

Yellowstone Wild Covid-19 Operating Plan

To our wonderful Guests:

Greetings from Yellowstone Country! We hope that you and your family are doing well during this time. As our summer season is kicking off, we wanted to reach out to update you on current health/safety protocols here in Yellowstone and how our business is responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Yellowstone National Park has reopened for day use only and we have obtained permits to begin operating tours again following the updated safety protocols listed below. Facilities will be limited for the foreseeable future, meaning there will be no lodging or dining options within the park, visitors centers will remain closed and staff will be minimal. Visitors may need to find lodging outside the park; please double check your lodging reservations and see our local recommendations [here](#).

At Yellowstone Wild, we have carefully analyzed how we can best conduct business for the safety and health of our guests and staff. While the open-air of our big sky country may be the best place to be right now, for both physical and mental health, we still need to be cautious in exactly how we go about it.

Our biggest concern at this time is the prolonged exposure/contact of our guides to our guests while traveling in an enclosed vehicle, and thus breathing the same air for extended periods at a time. Much about this virus remains unknown, but what is clear is that the likelihood of infection is drastically increased with prolonged exposure, especially in enclosed areas like vehicles. We are concerned that our guides could easily contract the virus through repeated prolonged exposure to a different family/group of people on each tour, essentially every day. Our guides could then, in turn, pass it on to a new group or family on every tour after that. This is, of course, an unacceptable risk and we feel it would be highly irresponsible to subject our guests and our staff to the risks of prolonged exposure in our vehicles for the duration of our road-based tours through Yellowstone. Until the virus and associated risks become better understood and controlled, we are asking you to work with us in slightly adjusting our activities to a safer and more socially-distanced type of tour that will keep you and our staff safer and help to limit the spread of the virus.

Traditionally, our standard tour has been rather heavily vehicle-based, where we drive your group through Yellowstone, stopping to search for wildlife from some of our favorite vantage points. This included being in and out of our touring vehicle throughout the day to view wildlife and to take short hikes to various vistas and attractions. This season, due to Covid-19 health risks, **we will not be transporting guests in our vehicles**. Therefore, we are offering some exciting, safe and responsible new options to provide the most meaningful and memorable guided Yellowstone experience for you and your group, while doing our very best to keep everyone safe and healthy. An upside is that we are cutting down on drive time and spending more time outside in the wilds of Yellowstone with you!

We are offering the following Yellowstone tour options for you:

Option A: Modified Wildlife Watching and Family Tour

Our Wildlife Watching and Family Tours have been slightly restructured to follow the necessary social distancing protocols above. The biggest difference is that we ask you to drive your own car, following your guide. We will give you a two-way radio/walkie talkie so that your guide can point out wildlife, interpret what you are seeing while driving and communicate when and where you will want to pull

over. As usual, we will make a series of several stops at wildlife hotspots, where we have the option of walking a short distance off the road to the best viewing locations. We would set up disinfected, high-powered spotting scopes for you to view wildlife through while we interpret the animal behaviors we observe, in addition to the ecology, natural history, our own personal experiences with Yellowstone's wildlife and, of course, answer your questions. Short hikes can also be incorporated as a great way to discover the very best of Yellowstone. Our knowledgeable local naturalist guides can design a hike specifically for your group's interests and ability levels to compliment the roadside wildlife watching. We serve breakfast pastries, a variety of snacks and a hearty picnic-style lunch, out in the open air of our favorite landscapes.

Option B: Day Hiking Tour

Another option is our [Day Hiking](#) option (click for more details). This has always been a popular choice among our clients and is naturally more conducive to social distancing standards. If you are physically capable of a moderate hike, we highly recommend our Day Hikes to step off the beaten path and experience the beauty of Yellowstone away from the crowds and the cars.

We would again ask that you to drive your own car, and we will meet you at a predetermined trailhead. We provide lunches, drinks and snacks, which each guest is responsible for carrying in his or her own day pack. Hikes are carefully crafted for your unique group's ability levels and areas of interest, and normally last up to 6-8 hours. We would provide disinfected binoculars as needed for everyone, so that no one has to share. On foot, we cannot cover the same amount of Yellowstone as we would in vehicles, so our wildlife sightings might not be quite as numerous, but what we do see, will be very memorable. A Yellowstone walk really allows us to slow down and delve deeply into the smaller details of this special Yellowstone landscape and ecosystem. We will look closely at things such as animal tracks and signs, flowers, trees, insects, birds, and so much more.

Hiking with an experienced naturalist guide is key to safely and comfortably enjoying the best that Yellowstone has to offer. If you previously booked a vehicle tour, yet you feel you would prefer a Day Hike, please let us know and we can easily rebook you to the hiking tour.

We want to thank you for being flexible with our dedication to stop the spread as well as to serve our purpose and passion in guiding people through the incredible Yellowstone National Park. We hope that you will agree that these changes to our operating structure have been carefully evaluated to provide the most positive outcomes as we all work together under challenging and confusing times. Please reach out with any questions or concerns you may have. We look forward to hearing back from you and can't wait to share Yellowstone's lively Spring and Summer bounty with you and your family.

Cordially,

Emil McCain, Owner
Yellowstone Wild, LLC
Gardiner, Montana
June 10, 2020

Additional Covid-19 Related Information

Deadline Lifted for Rescheduling/Canceling Tours

We have lifted the deadline for canceling or rescheduling tours without penalty. We fully understand that it is confusing to make travel plans right now, and we want to assure you that we will do everything in our power to work with you through this situation. That starts with eliminating any rush to make any decision at all, as we all wait and watch this situation unfold. Previously, our cancellation policy provided full refunds for cancellations made more than 60 days in advance, half refunds for cancellations made between 15 and 59 days in advance and no refund for cancellations made 14 days or less before a tour. To best serve our guests during these difficult times, we have lifted that policy. If you cannot travel because of Covid-19 travel restrictions or if you or a family member are sick, there will be no cost for rescheduling/canceling your tour, up to five days prior to your tour.

Rescheduling Tours with our Gift Card

If you have to cancel your tour because you are unable or unwilling to travel to Yellowstone because of Covid-19, we have established a Gift Card voucher system for you. This voucher will honor your payment to be applied in full towards a tour at a future date of your choice, provided tour availability. This voucher will not expire and will also be transferable to friends or family if you cannot make the trip (cost may vary depending on the number of guests). If you choose to cancel your tour but would like to keep the option to reschedule after the pandemic passes, we will send you a Gift Card voucher and the information needed to redeem your tour at a future date of your choice.

Refund

If you would prefer to fully cancel your booking due to the Covid-19 precautions and you prefer a refund over keeping the option to reschedule at a later date, we will refund your payment, minus the standard \$50 administrative fee to cover credit card processing expenses.

Track the Situation, Stay Informed and Keep in Touch

We encourage open dialog through this process as we all watch how this situation unfolds. We are committed to working with you in the most personable and heartfelt ways possible. Please keep us posted on your thoughts and plans, and know that we will do our best to do right by our valued guests. In the meantime, let's all do our part to stay healthy, limit any possible risk of transmissions and stay positive! We hope you will be able to join us here in Yellowstone soon, as wilderness seems to be the best medicine for the human body, mind and soul.