



The Official Fundraising Partner of Yellowstone National Park

HOME

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

HOW TO HELP

NEWS & EVENTS

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Yellowstone's Plastics to Carpet Program

When you visit Yellowstone National Park, your attention is likely on wildlife-watching, marveling at Old Faithful erupting, or enjoying spectacular mountain views. It's unlikely that you're thinking about what will happen to the plastic bottle you just tossed in the recycling bin. But the act of recycling that bottle has set off a chain of events that will not only help the environment and the economy, but also directly benefit the work of the Yellowstone Park Foundation.

It is estimated that only three out of every ten plastic bottles used in the U.S. are recycled, and these are usually shipped overseas to be made into plastic products that are imported back to be sold in this country. A new partnership between Yellowstone National Park, the Yellowstone Park Foundation, and private corporations is now diverting the plastic bottles collected in Yellowstone to be made into carpet backing here in the U.S.

Yellowstone has made great strides in recycling and composting, and park staff are always working to find innovative ways to divert Yellowstone's recyclables from the waste stream. Last year, the park diverted 72.6% of their waste from landfills, and they are working to increase that to 100% by 2016.

In 2011, Yellowstone recycled more than 56 tons of plastic. Rather than sending it somewhere to be shipped overseas, park staff sought an alternative destination closer to home.

The search led to a company that has developed technologies to reuse collected plastics from the park. United Textile Technologies (UTT) has agreed to purchase all the recycled plastic bottles collected in Yellowstone. The plastics are converted into a fleece yarn, incorporated into carpet backing and supplied to companies that manufacture carpeting and artificial turf.



One progressive carpet company, Georgia-based [Signature Crypton Carpet](#), has created "carpets with a conscience," a product line made exclusively with the Yellowstone plastics backing. One of the early buyers of the carpet was [Xanterra Parks & Resorts](#), Yellowstone's lodging concessioner, who installed it in the Old Faithful Snow Lodge dining room last year.

In November 2011, Signature Crypton Carpet launched the Yellowstone Collection, inspired by the colors and textures of Yellowstone's landscape. The company pledged to donate to the Yellowstone Park

Foundation 50 cents for every square yard sold. In June 2012, Signature Carpet presented a

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check for \$50,000 to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.

“We see this contribution as an investment in the park that serves as an inspiration for this product line,” said John McIntosh of Signature Carpets. “We don’t think that being environmentally friendly should be optional. It should be standard operating practice for any company.”

In addition to the Yellowstone-plastic backing, the Yellowstone Collection carpet contains yarn made from 100% recycled materials, and is manufactured with soy polyols instead of the petroleum products traditionally used in the making of carpets. All combined, The Yellowstone Collection is much greener than the average carpet. In fact, company representatives believe it is by far the most environmentally responsible commercial carpet in the world.



The general public may be disappointed to learn that they won’t be able to carpet their living rooms with “Artist Point,” “Caldera,” or “Old Faithful” carpet, as Signature Carpet only sells to the hospitality and healthcare industries. But park visitors can be involved by continuing to recycle their plastics when visiting Yellowstone, and feel good that they are helping the earth and the economy while supporting the Yellowstone Park Foundation.

The bottle recycling program is a true team effort, with several national and local partners involved, including the United Soybean Board, Georgia Tech Research Institute, and Montana-based Four Corners Recycling.

The program complements a comprehensive [sustainability effort](#) on the part of Yellowstone National Park and its concessioners and other partners, supported by the Yellowstone Park Foundation through the [Greenest Park Initiative](#).

Who We Are

- Major Accomplishments
- YPF Celebrates 15 Years
- Annual Report
- IRS 990 Form
- Audited Financial Statements
- Staff
- Board & Council
- Strategic Plan
- About Yellowstone
- FAQs
- Contact Us

What We Do

- Visitor Experience
- Wildlife & Wilderness
- Cultural Treasures
- Ranger Heritage
- Tomorrow’s Stewards
- Greenest Park

How to Help

- Donate
- Monthly Giving
- Be a YPF Fundraiser
- 1872 Society
- Old Faithful Society
- Planned Giving
- Employer Matching Gifts
- Use Your Mobile Phone
- Sponsor a Wolf Collar
- Sponsor a Bear Box
- Wildlife Adoptions

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- Event Calendar
- Subscribe to eNews
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- Press Kit
- Find Us on Facebook
- Follow Us on Twitter
- Newsletter Archive

More

- Donate
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- Send an eCard
- Yellowstone Visa Card
- Featured Photographer
- Donor Privacy Policy
- Website Privacy Policy
- Corporate Partnerships
- Login

The Yellowstone Park Foundation works in cooperation with the National Park Service to fund projects and programs that protect, preserve, and enhance the natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience of Yellowstone National Park.



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