

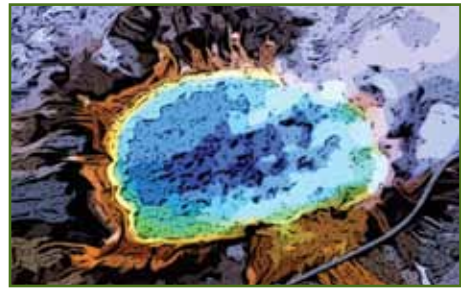
MSU Science Zone

Why is NASA studying Yellowstone?

When most people think of Yellowstone National Park, they think of buffalo, bears, and the geyser called Old Faithful. If you are lucky enough to visit Yellowstone, one of the Park's most interesting features is the beautifully colored hot springs.

Parts of the hot springs can be green, orange, brown, red, yellow, blue, and sometimes even purple. Lots of the colors are a result of microbes. Microbes are tiny living things that you usually need a microscope to see. While visitors to Yellowstone often focus on the big animals, they might forget to pay attention to the billions of microbes underneath their feet.

NASA is studying these microbes because scientists think they might resemble some of the first life on Earth. These microbes can help us understand how life started on our planet and how it might form on other planets. NASA is using research from Yellowstone to search for life on other planets and moons. To learn more, download "Science of the Springs," Montana State University's guide book to NASA research in Yellowstone at <http://abrc.montana.edu/outreach/scienceofthesprings.html>



Try this!

Fact or opinion?

A fact is something that can be tested, and an opinion is something that someone thinks or believes. Which of the statements below are facts and which are opinions?

1. Microbes are tiny organisms.
2. Microbes live in Yellowstone hot springs.
3. It is important to try and learn about life on other planets.
4. Most people would like to meet an alien.
5. Scientists are studying Yellowstone to understand how life might have developed on Earth.

Facts: 1, 2, 5 / Opinions: 3, 4