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Day in the Life: Thomas Cluderay

Interviews and Profiles





Thomas Cluderay

GENERAL COUNSEL

YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

6:00 am

My alarm sounds off, and I fumble to silence it. I take a moment to orient myself before greeting the day in Gardiner, Montana, just outside of Yellowstone National Park. I'm on one of my regular trips from Washington, DC to our Montana offices, serving as counsel for the park's principal nonprofit partner. After getting dressed and flagging several emails, **I pack my camera bag and briefcase** and hop into the car. I'm determined to make **the most of my time in the world's first national park** by taking sunrise photographs before heading into work.

7:00 am

It's **still dark as I drive into the park, but I have my bear spray. I set up my camera at Blacktail Ponds.** No snow, but it's forecasted and the ponds are freezing over. I take several daybreak photos, invigorated as I get back in the car. Returning to Gardiner, I spot a herd of bison — always a welcomed sight.

8:00 am

I pick up coffee at the Tumbleweed Cafe for my day's **first meeting with a member of our philanthropy team.** We're working to streamline some of our donation acknowledgement templates and this is a chance to check in on our progress.

9:00 am

Our board just met — which means I have several **governance items I need to field as follow-up.** I typically block out time each week for board support. Our organization formed as the result of a recent merger, so it has been rewarding to help establish **new policies and procedures as part of the post-merger integration.**

10:00 am

Daily huddle with senior leadership to discuss priorities for the day. Huddles are kept short. They help ensure that the leaders of our core business functions have a chance to connect as needed.

11:00 am

Head to an early lunch with our facilities director. Today's agenda includes the **sequence of a records management initiative** that should free up more space in our Gardiner office. I also get an update on **implementation of a new planning process around use of park property.** We resolve to meet again soon on cross-country skis.

12:00 pm

More email catch-up. I relay **action items from a monthly risk assessment team,** which provides a forum to think big picture about our organization's risk management strategies. I also **review a vendor contract.**

2:00 pm

Back in the car, I drive up to Mammoth for a planning meeting with park staff. An elk crossing the road causes a minor travel delay.

3:00 pm

I meet with park staff to discuss **the status of several agreements we are working through as the park's nonprofit partner**. We cover several other topics related to our activities in support of the park. I'll relay those to colleagues at tomorrow's huddle.

5:00 pm

I drive back to our office, **stopping along the way to watch two coyote scurrying across a meadow**. With cell service again, I use the opportunity to dive back into email, with several needing a response before close of business.

6:00 pm

I do a **status check on the renewal process for our state charitable registrations** and quickly meet with our chief education and operations officer, who is back from a visit to our office in Bozeman.

7:00 pm

I join our creative director for **dinner at the Two Bit Saloon**. We talk a bit about photo licensing, but mostly about park happenings.

8:00 pm

I retreat to **prepare for an upcoming guest lecture on related nonprofit structuring at American University College of Law**. I also check email one more time for the day.

10:00 pm

Netflix reminds me that the second **season of *Stranger Things*** has dropped. I get the season premiere under my belt.

11:00 pm

I read some of Annie Proulx's ***Barkskins***, which tracks the history of New France settlers and how their epics parallel changes to the land. Fading, it's lights out, but I'm ready for what tomorrow holds.

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