



Park Staff and Funding

National park rangers are consistently ranked among America's most popular public servants. Visitors generally regard all employees who wear the gray and green uniforms as "park rangers," and assume they will be a friendly source of information about the park, directions to the nearest restroom, and help with everything from minor car trouble to major accidents and lost children. Employees' awareness of this reputation and the strong belief in the NPS mission that most share can play an important role in their job satisfaction and translate into good visitor service.

However, park employees are not immune to stress stemming from concerns about the park's financial situation or their own salaries, benefits, living and working conditions, and the ongoing controversies that envelop Yellowstone. The challenge is to attract and keep the "best and brightest" employees—those who are professionally qualified and prepared to carry on the tradition of service that the public has come to associate with the NPS flat hat and badge.

A DISSENTING VIEW

“...The best thing the Government could do with Yellowstone National Park is to survey it and sell it as other public lands are sold...it is very rapidly assuming troublesome and elephantine proportions...Ten thousand dollars has already been spent in laying out roads that nobody uses. Last year we appointed a superintendent at an expense of \$2,000, and this year the appropriations are \$40,000. There is to be a corps of assistants to stay there summer and winter to look after the spouting geysers, to see that patent medicines are not advertised on the cliffs, that timber is not cut down, and that the noble game is not excluded from those preserves...

I do not understand myself what is the necessity for the Government entering into the show business in the Yellowstone National Park.”

— U.S. Senator Ingalls of Kansas, debating funds and protection for Yellowstone, March 1, 1883



Changes in the demographics of the workforce and trends toward corporate downsizing, decentralizing governmental decision making, and balancing the federal budget, as well as balancing work and family priorities—all these have clashed with the somewhat militaristic traditions of the NPS. The pool of applicants, and the housing, work space, and benefits needed for park employees have changed, as has Yellowstone’s visitor population. What was once mostly a summer park staffed by an influx of students and teachers now receives a growing number of visitors for eight or nine months of the year.

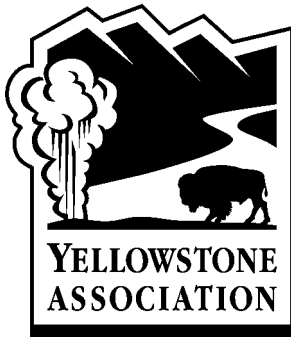
Park managers have had to figure out ways to keep Yellowstone functioning smoothly for this longer visitation season while at the same time coming under pressure to make do with fewer employees and appropriated dollars. Spending an inordinate amount of time looking for creative solutions to fiscal problems, park managers have been frustrated at the lack of funding to invest in their human capital. Although Yellowstone appears to continue to provide a worthwhile experience for most visitors, the morale and dedication of employees is waning, which affects their ability to protect park resources and keep the visitors satisfied.

The day-to-day work of looking after the park’s resources and visitors is, of course, not solely borne by NPS employees. Concession personnel, park volunteers, service organizations, and other benefactors assist those on Yellowstone’s payroll by providing funds, workers, equipment, and other valuable support for park programs.

Partners in Park Preservation

National parks have a long tradition of working with non-profit organizations that help park staff carry out their visitor service and resource preservation missions. While Yellowstone has always gained from the beneficence of generous supporters, the park's current fiscal situation compels a stronger effort to persuade those who care about Yellowstone to help protect, enhance, and restore park resources through public and private partnerships. While employees have historically seen themselves as isolated guardians of the nation's most precious park resources, the fostering of cooperative relationships with neighboring communities, governmental agencies, and corporations who also value park goals and values receives increased emphasis today.

YELLOWSTONE'S COOPERATING ASSOCIATION



Since its inception in 1933, the Yellowstone Association has provided more than \$6 million to benefit the park's resources and visitors by supporting educational and scientific programs. "YA" raises funds through sales of educational materials in park visitor centers, a membership program, and donations received from corporations or individuals who wish to support specific projects. Membership in the Yellowstone Association, which has grown greatly in recent years, reached the 10,000 mark in August of 1999.

The Yellowstone Association also provides staff who work with uniformed rangers and park volunteers to provide visitor information and other assistance in the visitor centers and museums. Future plans call for upgrading the bookstores in the Old Faithful and Canyon visitor centers to encourage more visitor education and exploration of Yellowstone.

The Yellowstone Association Field Institute provides in-depth learning experiences about park resources and issues through one- to five-day courses which are generally held at the historic Buffalo Ranch facility in the Lamar Valley. In 1998, when the Institute offered nearly 100 classes in which more than 900 people participated, it received an award from the Association of Partners for Public Lands for the best personal services interpretive program offered by a national park cooperative association.

SUPPORT FROM THE YELLOWSTONE ASSOCIATION

In 1998, support from the Yellowstone Association for the park's interpretation and education programs included:

- ▮ \$85,800 for 24 new museum and wayside exhibits in the Madison and Old Faithful areas;
- ▮ \$66,000 for self-guiding trail booklets at popular visitor attractions;
- ▮ \$58,300 toward the printing costs of *Yellowstone Today*, the newspaper distributed at the park's entrance gates; a special supplement on the 1988 fires; and *Yellowstone Science*, a quarterly magazine devoted to natural and cultural resources;
- ▮ \$30,000 for projects such as new benches for seating at visitor centers; and
- ▮ \$15,000 to the park library to help pay for staff and purchase books.

The Association provided a total of \$308,000 in financial support in 1998, including its contribution toward a two-year project to develop new exhibits on predator-prey relationships for the Albright Visitor Center at Mammoth, preservation of historic photographs, and infrastructure improvements at the Yellowstone Institute in Lamar Valley. The Association also facilitated additional park support through gifts from other donors for specific science, history, and educational projects.

INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE DONORS

Yellowstone is grateful for the tangible support given by many individuals, from the small out-of-pocket contribution made at a visitor center to the five-figure check offered by a generous benefactor.

Individual contributions. In addition to the \$12,000 to \$15,000 annually put in donation boxes throughout the park, some park supporters have contributed money to be used for specific purposes. Anglers and fish-watchers have added thousands of dollars to the Yellowstone Fisheries Fund, which supports native fisheries restoration efforts. Children, their families, and school groups contributed \$5,000 after the 1988 wildfires which was used to construct a boardwalk and provide interpretive displays about the natural recovery of the forest along a children's fire trail. Donors have contributed more than \$250,000 to the Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Fund since 1995, the year that wolves were returned to the park.

Park patrons. One of Yellowstone's most munificent patrons has been Chip Davis, president of American Gramophone and producer of the musical group, Mannheim Steamroller. Since 1989, he has donated to Yellowstone more than \$550,000 in proceeds from the group's concerts and sale of CDs and cassette tapes. By encouraging other donations, these benefit concerts have generated an additional \$10,000 from other corporations and individuals. The account set up for these funds, which has also grown through interest earnings, has been used to support a variety of projects including backcountry trail restoration, recycling efforts, and special museum exhibits.

Yellowstone's other corporate donors include Canon, U.S.A., Inc., which provided equipment and funds to study grizzly bears and print park publications; Diversa, Inc., which provided laboratory analysis of wolf DNA to identify the lineage of Yellowstone's packs and their genetic relationship to other wolf populations in the U.S.; and the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), maker of GIS computer programs such as ArcInfo and ArcView, which donated software and training to help park staff map resources and make spatial information available to researchers and other users. Yellowstone has a long-standing relationship with Unilever Home & Personal Care - USA, which has contributed funds in support of scientific conferences on park issues, and donated recycled material for boardwalks around Old Faithful Geyser, and is the lead grantor in the effort to fund a new Old Faithful Visitor Center.

YELLOWSTONE PARK FOUNDATION

A new foundation was created in 1996 to help generate private support to preserve, protect, and enhance Yellowstone's resources and enrich each visitor's experience. A generous grant of \$200,000 from Conoco, Inc. got the Yellowstone Park Foundation off to a strong start. During its first three years, the foundation has received more than \$1.2 million to support park projects, including:

- \$39,500 for development and interpretation of a self-guiding Fort Yellowstone walk;
- \$36,500 toward restoration of westslope cutthroat trout;
- \$15,000 toward conservation treatment of a horse-drawn Shaw & Powell buggy, used to transport park visitors to their tent camps between 1898 and 1916;
- \$15,000 to support production of the new bison exhibit at Canyon;
- \$9,250 for exhibits on microscopic life forms associated with park thermal features;
- \$3,500 for the first complete aerial survey for beaver in Yellowstone; and
- \$2,500 for a report on bioprospecting in Yellowstone.



A SAMPLING OF BENEFACTORS

Foundations, corporations, and organizations that have recently made major contributions to one or more park programs include:

Advanced Telemetry Systems, Inc.	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Amfac Parks and Resorts	Telonics, Inc.
Canon, Inc.	Tocad America, Inc.
Conoco, Inc.	The Trout and Salmon Foundation
Diversa, Inc.	Trout Unlimited-Coldwater Conservation Fund
Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.	The Turner Foundation
Hamilton Stores, Inc.	Unilever Corporations of America
Helicopter Wildlife Management, Inc.	The Wolfstock Foundation
The Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Lab	The Wolf Fund
Landis Wildlife Films, Inc.	Woods Electronics, Inc.
Mill Pond Press	The World Foundation for Environment and Development
The Montana Trout Foundation	The Yellowstone Association
The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Yellowstone Ecosystem Studies
The National Park Foundation	The Yellowstone Grizzly Foundation
Nikon, Inc.	The Yellowstone Park Foundation
The Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative	The Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Fund
The One-Fly Foundation	Yellowstone Park Service Stations
The Order of Moose	

OTHER TYPES OF PARTNERS

Yellowstone benefits from many cooperative relationships that are not primarily financial. The park's library, which is open to the public but used primarily by park staff, obtains reference materials through interlibrary loans with other larger facilities. Most of the research conducted to learn more about the park's resources is carried out by scientists affiliated with other institutions (see "Learning From Yellowstone," page 5-2). Some of these universities and government agencies have established formal cooperative agreements with the park which facilitate sharing of vehicles and laboratory equipment, and the assistance of student interns. Adjacent counties and communities have mutual aid agreements with Yellowstone to coordinate the response by trained professionals to fires, medical emergencies, and law enforcement situations in and outside the park (see "Protecting Visitors," page 6-48).

The ongoing support of many types of benefactors—individuals, corporations, a host of non-profit foundations as well as local and regional neighbors with common interests—will continue to be needed as Yellowstone seeks creative ways to advance its provision of public service and resource conservation.