

WILDLIFE & BACKCOUNTRY

SAFETY GUIDE



YELLOWSTONE CLUB





Whether you are hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, or just out for a stroll, your safety at Yellowstone Club is top priority. The wilderness in and around YC is prime wildlife habitat, which includes everything from bears, moose, and wolves to deer, elk, and other game species. The environment is also very dynamic and includes everything from thunderstorms and high altitudes to forest fires and rugged terrain. Please familiarize yourself with the following safety guidelines and abide by them when spending time outdoors. In the case of an emergency, call Yellowstone Club Security at (406) 993-2002.

SAFETY IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

- Carry bear spray and know how to use it properly.
- Know your hiking abilities: Do not attempt a hike that is too advanced for your level of fitness.
- Contact YC Concierge for information on trail conditions and weather forecasts.
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and your estimated return time.
- Try to avoid hiking at dusk and dawn when wildlife is most active.
- Take a jacket, raincoat or poncho, a warm hat, insect repellent, sunscreen, matches, high-energy food, and a map.
- Carry adequate drinking water, as stream and lake water may not be safe to drink untreated.
- Always hike with another person. There is safety in numbers!



WATCHING THE WEATHER

Be alert to changing weather conditions. In mountainous terrain, storms develop quickly, especially in the summer. Lightning can be very dangerous. If you are caught in a lightning storm remember to:

- Avoid high ridges, tall trees, and peaks.
- Stay in the open; try to remain in low-lying areas.
- Stay away from single trees or other targets – especially metal towers.
- Shed backpacks with metal supports.



HIKING BY THE RULES THINGS NOT TO DO

- Do not take shortcuts across switchbacks. This causes harmful erosion.
- Do not take motorized equipment or wheeled vehicles into the wilderness. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on YC and US Forest Service trails. E bikes are not allowed on US Forest Service Trails. Motorized and wheeled vehicles are not allowed in designated wilderness areas.
- Do not leave any trash or garbage. If you pack it in, **PACK IT OUT!**
- Do not build fires in the backcountry unless prior permission is granted by Security.
- Do not smoke. We are in a highly dangerous wildfire area.
- Do not make any significant impact in stream crossings.



ENCOUNTERING WILDLIFE

Although attacks are rare, ALL wildlife is unpredictable and may attack without warning. Even animals that appear 'tame' or docile can react suddenly and unexpectedly to a perceived threat – it's impossible to predict what will threaten the animal.

- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife – at least 100 yards.
- Make noise while hiking, by talking loudly, singing, or wearing bear bells; this will alert wildlife – especially bears – that you are in the area.
- Avoid eye contact and back away slowly during animal encounters.



BEAR SAFETY RULES

1. Bears can be anywhere (assume their presence).
2. Keep food and other attractants away from bears.
3. Be prepared to handle bear encounters.
4. Preventing a conflict is easier than resolving a conflict.

Bears can be anywhere (assume their presence).

Avoiding conflict is easier than dealing with a conflict.

- Stay alert and use all of your senses to detect bear activity, especially where visibility or hearing is limited (woods, bushy areas, streams).
- Travel in a group. Groups of people are usually noisier and less likely to surprise bears. Don't let your group get spread out. Stay in close proximity of each other so everyone is visible and can gather even closer together if a bear is encountered.
- Make noise by talking, singing or clapping. This may not be necessary continuously, but is critical when visibility and hearing are limited. Do not scream or shriek, as this may startle or confuse a bear.



- If walking with your dog(s), keep on a leash or close so they don't aggravate a bear or cause a bear to chase the dog back to you.
- Carry bear spray close in an accessible place and know how to use it.
- Avoid traveling at night, dawn, or dusk.
- Avoid carcass sites and evidence of carcasses (such as groups of scavenger birds).
- Anyone moving quickly (i.e. mountain biker, trail runner) is at a higher risk of surprising a bear.

Keep food and other attractants away from bears.

- Bears are curious and food driven.
- Feeding bears puts people and bears at risk.
- Securing food and garbage means keeping it in an approved bear resistant container (locked car, bear box, bear resistant garbage can, etc.) See <http://igbconline.org/certified-products-list/> for list of approved products.

Be prepared to handle a bear encounter.

- In any bear encounter, your behavior matters. Bears respond to your actions. Both grizzly bears and black bears pose a risk. The bear's behavior should determine your response.
- During an encounter with a bear:
 - Never run away. You cannot outrun a bear. Running may trigger a bear to chase.
 - Never approach a bear.

Mountain Bikers & Trail Runners:

- Anyone traveling quickly on trails (i.e. mountain biker, trail runner) is at higher risk of surprising a bear.
- Watch for signs of bear activity and avoid riding in these areas.
- Avoid riding fast on trails that feature seasonal food sources for bears, such as berries.
- Do not run or ride while intentionally impacting your ability to hear natural noises (i.e. wearing ear buds or headphones).
- Make noise and slow down when line of sight is poor.
- Make noise and slow down when ambient sounds make it difficult to hear (i.e. wind, rushing streams).
- When possible, ride in groups and stay together.
- If you encounter a bear, stop, get off your bike, and follow bear encounter recommendations.
- Never try to outrun or outride a bear.
- Carry bear spray on your person not on your bicycle.





IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Outdoor Pursuits (406) 993-2126

YC Emergencies (406) 993-2002

YC Security / Gatehouse (406) 995-4221

YC Concierge (406) 995-7370

YC Outfitters

Rental and Repair (406) 995-7395



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yellowstoneclub.com

For more information, please contact Yellowstone Club's
Public Safety Supervisor at (406) 995-4221 or visit
[Bears in Montana | Montana FWP or Bearsmart.com](#)