



Yellowstone and Grand Tetons Wyoming Trip Notes July 18 – 27, 2014

Once is enough? Yes, one trip report for an area is generally enough so the majority of this will be a copy of my trip notes from the same trip taken in 2008. Mostly the same hikes.

Once is not enough for these parks. I wanted to do this same trip again for a multitude of reasons: Both parks are big time scenic events; the hiking is spectacular; questioning if my aging body would be able to do it again; my favorite leaders who know the area well have their own new company; Parks Plus was adding an extra day in Mammoth Spring Terrace where I've tried to go for years; NJ friends were going; I had time and could use the exercise.



It worked! It was a birthday gift to myself: I'm pleased to report that despite six years having passed, I was able to handle all the mileage (nearly 70). While I'm not as fit in some ways, in others I am more used to the rocky terrain and keeping the body going. I'm slow but I have good endurance; I'm rarely tired or sore. Pretty good for starting my 70th year?

If it hurts, I stop! On that subject of keeping going, I do believe that I've kept going in part by being smart. I'm not too enchanted and not the slightest complimented when people suggest that I'm just lucky: I've taken care of my body, diet and feet from an early age; nothing but sensible shoes from my early 20s; I have an excellent and educated trainer as adviser and who I see often; if it hurts, I stop; I take no pills; I do a lot of cross training but just as carefully I don't do too much; I honor my body with no silly diets, plenty of good food; and rest when it needs it. Best of all, I have a comforting spouse who keeps me sane and stress-free. So here I am, grateful for what good health I've had and hope to continue hiking. If I can't, I'll find something else to do and know that I gave it my best shot. It probably wasn't just luck.



The photo – We just happened to be sitting on the same park bench when I got the idea to ask a stranger to take our picture. A rare event. A happy bunch, yes? Maybe for some because the week was done!

Why www.ParksPlusHiking.com?

- Leaders Steve and Nola are favorites after dozens of different hikes in years past. They are well educated, have a multitude of certificates and skill sets and they are healthy in their 50s.
- Having scouted a hike ahead of time is a given; we are never taken on an unknown hike or unable to find a trailhead.
- Bargain price, generous and covers everything.
- Best of restaurants offered in the area.
- New and different hikes each season.
- Well-known, always two leaders, have good back-ups as well as guest leaders
- Limited number of hikers per trip – they won't show up with a big bus.



I've been on a number of Backroads trips, and I'm still using Country Walkers for foreign ventures and I used to use Timberline when Steve and Nola were with them. But these other companies can be either horribly overpriced, don't use local-knowledge guides, might have an indecent number of guests, poor administration, get lost on un-scouted hikes, or use too-young or too-old guides. I am looking for more variety but don't want camping, large groups, young and inexperienced guides, old and aged guides, or overpriced ventures. I sure don't want to get lost on a trip.

Interesting links

My 2008 photo show – compliments of Tom on www.TomsKoi.com
<http://www.photoshow.com/watch/Re9UP9lj>

Ken Burns shares secrets of Yellowstone National Park

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2014/07/28/ken-burns-yellowstone-national-park/13269525/?csp=travel>

From The New York Times - Go Take a Hike!

If human-made messes are getting you down, try rejuvenating in the cathedral of the wilderness.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/03/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-go-take-a-hike.html>

NO, we didn't see this moose. We kept looking for moose and only saw a couple. Fortunately this was not our sighting. Coincidentally, these pictures were sent to me at the end of our trip. It happened in Maine.



Best Day Hikes in the Parks - National Geographic

<http://adventure.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/trips/best-trails/national-park-day-hikes/>

Two of the hikes of the week are on this listing – Mt Washburn and Lake Solitude. I've either done most of them or are scheduled to.

A fabulous video! When wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park in the United States after being absent nearly 70 years, the most remarkable "trophic cascade" occurred. What is a trophic cascade and how exactly do wolves change rivers?

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q&feature=youtu.be

Highlights – beyond the 2008 report below



Pictures by Nola. Thanks. I didn't take many and nothing of myself.

Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces

<http://www.nps.gov/yell/naturescience/mamterr.htm>

At Mammoth Hot Springs, a rarer kind of spring is born when the hot water ascends through the ancient limestone deposits of the area instead of the silica-rich lava flows of the hot springs common elsewhere in the park. The results are strikingly different and unique. They invoke a landscape that resembles a cave turned inside out, with its delicate features exposed for all to see. The flowing waters spill across the surface to sculpt magnificent travertine limestone terraces. As one early visitor described them, "No human architect ever designed such intricate fountains as these. The water trickles over the edges from one to another, blending them together with the effect of a frozen waterfall." How they work? Water rises through the limestone, carrying high amounts of dissolved calcium carbonate. At the surface, carbon dioxide is released and calcium carbonate is deposited, forming travertine, the chalky white rock of the terraces. Due to the rapid rate of deposition, these features constantly and quickly change.

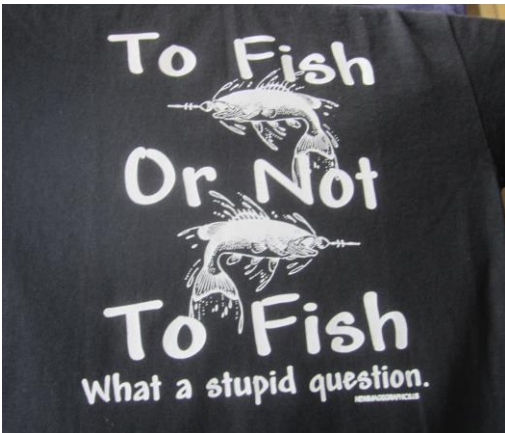
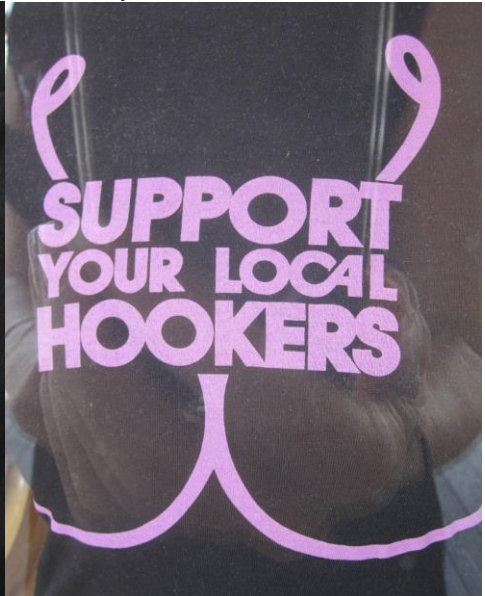
Some of my very few pictures

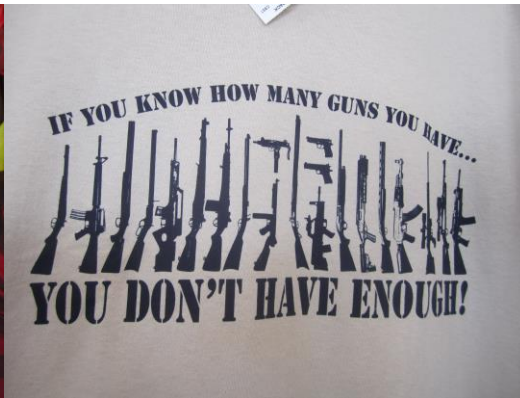
See link above for 2008 pictures put together in a Photo Show by Tom.



Jackson is in Jackson Hole

It is a cute but rather tacky little town as evidenced by the number of t-shirt shops. Somebody buys these and I'd say Jackson gets the gold medal for most obnoxious and yet creative t-shirts.





Those obnoxious t-shirts were surely worn by someone, and maybe by someone who wore these heels. I'd think 'nobody' would wear t-shirts or shoes like these except the shoes were in a second hand store.

Next?

Since I'm just in from the Italian Dolomites trip and quickly heading out to a Colorado hike, I'm pleased to be able to use the trip notes from my last Jackson Hole/Yellowstone/Grand Tetons trip. They follow. After Colorado and visiting friends Dave and Dana ex from New Jersey and now in Colorado Springs, I go to Reno for a tour of Lake Tahoe and a week's hiking in Lassen Volcanic National Park, followed rather quickly by another hike in the High Sierras and the eastern section of Yosemite. Then before September is over Tom and I are off to Milan for a refresher course and then I join up with hiking friends for the Lakes of Italy. Onward: London for ten days, Chicago for ice skating trials, Argentina for touring in Buenos Aires followed by hiking in Mendoza and Patagonia. Atlanta for five days and a half marathon, then Marie joins us for her winter holidays in Barcelona. Los Angeles for friends and sightseeing, then Florence later January with hiking friends. Well, somebody's got to do it



Jackson Hole/Grand Tetons/Yellowstone Trip Notes July 17 - 28, 2008

Firsts for Diana:

- Float and white-water rafting trip on WATER -- by me who doesn't get near water otherwise -- so my first and last.
- Broken toe on first day of 6-day hiking trip (stubbed my toe in the dark going to the john in the middle of the night).
- Rained only on the first day of the hiking tour (then never except the evening at Old Faithful Inn).
- Indulged in my first (and last) rodeo at the county fair.
- Solo hiking trip.
- Hiking within a huge caldera (the center of an active underground volcano)
- Crossing the Continental Divide.
- When the trip was over, continued stepping over rocks in my subconscious.

Firsts for the area:

- Yellowstone was the first national park.
- Old Faithful Inn is the oldest log and wood frame structure in the world.
- Snow King Resort in Jackson was the first ski resort in Wyoming.
- Jackson had the first all-woman city council in the 20s.
- Jackson had first women settlers owning ranches and first woman to ascend summit of Tetons.

Getting there: It wasn't feeling like a vacation when I had to depart home at 5am to make my flight, and it didn't feel like a vacation having to deal with Delta's 800#, seating or boarding pass. But I was fortunately able to use Delta's Crown Room while in Newark (though the Salt Lake City connection was only time to walk from one gate to the other.) Did you know Delta has a menu and food for sale on board? On these travels I felt lucky to have Continental as my primary airline, from the terminal layout, the long security lines, to the waiting areas.

Arrival in Jackson was around noon and shuttled into town. Cute little airport and as you walk down the airplane steps you can't help but be awed by the Teton Range on one side and the airport's arrival door arched with a big collection of antlers. In fact, it's a long valley that you land in and through. The shuttle driver gave me a head start with commentary the entire way into town.

What did I do in Jackson during my 3 days before and 3 days after my hiking trip?

- On arrival day I tried to walk ALL of town but had "eyes bigger than my stomach" It's not such a little town and its altitude of 6,200 feet and 85-90 degrees in full (and gorgeous) sun is challenging even without jet lag.
- Drank and dined at the Million Dollar Cowboy bar with the bar's saddle seats and live entertainment.

- Toured the Historical Society's museum as well as the Jackson Hole Museum – though I missed their walking tours, I walked a self-guided historical tour.
- Wandered in and around the historical Wort Hotel with their 2,000+ silver dollar-lined bar (see below), the Rusty Parrot Hotel listed by Travel + Leisure in their top 100s (Tom stayed there – no surprise), and Snow King Resort on the edge of town.
- Town Square's Shoot-Out show that's been performed every night for many years (see below.)
- Sunrise Wildlife Safari Expedition (see below.)
- Shopped their many boutiques and some 30 art galleries.
- Gray Line tour of Grand Teton Park (see below.)
- Hiked their Snow King ski runs and walked the nature trail over 2,000 feet far above Jackson with a gorgeous view of the Teton ranges.
- Sampled the meats of buffalo and elk.
- Wandered through the tents of a large art festival in a nearby park featuring many entertainment bands.
- Went to the Jackson County Fair for a real live rodeo (and wondered why.)
- Took in an excellent live concert (www.shaelaurel.com) at the fairgrounds.
- Educational films at their visitors center overlooking the zillion acre Elk Preserve.
- Saw a Cobra (car) rally in town.
- Saw a Porsche rally in town. My hotel's parking lot was inundated with Porsche cars from a Denver club, said to number 42.
- Last, but not least, subjected myself to both a float and then a white-water rafting trip.

Missed: Two different dinner shows in historic buildings, a bike tour, paragliding over at Teton Village said to be one of the best in the country, the National Museum of Wildlife Art 2.5 miles outside the city, and horse-back riding tours at Snow King and of course the alpine slide.

Animals: Saw cranes, blue herons, white pelicans, trumpeter swans, many eagles and osprey and their nests, beaver ponds, a cinnamon colored black bear chasing a marmot (though some thought it was a grizzly), a field of marmots squeaking to each other, little squirrel type animals without tails and a sheep sounding bleep called picas, little chipmunks much smaller than ours, a coyote in a stream bed, bighorn sheep on a peak, and the 5 ungulates – bison (American buffalo), mule deer, pronghorn antelope, moose and elk. One of our hikers saw a mountain lion which is possible as one had been seen by a Jackson runner.

Hotels stayed in: Trapper Inn & Suites (1), [now called Lexington Inn and updated] in Jackson was a good choice and on their main street. The hotel was only 1½ blocks to Town Square and turned out to be an excellent choice for me. Tom had encouraged me to upgrade from the Angler's Inn where the tour was starting. It wasn't a 4-star for sure, but very comfortable and roomy accommodations to include a dressing room, some of the best bath amenities, down comforters, a refrigerator and microwave, and while near to the main street, set back sufficiently to be quiet. Even better, it's recently renovated and has an expanded continental breakfast and wonderfully kind desk attendants. (But who can get breakfast when tours start before 6am?) www.trapperinn.com.

Old Faithful Inn (2) in Yellowstone is a world upon its own. It's worth a trip just to see it and learn its history. I would have given a bunch of money to have an architectural tour of the building and be able to crawl up into the Eagles Nest but the upper reaches is closed to the public due to earthquake damage. We were fortunate to have been bumped to the original Old Faithful instead of its new addition called Snow Lodge on the same premises but we weren't lucky that a company called Xanterra runs it. I simply can't say enough BAD about its administration and all I can think of is that the youthful employees need adult supervision.

Jackson Lake Lodge (3) is really the only show in town and the majority of the rooms are the cabins we were assigned which were decent but again needed some better administration to be made right. You can't beat the architecture or the view of the Grand Teton Ranges out the 90-foot picture-window, all of which are equally worth a trip.

Weather/Altitude: With temperatures in the high 80s and oftentimes a full 90, dehydration was a very real problem. I'm an excellent water-drinker but just couldn't keep up. The dryness or the sun or the wind just soaked it all up. The humidity was said to range from only 3 to 15%. It only rained one day and not much. Over the course of the trip there were days I refilled with a full five bottles of water during the hike but the only emptying was through the pores. Thirst even woke me up at night.

The weather is most odd. It's in the 40s at night, we needed a long sleeve shirt and jacket in the morning, and then we'd switch to real summer clothing in the afternoon. I expected Yellowstone to be as low as 32 degrees and only as high as 70 (per www.weather.com) but that was wildly wrong and must have been only at the edge of Yellowstone Lake, (one of the world's highest and largest alpine lakes) as we were in the high 80s during all the days.

Of course the altitude gave us stronger sun too. To put the altitude in perspective, think of our east coast high peaks we might brag about hiking: Mt Washington and Mt Mitchell. Well, they are the same altitude as Jackson Hole valley starts! Then we climb to 10,500 feet in the case of Mt Washburn. This acclimatization was one reason for my coming in three days early.

It's dry here even when it snows. There's some oddity called Verga that occurs here: it rains but it evaporates before it hits the ground. They also have something called dry lightning. Then there are the stands of forests where fire has roared through but the trees stand and never rot. Rotting requires moisture. This was so opposite from last month's visit to the Northern Cascades where nurse logs (from which new growth springs) and rotting and hanging moss on all sides of the trees are the norm.

Fluff: At 6pm every night for some 30 years there has been a "shoot out" western show on Town Square and I was no different than a zillion other tourists by running down to the corner for a new but almost silly experience. It's the same group that is performing Cat Ballew at the Playhouse. The costumes were cute, dancing entertaining and the gun smoke scared me away before the end of the 15-20 minute program.

Eating/restaurants: I wandered into numerous restaurants such as the famous Cadillac Grill on the Square, the Sweetwater Café in an old historical log cabin, the Wild Sage in the Rusty Parrot (where I snatched an afternoon cookie), and Nani's Cucina Italiana, and many were either too busy or overly pricey at up to \$40 a plate. I did eat at The Blue Lion [or was it the Blue Heron?] featuring a guitar player on their porch for entertainment, with fish, vegetables and wine for a decent price. The Bunnery was a favorite as is the Merry Piglets Mexican Grill on their main street, and the new E-leaven, as well as the noted Dornan's Chuckwagon in Moose. The best was Jackson Lake Lodge's Moran Room [or was it the Mural Room?] – very pricey but generously covered by the tour.

Notes on Jackson Hole adventures:

I was challenged to be up at 4:30am for a Sunrise Wildlife Expedition. This non-profit Teton Science School employs expert biologist and has a number of tour options but this was the only one available to me when I needed it. Since ADD set in, it turned out to be a good thing it wasn't the 8 or 14 hour day. I think I'm more of a zoo-girl and have learned that a Safari is NOT for me. It takes too much patience. It was educational and interesting and they supplied binoculars, scopes, and some good eyes. I'd met the owner quite by coincidence the day before. www.wildlifeexpeditions.org and

somewhat hefty prices from \$125 to \$250 a day but should be a world above Gray Line tours at \$90 which I did the following day but to a different area.

Our tour took us to the Elk Preserve, into Grand Teton National Park, and by two different rivers, including the Snake River where I took a float and a white water rafting trip on my return trip to Jackson. Gee, those floats looked to be going very fast Of the ungulates (udder feeders), we saw 4 of them and should have seen the 5th but the moose didn't cooperate. I was to see many later. There were antelope, elk, mule deer and bison, as well as osprey, bald eagles, cranes and great blue herons, not to mention all the mosquitoes but for that I was well prepared. The antelope and bison were quite close with their babies. The mosquitoes were even closer.

Though I'd had breakfast and a couple of snacks mid-morning and it was not quite noon, I was starving (is it the altitude?) so hunted down a place for a big "fat-ass" breakfast. There were lines of locals but it wasn't anything to write home about, just sufficient. All prices seem unreasonably high even to an east-coast girl.

I don't know how it happened, as I have a very full suitcase and no need of clothing, but I found a few items of clothing at the town's larger outfitter and that was even stupider since there's sales tax on clothing in WY. Oh well, as my best friend would say, IOM.

There are loads of little mini malls in Jackson's Town Square and I think all of them have been explored by me, but not being a very good shopper, it didn't take long. The Town Square itself is on the National Register of Historic Places and though these squares might be common in the east, this is one of the few such parks anywhere in the west. Most of the Square shops are fronted with boardwalk type sidewalks and little alleyway malls abound. The buffalo meat store in Gaslight Alley was interesting. I can well believe the tourist propaganda that says there are 30 art galleries within the downtown area, and in addition, a weekend art festival was ongoing in another park/square about three blocks away.

I typically enjoy hotel-hopping and Jackson has plenty to offer. There are old quaint ones that I'm glad that I didn't stay at (but my tour group did) but also the glorious ones that probably cost more than I like to pay. The Wort Hotel is long on the historical register and has many awards and they are home to a S-curved bar inlaid with 2,032 un-circulated 1921 Liberty silver dollars. The Rusty Pelican looks quite new and is where Tom stayed sometime in the late 80s or early 90s (just following the major 88 fire) has recently been listed by Travel + Leisure as a top hotel in the country. I went into both and in particular wanted to see the Wild Sage Restaurant in the Rusty Pelican where main courses are about \$44. My only souvenir of the visit was a big fat white chocolate macadamia cookie from their lobby. I thanked them, as though I belonged there, and then took a couple pictures and decided I was doing just fine at Trappers. On the other end of the scale, a block closer to Town Square is a hostel which looks as basic as camping.

There are said to be historical walking tours of the old town but having now visited the Historical Society's museum and bookstore, I've found they are only held on Tuesday and Thursday. I bought a self-guided walking tour of historic Jackson and have accomplished parts of it. While at the Jackson Hole Museum I found there are art walking tours but having seen nearly all of the 30 art galleries plus the art festival with a zillion tents, I was satiated. Maybe I'll venture to Town Square again for the 6pm shoot out which is said to have been going on continuously for many years.

Since Wildlife Expeditions only had a 14-hour tour, I opted for the Gray Line 9-hour tour through Teton Park and I was not disappointed. Perhaps it was fortunate to get a retired school principal who only works 3 days a week and loves the area and studies the history, flora and fauna as a hobby. He lives in an RV during the summer and returns to Hickory, NC in the winter.

Odds and Ends: Housing is a desperate situation with oftentimes multiple families sharing one home. Most of the homes in the area are 2nd or 3rd homes and we were regaled with all the celebrities who call Jackson their home, at least part time. Tour guide Paul pointed out some simple condos of 1200 SF selling for \$750,000 on the edge of town, but of course coming from the east that wasn't so shocking. Remember he comes from North Carolina. I had to wonder if all the thrift shops (just in my walking area there are 8 to 10) having to do with this same subject? Also odd is that there are very few minorities within Jackson's 8,000 population, which rises to 100,000 at the height of the tourist season.

Paul loves movies and we learned of multiple famous movies shot in the area with the most noted being "Shane" with Allan Ladd from the 50s where we walked through the old homestead and he felt badly that it wasn't being preserved. Apparently more movies would be filmed here except the parks won't close down the roads and the government doesn't make it a source of income like New York City has.

Wildlife: Q: What's a bicyclist to a bear? A. Meals on Wheels. There's plenty of bear attacks and one kind goes for the kill and ones just bites, but I don't remember if it's the grizzly or black bear that does which and who cares – I don't care to be close enough to find out. I also wasn't impressed with the need for bear repellent especially since it comes in a canister a size larger than our home fire extinguisher. The good news is that there has never been a bear attack on a group of over 4 hikers. On today's hike when everyone had lunch at Jackson Lake Lodge (yes, that one, designed by the same architect as Yosemite's Ahwahnee) I took off to the mountain for 45-60 minutes upward hike and views until I saw the warnings about it being bear territory and then I headed back as I hadn't seen a single person. On my return visit to the Lodge I noticed the trail was closed because of bears. Guess I was lucky.

Surprisingly we saw more wildlife on Gray Line's tour than the day "safari" and the sightings included Elk, Trumpeter Swans (with 9' wing spans and 3 pair living on the Elk preserve), white pelicans (with 8' wingspans), lots of bison (which is the same as an American buffalo) to include babies and some males that didn't realize that mating season isn't now, and finally a Moose. I finally got what an undulate is – any animal that feeds with udders. (What's my sign?) There's been a recent sighting nearby of a mountain lion that literally scared a female runner speechless.

The Elk Preserve is within a walk of my hotel and I walked to the edge on two different days and was reminded that about 7600 feed there in the winter and consume about 30 tons of pellets. A single Elk can consume 8 pounds per day and they come in so hungry that they follow the tractor laying out the pellets on the snow clad ground.

These Elk antler arches that line the Town Square and other places apparently only last a few years. The Boy Scouts clean up the dropped antlers once a year and make over \$150,000 selling the antlers which funds go primarily to the Elks' winter feeding. With 600 inches of snow last year, they must have needed more feed. It was a record snowfall which gave a lot of white water on the Snake River. On that subject, I was told that 2-3 weeks ago white water rafting was dangerous and there were many accidents. Drats, don't tell me. Another nice Boy Scout story is that over 1,000 have come to the region this summer to work with the forest rangers and trail maintenance and they're being housed in the local school.

Just beyond the Elk Preserve, but before the airport (which is the only airport on federal park property) is a fish hatchery that would be ho-hum except that they got their eggs from the Great Lakes originally and now are returning 1 million eggs a year to restock the Great Lakes. This story

reminds me of French wine vines going to California for planting and then needing to go back to France.

Remember that Jackson is 6,200 feet in elevation? Put that in perspective -- Mt Washington and Mt Mitchell on the east coast are similar. The Teton Range rises from a base of 6,200 rather suddenly to 13,000 feet. The creation of the Range is a subject that the 7-day evolutionists don't necessarily like and to which Paul says that if the 7-day evolutionists are correct, then the Teton Range was formed in 18 seconds.

Unless the air flow changes, all my pictures are a bit hazy due to the California wildfires. But that's nothing compared to what would happen if the caldera we sit upon were to erupt, and all scientists agree it will erupt, it's only a question of when. And when it does, it's said that much of the U.S. will starve. With all the earthquakes, there occurred the largest slide in the U.S. ever and it's just up from Kelly which was all but obliterated. Once Kelly and Jackson had competed for county seat and there was a sick joke about Jackson winning by a landslide. The area is now wilderness but nearby is what remains of Kelly where tiny lots sell for \$2 million in honor of their wonderful location with a perfect view of the Teton Range. Kelly has warm springs with multiple warm lakes, and a 64 acre Aspen grove (all stemming from potentially one plant – they spread via connecting runners). It wasn't far away where the Mormons have ranches that we saw more bison in the roadway and a barn that's said to be the most photographed in the world due also to its location with the Teton backdrop.

The rafting trip (4) was worth doing even if I was spooked about the water. But once is enough. The couple weeks prior I would not or could not have gone as the rapids were Class IV and the 1 ½ hours white-water portion was only taking 40 minutes and there were plenty of accidents. As it was, sitting in the back, I got soaked by water going over the front of our 12-man raft. Only one person was seen to go over unintentionally and my sitting in the middle didn't guarantee no tippy but gave me a very good chance of full safety. It was something new, a way to see the animals and birds of the Snake River, and a FIRST if not a LAST. [So much for saying "never" as I would do another white water rafting trip in Denali.]

The big Timberline Tours adventure:

Sunday - Day 1:

Morning met around a few blocks around at Angler's Inn lobby for a van shuttle to Yellowstone. We started with leaders Carol (owner) and Leslie and later Jim took over Carol's spot. Carol seemed a bit rattled and I later learned that they'd experienced their 3rd (ever) bicycle death on a tour (out of over 30 years) a couple days prior. (Sad story and one that had nothing to do with negligence.)

Visited Kebley Cascades on the way to Yellowstone, driving by Yellowstone Lake which is the nation's largest lake above 7,000 feet. It's in a pristine environment with an abundance of wildlife including bald eagles, osprey, white pelicans and others. We hiked to Lone Star Geyser, a backcountry gem and the 2nd largest after Old Faithful, but it didn't cooperate any more than spitting out some steam and small amounts of water. Then it was time to go onto the geyser basins surrounding Old Faithful. Explored thermal features surrounding the Inn via the boardwalk which reminded me of Reykjavik last August but Yellowstone is touristy whereas Iceland has not really been discovered yet. No one is sure which has the most geysers, but the word came from Iceland. The Upper Geyser Basin is home to a fifth of the world's geysers, including the granddaddy of them all, Old Faithful, which performs every 90 minutes or so. My best viewing of this massive cone geyser shooting as much as 8,400 gallons of boiling water to an average height of 145 feet (though some go considerably higher) was late evening after a long walk in the pouring rain and still in the mist at around 9pm.

Our first dinner was at the Old Faithful Inn, the oldest log and wood frame structure in the world. A glorious scene, but the rooms are just okay and would have been better were they not run by

Xanterra. Same for the restaurant that had great décor, good food, but the lousiest service ever encountered.

Hiked a total 5-7 miles with the tour group and then maybe 2 more miles in the evening rain on my own. Stayed in the historical and famous Old Faithful Inn (2) for 2 nights, a treat for the inn but the room wasn't anything to write home about.

Monday - Day 2

Each morning it was early up/early rise with breakfast at 6 to 6:30am and one time considerably earlier. We might pack out a lunch before departing and today was to Mystic/Fairy Creek Trail which meanders through meadows that are prime feeding habitats for bison and elk herds. Our hike to Mystic Falls and Imperial Geyser was via Bisquit Basin and Sapphire Springs, near to Little Firehole River. This area has some of the park's most active and dramatic thermal features. Then it was on to Fairy Falls whose 300-foot drop is among Yellowstone's highest. This trail additionally offers substantial testimony to the progressive regeneration of the Yellowstone forests that were decimated by the 1988 fires. Hiked a total of about 13 miles. There was an optional hike of 1.5 miles that I declined in order to soak a toe that looked very angry after having been stubbed in the hotel room. Honest – you can't make up such stupid stuff. Carol thought it might be broken and a couple weeks later I think that might have been the case but it did fine when confined and tightly restricted and I concentrated on not altering my gait so as not to cause other injury.

Tuesday - Day 3

Departed Old Faithful early and head to the summit of Dunraven Pass and the Mt Washburn trailhead headed to the awesome 10,243 summit or about 6 miles which took us about 4 to 4 ½ hours but that was with taking a lot of wildflower photographs. This was peak wildflower season. Following the encounter with Mt. Washburn and the very windy lookout, we descended to Canyon Village and spent some of the afternoon in the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. I'm sure it deserved a couple full days on its own. We did do the tourist scene there and walked along the rim to the various viewpoints of the Upper and Lower Falls. Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is more than 20 miles long and 1,200 feet deep. The canyon was formed 10,000 years ago through a convergence of volcanic activity, glaciation and erosion from the Yellowstone River. (Did we see Tower Falls? It was on the itinerary but I suspect it too far north and time ran out.)

From Canyon, we headed to Grand Teton and the beautiful Jackson Lake Lodge and a ranch BBQ but threatened rain kept us indoors. That was fine as there just couldn't be a more spectacular site than the Teton Range from the Lodge's 90 foot windows. Total hiking about 8 miles.

We moved to the Jackson Lake Lodge (3) for 3 nights. Again, it is location-location-location and the rooms, i.e., cabins, weren't much to write home about. The placement of the lodge by Rockefeller and the view was spectacular.

Wednesday- Day 4

Early morning we met in the Lodge's Grill for breakfast then departed to hike Death Canyon above Phelps Lake. These were truly spectacular views of the majestic, snow-clad spires of the Teton Range but it was the most difficult of the hikes for me due to the sun, bugs and ups and downs. Total miles were about 10 miles before returning for a dinner at Colter Bay. I copped out of dinner and ate on my own at the Lodge as I simply couldn't bear the thought of more togetherness in the van. We had wonderful participants but I'm used to quiet time.

Thursday - Day 5

Perhaps the most spectacular and challenging hike of the program was Day 5 but also the earliest. We prepared breakfast in Jim and Leslie's room at 5:30am! We had to be at the Jenny Lake boat

dock by 7am and shuttle to the other side and the canyon that would take us via a popular trail to Hidden Falls and then to Inspiration Point. The adventure began beyond the falls with a 2,000 foot climb to Lake Solitude in the heart of the magnificent Teton Range. It was a total climb of 2500 feet elevation for the day and there were some forested areas and some gradual climbing making it easier on the legs. We were awed by the beauty of the Teton Range from the valley below, but couldn't believe that which we saw along the trail to Lake Solitude – a hike that many consider to be the quintessential Teton experience. Along the way we saw either a young grizzly bear or a cinnamon black bear chasing a marmot. There were fields of marmots calling to each other too, as well as our closest encounter with a moose. Nothing would have prepared us for Lake Solitude however as it was ice covered, the sapphire color partially exposed, and sitting in a major rocky bowl on the other side of the Teton Range. We'd hiked by either waterfalls, streams or snow beds all day and really needed a rest, but those of us who were slower only were allowed about 20 minutes rest at the Lake before heading back. I didn't like the last mile or so downhill one bit and leaned very heavily on my trekking poles, my very swollen and black and blue toe not at all happy. But all other body parts were doing fine so I could make no complaint. Total hiking of 14.5 miles.

Dinner was a most generous offering in the famous and elegant Moran Room with the picture windows looking out at the Teton Range, which changed in appearance as the sun rose and set. It was again a very late night and we had yet to pack and be ready for another early morning departure. If we ever had over 7 hours even near a bed I don't remember it.

Friday - Day 6

After last night's farewell evening, the last day's hike was to be a leisurely one to Bradley and Taggart Lakes before returning to Jackson. I found the 300 foot elevation to be less than leisurely but well worthwhile and again my trekking poles were needed. Total hiking for the day was 6 miles. Total hiking mileage for the week, minus our own run-arounds in the evening, was 56-60 miles.

Our tour ended at 3:00pm back in Jackson and I considered crashing but instead walked the town, saw other tour participants and ate and drank at the Merry Piglets Mexican Grill on their main street. I returned to my original and favorite hotel of the trip, the Trapper Inn, again for 3 nights.

Saturday Jul 26 – 63rd Birthday

The day started at 6:30am with a taxi to the edge of town for the Barker-Ewing combination scenic float and whitewater rafting trip, separated only by a full breakfast and some nervous trepidation which was totally unwarranted. For more details, see (4) below or www.barker-ewing.com

Finished the birthday with another first – a rodeo at the county fair, and finished the whole big adventure with a needed trip home on Monday departing at 6am from the hotel.

Gifts: During the tour I had an unusual number of warm fuzzies. (1) Hair compliments, (2) surprise at my ability to pack in one carry-on suitcase yet still look good, (3) small backpack seemingly having everything needed, and (4) lack of wrinkles or sun exposure. Surely there was more because it was a pleasant experience maybe caused by having so many kind hearted folks on the trip.

Facts:

- Yellowstone is larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined.
- Yellowstone has been rising at approximately the same rate as fingernails grow.
- Yellowstone was the first national park founded in 1872.
- Yellowstone has over 1000 miles of trails throughout.
- About 2,000 earthquakes are picked up in a year with a major quake every 25 years. Since 1900s, the Yellowstone/Snake River has had about 30 earthquakes over 5.5.

- Inspiration Point -- Rock staircase descends 500 feet to a lookout above the Lower Falls and an incredible view of the canyon's depths.
- Teton is named for its highest peak of 13,700 feet.
- The Grand Teton is "only" Wyoming's second highest mountain. It stands nearly 1,000 feet above its nearest neighbor and 7,000 feet above the valley floor, and 2,000 summit it each year (half with professional guides.)
- Three million camera-laden visitors make this range the most-photographed in the world.
- Translates to Three Breasts and one can only guess that early trappers had been in the woods too long.
- Snake River has Class II and III rapids. Experience the wilderness from a whole new perspective.
- The Elk Preserve is 23,734 acres and winters-over Elk who would die of starvation otherwise.
- Jackson does not have a "hole" but rather the valley was known by trappers as Jackson's Hole because it is completely surrounded by mountains. It is 13 miles across and 55 miles long.
- A Bison is an American Buffalo and can weigh 2000 pounds. They can and do gore people.
- A bear can run up to 30 miles per hour.
- Yellowstone supports every species of wild animal that occupied the area before the arrival of civilization. No other place in the lower 48 can make such a claim.
- Elk antlers weigh up to 40 pounds. The male will carry them for about 140 days before they are dropped (at which point the Boy Scouts collect them!)
- Bald eagles weigh 10-12 pounds with the skeletal structure only half a pound and the 7,000 feathers a pound. The bones are light because they are filled with air.
- A grizzly will eat about 35 pounds a day. A bear spends 20 out of 24 hours a day eating and consumes 20,000 calories a day and gains 40 pounds every week.
- Elk do not turn into moose.
- Bear repellent is not something you wear on your clothes and skin. It is a huge canister that you spray at the feet of a bear that won't leave you alone.
- Hundreds of animal going occurs each year when tourists get too close to an animal.
- The Gros Ventre Slide is not a "slide" but a geologic feature or a scar caused by a massive landslide in 1925 when 50 million cubic yards of sandstone, limestone and shale slid about a mile down the hillside forming a dam 225 feet high and half a mile across the Gros Ventre River resulting in "Slide Lake." The slide area is now a protected park.
- It can snow at any given day of the year and weather changes quickly.
- We have the Rockefellers to thank for the pristine conditions.

Differences between Timberline Tours versus Backroads:

- No frills versus any and all fluff and any and all indulgences possible.
- About \$1,000 less.
- Limited to a dozen versus Backroads might have two van's full.
- No orientation at the first night's dinner.
- Limited educational information.
- Limited care and attention – there is no guarantee that you have a guide at the back of the pack.
- Hard charging without much 'smell the roses' time.
- No trip notes delivered under your door at night.
- No trip raps the morning of the adventure.
- Generous restaurants with open menu ordering.
- Limited and conservative snacks if any.
- Every meal covered versus a day off on your own at Backroads.

- Older and not so upbeat tour guides.
- Starts early and ends late so you have all days advertised.

Participants:

Robbin Holliday from Cincinnati was our bright star. Smart, quick, super good PR, she always kept the conversation flowing and had a nice thing or two to say to everyone. She does marketing for Scripps and has a significant-other of 10 plus years named Bill. She had been to Jackson numerous times for business and was very well traveled otherwise too.

Nancy Christiansen, also from Cincinnati, was Robbin's roommate. She is an 11th grade teacher, serious traveler, very fit, and just as cute as can be while always being open and outgoing. Nancy would be the one going back for someone left behind or choosing to walk with them. Nancy and Robbin have been many Timberline trips.

Ellen Leverette and Frank Ehrhardt are from Atlanta and she joked that she robbed the cradle when they met, she 41 and he 29. Frank is an engineer and Ellen is in sales. They had a couple things happen to make them disgruntled but they kept up a good face no matter. Ellen has the most beautiful skin you can imagine and maybe the continual protection has to do with it.

Sarah Flosi is from downtown Chicago, a retired lawyer, though she volunteers. She's 65, had a pin in her foot causing some serious rehab but it never held her back so she was an inspiration. She was our most "smell the roses" hiker and absolutely went orgasmic over the sights and in particular the wildflowers. She was very good for us. She'd suffered some melanoma in the recent past so wore sun shirts, which I newly also did and will add more to my wardrobe from now on. She's also married to someone a bit older (73?). They travel together on easier endeavors and leave the heavy hiking to Sarah and/or Sarah and daughter. I will make a serious effort to see Sarah again.

The Wasicek family is a real treasure. Daddy Chuck is an immunologist and who I hiked with the most. Momma Connie was unofficially with us but unable to hike due to a knee injury so she'd go biking during the day and join us for meals. She always seemed to know what Chuck and I talked about on the hike, another compliment. Their 25 year old son Andrew is such a beauty of a man and he came complete with long term girlfriend, Hillary Gluck, who wowed everyone with her charm and ability to have fun at all times. Hillary had lost her parents and seemed to be a part of the Wasicek family. Both Andrew and Hillary will be starting law school in the fall. It would be a big disappointment if I didn't see the entire family again. The parents live upstate New York, the kids are becoming Connecticut residents, and Connie is from Buffalo.

Missy Schwartz, from Brooklyn, was our hard charger (after youngsters Hillary and Andrew) but suffered some small injury the last day. It appeared she wanted some time alone and that might have precipitated her running ahead. Serious minded and probably a really good person but I got to know her least of all the participants, maybe because I couldn't keep up (grin). In marathons we say that speed injures, so maybe that's why she was unable to hike the last day.

Bob Neil was one of 3 engineers on the trip and he works at NASA in Houston. He'd been married a long while ago and seemed pleased to be single and surely any nice looking single male would be single by choice! We were frightened for him at one point when he had a peanuts-allergy scare while up in Death Canyon. Having an immunologist on board was handy and the proper drugs were magically available.

Carol is an owner and was with us through Yellowstone when husband Dick showed up and they left to go onto a biking tour. She's a bitty little cute Type A blonde and a good hiker and apparently an even better biker but a little easy going administratively for leading a hike. She was very likeable but

took exception to my needing exact times. (I'd had more than one instance of showing up on time and waiting and waiting and I made more out of it than others who just whispered their complaints.) She looks and sounds like she could be my friend Andrea's twin. I'd like to do a trip with her again no matter and am hoping for Yosemite and Half Dome.

Leslie Bullock was a leader with us from the start. She's from Medford, Oregon and leads 5-6 trips a year but I'm not so sure she should. I don't think she much liked us, she has a major hearing difficulty, and she's probably in her 70s though nothing slowed her down despite her age. She's a retired vet and maybe always has been single but at least is now. Robbin and Nancy said they'd had Leslie as a leader before and she'd never been so lackadaisical or grumpy before. Her serious blisters might account for the grumpiness but I can't think why she gave us so little information. [I later learned that she had a heart problem the next week.]

Jim McClain joined us when Carol and Dick left (with an overlap in Mt Washburn) and is a very fit 72. I might have really liked him in time had I gotten to know him more as he had a nice way about him. He apparently really knows bikes. Most of the participants though he and Leslie seemed to have a power struggle going on but I didn't pick up on it. We don't think they are a couple but they shared a room so it was a question. I think Jim is from North Carolina. [On another trip, the story goes that the van load had to return 1 ½ hours back to the hotel because Jim forgot his teeth.]

Footnotes:

(1) Trapper Inn (formerly known as Americas Best Value Inn) [and now the Lexington Inn] In early times, Trappers would refer to a low-lying valley surrounded by mountains as a "Hole." In the early 1800's, this area was a junction for six main Trapper Trails. Trappers would rendezvous annually in the "Hole" to sell and trade their furs. As settlers came, the town itself was named Jackson, and the area is still known as Jackson's Hole, referring to a frequent fur trading Trapper named Davey Jackson. Thus, the name of Trapper Inn & Suites commemorates the Trappers of earlier times and welcomes all of those who wish to rendezvous in the Jackson Hole area.

The Trapper Inn is downtown Jackson's newly built all Suite hotel featuring 47 suites, 6 luxury guest rooms and 36 renovated guest rooms. At our convenient location one and a half blocks from Jackson's Historic Town Square, shopping, dining, and entertainment await you. No restaurant on premises though an expanded continental breakfast is provided. Convenient location one block from Town Square, near shops, restaurants, and galleries. Indoor Swimming Pool & Hot Tub; Cable TV with HBO; Refrigerator; Coffee Maker; Microwave; Hair Dryer; Coin Operated Laundry Facility. Free in the lobby: coffee throughout the day, wireless internet and newspapers. Excellent amenities in bath.

Trapper Inn consists of 4 buildings. Courtyard rooms are in oldest section, motel style, renovated in '07.

(2) Old Faithful Inn – A National Historic landmark, located close to the geyser for which it is named. Completed in 1904, described by Travel + Leisure as a spectacular log-and-shingle chateau that captures the moment the West went from wild to Baroque. Built during the winter of 1903-04, the Old Faithful Inn was designed by Robert C. Reamer, who wanted the asymmetry of the building to reflect the chaos of nature. The lobby of the hotel features a 65-foot ceiling, a massive rhyolite fireplace, and railings made of contorted lodge-pole pine. Wings were added to the hotel in 1915 and 1927, and today there are 327 rooms available to guests in this National Historic Landmark.

The spectacular Old Faithful Inn is within short viewing distance of Old Faithful Geyser, the most famous geyser in the United States. Built at the turn of the century, the Inn is a National Historic Landmark and is one of the few remaining log hotels in the United States. It's unique and rustic

design has made the Old Faithful Inn a significant part of the history of Yellowstone National Park, and a favorite attraction for visitors to the park.

The Northern Pacific Railroad financed the original construction of Old Faithful Inn at a cost of around \$140k with furnishing adding an additional \$25k to the project. The Department of the Interior allowed building materials to be gathered within Yellowstone National Park itself. Architect Robert C. Reamer designed the building to blend in with the natural environment of Yellowstone, and to provide a "western experience" for early Yellowstone visitors. The Inn was constructed in three phases. In 1903, the original section (now called the Old House) with dining room, kitchen wings, and the two original and smaller guest-room wings were built. During 1913-14, a larger east wing was built, followed by the 1927 west wing.

Features of Old Faithful Inn include: faces north, overlooking the Old Faithful Geyser Basin; nearly 700 feet in length, seven stories high, with a lobby that climbs ninety-two feet from the floor exposed log and wood-framing structure; original foundation is stone, or concrete with a stone veneer; first floor structure consists of load-bearing log walls, and log framing; upper stories are of milled lumber and log framing, sheathed with yard-long shingles on the exterior; central, massive gable roof is the dominant architectural feature, making up six of the seven stories; three stories of dormers and windows on the gable ends provide natural light to the lobby and guest rooms; widow's walk with five flagstaffs surrounds the top of the roof, which had spotlights to light Old Faithful geyser at night - removed in 1948; original porte-cochere was recessed under the large gable roof of this central portion, along with a second-story porch directly above it, until the porte-cochere was extended out in front of the building in 1927; a portion on the ground floor was enclosed in 1927, and became part of the lobby, with the second-story porch extended for better viewing of Old Faithful; windows in the Old House are usually single and paired casements with various multi-light patterns of diamonds, circles, and rectangles; north door constructed of large planks with wrought iron hinges and a lock forged on-site by a blacksmith; lobby has a "Crow's Nest" - a separate small landing near the roof where musicians played for the enjoyment of guests far below during the Inn's early days; gnarled log brackets are attached to the log columns of the framing adding rustic decoration; similar rustic log work is used for balcony railings, balustrades along staircases, and brackets under the eaves; stairs are made from half-logs; logs of the interior spaces originally had bark on them but now are peeled; massive stone fireplace in lobby, sixteen feet square at its base; a large-scale wrought-iron and brass clock, designed by Reamer, is featured on the exposed stone masonry chimney; original rustic hickory chairs, still in the dining room, came from the Old Hickory Furniture Company; guest wings and hallways retain considerable original character - some with original plumbing fixtures: claw-foot bathtubs, wood water closets, and marble sink tops; Old House original Mission furniture add to the building's integrity, including: loose-cushioned settees, rockers, arm chairs, wing-back chairs, octagonal base tables with leather tops and brass studded trim, writing desks and chairs; original lighting fixtures still exist, such as: copper and iron chandeliers in the lobby and dining room; and wood candelabra of rustic design serving as the capitals of the log columns supporting the balconies. The building survived an earthquake in 1959, but the fireplace in the dining room collapsed. The earthquake also caused damage to the lobby chimney.

From 1991-1993, A&E Architects was involved in a comprehensive renovation of the guest rooms at Old Faithful Inn. A total of 83 rooms were renovated in the east wing, and 57 rooms were renovated in the west wing. The construction took place over two consecutive winters to allow guest use of the facility during the summer tourist season. The guest wings were renovated to be compatible with the original design, with some modifications to provide for modern convenience.

Old Faithful Inn is closed during the winter, but remains open the rest of the year. However, the newly built Old Faithful Winter Lodge provides lodging for winter guests, and of course, Old Faithful geyser performs year-round!

Old Faithful Lodge: Unlike the Inn, the current Old Faithful Lodge is a result of numerous changes dating back to the early days of tent camps provided by companies like Shaw and Powell Camping Company and Wylie Permanent Camping Company. These camps were erected throughout the park and offered shelter before hotels and lodges were built. Both companies had facilities at Old Faithful. By 1917, auto traffic into the park was increasing, and it was decided that some camps could be eliminated. Yellowstone Park Camping Company emerged and operated on the old site of the Shaw and Powell camp, the present day site of the Lodge. In 1918, a laundry was built on the site and construction continued on the facility until 1928 when the Lodge reached its present configuration. Cabin-style accommodations are available at Old Faithful Lodge. Often confused with the other two hotels in the area, Old Faithful Lodge houses a cafeteria, gift shop, coffee shop, and the front desk where guests check in.

Snow Lodge: Completed in 1999, the Old Faithful Snow Lodge is the newest Yellowstone lodge. The architecture of the lodge incorporates heavy timber and log construction, and a cedar shingle roof, making it fit in with the classic, rustic grandeur of buildings throughout Yellowstone National Park. Western furnishings were used throughout the lodge interior. Accommodations at the Old Faithful Snow Lodge range from large hotel rooms to comfortable cabins.

(3) Jackson Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park is situated on a bluff with spectacular views across the water of Jackson Lake to the skyline of the Tetons. There are 348 guest cottage rooms located on either side of the lodge as well as 37 guest rooms in the main lodge building. The upper lobby features 60 foot picture windows framing the Teton Mountain range as well as a collection of Native American artifacts and Western art.

Meals are memorable in the Mural Room with its Rocky Mountain cuisine and breathtaking panoramic Teton views, open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Pioneer Grill offers counter service of light meals, snacks and soda fountain treats, open daily from 6:00 am to 10:30 pm. The Blue Heron Cocktail Lounge features live entertainment, your favorite beverage and snack along with spectacular views.

Guest facilities include gift and apparel shops, a large heated outdoor swimming pool, horseback riding, scenic Snake River float trips, lake cruises on Jackson Lake, bus tours of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, lake and river fishing, a service station and a medical clinic. In keeping with the National Park location, rooms do not have televisions or radios, but do have telephones, voicemail and data ports.

Built by same architect as Yosemite's Ahwahnee?

(4) Barker-Ewing Breakfast Rafting Combo - 16-mile Scenic & Whitewater Breakfast Combination to get the best of both worlds. It begins in the cool early morning with a calm 8-mile scenic stretch in the upper reaches of the Snake River Canyon. There are great birding opportunities coupled with surrounding beautiful mountain vistas as you head deeper into the Grand Canyon of the Snake River.

A hot, hearty breakfast is waiting for you halfway at our exclusive Pine Creek campsite along the Snake. Cooks prepared the famous wild rice pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, cowboy coffee, hot chocolate, tea and orange juice. Following breakfast, there is a brief rendezvous with the bus, where you stash safely aboard all cameras, binoculars and other personal items you don't want to get wet during the Whitewater portion.

The Whitewater stretch is 8 miles of pure excitement! This Class II/III section of river is great for people of all ages and experience. The entire trip is approximately six hours roundtrip from Jackson.

What to bring? For the scenic trips, casual clothing such as lightweight shorts or pants and comfortable, soft-soled shoes are most suitable. For the early morning trips, bring an extra layer for warmth in case of cooler weather. You will not get wet on these trips, so cameras are a great idea and are generally not at risk.

For the whitewater trips, wear clothing that you don't mind getting wet from spray and splashing waves. Synthetic fabrics such as nylon shorts work the best but are not necessary. Shoes that are secure on your feet are required and will get wet. No flip-flops. Bring a towel or dry clothing to leave on the bus for the return ride to Jackson. Sunglasses, prescription eyewear, hats, cameras and binoculars are subject to water damage.

Provided is roundtrip transportation from the meeting place in Jackson. Water is available on the bus. Life preservers are required at all times while on the water. For the cold water temperatures of early summer, wetsuits, booties and fleece are available on a rental basis. They are a nice addition and may add significantly to your comfort on rainy, cloudy or windy days throughout the summer as well. You can request rentals at the time of your trip.

Education:

Available in DVD and viewed on National Geographic Channel – “Secret Yellowstone.” America's first and foremost National Park and its majestic beauty inspires more than 3 million visitors each year. National Geographic goes beyond the tourist hotspots and travels deep inside the 2 million acre national park to reveal the backcountry wilderness few have seen. Explore some of the 300 newly discovered waterfalls and learn how wolves, back after five decades of absence from Yellowstone, are helping restore the balance in the ecosystem alongside the grizzly bear and bison. Finally, discover how the geology of Yellowstone with its giant well of molten lava underneath the surface is sometimes more dangerous than the wildlife. So serene and yet so dangerous: this powerful drama comes alive through satellite imagery and CGI animation.

Available in DVD through National Geographic: The Living Edens: Yellowstone, America's Sacred Wilderness High in the American Rockies, Yellowstone Park is a place of extraordinary landscapes and geysers. Created by the largest volcanic explosions in the planet's history, it became the world's first national park. With the return of wolves, it has become a world-class wildlife sanctuary, the best place to see wolves and grizzly bears chasing elk. Yellowstone expert Paul Schullery guides viewers through the dramatic events that unfold each season.

Reading Owned:

- Spectacular Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks 12x16 with additional fold out panorama pages by Universe.
- Discovery Series Insight Guide on U.S. National Parks – West U.S.
- Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks: Must-do Hikes for Everyone by Top Trails Winner National Outdoor Book Award, by Wilderness Press and Andrew Dean Nystrom.
- AAA Wyoming book and maps

Itinerary for 2014 Trip

Fri Jul 18

2:04pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#1695
4:50pm Arrive Houston Bush IAH for plane change

5:45pm Depart Houston Bush IAH via UA462
7:54pm Arrive Jackson Hole JAC

Shuttle All-Tran at 800 443 6133 or 307 733 3135
Pre-booking recommended; \$16.95 one way or discount RT vs taxi at \$35

Hotel "49er" Inn & Suites – 2 nights guaranteed by SGM/PPH
330 West Pearl Avenue, Jackson, WY 83001 Tele 307 733 7550

Wi Fi free; refrig, coffee service and microwave yes; liq sales available in proximity

Summary and pictures above from www.ParksPlusHiking.com - Many of us have been to Yellowstone National Park, often as a child on a fondly-remembered summer vacation. Most likely the Yellowstone you will see on our Parks Plus tour will be very different from that previous trip. Yellowstone is an enormous park with an amazing array of geysers and other thermal features, scenic rivers and thundering waterfalls, the awesome Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, world-famous historic lodges, and more wildlife than any of the other national parks we visit. During our time in Yellowstone, we'll do our best to get far off the well-travelled roads and into the backcountry to see some of these wonders, within the limits of our day-hike only format. Oh and we should mention as well the three days we'll spend in Grand Teton National Park at fabulous Jackson Lake Lodge. No matter the sights you'll see the other six days, the hike up Cascade Canyon to Lake Solitude in the Tetons will make the entire trip a memory of a lifetime.

Sat Jul 19

Open – within walk of downtown and plenty of stores locally

Sun Jul 20 - Day 1

Lone Star Geyser and Old Faithful Area - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 3

Lodging: Old Faithful Inn – 1st of 2 nights
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190 Tele for res: 1-866-GEYSERLAND (866-439-7375)
Tele: 307 545 4601
<http://www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com/lodging/summer-lodges/old-faithful-inn/>

The largest log structure in the world. As a national historic landmark, Old Faithful Inn is the most requested lodging facility in the park. Built in 1903-1904 with local logs and stone, the Inn is considered the largest log structure in the world. The towering lobby features a massive stone fireplace and a hand-crafted clock made of copper, wood and wrought iron serving as focal points. With 327 rooms, the Old Faithfull Inn is open from early May until mid-October and features a full-service restaurant, lounge, snack bar, gift shop and daily tours. Probably NO coffee maker.

Exiting Jackson to begin our tour, we will get our first glimpse of the spectacular Grand Teton range. It is just a teaser though as our initial destination is Yellowstone, specifically the Old Faithful area of the park. On our way there we'll cross the continental divide twice then stop for a stroll out to Lone Star Geyser. Once at Old Faithful we will explore the many geysers, hot springs, and other thermal features in the vicinity, then settle in for two nights at historic Old Faithful Inn.

Mon Jul 21 - Day 2

Mystic/Fairy Falls Loop - Distance: 15 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Old Faithful Inn – 2nd of 2 nights

Although millions visit Yellowstone every year, few see the side of the park we will today. The named destinations for our hike are Mystic and Fairy Falls and Imperial Geyser, but our main goal is to experience the sheer size of Yellowstone and witness mile-upon-mile of vibrant new forest growth as the land recovers from the massive fires of 1988. We like to call it nature's greatest tree nursery!

Tue Jul 22 - Day 3

Osprey Falls/Bunsen Peak - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Canyon Village Lodge – 1 night only
Part of Yellowstone? Tele: 307 242 3901

Leaving Old Faithful, today we head north for a fantastic hike to roaring Osprey Falls and rocky Bunsen Peak with its 360 degree views of the Mammoth Hot Springs area and the park's northern border. We'll keep our eyes peeled for bighorn sheep as we descend back to the van, then commute to the Canyon Village area for a quiet overnight in one of Canyon's lodges.

Wed Jul 23 - Day 4

Mt. Washburn, Yellowstone Canyon - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Jackson Lake Lodge – 1st of 3 nights
101 Jackson Lake Lodge Rd, Moran, WY 83013 Tele: (307) 543-2811
<https://www.nationalparkreservations.com/lodge/grandteton-jackson-lake-lodge>
www.gtnc.com/lodging/jackson-lake-lodge

Jackson Lake Lodge is in a beautiful location, less than a five minute drive to Jackson Lake, which is Grand Teton National Park's largest lake and site of many wonderful vacation opportunities. The lodge was built in the 1950's which is attested to by its unique architecture, which includes a flat roof and great big windows ideal for the stunning views that surround the lodge of the Teton mountain range and lake in the back drop.

Our final day in Yellowstone is a full one. Our first stop is Dunraven Pass, from which we will ascend Mount Washburn whose 10,243' summit often provides incredible views all the way to the Tetons. From Mount Washburn we'll return to the Canyon area to explore several viewpoints along the mighty Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone and colossal Yellowstone Falls. Finally, we will make the commute back to Grand Teton National Park for our final three nights.

Thu Jul 24 - Day 5

Phelps Lake/Death Canyon - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Jackson Lake Lodge – 2nd of 3 nights

Many of the trails in the Tetons traverse the canyons between various peaks in the range passing glacial lakes excavated during the last ice age. Today we encounter such a combination on the Phelps Lake/Death Canyon trail. For good measure, we will also be hiking along the cascading Death Canyon Creek.

Fri Jul 25 - Day 6

Lake Solitude - Distance: 14 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Jackson Lake Lodge – 3rd of 3 nights

It is difficult to find words for hikes like Lake Solitude. The brisk morning boat ride across mirror-like Jenny Lake to the trailhead, a short visit to photogenic Hidden Falls, the first glimpses of Cascade Canyon and 13,800' Grand Teton as the trail emerges from the forest—incredible. Then there is Lake Solitude itself, set in a massive cirque with Paintbrush Divide looming to the north. Toss in frequent moose sightings and incredible wildflowers. Words truly fail! To reward our hiking efforts, our final dinner is in Jackson Lake Lodge's famous Mural Room—more great food and jaw-dropping views.

Sat Jul 26 - Day 7

Bradley/Taggart Lakes - Distance: 5 mi - Difficulty: 2

We'll wind down from our last few days of excitement with a quieter, moderate hike to scenic Bradley and Taggart Lakes today. It is then time for a final lunch together prior to our return to Jackson to say our goodbyes.

Hotel "49er" Inn & Suites in Jackson – as above – 1 night

Sun Jul 27

7:54am Depart Jackson Hole JAC via UA#438
12:00pm Arrive Houston Bush IAH for plane change

4:15pm Depart Houston Bush IAH via UA#340
9:06pm Arrive Newark EWR

Participants

Steve and Nola of www.ParksPlusHiking.com
Chanikan, a pathologist from LA and born in Thailand
Marty and Sofia Frumkin from NJ