



# READY, SET, EXPLORE!

## JANUARY 2025

It's Time To...

### *Ready, Set, Explore!*

This is a free, family-friendly program designed to inspire outdoor adventures and create unforgettable memories.

Join us each month from November, 2024 - April, 2025 for fun outdoor activities, snack ideas, journal prompts, tips for enjoying the outdoors responsibly, and more!

### GET REGISTERED FOR DECEMBER'S ACTIVITIES TODAY!

Get ready for an adventure-filled season! Starting in November, we'll be sending out special monthly rewards to families who register and complete that month's Ready, Set, Explore activities! Just one incentive per family each month, but a whole world of memories to create together. Plus, November kicks off the chance to earn your family's Wyoming State Parks Annual Day Pass—complete any 4 out of the next 6 months of activities, and it's yours!

Join at any time during the month, and bring along anyone who feels like family to you. Whether it's parents, grandparents, friends, or neighbors, we welcome all groups who want to take on this journey together. Don't miss the chance to kick off your adventure this November with,

### *Ready, Set, Explore!*

To register use the following link or scan the QR code!  
[https://bit.ly/ready\\_set\\_explore\\_registration](https://bit.ly/ready_set_explore_registration)



Family adventures await

QUESTIONS?  307.568.4160  [gasvoda@uwyo.edu](mailto:gasvoda@uwyo.edu)

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## PROGRAM INFORMATION

This is a free, family-friendly program designed to inspire outdoor adventures and create unforgettable memories. This program will take place from November, 2024 - April, 2025. Each month, families are encouraged to step outside, discover the beauty of the natural world, and enjoy quality time together. Whether it's hiking through scenic trails, discovering local wildlife, or simply enjoying a picnic under the stars, "Ready, Set, Explore" brings families closer to nature—and to each other!

### HOW IT WORKS!

#### Each month, participants will:

1. Register to participate at:  
[https://bit.ly/ready\\_set\\_explore\\_registration](https://bit.ly/ready_set_explore_registration)  
**(only need to register once for the program!)**
1. Be emailed all Ready, Set, Explore information for the month: activities, extras, and questions.
2. Choose to do 4 or more of the activities listed for that month.
3. Answer the 4 activity questions.
4. Email your answers to the 4 activity questions along with 1-4 pictures from that month to:  
[readysetexplore.4h@gmail.com](mailto:readysetexplore.4h@gmail.com)

### EXTRAS!

**The fun doesn't stop there!** Each month participants will also be sent the following information that they are encouraged to do, but not required:

- Nature Journaling Prompt
- Vibrant Health Tip
- Snack Idea
- Leave No Trace Tip
- Natural Resource Handout

### WHAT YOU GET FOR COMPLETING THE MONTH!

For each month completed (see how does it work above) each family will be sent a monthly incentive!

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### Activities: Pick 4 or more:

1. Go snowshoeing.
2. Participate in a "First Day Hike" at your local Wyoming State Park.
3. Plan Ahead! It's the New Year, that means that you have a whole year of fun outdoor adventures ahead of you. Take time to plan ahead one outdoor trip you want to take this year (ex. Camping, hiking, skiing, etc.)
  - Things to plan:
  - Where you're going
  - How long will you be there
  - Who is going with you
  - What time of year
  - What gear will you need
  - Share why do you want to go on this trip
4. January 5, 2025 National Bird Day
  - Bird Walk – Identify unique birds
  - Explore Habitat
5. Snowball Contest: Make snowballs and have a contest of who can throw their snowballs the farthest. Make a target and see who can make a bulls eye.
6. During a winter walk, find the footprints of the animals that call that area home. What kind of tracks did you find?
7. Winter is the perfect season to lace up your skates and skate at an outdoor rink! There's something truly magical about gliding across the ice in the crisp, frosty air. It's fun to skate indoors, too!
8. Winter is a wonderful time to explore and learn about evergreen trees! Identifying local conifers is a fun and educational skill for all ages. Discover the differences by examining their unique shapes and needles.
9. Found animal tracks in the snow? Create your own! Cut oversized yeti footprints from cardboard, attach them to your boots, and leave a fun trail around the yard or neighborhood.
10. Snow Maze Fun! Got a big patch of snow? Design a maze with entrances, obstacles, and exits. They can challenge each other to create the trickiest paths and race to see who finishes fastest!
11. Spread some kindness! Shovel a neighbor's sidewalk or driveway—especially for elderly folks or new parents or just to help your neighbor!
12. Take a hike and search for signs of beavers! Spot dams, felled trees, and lodges. In winter, a lodge with melted snow on top means beavers are inside—listen closely, you might even hear them!

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### JOURNAL PROMPT

#### Natures Patterns

Head outside and observe the intricate patterns in nature during winter, like frost on windows, bark on trees, or snowflakes. Choose one pattern to focus on and sketch it in your journal, noting its details and what stands out to you. Reflect on how the pattern makes you feel, what might have created it, and what it reminds you of. Write a few sentences connecting the pattern to larger ideas, such as the uniqueness and beauty of nature's design. Bonus: Compare multiple patterns you find and note their similarities and differences.

### LEAVE NO TRACE TIP

#### Principle 4- Leave What You Find

When you're outside, remember that we shouldn't take rocks, flowers, or cool things we see outside so everyone else can enjoy them too, and nature stays just the way it is!

### VIBRANT HEALTH TIP

Incorporating **gratitude** into your daily routine can have profound effects on both mental and physical health.

- **Makes Us Happy:** Saying "thank you" and thinking of good things can boost our mood!
- **Helps Us Sleep:** When we focus on happy thoughts, it can help us fall asleep faster and sleep better.
- **Fights Worries:** Being grateful can help us feel less worried and anxious, making us feel calm.
- **Keeps Us Healthy:** Feeling thankful can actually help our bodies fight off sickness!
- **Builds Friendships:** Saying thank you and showing appreciation can make our friendships stronger.
- **Makes Us Brave\*\*:** When we focus on what we're thankful for, we can face challenges with a positive attitude!

Practicing gratitude is like giving our hearts a big hug!

### SNACK IDEA

#### Winter Wonderland Popcorn:

- **Ingredients:** Popcorn, white chocolate, winter-themed sprinkles, and edible glitter.
- Drizzle melted white chocolate over popcorn, then add winter-themed sprinkles and edible glitter for a wintry touch.

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## WHAT IS NATURE JOURNALING?

A WAY TO ENGAGE IN OBSERVATION, CURIOSITY, AND CREATIVE THINKING IN NATURE!

NATURE JOURNALS ARE USED BY SCIENTISTS, NATURALISTS, THINKERS, POETS, WRITERS, ARTISTS, ENGINEERS, AND ANYONE ELSE WHO WANTS TO USE ONE!

### WHY DO WE DO IT?

#### WE NATURE JOURNAL TO:

- SLOW DOWN, PAY ATTENTION, AND EXPERIENCE WONDER
- DEVELOP CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING
- TO NURTURE CONNECTION TO NATURE
- TO HAVE FUN!



### MATERIALS

- NOTEBOOK
- PENCIL
- NOT REQUIRED, BUT CAN BE USED:
  - COLORED PENCILS
  - STICKERS
  - WATER COLOR PAINTS
  - RULER/MEASURING TAPE
  - ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT

### HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- EITHER BY YOURSELF OR WITH YOUR FAMILY, USE WORDS, PICTURES, AND NUMBERS TO RECORD WHAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING

### STEP 1

#### RECORD METADATA

- METADATA- DATA THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER DATA
- WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE FOR NATURE JOURNALING?
  - USUALLY IN TOP CORNER (OR WHEREVER YOU WANT!)
    - DATE
    - LOCATION
    - WEATHER
    - ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECORD

### STEP 2

**START JOURNALING!**  
**LOOK AT THIS MONTH'S PROMPT TO LEAD YOUR JOURNAL!**



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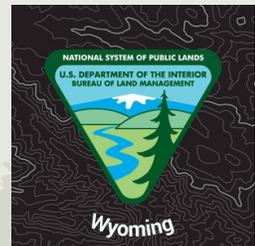
# READY, SET, EXPLORE!

## OUR PARTNERS

We couldn't make this program happen without the help from our amazing partners from around the state! Check out our partners below as well as more ways to Ready, Set, Explore Wyoming!

### PARTNERS

- Wyoming State Parks
- Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation
- Wyoming Game and Fish
- Wyoming Bureau of Land Management



### Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources

The mission of Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites, and Trails is to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment by providing enjoyable, educational and inspiring experiences for present and future generations. With a variety of parks offering activities like hiking, biking, fishing, and camping, they strive to create spaces where people of all ages and abilities can connect with nature. Their programs and events, such as guided tours, educational workshops, and seasonal activities, are designed to make the outdoors accessible, fun, and meaningful for families, adventurers, and first-time explorers alike. Don't forget to check out your local Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites in 2025!

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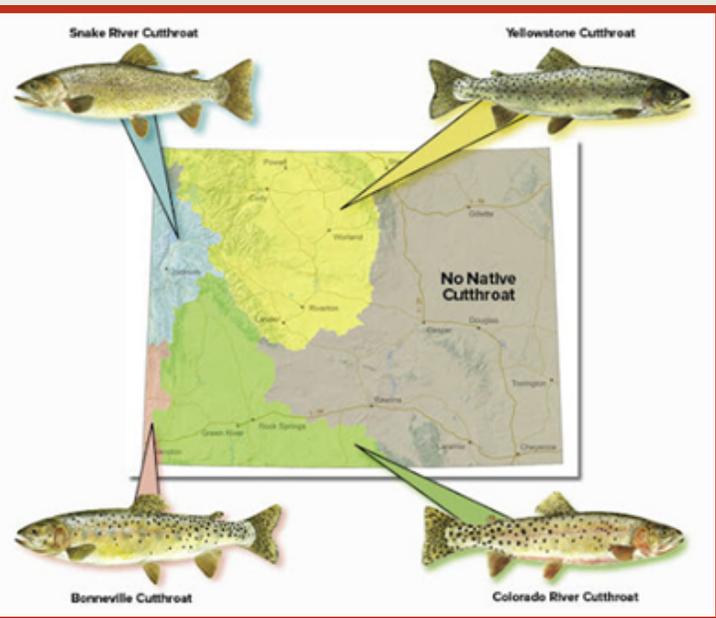
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# CUTTHROAT TROUT, WYOMING'S NATIVE SON

The Cowboy State is known for its amazing outdoor recreation opportunities. Trail riding, snowmachining, hiking, ATVing, and of course, hunting and fishing, all make up some of the best outdoor fun in the nation. Second only perhaps to pursuing our state's amazing big game hunting, no other outdoor activity is Wyoming so well known for as fly-fishing. We have a great array of sport fish in our lakes and streams, including eight species of trout and salmon. From rainbows to brookies, there are plenty of these fish in almost every creek, river and alpine lake you can find. What may come as a surprise to some, however, is that of all of the great trout species that you may be lucky enough to hook, only one trout is native to our state. (In fact, browns, brooks, lake, splake and tiger trout aren't even trout! They are technically part of a group of fish called char.) The honor of being a true Wyoming fish belongs to the cutthroat, perhaps the most prized fish to reel in by both hardcore fly-fisherman and amateur anglers alike. That's right, cutthroat trout are the only trout that were originally swimming in our state's waters when Wyoming was first settled. All others, even the common rainbow, were introduced into the state from other places. It's no wonder that the cutthroat is held in such high regard.



This beautiful fish gets its name from the bright red markings below its jaw, which give the impression of a bloody neck. The cutthroat was first described by none other than William Clark, of the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition. In fact, part of its scientific name, *oncorhynchus clarki*, is derived from Clark himself. There are four subspecies of cutthroat that inhabit different regions of the state. These include the Snake River Cutthroat, the Yellowstone Cutthroat, the Colorado River Cutthroat, and the Bonneville Cutthroat. These are divided by different drainage systems. Each is unique and has specific markings. Cutthroats are much more common on the western half of the state and become more rare and even nonexistent on the high plains and mountains on the eastern side. Cutthroat trout can be caught in some of the biggest rivers of western Wyoming, such as the Snake, the Green, and of course, the Yellowstone, along with their tributaries and lakes. Perhaps no source of water is as famous for cutthroat as the great Yellowstone Lake in the center of our state's largest attraction.

Unfortunately, cutthroat trout are not near as common as they once were and are gone or much less prevalent in much of their former range. This is largely due to habitat loss and competition from non-native species. Cutthroat requires clear, cold water with plenty of insects and other small aquatic critters to feed on. However, conservation and production efforts from our Game and Fish and other groups are trying to keep our native trout around and healthy for years to come. In an attempt to encourage appreciation and protection of cutthroat, the Wyoming Game and Fish hosts the "Cutt Slam", where anglers can attempt to catch each of the four subspecies found in Wyoming in their native habitat. This is a free and simple program where photos and location of each trout can be posted and those that accomplish this receive a certificate, medallion and a decal. There is no time limit on this, but some serious fishermen make the challenge harder by attempting to catch all four in a week, or even a day! For more information on this program or to apply and submit, visit the Wyoming Game and Fish Cutt Slam webpage at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/fishing-boating/fishing-challenges/wyoming-cutt-slam>.

The cutthroat trout is a precious natural resource not only to Wyoming's environment, but to our history and outdoor culture. So, the next time see a fish gulp a fly or chase your spinner, keep in mind that you may be lucky enough to be seeing a true piece of Wyoming itself!



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### ACTIVITY QUESTIONS

- Describe your favorite activity and what made it enjoyable for everyone.
- How did these activities help your family spend quality time together?

How did these activities affect your family's physical/mental health and happiness?

How many minutes/hours did you spend outside this month completing the Ready, Set, Explore activities?

Send your answered questions and 1 - 4 pictures by January 31 to:  
[READYSETEXPLORE.4H@GMAIL.COM](mailto:READYSETEXPLORE.4H@GMAIL.COM)

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