



Indian Head and the Teton River © Robert Granzow

PRE-TRIP ITINERARY

# Pine Butte

A SPECIAL NATURE  
CONSERVANCY DEPARTURE  
JUNE 23 - 28, 2019

- Estimated Price: \$3370 per person based on single or double occupancy
- Trip cost is based on a minimum of 10 participants. Final trip costs will be based on actual number of participants.



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Despite its size, Montana is the third least populated state in the country, meaning that vast expanses of land continue to exist as pristine, untamed spaces of wildness. Pine Butte is such a place, and The Nature Conservancy is working to ensure that it remains one of the jewels in the Crown of the Continent. The area is one of the last places in the lower 48 where grizzly bears roam free on the plains, and its patchwork of habitats supports a remarkable level of biodiversity. In addition to on-the-ground land management, the Conservancy is working with local ranchers on collaborative stewardship and conservation tools. Community-based partnerships can help sustain long-lived land protection and restoration efforts, as well as the people that live here. The Conservancy’s Pine Butte Swamp Preserve recalls an earlier time of rugged, American beauty, and we invite you to experience this special place. Thank you for your interest in traveling with The Nature Conservancy.

# Day 1

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

12 to 3:00 pm	Great Falls arrival Group transfer to Pine Butte Preserve (approx. 2 hours)
Afternoon	Introductions, settle in to cabin
Evening	Dinner in main lodge Overview of TNC conservation efforts along the Rocky Mountain Front
Overnight	Pine Butte

Welcome to Montana! Arrival times will differ between guests (flights into Great Falls International Airport will be scheduled between noon and 3:00 pm), so we ask for your patience in waiting for everyone to land. After the entire party has arrived, you will be transferred as a group to the Pine Butte Preserve, about 2 hours away. The cabins that are to be your home for the following nights are owned by The Nature Conservancy and are located within the Conservancy's Pine Butte Preserve. There is a main lodge, stocked with a collection of books, cards and games, and also a Front Room, where you can enjoy some peace and quiet.

You will have the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers and unpack before dinner. Tonight, and for the rest of the week, the chefs of Bravo catering will be happy to accommodate vegetarian and other dietary preferences. You will also hear a presentation about the work that the Conservancy is doing on the Rocky Mountain Front. Be sure to get a good night's sleep to be ready for the adventures ahead!

# Day 2

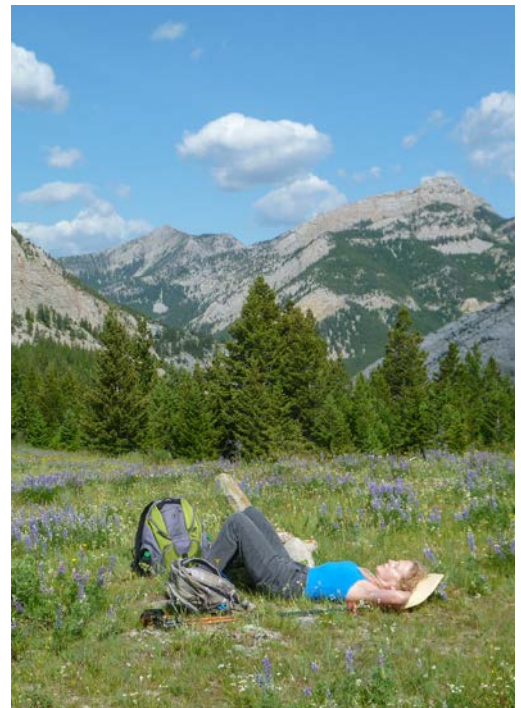
MONDAY, JUNE 24

6:30 am	Coffee and tea available in main lodge
7:30 am	Buffet Breakfast in main lodge
Morning	Hike
Midday	Lunch in main lodge
Afternoon	Horseback ride or free time
Evening	Dinner in main lodge and wildlife viewing
Overnight	Pine Butte

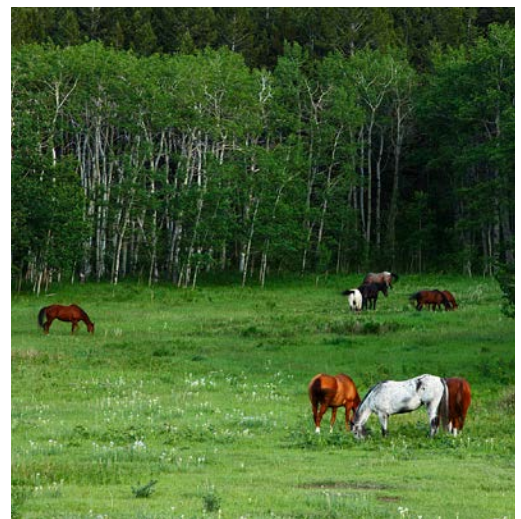
Today will be broken up into morning and afternoon activities. After breakfast, you can hike one of the many trails that wind through the surrounding landscape. Some trails start and end on the Preserve, while others meander through adjacent lands. Trails range from 1 to 4 miles, and can vary in elevation gain from virtually flat to a few thousand vertical feet.



Field of wildflowers, Pine Butte © Robert Granzow



Hiker basks in midday sun, Pine Butte © Robert Granzow



Horses grazing, Pine Butte © Robert Granzow

No matter which trail the group selects, there will be plenty of Montana wildness to see and enjoy. Look for signs of grizzly bears, moose and elk; run your hands through the clear water of a creek; and once every so often, stop to look up and appreciate why this area is nicknamed “Big Sky Country.” You can enjoy a packed lunch at your leisure, either on the trail or back at the lodge.

In the afternoon, we will go for a group horseback ride through the high meadows of the Rocky Mountain foothills. After a short drive to a neighboring ranch, you will be outfitted with a horse that matches your riding ability. Out on the trail you will see the same types of flora and fauna Lewis and Clark may have encountered almost 200 years ago, as well as experience firsthand why local conservation efforts are so important. In the evening, we will gather for dinner in the main lodge.

## Day 3

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

- 6:30 am Coffee and tea available in main lodge
- 7:30 am Buffet Breakfast in main lodge
- Morning Horseback ride
- Midday Boxed lunch
- Afternoon Hike Marmot Rock or free time
- Evening Dinner in main lodge  
Pine Butte Slideshow
- Overnight Pine Butte

Today’s activities will be determined by the group’s interests. You have the options of horseback riding, hiking or relaxing. If you hop on a horse, the local equestrian trails will take you through diverse forests, over crystalline streams and to mountain outcrops with unbelievable views. Just imagine, horseback was once the primary way to traverse Montana’s varied terrain. If you prefer not to ride, you can join a group for a hike or you are welcome to relax on the front porch with your favorite book.

This evening, we will have dinner and a presentation on the Conservancy’s work at the Pine Butte Preserve. Pine Butte is the largest wetland complex along the Rocky Mountain Front and one of the grizzly bear’s last strongholds on the plains. The area is part of the larger Crown of the Continent, a 10-million-acre landscape in the Northern Rockies that includes Glacier National Park and straddles the Montana-Canada border.

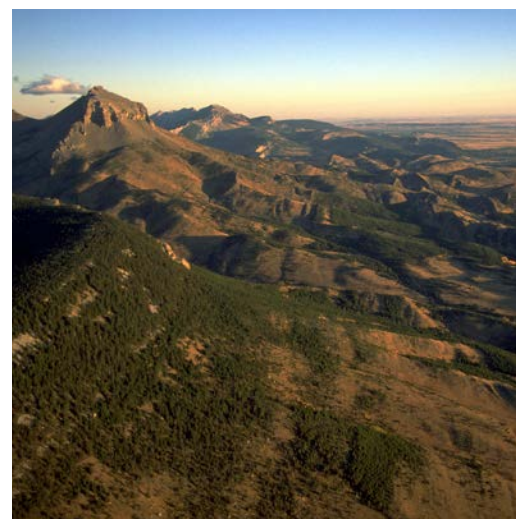
The Nature Conservancy began acquiring land west of Choteau at Pine Butte in 1979, assembling portions of several cattle ranches and a dude ranch to create the 13,000-acre Pine Butte Preserve. Pine Butte is part of a landscape that the Blackfeet people have called home for countless generations. The Old North Trail, used by Native Americans for thousands of years, cuts through the preserve, and today serves as a reminder of Montana’s cultural diversity.



Legacy Club members on N. Yeager Flats Trail © Simon Williams



Guests on an afternoon horseback ride through foothills of Rocky Mountain Front © Simon Williams



Rocky Mountain Front Foothills © Robert Granzow

# Day 4

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

- 6:30 am Coffee and tea available in main lodge
- 7:30 am Buffet Breakfast in main lodge  
Pine Butte Preserve tour
- Midday Boxed lunch
- Afternoon Free time
- Evening Dinner in main lodge  
Wildlife viewing
- Overnight Pine Butte

To enrich the last two days of your outdoor adventures, this morning we will take a comprehensive tour of the Pine Butte Preserve. The preserve and surrounding lands support a third of the plant species in Montana and many rare wetland species such as yellow lady's slipper, Macoun's gentian, green-keeled cotton grass and Craw's sedge. About 200 species of birds and 43 species of mammals also call the preserve home. During the hike, feel free to make observations and ask your guide questions; no detail is too small.

You will have some time to yourself after lunch, and later in the afternoon, we will gather for tonight's dinner and evening wildlife viewing!

# Day 5

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

- Morning Breakfast in main lodge  
Hike to Our Lake
- Midday Boxed lunch
- Afternoon Free time
- Evening Dinner in main lodge
- Overnight Pine Butte

Enjoy a hike to Our Lake in the morning. Our Lake hike climbs up 1,450 vertical feet and is approximately 7 miles round trip. We will enjoy a picnic boxed lunch while taking in views of the lake and waterfall. In afternoon we will return to Pine Butte to rest and relax.



Hikers on a meadow in Pine Butte Preserve © Simon Williams



Grizzly bear, during autumn, Montana © Janet Haas



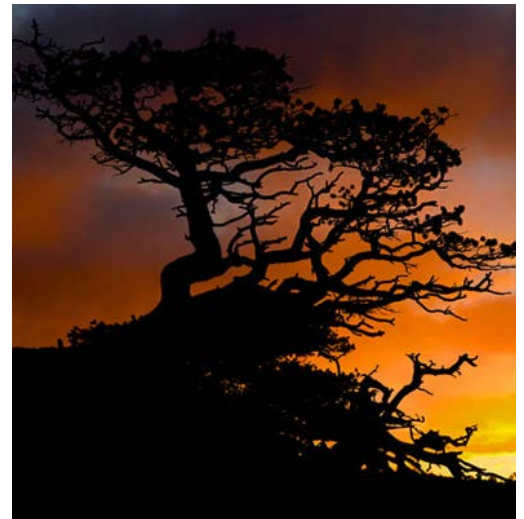
Wildflowers at Yeager Flats © Robert Granzow

# Day 6:

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

Morning    Breakfast in main lodge  
              Group transfer to Great Falls International Airport  
              (approx. 2 hours)

After breakfast, you will say farewell to Pine Butte and be transferred as a group to Great Falls International Airport. All departures should be scheduled for after 1:00pm.



Limber Pine over Pine Butte © Dave Hanna



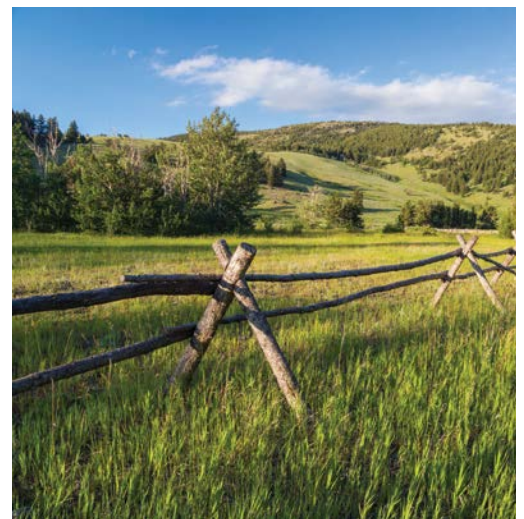
Kinnikinnik Flowers © Robert Granzow

## Thank you for traveling with The Nature Conservancy!

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to contact Joe Solomon with Iconic Adventures if you have any questions or needs regarding trip logistics.

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Mountains meet prairies at TNC's Pine Butte Guest Ranch © Robert Granzow