

2016

National Park Service.  
CENTENNIAL



# Yellowstone Resources and Issues Handbook

### ***Yellowstone Park and Protection Act***

In 1872, the US Congress established Yellowstone National Park. The Yellowstone National Park Protection Act states, “the headwaters of the Yellowstone River. . .is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale. . .and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

### ***The Organic Act of the National Park Service***

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service, a federal bureau in the Department of the Interior. The Organic Act of the National Park Service states “the Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations. . .by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

#### **ON THE COVER**

The Roosevelt Arch, pictured here on a Haynes postcard. No date.



# Yellowstone Resources and Issues Handbook

**2016**

An annual compendium of information about  
Yellowstone National Park



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[www.yellowstoneassociation.org](http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org)

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Yellowstone National Park, the world's first national park, is named after the Yellowstone River.

## Welcome

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Yellowstone National Park is as wondrous as it is complex. The park has rich human and ecological stories that continue to unfold. When Yellowstone was established as the world's first national park in 1872, it sparked an idea that influenced the creation of the National Park Service and the more than 400 sites it protects today across the United States. Yellowstone National Park also forms the core of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. At 34,375 square miles, it is one of the largest, nearly intact temperate-zone ecosystems on Earth. The park continues to influence preservation and science, and we are pleased to share its stories with you.

Many people have dedicated their lives and careers to studying Yellowstone and the park has a long history of research and public interest. The park hosts more than 150 researchers from various agencies, universities, and organizations each year. They produce hundreds of papers, manuscripts, books, and book chapters on their work annually—a volume of information that is difficult to absorb. This compendium is intended to help you understand the important concepts about Yellowstone's many resources and contains information about the park's history, natural and cultural resources, and issues.

In addition to the references listed for each topic covered in this handbook, here are some interdisciplinary sources:

- [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)
- *Yellowstone Science*, free from the Yellowstone Center for Resources, in the Yellowstone Research Library, or online at

[www.nps.gov/yellowstonescience](http://www.nps.gov/yellowstonescience).

- The park newspaper distributed at entrance gates and visitor centers.
- Site bulletins, published as needed, provide more detailed information on park topics such as trailside museums and the grand hotels. Free; available upon request from visitor centers.
- Trail guides, available at all visitor centers. A \$1 donation is requested.

### Second Century of Service

On August 25, 2016, the National Park Service will celebrate its 100th birthday. For a century the National Park Service has cared for and protected wildlife, land, waterways, accomplishments, lessons, and stories belonging to the citizens of the United States. And we are ready to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.





Yellowstone's first park rangers included veterans of US Army service. Modern ranger uniforms still resemble the original Cavalry uniforms shown here in 1910.

## Birth of the National Park Service

In the years following the establishment of Yellowstone, the United States authorized additional national parks and monuments, many of them carved from the federal lands of the West. These were administered by the Department of the Interior. Other monuments and natural and historical areas were administered by the War Department and the Department of Agriculture. No single agency provided unified management of the varied federal parks.

By 1916, the Department of Interior was responsible for 14 national parks and 21 national monuments but had no organization to manage them. Interior secretaries had asked the US Army to detail troops to Yellowstone and the California parks for this purpose. There, military engineers and cavalrymen developed park roads and buildings, enforced regulations against hunting, grazing, timber cutting, and vandalism, and did their best to serve the visiting public. Civilian appointees served as superintendents at the other parks, while the monuments received minimal custody. In the absence of an effective central administration, those in charge operated without coordinated supervision or policy guidance. National parks clearly needed coordinated administration by professionals attuned to the special requirements of these preserves.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service, a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior. The National Park Service of the United States now comprises more than 400 areas covering more than 84 million acres in 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. These areas are of such national significance as to justify special recognition and protection in accordance with various acts of Congress.

The National Park Service strives to meet its original goals, while filling many other roles as well: guardian of our diverse cultural and recreational resources; environmental advocate, partner in community revitalization, world leader in the parks and preservation community, and pioneer in the drive to protect America's open space. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

### National Park Service Organic Act

Passed in 1916, this law created the National Park Service and established its mission:

*"to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."*

## Journey to Wonderland in 1916

Preserved for you in Yellowstone National Park, is the opportunity to experience the world as it once was. As the National Park Service approaches its 100th birthday, take a look back at how visitors enjoyed Yellowstone when the Service was new.

### *Getting here and getting around*

In the same year the National Park Service was created, transportation modes transitioned in Yellowstone National Park. It was the last year that horse-drawn wagons were allowed on park roads. Despite years of resistance from park managers, the first automobiles were officially allowed into Yellowstone in 1915, and visitation that year soared. In 1916 it was becoming clear that the automobile would change the Yellowstone National Park experience forever.

In earlier days, visitors arrived by train to West Yellowstone or Gardiner, Montana. Tourists travelled by stagecoach, wagon, or horseback to see sights around the park. As automobiles became more prolific, accidents between the machines and horses increased. Car tires could not manage on the old wagon roads, leaving visitors stranded. Even as the wonders of Yellowstone became more accessible to the average American family, it also became necessary to provide paved roads and services for the increase in visitors and their automotive needs.

### *Following Footsteps*

Travelers nearly a century ago, in 1916, were here for the same reasons you are. Visitors flocked to Old Faithful geyser and eagerly awaited each eruption.



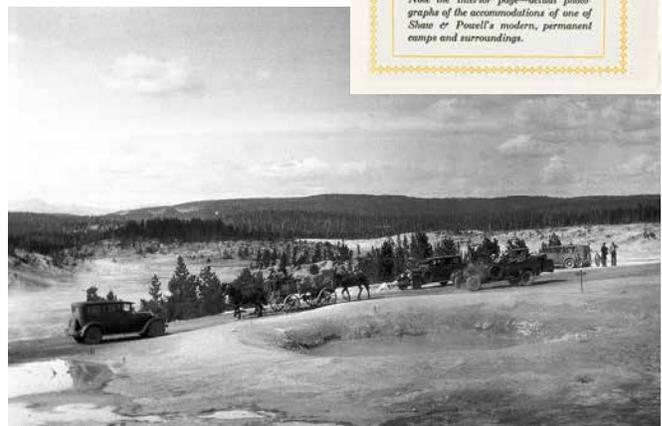
Visitors at Minute Man Geyser (now known as Constant Geyser) in Norris Geyser Basin, shown here in a Haynes postcard.



Prior to 1916, tourists traveled by stagecoach, wagon, or horseback to see the sights around the park.

After long hours bumping along in wagons or on horseback, they climbed carefully along the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River and reached out to feel the spray from the Lower Falls overlook. Each step you take in Yellowstone lands on the footprints of the generations before you.

Travelers who could afford them, stayed in the grand hotels at Lake, Mammoth, Canyon, and Old Faithful. Others camped at one of the “permanent” camps or from their own vehicles, enjoying campfires and cookouts.



Despite years of resistance from park managers, the first automobiles were officially allowed into Yellowstone in 1915, and visitation that year soared.



# Park Facts

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**Yellowstone National Park was established on March 1, 1872.**

**Yellowstone is the world's first national park.**

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## GEOGRAPHY

3,472 square miles (8,991 km<sup>2</sup>)  
2,221,766 acres or 899,116

hectares. *Note: No area figures have been scientifically verified. Efforts to confirm the park's total area continue.*

63 air miles north to south (102 km)

54 air miles east to west (87 km)

96% in Wyoming, 3% in Montana, 1% in Idaho

Highest Point: 11,358 feet (3,462 m; Eagle Peak)

Lowest Point: 5,282 feet (1,610 m; Reese Creek)

Larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined

About 5% covered by water; 15% by grassland; and 80% by forests

## Precipitation

Annual precipitation ranges from 10 inches (26 cm) at the north boundary to 80 inches (205 cm) in the southwest corner

## Temperature

Average daily, at Mammoth:  
January: 9°F (-13°C)  
July: 80°F (27°C)

Records:

High: 99°F (37°C), 2002 (Mammoth)

Low: -66°F (-54°C), 1933 (West Entrance, Riverside Station)

## Yellowstone Lake

131.7 square miles of surface area (341.1 km<sup>2</sup>)

141 miles of shoreline (227 km)

20 miles north to south (32 km)

14 miles east to west (22 km)

Average depth: 138 feet (42 m)

Maximum depth: 430 feet (131 m)

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## GEOLOGY

An active volcano

One of the world's largest calderas at 45 x 30 miles (72 x 48 km)

1,000–3,000 earthquakes annually

More than 10,000 hydrothermal features

About 500 active geysers (more than half the world's active geysers)

About 290 waterfalls

Tallest waterfall near a road: Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River at 308 feet (94 m)

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## WILDLIFE

67 species of mammals, including:

7 species of native ungulates  
2 species of bears

285 species of birds (150 nesting)

16 species of fish (5 nonnative)  
More than 7 aquatic nuisance species (3 having significant detrimental effect)

5 species of amphibians

6 species of reptiles

2 threatened species: Canada lynx, grizzly bears

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## FLORA

9 species of conifers (more than 80% of forest is lodgepole pine)

1,000+ species of native flowering species (3 endemic)

225 species of invasive plants

186 species of lichens

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## CULTURAL RESOURCES

26 associated Native American tribes

More than 1,800 known archeological sites

More than 300 ethnographic resources (animals, plants, sites)

25 sites, landmarks, and districts on the National Register of Historic Places; many more eligible for listing

1 National Historic Trail

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More than 900 historic buildings

More than 720,000 museum items, including 30 historic vehicles

Millions of archived documents

More than 20,000 books (many rare), manuscripts, periodicals

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## EMPLOYEES

**National Park Service** (July 2015)

Permanent (330 total)

Full time, year-round: 176

Subject to furlough: 146

Part time: 8

Term (variable duration): 37

Seasonal: 406

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## Concessioners

About 3,200 people work for concessioners at summer peak

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## FACILITIES

9 visitor centers, museums, and contact stations

9 hotels/lodges (2,000+ hotel rooms/cabins)

7 NPS-operated campgrounds (450+ sites)

5 concession-operated campgrounds (1,700+ sites)

More than 1,500 buildings

52 picnic areas, 1 marina, 13 self-guiding trails

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## ROADS AND TRAILS

5 park entrances

466 miles of roads (310 miles paved)

More than 15 miles of boardwalk

Approximately 1,000 miles of backcountry trails

92 trailheads

301 backcountry campsites

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## BUDGET

**Fiscal Year 2015 (in millions)**

Total: \$69.1

Federal Funding:

Congressional Annual

Appropriations:

Operations and staff (base): \$34.6

Wildland Fire: \$1.2

Other Appropriations: \$17.5

Other Funding:

Donations and Grants: \$3.0

Fees: \$7.5

Utilities & Agreements

(Reimbursable): \$5.3

## Distribution of Budget

Administration: 8%

*Includes human resources, contracting,*

*budget and finance,*

*property management,*

*telecommunications and*

*information technology*

Facility Operations and Maintenance: 42%

*Includes utilities, roads,*

*trails, structures, historic*

*preservation coordination,*

*construction management*

Resource Protection: 15%

*Includes research and*

*monitoring of natural and*

*cultural resources, invasive*

*species management*

Visitor Services: 35%

*Includes interpretation and*

*education, law enforcement,*

*emergency medical services,*

*search and rescue, entrance*

*station operations, structural*

*fire activities, and park*

*concessions management*

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## VISITATION

In 2015, park visitation topped 4 million. More than one-fourth of the park's total annual visitation was recorded during the month of July. The last time the park recorded fewer than 3 million annual recreational visits was in 2006, with 2.87 million visits.

Detailed park visitation information is available at <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/>

## Top 10 Visitation Years

1.	2015	4,097,710
2.	2010	3,640,184
3.	2014	3,513,484
4.	2012	3,447,727
5.	2011	3,394,321
6.	2009	3,295,187
7.	2013	3,188,030
8.	2007	3,151,343
9.	1992	3,144,405
10.	1999	3,131,381

# Yellowstone National Park

