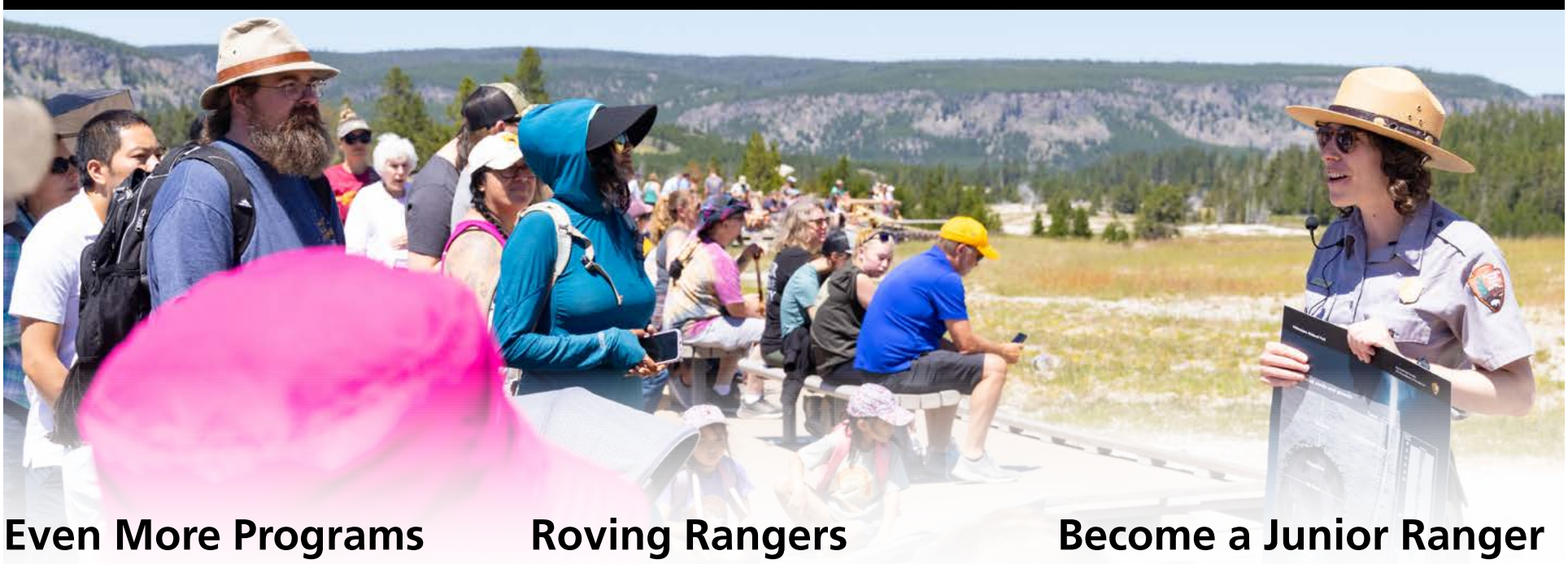
Yellowstone Ranger Program Schedule
2026: 250th Anniversary of American Independence

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Even More Programs

More ranger-led talks, walks, and programs are available throughout the summer. Check for listings at each visitor center, museum, or information station.

Roving Rangers

Look for our roving rangers as you travel through the park. Don't be shy! Feel free to ask the ranger questions about the park and its wildlife.

Become a Junior Ranger

Stop at any visitor center or museum to learn more about Yellowstone's Junior Ranger Program, which is available free of charge to kids of all ages! See the back page for more.

Old Faithful

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Geysers Galore! June 7 – September 7 10 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Did you know Yellowstone contains about half of the world's active geysers? Join a ranger to learn how these geologic wonders work. Meet at the benches in front of Old Faithful.	**Timed around eruptions of Old Faithful between 10 AM and 5 PM.** **Check at the visitor center for the time of the next program.**						
Flat Hat Chat June 7 – September 7 30 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Yellowstone is filled with an array of marvels. Join a ranger and go in depth on one of Yellowstone's many wonders. Meet outside the visitor center on the geyser side.	**3 PM**	**3 PM**	**3 PM**	**3 PM**	**3 PM**	**3 PM**	**3 PM**

West Yellowstone

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
All Aboard! The Yellowstone Special June 15 – August 21 45 minutes. ¼-mile walk. For all ages. ♿ Stroll the West Yellowstone Historic District, explore inside the Union Pacific Dining Hall, and learn about the Golden Age of Travel. Meet outside the Museum of the Yellowstone.	No program	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	No program
Evening Campfire Programs at the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center June 14 – September 12 45 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Join a park ranger for a presentation on one of Yellowstone's fascinating topics. Meet at the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center. Free admission after 6:30 PM for the ranger program.	**7 PM**	**7 PM**	**7 PM**	**7 PM**	**7 PM**	**7 PM**	**7 PM**

Call 307-344-2251 at least three weeks ahead to arrange for a **sign language interpreter** at ranger programs.

Ranger programs with this symbol in the description are **wheelchair accessible**.

Mammoth Hot Springs

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Experiencing Wildlife May 31 – September 7 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Learn where to see wildlife and how to view them safely. Meet in front of the Albright Visitor Center.	**10 AM**	**10 AM**	**10 AM**	**10 AM**	**10 AM**	**10 AM**	**10 AM**
Ranger's Choice May 31 – September 7 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Yellowstone is full of wonders! A ranger will share insights into a fascinating aspect of this magical place. Meet in front of the Albright Visitor Center.	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**	**11 AM** **1 PM** **3 PM**
Meet a Ranger at Liberty Cap Boardwalk May 31 – September 7 For all ages. ♿ Get hands-on with fascinating objects related to Yellowstone. Meet near Liberty Cap at the base of the hot springs.	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**	**11:15 AM to 12:45 PM**
Fort Yellowstone Walk May 31 – September 7 30 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Learn more about the US Army's presence in Yellowstone and the history of early park management. Meet on the front porch of the Albright Visitor Center.	**5 PM**	**5 PM**	**5 PM**	**5 PM**	**5 PM**	**5 PM**	**5 PM**
Ranger Talk at Palette Spring May 31 – September 7 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Yellowstone is full of wonders! A ranger will share insights into a fascinating aspect of this magical place. Meet at Palette Spring boardwalk at the base of the hot springs.	**6 PM**	**6 PM**	**6 PM**	**6 PM**	**6 PM**	**6 PM**	**6 PM**

Fishing Bridge and Lake Village

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Storm Point Hike June 14 – September 12 2–2.5 hours. Easy 2.3-mile hike. For all ages. Wander through beautiful landscapes along the lake shore. Meet at the Storm Point Trailhead by Indian Pond, 3 miles east of Fishing Bridge Junction. **Bring water, rain gear, and good hiking shoes.**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**
Porch Talk May 31 – September 12 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Yellowstone is full of wonders! A ranger will share insights into a fascinating aspect of this magical place. Meet at the Fishing Bridge Visitor Information Center.	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**
Mud Volcano Talk May 31 – September 12 20 minutes. For all ages. View colorful, vociferous, and intriguing mudpots and hot springs, and find out what they reveal about Yellowstone's explosive past and future. Meet at the Mud Volcano parking area.	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**

Canyon

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
South Rim Walk June 7 – September 12 1–1.5 hours. 1-mile walk. For all ages. Explore the South Rim Trail, enjoying stunning views of the Yellowstone River, Lower Falls, and the canyon walls. Meet at the Upper Falls Viewpoints parking lot shelter on the South Rim Drive.	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**	**9 AM**
Artist Point Talk May 24 – September 26 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ From a classic viewpoint, enjoy spectacular scenery while learning about the area's natural and cultural history. Meet on the lower platform at Artist Point on the South Rim Drive.	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**	**2 PM** **3 PM**
Night Sky Programs June 7 – September 9 45 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Learn about Yellowstone's night skies. Bring a chair or blanket. Meet at the Canyon corrals parking lot 0.9 miles south of Canyon Junction.	**Check at Canyon Visitor Center desk for starting time.**	No program	No program	**Check at Canyon Visitor Center desk for starting time.**	No program	No program	No program

Grant Village and West Thumb

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Wildlife Wonders June 7 – September 12 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Have you ever wondered: what's a ranger's favorite animal? Join us to explore Yellowstone's most interesting wild residents! Meet on the porch of the Grant Village Visitor Center.	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**	**10:30 AM**
Gazing into the Abyss May 31 – September 12 10 minutes. For all ages. ♿ with assistance. Look deep into beautiful Abyss Hot Spring and discover the secrets it holds. Meet at Abyss Hot Spring located in the West Thumb Geyser Basin, ¼ mile from the start of the boardwalk.	**1 PM**	**1 PM**	**1 PM**	**1 PM**	**1 PM**	**1 PM**	**1 PM**
Evening Program June 21 – September 12 45 minutes. For all ages. ♿ with assistance. Discover more about Yellowstone in a presentation highlighting some of its many wonders. Inquire locally for program descriptions. Meet outside the Grant Village Visitor Center.	**8 PM**	**8 PM**	**8 PM**	**8 PM**	**8 PM**	**8 PM**	**8 PM**

Norris

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Exploring the Volcano June 7 – September 7 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Learn about geysers, hot springs, mudpots, and fumaroles and how to more safely explore them. Meet at the Norris Geyser Basin Museum.	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**	**11 AM**
World's Tallest June 7 – September 7 20 minutes. For all ages. ♿ Explore the rare and fascinating world of geysers at the tallest active geyser on Earth! Meet at Steamboat Geyser (15-minute walk from the Norris Geyser Basin parking lot).	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**	**2:30 PM**

250 Years of American Independence, 154 Years of "America's Best Idea"

As the United States observes the 250th anniversary of its independence, the nation finds itself looking both backward and forward—reflecting on the ideals declared in 1776 while reconsidering the shared inheritance those ideals imply. Few American institutions make that inheritance as tangible as the national parks, and no place makes the argument more powerfully than Yellowstone National Park, celebrating 154 years since its creation in 1872.

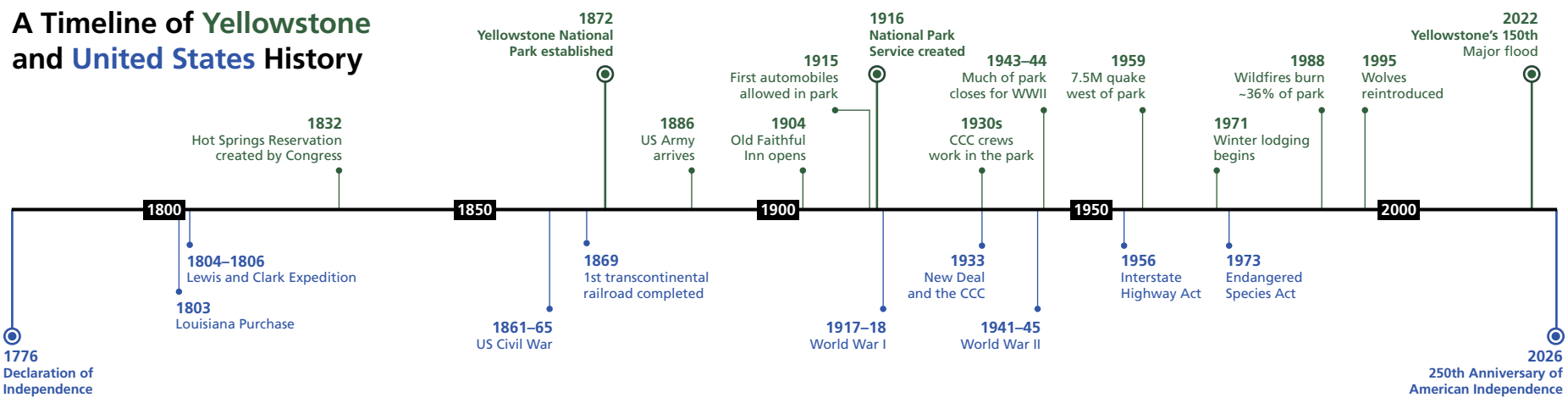
Yellowstone emerged from a country still defining its purpose. The ink on the Declaration of Independence was less than a century old when Congress decided that this astonishing landscape—its geysers, canyons, and wild expanses—should not be claimed or commercialized, but instead set aside "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." That choice was radical: a young nation, still unsure of its reach and identity, proclaimed that some of its greatest treasures would belong to everyone.

In that moment, national parks became a kind of second declaration—one not written on parchment, but on the land itself. Over time, this idea evolved into what filmmaker Ken Burns, borrowing from an essay by Wallace Stegner, later called "America's Best Idea": the belief that democracy is strengthened when people share access to wonder, beauty, and the lessons of the natural world.

Yellowstone has long served as a proving ground for that belief. From the Army's early stewardship to the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, from landmark wildlife policies to the park's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Yellowstone reflects the country's shifting understanding of nature, science, and responsibility.

As the United States enters its 250th year, Yellowstone offers a timely reminder that freedom is not only an individual right but a collective project. The park teaches that the landscapes we inherit require care, humility, and participation—that independence is made stronger when paired with stewardship.

In celebrating 250 years of American independence and 154 years of America's Best Idea, Yellowstone invites us to imagine the next century: a nation committed not just to protecting its extraordinary places, but to ensuring that all people can experience and be inspired by them.



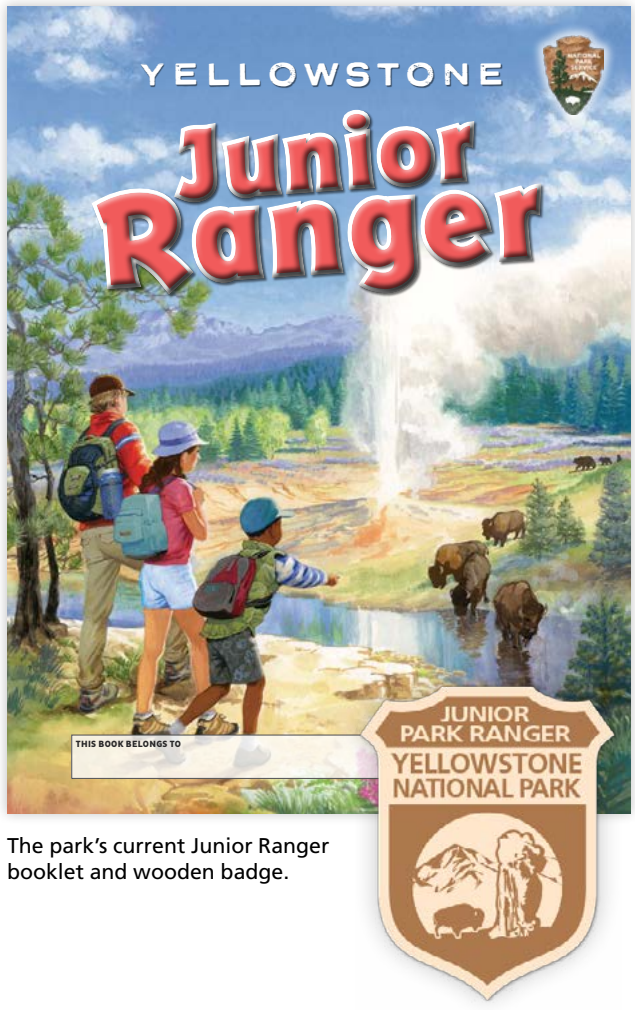
Nearly 80 Years of Yellowstone Junior Rangers

In 1947, ranger-naturalist Mildred Ericson led a group of children out to the beaver dams near Mammoth Hot Springs, where, as she noted in her field journal, they "studied the habits of the beaver, hypnotized frogs, and observed a herd of antelope." That afternoon belonged to Yellowstone's Junior Nature Explorers, a new program for children aged six to fourteen who spent their afternoons exploring, soaking up nature lore, and trying their hand at nature craft. It was the earliest children's program in the world's first national park, and the start of a now 79-year tradition.

Today the program is among the Service's most beloved. Children four and older (and plenty of adults who are young at heart) complete an activity booklet built around the park's geology, wildlife, and fire ecology; hike a trail or boardwalk; and interact with a ranger. A ranger then reviews the work, administers a pledge—"As a Junior Ranger, I promise to learn all I can to help preserve and protect Yellowstone's wildlife, history, and natural features. When I return home, I will teach others how to protect the natural world."—and swears in each new Junior Ranger.

In 2025 alone, roughly 100,000 people took part, and thanks to the park's nonprofit partner, Yellowstone Forever, the program remains free to families.

From that 1947 afternoon of hypnotized frogs to the children sworn in this summer, the message hasn't changed in 79 years: this place is worth knowing and protecting, now and for generations to come.



The park's current Junior Ranger booklet and wooden badge.