

# Yellowstone

## Day Hikes

### In the Mammoth Area

Yellowstone National Park  
P.O. Box 168  
Yellowstone, WY 82190  
www.nps.gov/yell



#### Welcome to the Mammoth Area

Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone's backcountry begin in the Mammoth area. This guide introduces you to eight 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.

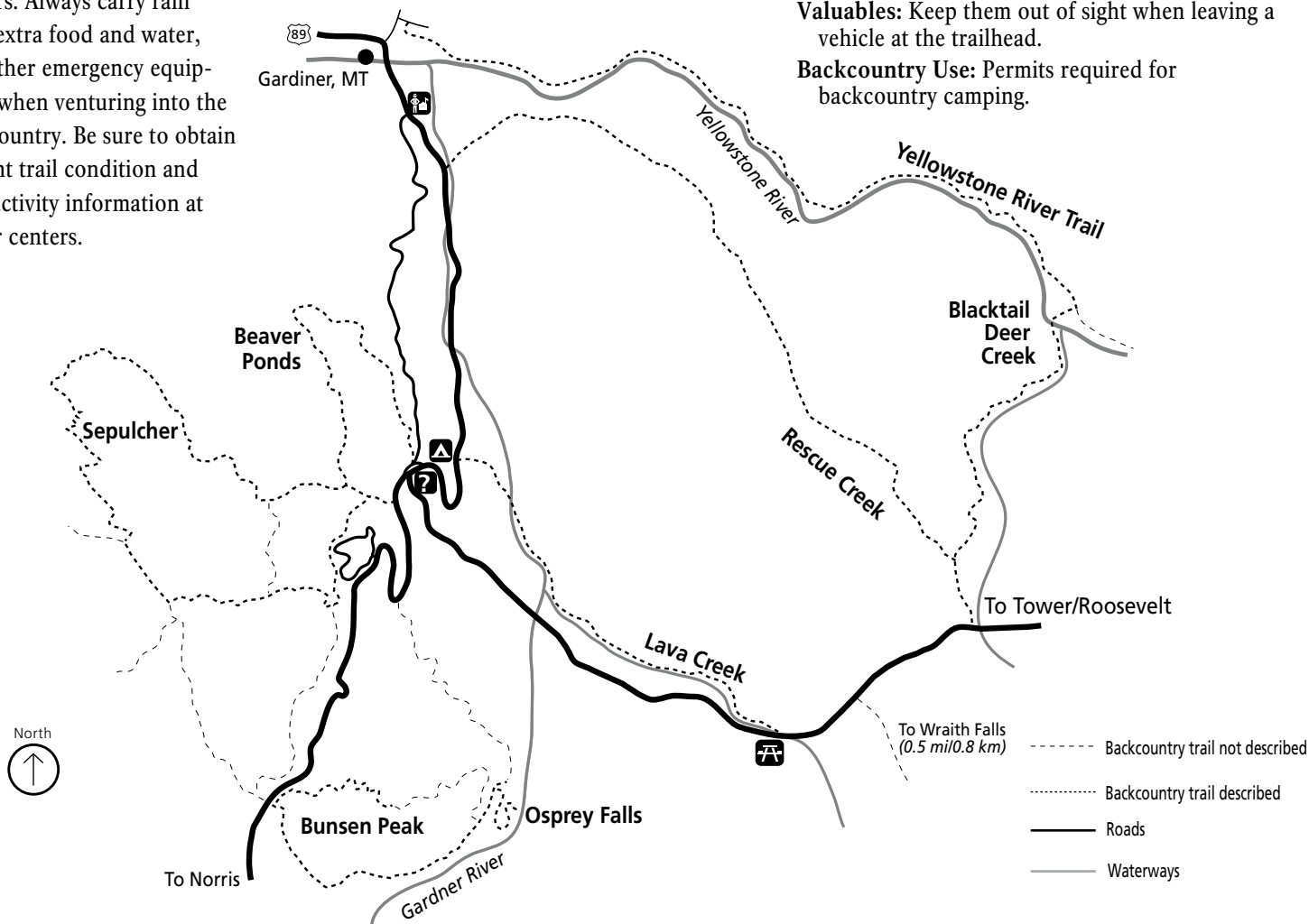
**All Wildlife:** You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards (23 m) from all other animals—including birds. It is illegal to disturb animals from any distance.

**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. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this source of food. Obtain detailed bear information from a ranger at the Albright (Mammoth) Visitor Center.

**Fishing:** Anglers must have a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit in their possession. Consult the park newspaper or rangers at visitor centers.

**Valuables:** Keep them out of sight when leaving a vehicle at the trailhead.

**Backcountry Use:** Permits required for backcountry camping.



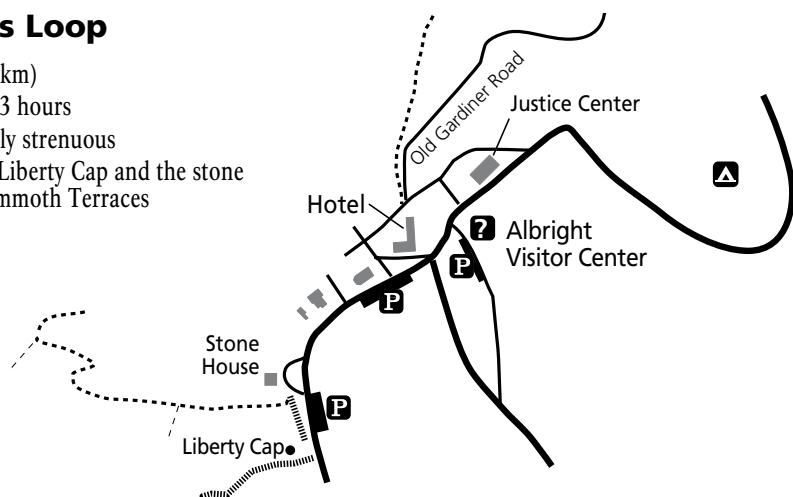
#### Beaver Ponds Loop

**Distance:** 5 miles (8 km)

**Estimated time:** 2-3 hours

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Trailhead:** between Liberty Cap and the stone house next to the Mammoth Terraces



The trail begins just north of Liberty Cap and the 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. Look for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, moose, beaver dams and lodges, the occasional beaver, and waterfowl. Be alert for bears: both black and grizzly bears forage in this area. Past the ponds, the trail travels through forest and grassland back to Mammoth.

## Bunsen Peak

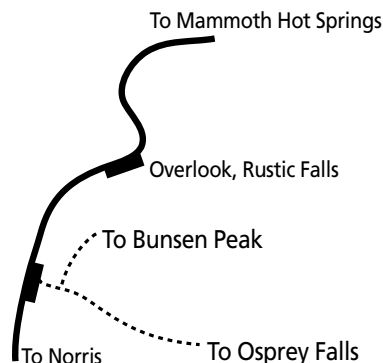
**Distance, round trip:** 4.2 miles (6.7 km)

**Estimated time:** 2–3 hours

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous; 1,300 foot climb

**Trailhead:** 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Mammoth–Norris 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.



## Osprey Falls

**Distance, round trip:** 8 miles (12.8 km)

**Estimated time:** 5–6 hours

**Difficulty:** strenuous

**Trailhead:** 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Mammoth–Norris Road, across from the Glen Creek trailhead

Follow Bunsen Peak Road (hiking/biking only) through grassland and burned forest 2½ miles (4 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.

## Lava Creek

**Distance, one way:** 3.5 miles (5.6 km)

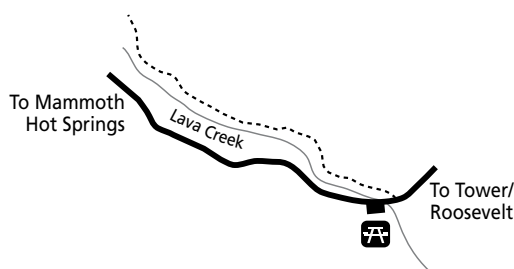
**Estimated time:** 3–4 hours

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

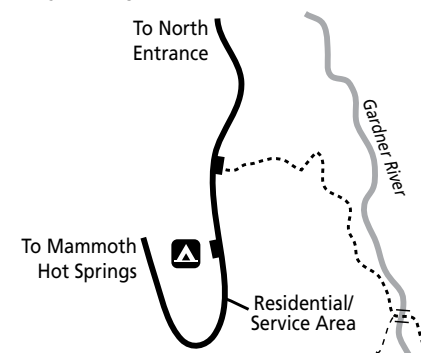
**Trailhead:** Across the road from the Lava Creek picnic area on Mammoth–Tower Road

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.

### Trailhead



### Trail End



## Rescue Creek

**Distance, one way:** 8 miles (12.8 km)

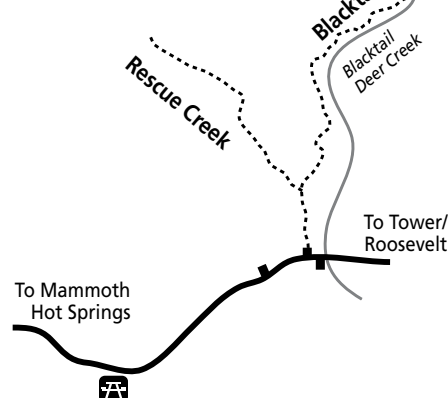
**Estimated time:** 5–6 hours

**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

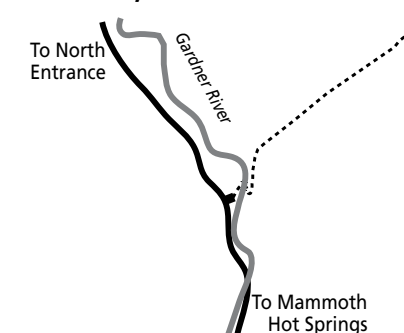
**Trailhead:** 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on Mammoth–Tower Road; ends 1 mile (1.6 km) south of the North Entrance Station

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.

### Trailhead, Rescue Creek & Blacktail Deer Creek



### Trail end, Rescue Creek



## Blacktail Deer Creek/ Yellowstone River

**Distance, one way:** 12 miles (19.3 km)

**Estimated time:** 6–8 hours

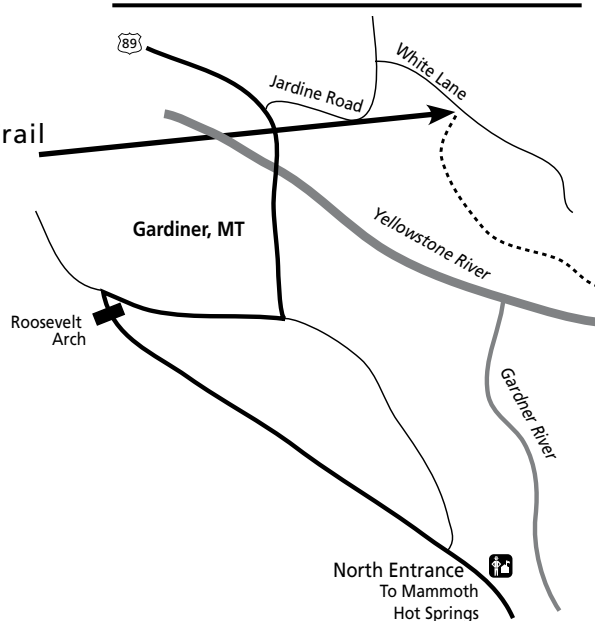
**Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Trailhead:** 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on Mammoth–Tower Road (map above)

Follow Blacktail Deer Creek as it descends 1,100 feet (33.5 m) through rolling, grassy hills and Douglas-fir forest to the Yellowstone River. Cross the river on a steel suspension bridge then join the Yellowstone River Trail, which continues downriver, passing Knowles Falls and into arid terrain until it ends in Gardiner, MT (map right)

**Caution:** Very narrow, short stretch near Gardiner is slippery when wet.

### Trail end, Yellowstone River Trail



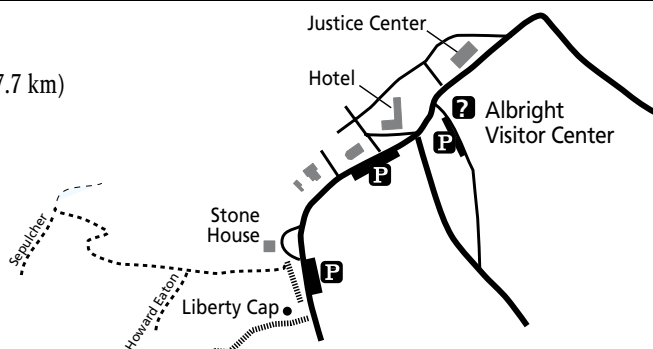
## Sepulcher Mountain

**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 Terraces



Follow the Beaver Ponds Trail (see above) to the Sepulcher Mountain Trail junction, then climb 3,400 feet (1,036 m) 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 Trail, which descends to the Howard Eaton Trail, which goes north to Mammoth Terraces and the trailhead.

## For more information

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

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

Each major area of the park has a free hike handout. The Yellowstone Association bookstores also sell a “Dayhike Sampler” with a hike or two per area plus several guides for trails throughout the park. Proceeds from all sales support Yellowstone National Park’s interpretive ranger programs.