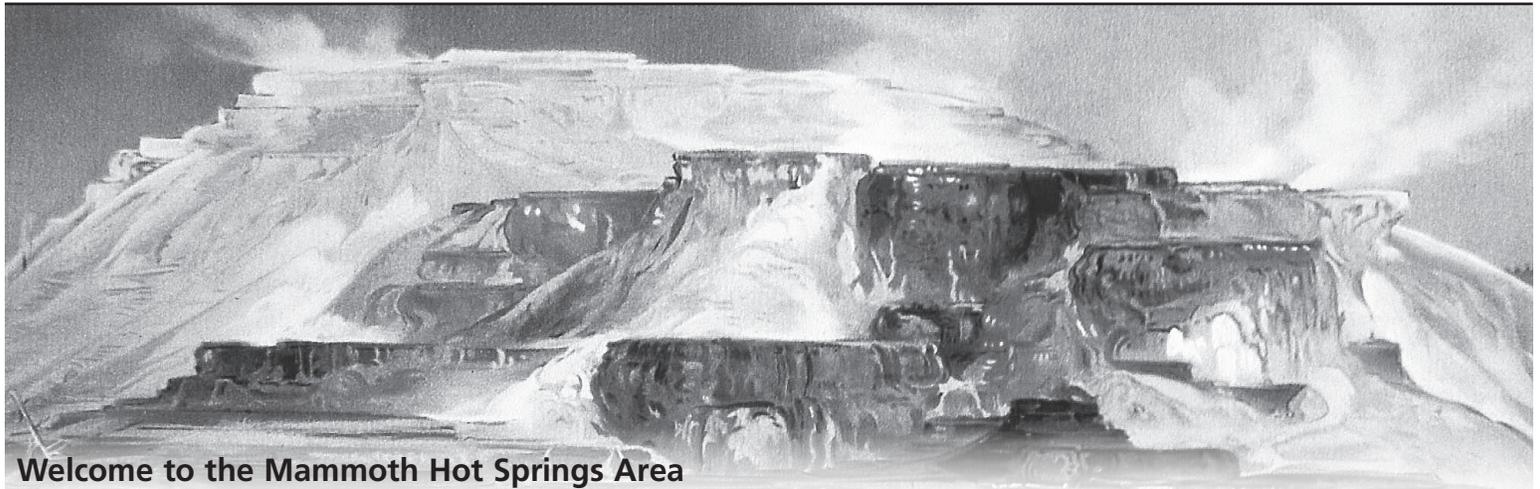


Mammoth Area Day Hikes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Yellowstone National Park



Welcome to the Mammoth Hot Springs Area

Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone's backcountry begin in the Mammoth area. This guide introduces you to several hikes selected by park rangers. Always carry rain gear, extra food and water, and other emergency equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Be sure to obtain current trail condition and bear activity information at visitor centers.

Cautions

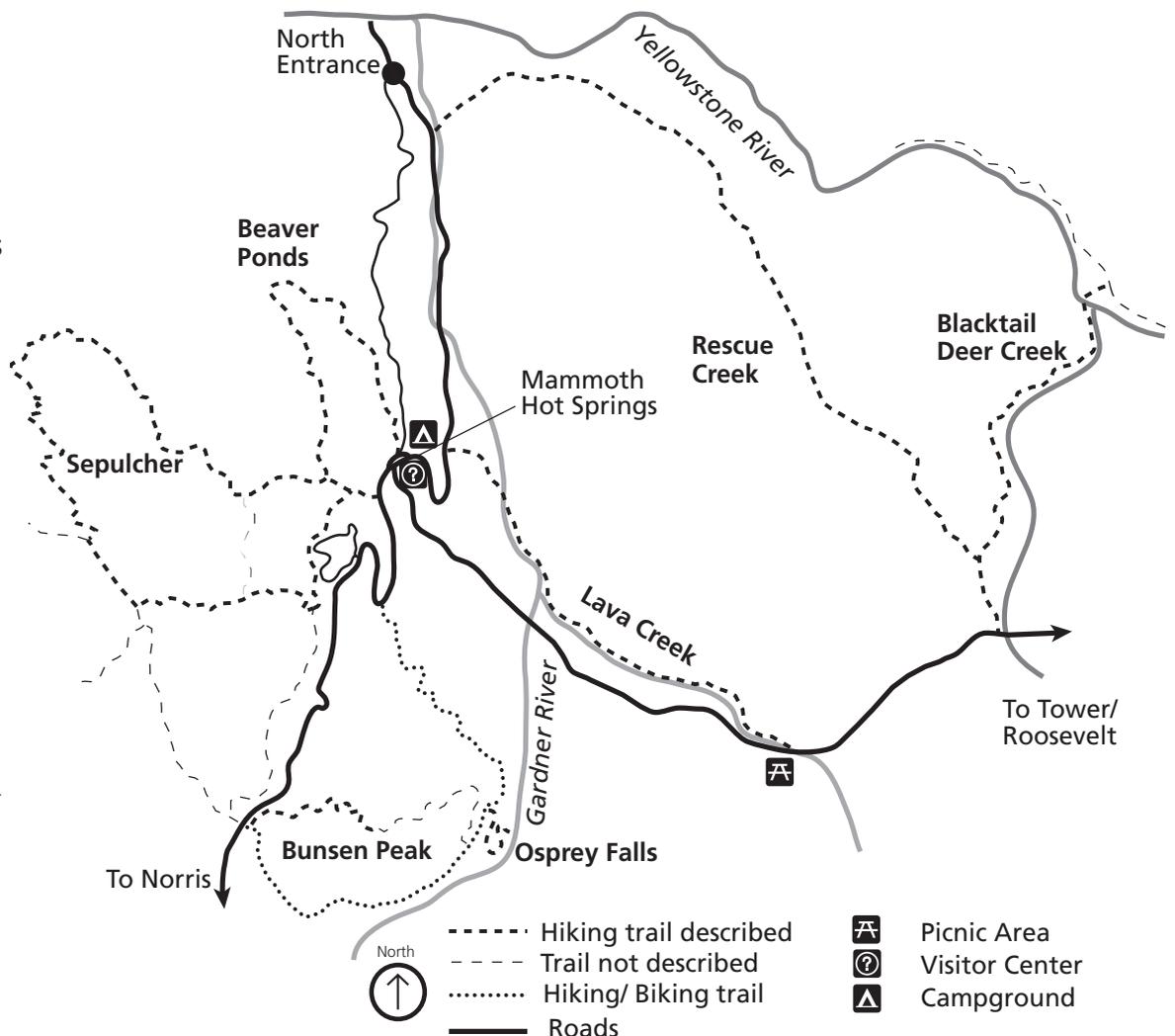
Hydrothermal areas: The thin ground in these areas breaks easily, and often overlies scalding water. Stay on the trail.

All Wildlife: You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves; and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other animals—including birds.

Bears: Although your chance of an encounter is low, your safety is not guaranteed. Minimize your risks by making loud noises, shouting, or singing. Hike in groups and use caution where vision is obstructed. Carry bear spray and know how to use it. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this food source.

Fishing: Anglers must have a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit in their possession. Consult the park newspaper for purchase locations.

Backcountry Camping: Permits are required for backcountry camping.



Beaver Ponds Loop

Distance: 5 miles (8.3 km)

Estimated time: 2–3 hours

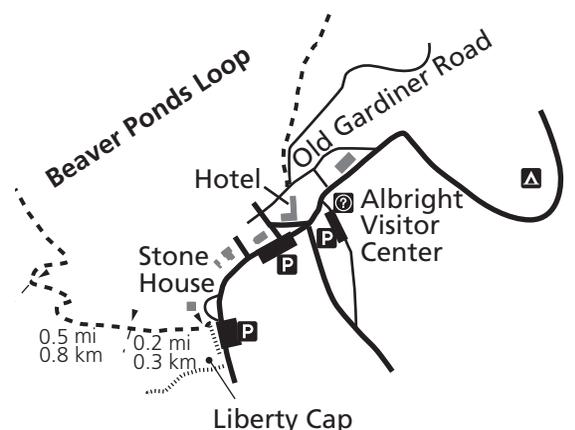
Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: between Liberty Cap and the stone house next to the Lower Terraces of Mammoth Hot Springs

The trail begins just north of Liberty Cap and the lower Mammoth Terraces, and begins with a 350 foot (106.7 m) climb up and above Clematis Gulch. At the junction with Sepulcher Mountain Trail, go right. Soon thereafter, the trail levels out and rambles through meadows and stands of aspen to a series of beaver ponds. The Beaver Ponds are approximately half way around the loop. Look for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, moose, beaver dams and lodges, the occasional beaver, and waterfowl. Past the ponds, the trail travels through forest and grassland back to Mammoth.



Be alert for bears: both black and grizzly bears forage in this area.



Bunsen Peak

Distance, round trip: 4.6 miles (7.6 km)

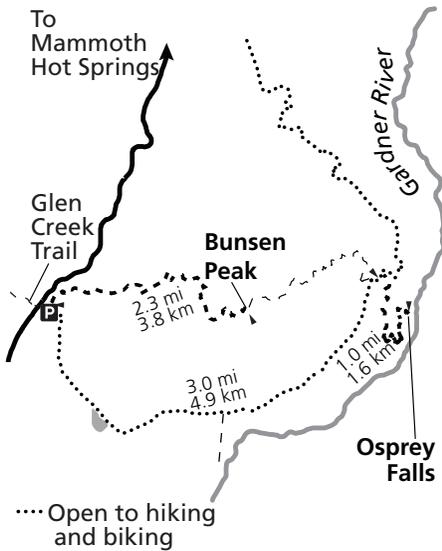
Estimated time: 2–3 hours

Difficulty: moderately strenuous; 1,300 foot climb

Trailhead: 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Grand Loop Road, across from the Glen Creek trailhead. Climb through forest and meadow to the summit of Bunsen Peak, which has panoramic views of the Blacktail Plateau, Swan Lake Flat, Gallatin Mountain Range, and the Yellowstone River Valley. (You'll also see communications equipment, which supplies Mammoth and nearby communities.) Return by the same route.



Grizzly bears frequent this area, use caution when traveling.



Osprey Falls

Distance, round trip: 8 miles (13 km)

Estimated time: 4–5 hours

Difficulty: strenuous

Trailhead: 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Grand Loop Road, across from the Glen Creek trailhead. Follow Bunsen Peak Road (hiking/biking only) through grassland and burned forest 3 miles (4.9 km) to Osprey Falls Trail (no bikes allowed). Descend 700 feet (213 m) into Sheepeater Canyon, one of the deepest canyons in Yellowstone. Osprey Falls, on the Gardner River, plunges 150 feet (46 m) over the edge of a lava flow. Return by the same route.

Lava Creek

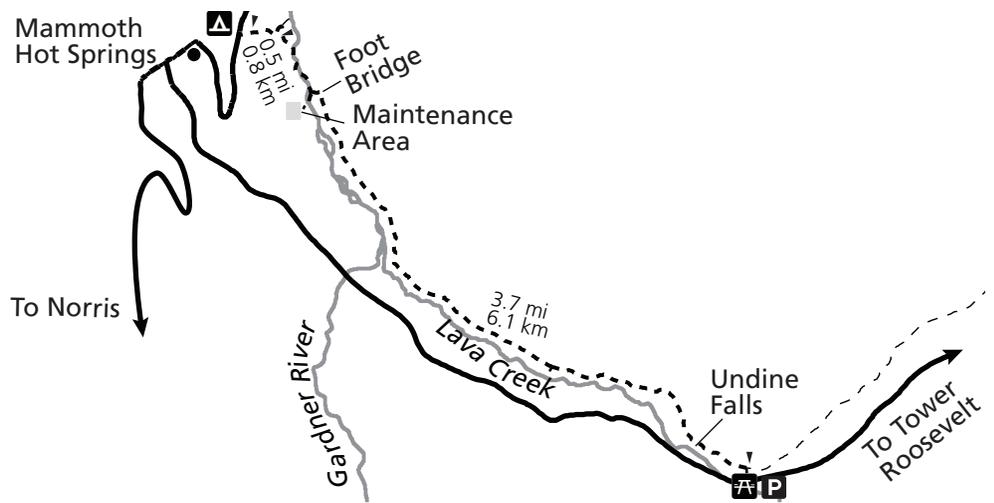
Distance, one way: 4.2 miles (6.9 km)

Estimated time: 2–3 hours

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: Across the road from the Lava Creek picnic area on the Grand Loop Road

Follow Lava Creek downstream past Undine Falls (60 feet/18 m), descending gradually. Lava Creek meets the Gardner River further downstream. The trail crosses the river on a footbridge to a final steep climb out, ending near the Mammoth Campground. Return by the same route, or have a vehicle shuttle arranged.



Blacktail Deer Creek to Yellowstone River

Distance, round trip: 7.4 miles (12 km)

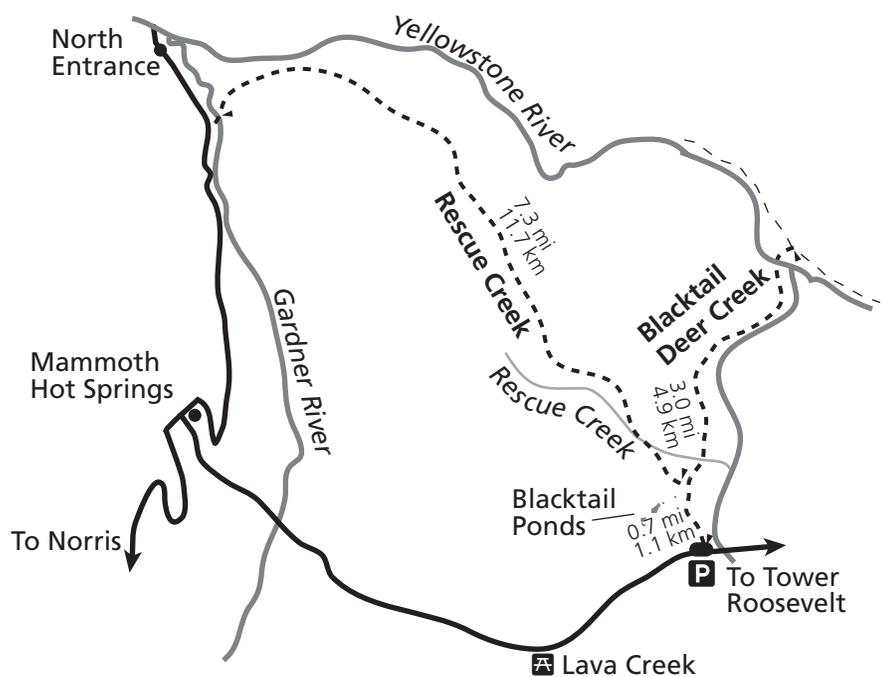
Estimated time: 4–5 hours

Difficulty: return is strenuous

Trailhead: 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on the Grand Loop Road

Follow Blacktail Deer Creek as it descends 1,100 feet (33.5 m) through rolling, grassy hills and Douglas-fir forest to a suspension bridge over the Yellowstone River. Return the same way.

Trail frequented by stock animals.



Rescue Creek

Distance, one way: 8 miles (12.8 km)

Estimated time: 4–6 hours

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on the Grand Loop Road; route ends 1 mile (1.6 km) south of the North Entrance Station.

Follow Blacktail Deer Creek trail past the east end of Blacktail Pond to the top of a short hill, then veer left on the Rescue Creek Trail. Climb gradually through aspens and meadows, then descend through forests to sagebrush flats that lead to a footbridge across the Gardner River. Return by the same route, or have a vehicle shuttle arranged.

Sepulcher Mountain

Distance, round trip: 11 miles (17.7 km)

Estimated time: 6–8 hours

Difficulty: strenuous

Trailhead: between Liberty Cap and the stone house next to the Mammoth Hot Springs Lower Terraces

This strenuous hike requires a good map for navigation. Stop by the Mammoth Backcountry Office for further information.

This 11 mile (17.7 km) hike climbs 3,400 feet through forest and meadows to the 9,652 foot (2,942 m) summit. Loop trail continues along the opposite side of the mountain through an open slope to the junction of Snow Pass. Occasionally, you can spot mountain goats, bighorn sheep, and moose along this trail.



Grizzly bears frequent this area, use caution when traveling.

For more information

www.nps.gov/yell

Visitor centers have a free day hike handout for each major area of the park. A "Day Hike Sampler," with a hike or two per area, is also available along with several guides for trails throughout the park.