

# Yellowstone Studies Spring 2007

## Forestry 274

Instructors: Paul Alaback, Laurie Ashley, Adam Lieberg

### Course Description

Yellowstone Studies is an intensive four-day field course that explores ecological and social issues in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and Yellowstone National Park. The course includes meetings with scientists, managers, private landowners, NGO's and field researchers, evening discussions, and field study. Course topics include conservation history, elk and bison management, wolf reintroduction and ecology, Native American involvement with the Park, winter recreation, geology, area ranching, and an examination of current land use and demographic changes in the GYE. The course also includes a one hour pre-field trip meeting on campus in which we will discuss structure of course, and logistics for the field trip.

### Course Objectives

This course will introduce students to ecological issues and natural resource conservation in Yellowstone. Particular emphasis will be placed on:

- The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and connectivity across political, social, and ecological boundaries
- The influence of natural and anthropogenic disturbances on the ecological function and diversity of this region
- Interactions between predators and prey and their habitats
- How decisions regarding the park and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are made in the context of science, politics, and differing perceptions and priorities for the region
- The impact of demographic change in the region on ecological processes and people's livelihoods
- Develop a clearer understanding of the causes of ecological and social patterns in the West through reflection on the divergent ideas presented in this course by speakers and authors
- Advance synthesis by challenging students to think about potential solutions to conservation problems that include an integration of social and ecological realities

### Course Requirements

Faculty Packet (required reading prior to field trip)

Field Study (February 16-19)

Final Paper

*Wilderness and Civilization program students must complete one field note and a reflection*

### Final Paper (details will be provided in first class session on campus)

All students are required to write a paper on one of the topics addressed in this course. Papers must address a major controversy in conservation or ecology which pertains to Yellowstone. In this paper students will integrate information from readings, lectures and discussions on that topic during the field course and recent scholarly literature to achieve a deeper understanding on at least one topic of interest.

It is critical that students select a topic and clear it with one of the instructors no later than the first day of the field class so that they can make sure they have good notes from speakers that address elements of this issue and also so they make sure they ask questions to get more information from speakers and instructors on their topic during the field course.

A 5-7 page final paper will be due by 5:00 PM on March 19<sup>th</sup> to Laurie Ashley in Main Hall 304. Electronic copies are sufficient and can be emailed to [laurie.ashley@umontana.edu](mailto:laurie.ashley@umontana.edu).

### Evaluation (details will be provided in first class session on campus)

Your course grade will be based on your participation during the field component (20%) and your final paper (80%).

*All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.*

*All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm?page?1321>.*

## Yellowstone Studies Schedule

### Friday, February 16

- 7:30 am Meet at the motor pool to load bus and leave for Yellowstone.
- 11:30 Lunch in Bozeman
- 12:15-2:30 Overview of the region, changing land uses, and effects on the GYE
- 4:30 Mike Yochim (YNP) will speak about winter use issues in the park
- 6:00 Have dinner in Gardiner and then check in at the Church
- 7:30-8:30 Evening Discussion (course topics, Y2Y, Yellowstone history)

### Saturday, February 17

- 9:00 am Leave for the Visitor Center in Mammoth
- 10:15 Morning and lunch at the Boiling River; time to soak, hike and do a field note with Adam Lieberg (required for WC students)
- 2:30 Paul Alaback and John MacLean will give an overview of the geology of the GYE and lead a walk through the Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces
- 5:00 Return to Gardiner for dinner on your own
- 7:00 Flo Gardipee (UM) will discuss the history and management of bison in the Park

### Sunday, February 18

- 6:30 am Leave for field day in the Lamar Valley
- 7:15 Watch quietly for wolves
- 8:30-10:00 Meet with Cedar Brant (U of WY) to learn about elk foraging, wolf, and aspen studies (informal predator observation in morning followed by talk about research)
- 12:00-1:00 Paul Alaback and John MacLean discuss elk management, fire ecology, and the volcanic history of the park (Lunch)
- 1:00- 3:00 Ski to Tower Falls
- 3:30-4:00 Visit petrified tree with Paul with additional focus on the historic subtropical forests of Yellowstone
- 4:30 Return to Gardiner
- 6:00 Pizza dinner delivered
- 7:15 Meet with Dan Hartman (Naturalist and wildlife photographer) for a talk and slide show about predators and wildlife dynamics in and around the park

### Monday, February 19

- 8:00 am Clean up church and pack up
- 9:00-10:30 Katie White (NPS) will discuss Native American historic habitation and use of the Park, and present day consultation and use
- 11:00 Visit Sean and Maggie Murphy's Ranch in the Paradise Valley
- 5:00 Stop at the Berkeley Pit in Butte
- 8:00 Approximate return time to Missoula