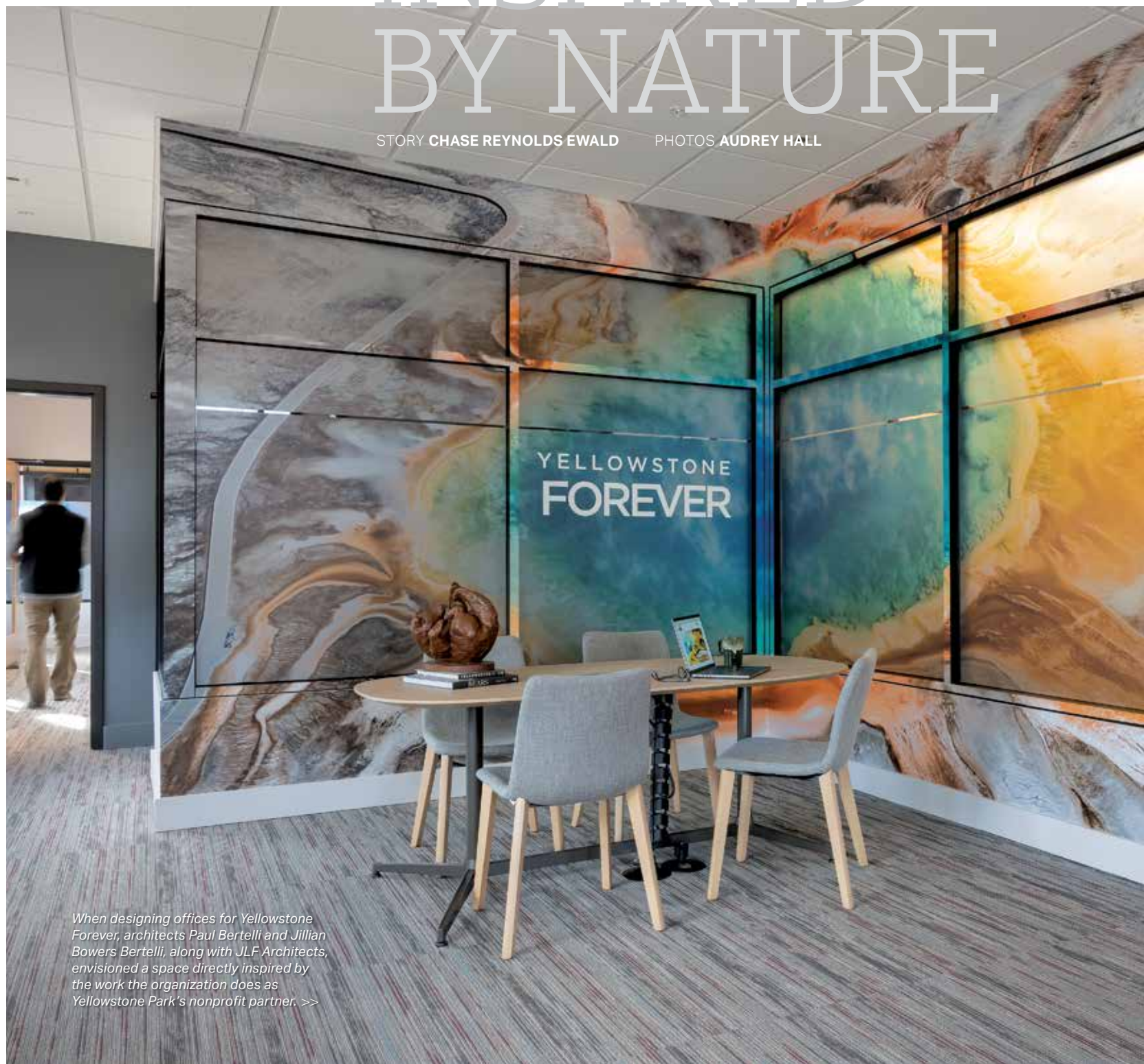


YELLOWSTONE FOREVER'S DESIGN-FORWARD OFFICE
BRINGS THE OUTDOORS IN—TO THE WORKPLACE

INSPIRED BY NATURE

STORY CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD PHOTOS AUDREY HALL



When designing offices for Yellowstone Forever, architects Paul Bertelli and Jillian Bowers Bertelli, along with JLF Architects, envisioned a space directly inspired by the work the organization does as Yellowstone Park's nonprofit partner. >>



During a time of budget cuts and ever-increasing visitation, some say America's national parks are being "loved to death." Yellowstone, the world's first national park, drew almost five million visitors in 2025.

For a government-run entity operating in one of the wildest regions in the lower 48 states, consistent support from its nonprofit partner, Yellowstone Forever, has proved invaluable. While the National Park Service focuses on operations, resource protection and maintenance, Yellowstone Forever helps fund wildlife research, trail maintenance, educational programs and more.

For years, the nonprofit's staff worked from a Bozeman office that was dark, warren-like, divorced from the outdoors and lacking adequate meeting space. When the landlord announced renovations that would require vacating, it

seemed an ideal opportunity to reflect on what makes a functional, flexible and inspiring office environment.

JLF Architects founder emeritus Paul Bertelli has been involved with Yellowstone Forever for decades. "It didn't take long to realize that the quality of the work we were doing and the reason people are passionate about living here was because of the park," he says. "That was strong motivation to give back, because it's such an extraordinary place. If we don't care for it, nobody else will." >>

Unlike the nonprofit's former office, the new space is filled with light and inviting places for small team meetings. Monumental color imagery celebrates iconic sights like Yellowstone's Grand Canyon.

Teepees in a meadow bathed in light and upholstery colors inspired by lichen found on rocks in Yellowstone directly inspire YF's everyday work. >>



JLF led a design charette pro bono, surveying employees in detail; Paul Bertelli and Jillian Bowers Bertelli then donated their time to direct the design. While Paul focused on the flow of space in the partially constructed building with chief operating officer Kristi Mills and Walker Construction, Jillian collaborated with staffers Wendie Carr and Matt Ludin to design interiors and select furniture that speak to the spirit and palette of Yellowstone National Park.

The mission is evident from the moment one steps inside, where a spectacular color-rich photograph extends from floor to ceiling and across two walls. "The entry is designed to be immediate, bold and intentional," explains Bowers Bertelli. "It transports one into nature while immediately communicating the important work that YF staff do to support the park's mission. Color-rich photos of Grand

Prismatic Spring's intense palette, created by thermophilic bacteria and archaea, seemed the perfect welcome."

From furniture inspired by the color of lichen to sound-absorbing wood slats applied in a contemporary treatment in the stairwell, the space is fresh and energy-inducing. Amenities include "huddle spaces" for field employees, a lactation room and a dining patio. Framed vintage railroad posters, on loan from the Yellowstone Heritage & Resource Center, line hallways. Glass dividers imprinted with a >>

LEFT: A cozy meeting space combines soundproof wood paneling arranged in a fresh, graphic pattern and inviting lighting and textiles. RIGHT: Opaque panels admit light while featuring one of the park's most iconic features: steam from the thermal sites.





transparent image of steam filter daylight and provide privacy. But the biggest impact comes from monumental images by Ludin and the park's Jacob W. Frank celebrating Yellowstone's most iconic features, including the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Abiathar Peak and teepees near the Roosevelt Arch gateway.

"One of our main goals for design," says president and CEO Lisa Diekmann, "was to bring Yellowstone into the space and create an office that encouraged collaboration. Homages to Grand Prismatic, bison and the Mammoth Hot Springs terraces are visual reminders of our mission and why our work matters. The new space is welcoming and comfortable and meets the needs of our team. It reflects our mission and

purpose, helps strengthen our organizational culture and is a warm and engaging base for our Bozeman team."

Adds Paul Bertelli, "When someone walks through the door, "they know who they're working with and why they're doing it. For employees, you're giving substance to their passion. There's no question it works—for donors, vendors and staff. And it wasn't until we actually finished it and got the artwork on the walls, and the furniture, that the switch turned on. But now it's visceral; you can feel it." ○

A staff-led committee toured several buildings and locations before settling on a building that was undergoing renovation. Says Diekmann, "We had the opportunity to design the space specifically for our needs." The conference space, for instance, not only morphs from 1 to 2 rooms but clearly reflects the group's mission.

yellowstone.org; jlfarchitects.com