

Our second day in 'the office'

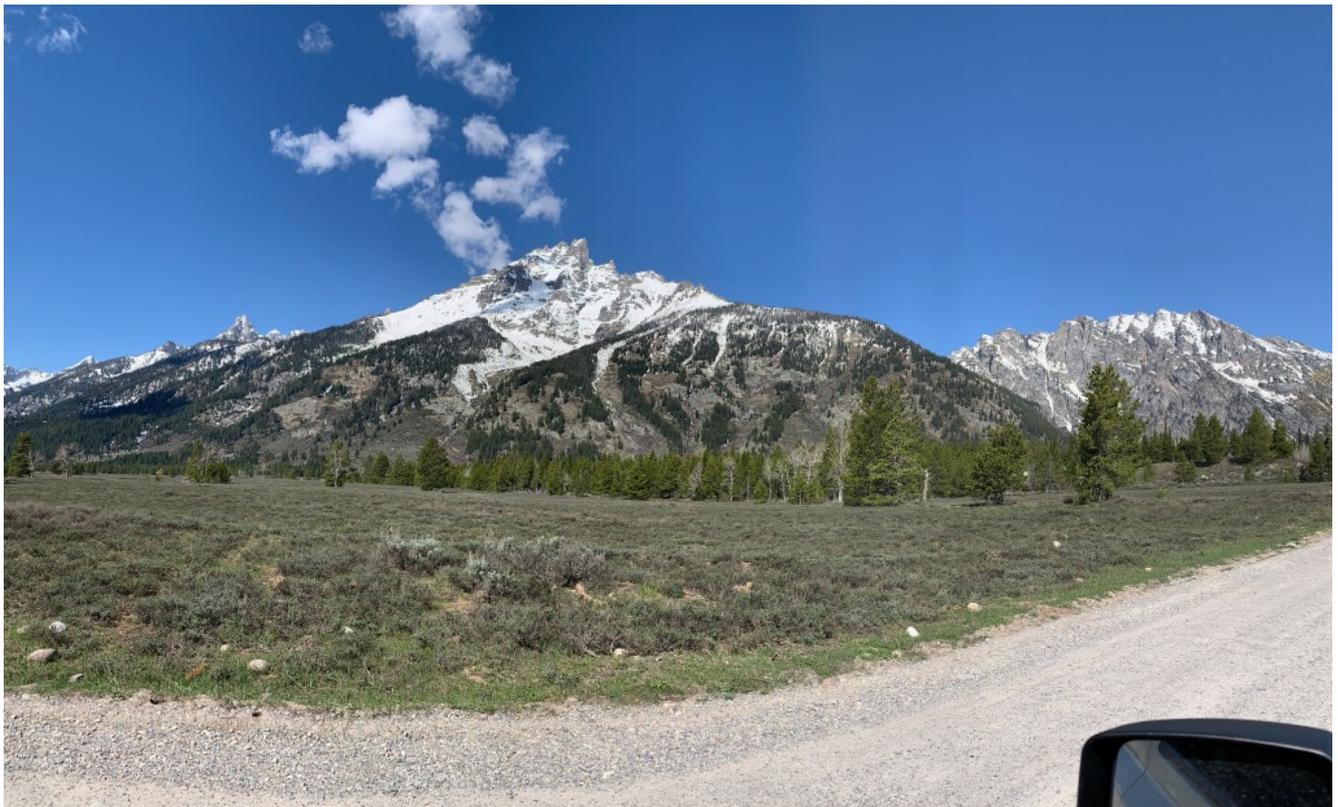
Dave and I both had a some what quieter though no less interesting day on our second work day. It began with a moose calf and his mother having their breakfast under the window of the Airstream as we had coffee. A dream start to a day in the park.

My assignment today was to support the Safety Officer by delivering an emergency procedure booklet to the residences of seasonal employees. Armed with photocopies of aerial maps of the housing locations in the park, three heavy boxes of pamphlets, and the keys to a white government issue jeep hatchback, I set off.

The park service has housing for permanent employees, seasonal employees such as fire jumpers, dispatchers, and park [interpreters](#) (the folks that help visitors discover the unique attributes of the park to make their visit more personal), and volunteers that help fill in the manning gaps. We don't all live in RVs.

The residences come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, materials, and ages. A few apartment complexes remind me eerily of military base housing, with big parking areas, attached laundries, and without much personality. My favorite residences to discover are the log cabins, many I am sure are legacy buildings from inholdings of original family ranchers that were later acquired by the park ([established in 1929 and expanded in 1950 and 2007](#)). Some are tiny log cubes tucked under tall pines with a few hundred square feet of living space. Others remind me of the guest log cabins my great uncle built on his dude ranches in the Adirondacks. Low ceilings, massive stone fireplaces, and big metal framed windows to let nature in.

There are cabins with one porch, cabins with two porches. Cabins serenaded by the Snake River burbling over rocks as it runs past the enclave. Cabins with the river on one side and a cathedral-like wall of mountain on the other. Porches hold hiking boots, skis, snowshoes, kids bikes, deck chairs for relaxing, and just general signs that the occupants are devoted to enjoying being out in nature.



not a bad view from one employee housing development!
I had only one real challenge all day – finding a particular set of houses. The aerial photo was too zoomed in so I had no idea what main road it was off of. The car did not have a GPS, my cell phone couldn't find a tower to see a map, and it was not marked on the park map – since it is a residential area and off limits to the general public. On my lunch break I stopped in at Colter Bay to ask the rangers if they happened to know where it was. It took a computer search to work it out, but I knew where to head next.



a quiet (for now) corner of Jenny Lake
Several visitors stopped me for a chat or questions. The funniest was whether or not I was enjoying the calm before the storm when the visitors start flooding the park. We all agreed that the weather, though abnormally hot for the season, was a delight to be enjoyed to its fullest.



this raven was very put out that I would not share lunch
Dave had a different schedule today so he could work with and learn from another shift of people. His day started about the time mine ended. He started the day with a bear jam that was seven or eight miles south of where the sow 399 and her four cubs were hanging out yesterday. "She made good progress overnight." Dave ran into a few of the same people that were at the bear jam yesterday, and some of them complimented Dave on the brigade's handling of the traffic and people situation the day before.

After the bear family had retreated from view once more, the brigade went north to introduce Dave to things to be familiar with in the northern area of the park. Apparently vehicle speed is the biggest danger to the brigade members – for some reason folks leaving Yellowstone think they are now on the Nürburgring racetrack in Germany. When they have time, the brigade patrols the campgrounds in this prime bear habitat, on

the lookout for food violations and opportunities to educate visitors on the importance of proper food storage.

Riding with the experts, Dave is a sponge for all of the interesting facts Justin and Tyler share with him. When recalling the grizzly cub's playing with the traffic cones yesterday, Dave found out that for some reason, bears love petroleum products! That is one reason, beyond their normal curiosity, that there are pictures on social media of bears [interacting with the cones](#). Apparently that is also why they love the smell of sun tan lotion. They love the petroleum smell so much they will roll on top of a newly paved asphalt road!

In the afternoon 399 reappeared, another couple of miles further south. Interestingly enough, she was in the southern part of her normal range, and on the border with another known grizzly's territory (albeit one of her many daughters). What will this mean for possible future encounters this summer? The wildlife managers will be watching and accessing the situation. Dave is really getting a fascinating practical education in bear management from the park's perspective! And I am getting an education by anecdote.

There was a minor hiccup with the truck Dave was driving not starting. While waiting for assistance to arrive, the view as "one of the nicest you could ask for, if you have to break down" according to Dave. Truth be told, it wasn't really a breakdown at all. Now Dave is fully versed on the starting procedures for a Ford hybrid! <oops>

Got the car 'fixed' (ok, operator error corrected) just in time to respond to a Grizzly bear in Colter Bay, one of the developed areas of the Park. The Park's policy is that developed areas are managed for people – not bears – so it will need to find another playground, and we would assist in that endeavor. After driving around the area though we were 'unable to locate' or "UTL" in Park jargon, and so the shift

ended quietly.



It all made for a very long day, with Dave not getting back to camp for dinner until after 10pm. We won't settle into a set work routine for several days yet. In the meanwhile, there are training meetings, bi-weekly department meetings, and social events to look forward to. We'll keep you posted on anything of interest!