GRAND CANYON OF YELLOWSTONE**

We will want an early start because we will be heading to the eastern side of Yellowstone and to the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. On the way, we'll make stops at Mud Volcano Area, Sulphur Caldron and Hayden Valley. Hayden Valley is one of the world's outstanding wildlife viewing areas, home to bison, grizzly, elk, deer, moose and wolves. The birders in the group will want to watch for eagles, osprey, geese, herons, teal, goldeneyes, and swans. We will eventually arrive at the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. This 23-mile-long canyon was gouged out of ancient volcanic rock by the Yellowstone River. Along the way we will have spectacular views of the Lower and Upper Falls, as well as the beautiful canyon itself. The canyon walls get much of their color from the oxidation of iron in the rocks. Today is guaranteed to be a day of extraordinary beauty as we continue the Grand Loop Driving Tour to Mammoth Hot Springs and then south to Norris and then back to Yellowstone Lake and our cabins. We will see several waterfalls, vistas of Lake Yellowstone, mountain peaks, wildlife sighting, Yellowstone River, mud volcanoes, birds and a petrified redwood tree 45 million years old.

- Picnic lunch provided. Overnight at Lake Yellowstone Cabins in Lake Village.

### **Friday, September 18, YELLOWSTONE**

We'll continue to explore Yellowstone, taking our time visiting sites and vistas we missed or want to revisit. There are more geysers to see in the Norris Geyser Basin. There is Emerald Spring, Cistern Spring, and Steamboat Geyser with its 300 to 400-foot-high eruptions (but Steamboat is very unpredictable). Tower Falls with its volcanic spires surrounding the head of falls, Virginia Cascade and scenic drives to explore.

One of our goals will be to drive along the Yellowstone River in the evening. This will give a great opportunity to look for wildlife such as moose, elk, and bison.

- Picnic lunch provided. Overnight at Lake Yellowstone Cabins in Lake Village.

### **Saturday, September 19, GRAND TETONS**

Today we will say goodbye to Yellowstone and return to Grand Teton National Park. We will have an early start (best time to spot wildlife). There will be short stops and gentle walks before we end in Jackson Hole for lunch (on your own). You will have a short time to visit the many interesting shops and museums.

At 2:00 pm we will meet our guides for a float trip on the scenic Snake River. Our gentle 10-mile trip is entirely within Grand Teton National Park. Participants get to sit and enjoy the ride in large rafts steered and powered by our guides. The guides will talk about the wildlife, geology, and

history of the area. Sightings of possible wildlife include bald eagles, osprey and moose. You will also have fabulous views of the Teton Mountain range!

- Overnight at Colter Bay Cabins.

### **Sunday, September 20, GRAND TETONS**

Today we will explore south along the base of the Tetons in the Grand Teton National Park. One of our first stops will be Jenny Lake. Here we will take a park service boat across the Lake to land on the western side. Our walking destination will include Inspiration Point, Hidden Falls, and the meadows of Cascade Canyon. After a picnic lunch (Sarett provides), our planned stops will be Lupine Meadows Trailhead, Teton Glacier Turnout, and Moose Visitor Center.

- Overnight at Colter Bay Cabins.

### **Monday, September 21, HEADING HOME**

We will have to say goodbye to the Grand Tetons and the Greater Yellowstone area this morning. It will be an early departure to return the rental vans and be at the Jackson Hole airport on time for our 10:25 AM flight. Approximate return to Sarett is 7:00 PM.

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

**Dates:** September 14 - September 21, 2020

**What to bring:** A sense for adventure. Please remember the itinerary could change slightly to accommodate weather, wildlife sightings, etc.

**Cost:** \$2,450.00 per person based on double occupancy.

#### **Includes:**

- Round trip transportation from Sarett to O'Hare Airport in Chicago and return.
- Round trip airfare from Chicago to Jackson Hole, Wyoming.
- All scheduled transportation within parks in rental vehicles.
- Picnic lunches – five picnic lunches will be provided.
- Wildlife Expedition with guides from the Grand Teton Science School.
- Guided scenic float trip on the Snake River.
- National Park admission fees.
- Gratuities for Teton School Guides and Raft Guides.
- 7 nights lodging – 4 nights at Colter Bay Cabins & 3 nights at Lake Yellowstone Cabins.
- Naturalist escorts from Sarett Nature Center.
- Jenny Lake boat shuttle ride.

#### **Flights:**

September 14: American Airlines – Depart O'Hare 10:25 AM arrive Jackson Hole 12:30 PM

September 21: American Airlines – Depart Jackson Hole 11:40 AM arrive O'Hare 3:54 PM

**Luggage:** Please use **small sized luggage** as we have very limited storage space.

**Deposit:** \$300.00 is required to hold your spot. Make checks payable to Sarett Nature Center. Deposits are now being accepted. There is a large interest list for this trip and trip size is limited. To avoid disappointment, send your deposit in immediately. A Sarett Nature Center membership is required for all trips; Individual = \$40 & Family = \$50.

**Outdoor Activities:** All travelers should be in good health and able to enjoy easy to moderate walking. Please be prepared for cold/cool weather as well as warm. Be sure to have rain gear and good walking shoes. Hiking poles can be helpful for balance. You will want to have a good pair of binoculars on this trip for wildlife viewing. Sarett naturalists will have scopes for those far away animal views.

**Lodging Descriptions:**

The Cabins at Colter Bay Village are near original. When John D. Rockefeller Jr. purchased the land, in one of the first acts of sustainability he moved the cabins from their original homesteads and built Colter Bay. Each cabin is unique in its design and history. The Colter Bay cabins are basic yet comfortable. All cabins include linens, towels, and daily housekeeper services. Cabins **do not include** coffee makers, microwaves, or mini-fridges. Hairdryers and irons are available upon request at the cabin office.

Lake Village is located in between Bridge Bay and Fishing Bridge along the northwest corner of Yellowstone Lake. It sits at the junction of the East Entrance Road and the Grand Loop Road, 16 miles south of Canyon Village and 21 miles north of West Thumb. Western Cabins are spacious and modern with private bathrooms. Amenities are basic, and there are no televisions, radios, air conditioners or Internet hookups. This is in keeping with the natural surroundings of the park. For meals, there is a cafeteria-style dining, and there is a lounge and gift shop in the lobby.

**Final Payment:** Final payment is expected by August 1. We will bill you for final amount.

<b>Cancellation Policy:</b> Now-July1	\$50/person
July 2 – August 1	\$100/person
After August 1	Limited to amounts recoverable. We will make every effort to return as much as possible.

**Responsibility:** It is clearly understood that Sarett Nature Center will provide interpretive services on this trip and is in no way whatsoever responsible for the operations of airlines, local agents and other transportation companies. The Sarett Nature Center will act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation, hotels and others providing services in connection with this tour. The Sarett Nature Center and its agents shall not be liable for any injuries, damages, losses, accidents, expenses, delays or irregularities which are beyond their control. We cannot accept responsibility for unexpected transport delays and changes resulting from strikes, and other causes nor liability for additional expenses or loss of time incurred by tour participants resulting there from. On advancement of deposit to Sarett Nature Center, the depositor agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions here.