



**Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area  
Long-Range Interpretive Plan  
May 2012**



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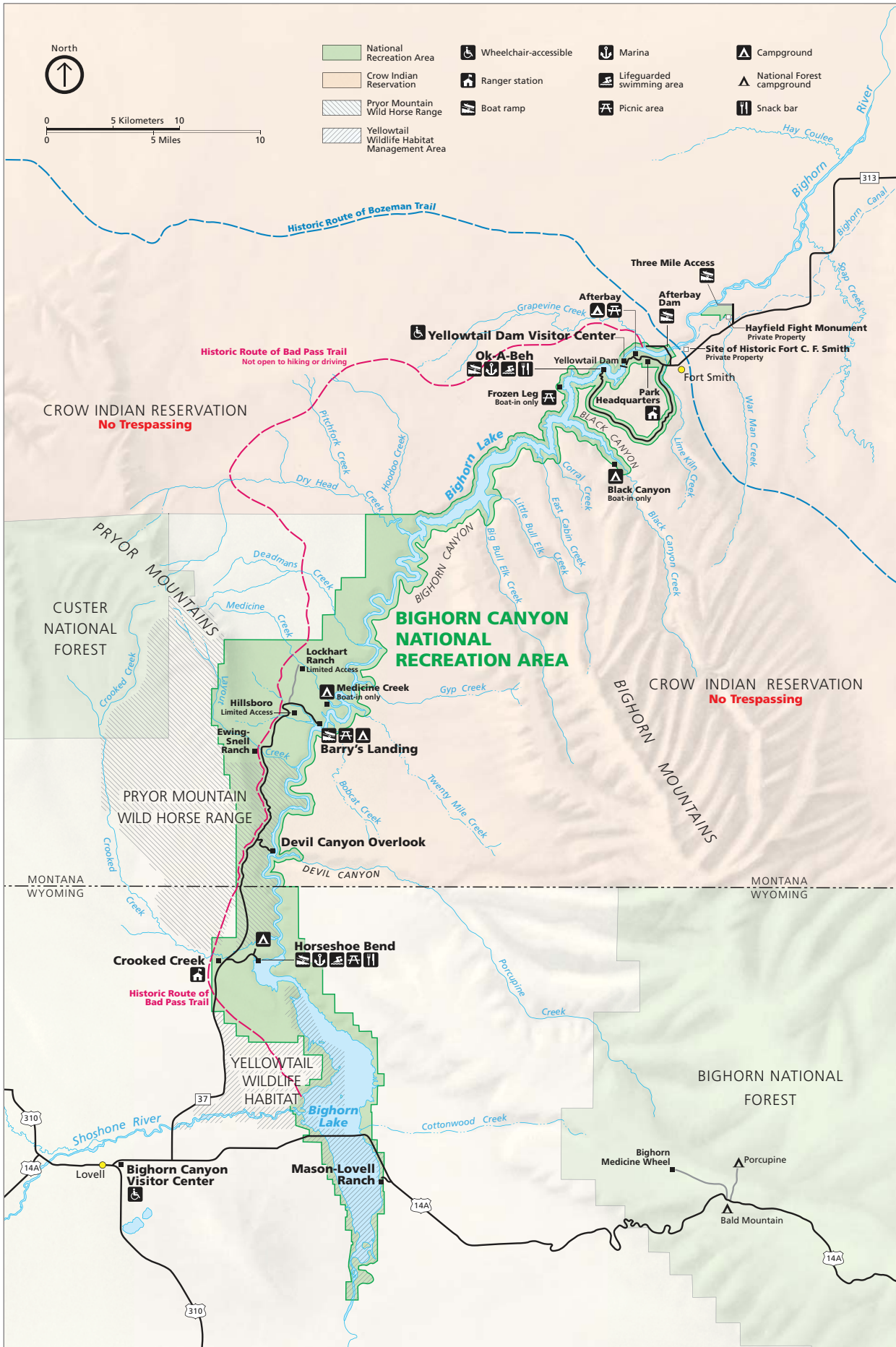
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U.S. Department of the Interior

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Map of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

# Introduction

## The Grandest Canyon of the Northern Rockies

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area spans some 120,000 acres – including a 12,700-acre lake – in southeastern Montana and north central Wyoming. The area is home to the Crow Indian Reservation, as well as to the giant Yellowtail Dam, one of the largest hydroelectric power stations in the region.

Visitors who know the Bighorn Canyon, with its multi-colored geologic strata and 1,000-foot high walls, may justifiably describe it as “the grandest canyon of the Northern Rockies.” A land of spectacular views, abundant trout, mountain lions, bald eagles, and elusive bighorn sheep, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area attracts some 200,000 visitors a year for fishing, boating, camping, and enjoying wilderness solitude. While most visitors come for the park’s recreational offerings, its scientific, cultural, and historical resources are equally remarkable. From paleontological finds documenting mega-fauna to ancient American Indian sites and artifacts, complex and variable ecosystems, historic ranches from America’s “Wild West,” and the living culture of the Crow Tribe, the Bighorn region offers much to explore, study, and enjoy.

Established in 1966, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area has operated in recent years with a limited interpretive staff, although the park’s resource management division has worked extensively over the years to foster interpretation and education through archeological field schools and outreach. In this decade, with new management and the recent creation of a new Chief of Interpretation position, the park looks forward to expanding and re-establishing interpretive programs and building a broad-based constituency for the park’s many different recreational, scientific, cultural, and historical resources.



The grandeur of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area from atop Devil Canyon Overlook.

## The Long-Range Interpretive Plan

In the planning hierarchy of the National Park Service, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) uniquely focuses on visitors and the opportunities available to them for experiencing the park, understanding and appreciating its resources, and supporting park preservation for future generations. The LRIP supports and complements a park's General Management Plan (GMP) and other park-specific resource documents. During the long-range interpretive planning process, interpretive planners worked with park staff, stakeholders, and community partners to address fundamental questions from a visitor perspective: Why is this site important? What is it “about”? What are its primary resources, and why should visitors care about them? What can visitors do, learn, feel, and be inspired about by visiting this site?

Through stakeholder workshops, review of existing conditions, and discussions with park staff and other interested parties, the interpretive planning team works with park management to develop a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) aimed at guiding the site's interpretive offerings for the next seven to ten years. In most park settings, these interpretive offerings will include an array of personal services, including guided tours by interpreters or subject matter experts, as well as interpretive media such as printed brochures and booklets, films and other audiovisuals such as CD-based driving tours, wayside signs and kiosks, and where budgets and space allow, large-scale interpretive exhibits.

This LRIP is one component of the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP); two other components are the park-produced Annual Implementation Plan and the corresponding park-produced Interpretive Database. Barring legislative changes, the foundational elements in this plan are expected to remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about interpretive programs or media may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. In addition, further design documents must be produced to implement some of the recommendations set forth in the plan.

## Executive Summary

Visitors to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area encounter an immense, largely unmarked land of spectacular views, rugged canyons, cold waters with abundant trout, and remote forests and craggy peaks harboring mountain lions, bald eagles, and elusive bighorn sheep. This 120,000-acre recreation area along the Bighorn River and Lake of southern Montana and northern Wyoming attracts approximately 200,000 visitors a year for fishing, boating, camping, and enjoying wilderness solitude.

In developing a Long-Range Interpretive Plan for Bighorn Canyon NRA, the planning team (including stakeholders, volunteers, partners, and staff) first convened at a workshop to review the park's founding legislation, purpose and significant statements, existing conditions, and visitor expectations. Next, the team crafted six primary interpretive themes to guide future interpretation throughout the site. After reaching consensus on these elements, planning participants met for a second workshop to develop recommendations for strengthening and expanding the interpretive program in numerous ways over the next seven to ten years.

The following interpretive themes capture the “main messages” of the park and serve as starting points for sharing the park's multiple stories and resources with visitors. (Subthemes and potential storylines complement each primary theme.)



## Primary Interpretive Themes

- The vast, wild landscape of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area offers modern visitors unparalleled opportunities to immerse themselves in the natural world and experience the wonders of this extraordinary place.
- The 120,000 acres of land and water in Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area display an astounding diversity of ecosystems supporting hundreds of species of plant life, birds, fish, and other wildlife.
- Bighorn Canyon, the river, and the surrounding environment are a vital part of the ancient and living culture of American Indians, including the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Shoshone, Blackfeet, Arapaho, Lakota, and other tribes of the region.
- The lives and stories of 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century settlers of European descent in this region illustrate the challenges, changes, perils, and personalities of America’s “wild west” frontier, with legacies that live on in the lifeways of their 21<sup>st</sup>-century descendants.
- Through the ages and into the present day, the water resources of the Bighorn River, Lake, and watershed represent a vital, life-giving force in a tough, challenging environment.
- The ancient cliffs and exposed rocks of Bighorn Canyon provide a fascinating geological record of earth’s changes over many millions of years, as well as significant opportunities for archeological and paleontological discoveries.

## Interpretive Program Recommendations

With valuable input from stakeholders in both the north and south districts of the recreation area, the interpretive planning team identified numerous short-term, mid-term, and long-term opportunities for strengthening and enhancing interpretation on all six themes over the next seven to ten years. The team focused on several distinct areas of emphasis:

- Outreach to local and regional audiences to increase awareness of the park’s full range of recreational, historical, scientific, educational, and cultural heritage resources;
- Development of practical, effective ways to use technology to deliver self-accessed programming in this remote region, which is largely “off the grid” for wireless or WiFi signals;
- Outreach to inform recreational users about other aspects of the park, without intruding on their primary pursuits; and
- Improving NPS and BICA visibility and identity internally throughout its vast land and water acreage.

## Community and Educational Outreach Recommendations

Recommended interpretive outreach initiatives for local residents and communities include:

- working with local media;
- networking with other recreational, cultural, and historic sites in the area;
- working more closely with the Crow Tribe on mutually beneficial interpretive opportunities;
- developing consistent year-round activities in local communities; and
- working more intensively with the commercial tourism industry serving the region.

The planning team also recommended a number of specific educational and youth outreach activities through local schools, field trips, festivals, Junior Ranger programs for all four historic ranches as well as the Crow Tribe, adding Teacher-Ranger-Teacher staff, and updating an existing online curriculum for the park.

## Personal Services Recommendations

The BICA staff has made significant strides in expanding the delivery of ranger-led interpretive programs in recent years. This plan recommends continuing the park’s momentum in both the North and South Districts. Recommendations address ways to deliver personal interpretation (by interpretive staff, cultural resources staff, volunteers, and concessionaires) to a widely scattered audience with diverse interests and many different activities. Short-term recommendations focus on continuing and extending a variety of personal programming in campgrounds, visitor contact stations, and other areas of higher visitation, especially in summer. Longer-term recommendations include full-time staffing for the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center in summer, developing and delivering personal interpretive programming for targeted groups, and seeking ways to use the park’s two full-size auditoriums more effectively for interpretive programming such as guest lecturers, living history, dramatic and music presentations, travelogues, and films.

To enable the park to carry out the expansion of personal services, this plan recommends the addition of one permanent interpretive ranger position in the North District and two Park Guides, one for each district.

## Interpretive Media Recommendations

Interpretive media recommendations for Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area include both technology-based and traditional media. To enable broader use of technology-based interpretation, this plan recommends the following:

- installing AM radio transmitters strategically in several locations;
- adding open-source WiFi hotspots at visitor centers to enable visitors to download park materials to their smartphones; and
- ground-truthing all GPS coordinates and directions for the park.

Additional media recommendations address audiovisuals, exterior exhibits (waysides and kiosks), interior exhibits, publications, social media, and the park website.

- Technology-oriented media recommendations call for converting audio driving tours to CD and MP3 formats for North and South Districts; converting films to DVD; making more use of digital recordings/oral history for podcasts and non-print uses; developing a virtual tour of Yellowtail Dam hydroelectric facility; and planning for a major new film about the park; and maintaining and expanding the park’s use of web-based and social media.
- Indoor interpretive exhibits recommendations include installing major new exhibits in the Taggart Visitor Center (Lovell, WY) and the Yellowtail Dam visitor center and adding smaller or mobile exhibits at other key seasonal locations.
- Exterior exhibit recommendations are two-fold: First, seek funding for a parkwide sign plan emphasizing wayfinding and visitor orientation; second, seek funding for a wayside exhibit plan that will address topics and stories that reflect the park’s interpretive themes. (Appendix C lists future interpretive waysides by location and topics identified by the planning team.)
- Publications recommendations include updating existing materials, creating a rack card for wide distribution outside the park, and creating new site bulletins (topical brochures) for various locations and stories in support of the park’s primary interpretive themes.

## Research Needs

The plan also addresses research needs in support of interpretation, including creating digitized catalogs of contemporary and historic images and working with the Resources Division to develop a comprehensive museum and archives program in support of interpretive programming.





**Foundation for Planning**



Effective long-range interpretive planning begins with reviewing, documenting, and clarifying the foundational elements utilized in park planning. Accordingly, this plan includes excerpts from Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area’s enabling legislation; contains updated purpose and significance statements; references other existing management plans and materials developed during prior interpretive planning efforts; and incorporates input regarding interpretation from partners and community stakeholders. This plan also presents primary interpretive themes; describes current and projected visitor uses, desired visitor experience goals, and existing interpretive conditions; and discusses a variety of issues and influences that affect or should be considered in developing the park’s future interpretive program.

## Enabling Legislation

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (BICA) was established by an Act of Congress (Public Law 89-664) on October 15, 1966. The Act states the reasons for the recreation area’s establishment “. . .to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of Yellowtail Reservoir and lands adjacent thereto. . . and for the preservation of the scenic, scientific and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters. . .” According to the legislation, the Secretary of the Interior is charged with coordinating administration of the recreation area with other purposes of the Yellowtail Reservoir so that

it will in his judgment best provide (1) for public outdoor recreation benefits, (2) for conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment and (3) for management, utilization and disposal of renewable natural resources that promotes, or is compatible with, and does not significantly impair, public recreation and conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, or other values contributing to public enjoyment.

As the legislation was being developed to create the park, the Crow Tribe in Montana requested a name change – Bighorn Lake, rather than Yellowtail Reservoir – that reflected their traditional story of the naming of the river and its importance to the tribe. After several years of effort, in 1970 the Crow Tribe and its supporters were successful in getting the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to change the name to Bighorn Lake. (Except for quotations from the original legislation, this document uses the preferred nomenclature of Bighorn Lake throughout.)



The snow-capped mountains and red chugwater rock are scenic wonders that bring visitors to Bighorn Canyon.

## Park Purpose

Purpose statements explain why an area was set aside as a unit of the national park system and describe significant resource values related to the reasons the park was established. Purpose statements are based on the park's enabling legislation and legislative history and typically highlight recreational, cultural, and natural resources and any special designations for the site. Purpose statements provide foundational guidance for park management and public use.

The following purpose statement for Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area was defined in the BICA Park Asset Management Plan of 2009 and reaffirmed in stakeholder workshops for this LRIP:

The purpose of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is:

- To provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of Bighorn Lake and lands adjacent thereto within the exterior boundary of the National Recreation Area on National Park Service lands;
- To preserve the scenic, scientific and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters; and
- To coordinate administration of the recreation area with the other purposes of the Bighorn Lake project so that it will best provide for
  - public outdoor recreation benefits,
  - conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment, and
  - management, utilization, and disposal of renewable natural resources that promote or are compatible with and do not significantly impair, public recreation and conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, or other values contributing to public enjoyment.

## Park Significance

Significance statements capture the essence of an area's importance to the nation and summarize why this site is important enough to warrant national recognition and protection. These statements reflect natural, cultural, scientific, recreational, inspirational, historical, or other resources that define a park's distinctiveness and place it within regional, national, and international contexts. These statements may evolve over time as a result of new discoveries about the site. Park significance statements provide direction for park managers in making decisions that preserve resources and values consistent with the site's purpose, and they provide interpretive guidance in the development of primary interpretive themes and programs.

The following significance statements are based on earlier interpretive and management planning efforts at Bighorn Canyon NRA, with amendments and refinement by the interpretive planning team in 2011:

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is nationally significant because:

- The park offers outstanding scenic, recreational, and natural history values, including hunting and fishing, boating, camping, wildlife photography, and other outdoor pursuits, in its 66,000 land acres, the Bighorn River, and the 70-mile long, 12,700-acre Bighorn Lake.
- The park contains physical evidence of more than 10,000 years of continuous human habitation, including pre-historic cultures, historic and contemporary Crow culture, and Western frontier culture.
- The park's remoteness and its inclusion of multiple climatic zones within a small geographical area make it a "living laboratory" for biological research and conservation, including wild horses on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range, preservation and reintroduction of bighorn sheep and other plant and animal species, and preservation of the cottonwood riparian zone and other wildlife habitats of the 19,000-acre Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area.
- The park contains significant geological features that were critical to the forming of the Bighorn Canyon, the surrounding mountains, and the water resources of the region.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are the “main messages” about a place – the fundamental ideas, concepts, and inherent meanings – that should be readily apparent and accessible to every visitor who comes to the site. At Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, a vast landscape with a multitude of historic, cultural, and natural resources, identifying and developing a well-defined set of primary interpretive themes is a critical component of this long-range interpretive plan.

Depending on the complexity of a park’s resources and the breadth of its offerings, each major theme may be subdivided into several subthemes that lead deeper into the park’s stories and resources. Each subtheme is followed by examples of supporting interpretive concepts or storylines that illustrate the themes in ways that invite people to listen, learn, and care.

Although numbered for easy reference, the primary themes compiled here should be viewed as equal priorities for interpretation of the park as a whole.

The following primary interpretive themes, subthemes, and sample storylines were developed by the planning team in workshops in 2011.

### **Theme 1:**

**The vast, wild landscape of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area offers modern visitors unparalleled opportunities to immerse themselves in the natural world and experience the wonders of this extraordinary place.**

### **Subthemes:**

- The Bighorn Canyon NRA offers some of the best fishing and hunting in the West!  
*Sample Storylines:*
  - Why trout thrive in the Bighorn River
  - Genetically unique native sauger fish of Bighorn Lake
  - Learning how to fish
- Recreational boating, swimming, hiking, and camping are all great ways to enjoy Bighorn Canyon NRA.  
*Sample Storylines:*
  - Safety messages for boating, swimming, hiking, and camping
  - Resource protection messages – Leave No Trace, boat cleaning to remove invasives, etc.
- The wild, remote seclusion of Bighorn Canyon NRA is an ideal place to experience the natural elements of the West, to seek peace and solace in nature, and to find time and space for solitude and quiet contemplation.  
*Sample Storylines:*
  - American Indian perspectives, stories, and legends on humans and the natural world
  - Examples of early explorers/historic figures who tested the elements and survived in the wild environs of the area
  - The human impulse for many to seek solace, solitude, and renewal in the natural world

**Theme 2:**

**The 120,000 acres of land and water in Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area display an astounding diversity of ecosystems supporting hundreds of species of plant life, birds, fish, and other wildlife.**

**Subthemes:**

- The park encompasses multiple climatic zones and distinctive ecosystems, from shrub land desert to high conifer forests.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Dramatic ecosystem differences, vegetation, etc., on south- and north-facing slopes
  - Ecosystem changes brought about by the Yellowtail Dam
  - Individual plant and animal stories and details
  - The unique diversity of flora and fauna found within the relatively small geographical area encompassed by the park
  - The impact of climate change on the park's ecosystems
- The canyon and its surroundings support hundreds of species and a variety of wildlife habitat that could potentially suffer from human encroachment and development.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Extirpation, then reintroduction, of bighorn sheep
- Reintroduction of peregrine falcons, revival of bald eagles
- Biological research stories at the park – for example, the current documentation of mountain lions in the canyon
- The wild horses, their history and current status
- Fish (native and imported) of the Bighorn
- Habitat preservation and restoration



A cactus flower is just one of hundreds of plant species that thrive in the arid climate of Bighorn Canyon.

**Theme 3:**

**Bighorn Canyon, the river, and the surrounding environment are a vital part of the ancient and living culture of American Indians, including the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Shoshone, Blackfeet, Arapaho, Lakota, and other tribes of the region.**

**Subthemes:**

- Archeological findings document well-established cultures of American Indians and Paleo-Indian tribes in the region dating back thousands of years.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Archeology Field School and its work on stone circles (tipi rings)
  - Evidence of buffalo hunting techniques
  - Ancient cairns of Bad Pass Trail
  - Regional lithics and pottery development through the centuries
  - Social organization of ancient peoples
- Many different American Indian groups – most prominently, the Crow Tribe, as well as the Arapaho, Shoshone and Northern Cheyenne – trace their roots to the Bighorn Canyon and its environs.

*Sample Storylines:*

- The story of Big Metal and the naming of the river and canyon
- Vision quests
- History and culture of Arapaho, Shoshone, Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and other tribes in this area
- Domestic life of the people, including women and children

- Present-day Crow culture in the region draws on and sustains the Crow tribe’s ancestral sense of belonging and oneness with the lands and waters of the Bighorn region.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Contemporary Crow presence in and around the park: the reservation, towns and communities, Crow tribal members as stewards of the land
- Crow lifeways, then and now
- Crow perspectives on the construction of Yellowtail Dam and creation of Bighorn Lake

**Theme 4:**

**The lives and stories of 19th- and early 20th-century settlers of European descent in this region illustrate the challenges, changes, perils, and personalities of America’s “wild west” frontier, with legacies that live on in the lifeways of their 21st-century descendants.**

**Subthemes:**

- Four restored historic ranches within the park illustrate four distinct eras of settlement and ranching on the American frontier.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Stories of the Mason/Lovell open range cattle ranch
- Stories of the Ewing-Snell family ranch
- Stories of the Hillsboro dude ranch and the work of silversmith Eddy Hulbert
- Stories of well-known author Caroline Lockhart’s ranch
- Stories of the restorations efforts on these historic ranches

- Many rugged “mountain men” and other colorful characters, male and female, explored or settled in Bighorn Canyon seeking to make their fortunes by tapping the natural resources of the region for economic use.

*Sample Storylines:*

- The search for gold in Montana and the impact of these efforts on the Bighorn region
- Fur trapping and trade in the region
- Stories of Bad Pass Trail
- Jim Bridger – mountain man, trader, Army scout, and explorer
- Cattle rustling and outlaw hideouts

- The U.S. military, sent westward after the Civil War by a federal government eager to defend westward expansion and settlement, encountered Indian resistance, isolation, and extreme danger as the price of securing the trails for westward expansion.

*Sample Storylines:*

- Establishment of Fort C.F. Smith as an outpost to protect the Bozeman Trail and its connection to the Montana gold fields
- Sioux, Cheyenne, Shoshone, and Crow responses to U.S. military incursions
- The Hayfield Fight and other battles between soldier/settlers and Indian tribes



Cabins from the historic Lockhart Ranch demonstrate the rugged lifestyle of early Twentieth Century ranchers.



## **Theme 5:**

**Through the ages and into the present day, the water resources of the Bighorn River, Lake, and watershed represent a vital, life-giving force in a tough, challenging environment.**

### **Subthemes:**

- The Yellowtail Dam, constructed and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, was built as a component of a comprehensive development plan for water resources in the Missouri River Basin.

#### *Sample Storylines:*

- Details about the dam's construction
  - The science behind the dam
  - The national vision for water development in the West
  - Local support – and opposition – to the dam (the lost town of Kane)
  - The life of Robert Yellowtail
  - Loss of Crow Reservation land and sacred sites to creation of Bighorn Lake
- The dam and reservoir are tools for providing a reliable water and energy supply. The facility was authorized by Congress to produce multiple benefits for the American public including flood control, hydroelectric power, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and water storage for homes, farms, and industry.

#### *Sample Storylines:*

- The dam as a continuum of earlier human use of the river to sustain human settlement in the region
  - The Bighorn River and its watershed; what it means to the region
  - Benefits to the public
  - How hydroelectric power works
  - Current operation of the facility
- The river and lake offer many and varied recreational opportunities for visitors throughout the U.S. and abroad.

#### *Sample storylines:*

- Bighorn River trout fishery as an unintended benefit of the cold lake water
- How water levels affect boating, fishing, and safety of those recreating on and along the water
- Protecting the Bighorn's water supply and balancing the needs of different groups who rely on it
- The importance of the Shoshone River as a tributary to the Bighorn



Yellowtail Dam tamed the once rapid currents of the Bighorn River, creating a lake that provides recreation for thousands each year.

## **Theme 6:**

**The ancient cliffs and exposed rocks of Bighorn Canyon provide a fascinating geological record of earth's changes over many millions of years, as well as significant opportunities for archeological and paleontological discoveries.**

### **Subthemes:**

- The layers of rock forming the canyon walls tell the story of how the canyon was formed millions of years ago.

#### *Sample Storylines:*

- Types and explanations of different layers of rock
  - The power of erosion
  - The unique properties of limestone in the formation of caves in the region
  - Bentonite and what it means for the region, both geologically and economically
  - The relation of the Bighorn region to the Yellowstone caldera
  - Geological research underway at Bighorn Canyon
- Fossils and other findings by paleontologists reveal a past of Ice Age mammals and ancient seas.

#### *Sample Storylines:*

- Natural Trap Cave and its remains of early horses, camels, mastodons, and saber-toothed tigers
- Dinosaur fossils of the Morrison formation (Jurassic Period)
- Gryphea, Belemnites, corals and other fossils a visitor may see in and around the park



The multi-colored layers of rock are a geological record of the earth's changes over millions of years.



## Visitor Data

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area currently receives approximately 200,000 visitors a year. Attendance numbers show a high of 391,000 visitors in 1995, followed by a gradual decline to a low of 149,885 visitors in 2004. Since 2004, visitation has increased and remained relatively steady at 200,000+ visitors a year.

Visitors come to the park for a variety of reasons, some of which may overlap. Anecdotal and observational evidence indicates that the vast majority of visitors, whether traveling alone or in groups, plan their trip to take advantage of the park's outstanding recreational opportunities on and around the lake, the river, and the canyon. Many of these boaters, hikers, campers, anglers, and hunters are repeat visitors who live within 100 miles of the park. Other visitors are those interested in the park's scenic vistas and cultural resources, such as the history of the Crow people, the stories of the four historic ranches in the park, or the construction and operation of Yellowtail Dam.

The terrain and distances within the park essentially divide the visitor base into two districts, north and south, each with its own visitor types and characteristics.

In the North District, visitors typically come for recreation on Bighorn Lake, fly fishing on the Bighorn River, viewing the Yellowtail Dam, or exploring past and present American Indian culture, the Bozeman Trail, or Fort C.F. Smith. Visitor types include the following:

- area residents, primarily boaters and anglers
- Bighorn River anglers from across the U.S.
- “accidental” visitors, many of whom learn about the park from visiting Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument 45 miles away

- NPS Passport Stamp collectors who seek this isolated NPS site for their Passport Books
- cultural visitors seeking more information about American Indian culture, tribal affiliations, or history of the frontier West
- tour and youth groups, including bus tours to Yellowtail Dam
- visitors who want to view and learn more about Yellowtail Dam
- virtual visitors – some 150,000+ a year – who use the park website to explore and research a place many will never be able to visit in person

In the South District, visitors arrive for recreation on Bighorn Lake or within the canyon, views of the Pryor Mountain wild horses or bighorn sheep, or opportunities for geological study or cultural history. Visitor types include the following:

- area residents, including boaters, anglers, hikers, and people interested in local history
- people from around the United States and abroad interested in the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses
- “accidental” visitors, many of whom learn about the park from signs on the National Scenic Byway (US 14A) or following planned visits to other NPS sites such as Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument or Yellowstone National Park
- geologists, including college groups
- K-12 school groups
- Scouts and youth groups
- local recreational enthusiasts engaging in boating, fishing, camping, hunting, and hiking
- virtual visitors – some 150,000+ a year



## Visitor Experience Goals

What kind of experiences are visitors seeking when they come to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area? How can the park interpretive staff support or enhance visitors' experiences at the site?

A comprehensive interpretive program seeks to provide all visitors with multiple opportunities for memorable, meaningful experiences as they engage with and enjoy the site. In this large, diverse recreation area, different visitors may experience its offerings in many different ways: by boating, fishing, camping, hunting, sightseeing via automobile, hiking, bird watching, exploring Crow culture or the historic ranches, seeing the exhibits, attending ranger-led programs, or simply enjoying the scenery and solitude. Whatever approach or activity they prefer, all visitors should have opportunities to explore key resources and appreciate the intrinsic values and meanings of this vast, wild land.

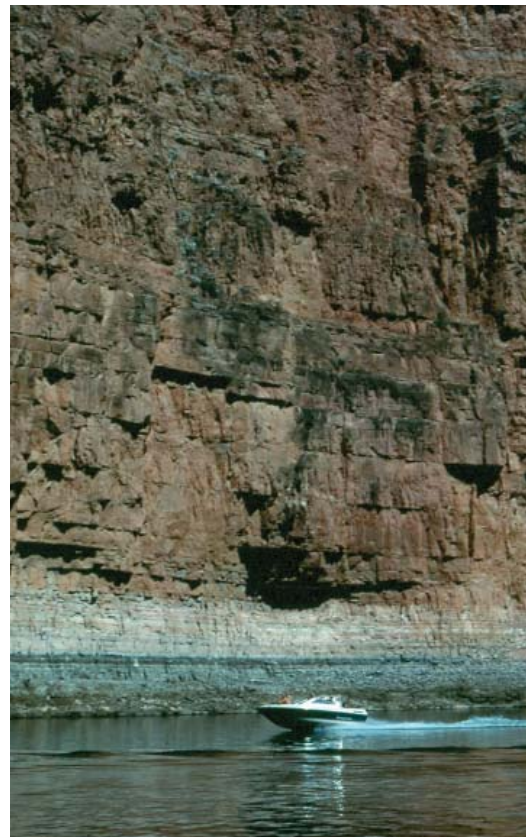
Based on analysis of the park's resources and input from workshop participants, the following visitor experience goals have been identified for Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

**Experiential goals:** What should visitors have the opportunity to do when they visit Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area?

Visitors will be able to:

- Actively engage in water-based recreation: boating, waterskiing, fishing, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, or scuba diving.
- Go hunting and fishing, in accordance with applicable state laws.
- Explore marked trails of varying lengths and levels of difficulty within the park.

- Visit the park's numerous cultural sites, including the four historic ranches; sites related to westward expansion and military presence or battles; and sites that reflect the longstanding presence of the American Indians in the region.
- Engage their senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting) during their visit – for example, seeing spectacular views; hearing the wind, the calls of birds, or the lapping of waves; touching the cold water or the rough rocks; smelling the fresh scent of juniper or sage; or tasting freshly caught fish.
- Enjoy relevant hands-on or living history activities and programming provided by park or guest experts or craftspeople in the region.
- Use emerging technologies (the internet, podcasts, social media) to explore Bighorn Canyon in a virtual and interactive way.



Boating is the best way to experience the beauty of Bighorn Canyon.

**Cognitive Goals:** What should visitors have the opportunity to **learn** when they visit Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area?

Visitors will have opportunities to learn about:

- Park-specific regulations and safety requirements that support a safe and enjoyable visitor experience and protect park features (as part of their arrival experience at all visitor destinations).
- The ecology and extraordinary plant and animal diversity found within the relatively small geographical area encompassed by the park.
- The geology of the canyon and the surrounding landscape.
- The archeological findings and early human presence in the region.
- The historical and contemporary Native American culture in and around the park.
- Pioneer and frontier history in the region.
- The Bighorn River's role as a water resource through the ages and into the present day, including the changes caused by the Yellowtail Dam.

- Stewardship, including the preservation and management of the park by the National Park Service; the NPS's collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies to improve resource management and visitor experience opportunities; and ways individuals can get involved and support the park.

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area's future interpretive, education and visitor program will foster:

- A sense of discovery during park exploration.
- A sense of wonder and awe about the magnificence of the scenery, as well as a sense of scale, perspective, and responsibility regarding humans' place in this vast landscape.
- A feeling of refreshment or renewal after experiencing nature – without the distractions of modern life – when they visit the park.
- Personal connections to park resource values as a direct result of their immersion in this wild, beautiful place.
- Visitors' ability to explore their roles and responsibilities as visitors and as stewards of this unspoiled natural world; they should leave no trace of their visit on the land.
- A chance to “reconnect” with the natural world.
- Respect for other cultures and other living things in and around the canyon.
- Opportunities to become engaged in stewardship of the canyon, the river, and the biological and cultural resources of this unique environment.
- A strong desire to return to the area and bring friends and family.



Layout Creek on the historic Ewing-Snell Ranch provides a peaceful scene amid the arid climate of Bighorn Canyon.





The floating dock in Black Canyon provides a valuable service for boaters and offers future interpretive opportunities.



Fishermen brave the cold to ice fish at Horseshoe Bend.





## Existing Conditions

## Pre-Arrival Assistance

The park receives numerous information requests via the mail, phone, and website, with at least 50% of these requests coming via the website. Requests typically involve basic information on things to do in the park, logistics, and maps. Many requests can be answered through referral to specific website pages, although some requests require mailed information. Statistics on the number of these requests are anecdotal but are estimated to be in the low hundreds.

## Sites and Facilities for Interpretation

**Vehicular pull-offs/parking** – With numerous scenic overlooks throughout the park, safe, accessible vehicular pull-offs offer numerous opportunities for interpretive media. Many pull-offs in the South District have wayside exhibits, and several pull-offs in the North District also have waysides.

**Western National Parks Association Bookstores** – The park cooperates with the Western National Parks Association to operate a bookstore in the Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center in Lovell as well as smaller retail installations in the Afterbay Visitor Contact Station and Crooked Creek Contact Station. Offerings include a range of books, postcards, clothing, and other merchandise reflecting both the natural and cultural resources of the park.

- Bookstore sales at the Taggart VC were \$24,437 in FY2010.
- Bookstore sales at the Afterbay VCS were \$2,897 in FY2010.

## North District Sites

**Afterbay Visitor Contact Station** – Located in Ft. Smith, Montana, this small contact station is the first point of contact for visitors arriving in the North District of the park. Equipped with a reception desk, a wide-screen television, small-scale wall exhibits, and a small bookstore, this facility is open daily from late May through Labor Day, five days a week in September, and intermittently (weather permitting) in fall, winter, and spring. An automated fee machine and interpretive kiosk are located in the parking lot.

Unless otherwise noted the facilities described below are on park lands and managed by Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

**Afterbay Campground** – The campground amphitheater is used for interpretive programs. The campground area also has a bulletin board for posting information.

**Hayfield Fight Monument** – This small monument, located on private land, is visible from the roadside but protected by a wire fence. There is no pathway to the monument.

**Fort C.F. Smith Historic Site** – The historic site of Fort C.F. Smith, also located on private property, is viewable from the roadside but has no interpretation at the site.

**Four Winds Overlook** – This high, scenic vista has a fenced area with a number of wayside exhibits developed in cooperation with the Crow Tribe.



**M.K. Hill Picnic Area** – A popular picnicking area for local residents, including many Crow Indians, this site has scenic views, picnic tables, and parking but no interpretation.

**OK-A-Beh Marina** – This site includes a well-equipped concession operated marina, picnic area, and parking lot a few miles south of the dam, and the parking lot currently has one wayside interpretive sign on geology.

**Pretty Eagle Point** – This beautiful, secluded canyon overlook, a sacred site on the Crow Reservation adjacent to the National Recreation Area, is not accessible to the majority of park visitors. However, the site could potentially be opened through the Native Voices partnership by offering limited visitation in cosponsored NPS/tribal tours led by Crow tribal members, if the tribe wishes to offer park visitors a glimpse into Crow culture in and around the canyon.

**Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center** – After dedication of the Yellowtail Dam and hydroelectric station in 1968, the Bureau of Reclamation built a visitor center on the canyon rim overlooking the site. Today the center continues to operate seasonally as a visitor center from Memorial Day to Labor Day, closing for the winter months. The visitor center has a reception area, interpretive exhibits originally installed when the building opened in the early 1970s, a 42-seat theater (updated with new ADA-compliant AV equipment including a digital projector and surround sound in 2010), and a spectacular view of the dam through large curved windows and an exterior viewing porch along the back side of the building.

A vehicular pull-off offers scenic views – but no interpretive wayside signs – on the Yellowtail Road leading to the dam. Like the visitor center facility, this access road is closed for the winter season.



Afterbay Campground is a popular camping spot in the park near Ft. Smith, Montana.



## South District Sites

**Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center** – Located in Lovell, Wyoming, about ten miles from the park’s south entrance, this facility opened in 1976 and contains exhibit space, a 62-seat theater, a small bookstore, and a staffed visitor reception area with informational and interpretive materials. The first building in the NPS to install a solar-based energy system (currently inoperable), the former Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center was renamed the Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon VC in August 2006.

The Taggart Visitor Center is open from 8:00am to 6:00pm daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and until 4:30pm in the winter months (Labor Day to Memorial Day); from December 2010 to March 2011, the center was open daily, with minor disruptions due to staffing and/or weather conditions.

**Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station** – This small facility is usually staffed by volunteers on weekends during the summer months. The site provides orientation materials

and a four-sided column containing interpretive information on the four historic ranches in the South District.

**Devil Canyon Overlook** – This pull-off from the park highway (Wyoming 37) is a scenic vista with great views of the Devil Canyon area as well as Bighorn Canyon. Several waysides here inform visitors about the geology and bird life in the area.

**The four historic ranches** – Each of these historic ranches – the Mason/Lovell open-range cattle ranch, the Ewing-Snell family ranch, the Hillsboro dude ranch, and the ranch/retreat of well-known author Carolyn Lockhart – offer excellent opportunities for interpretation. In 2011, these ranches are in various stages of restoration and offer varying degrees of access and interpretation.

**Horseshoe Bend Marina and Campground** – With tent and trailer campsites, a swimming beach, a play structure, an amphitheater, and interpretive signs on geology, this area is one of the most popular sites in the South District.



The Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Visitor Center in Lovell, Wyoming.

## Interpretive Programming

A Chief of Interpretation position and a separate Division of Interpretation were reestablished at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area in FY2010. Prior to 2010, the park had not had a separate interpretive division for more than a decade.

### Staffing for Interpretation and Visitor Services

A GS-11 Chief of Interpretation manages the interpretive program, supervising the work of two permanent (GS-9 ranger) and five seasonal interpreters (four GS-4 park guides and one visitor use assistant). The park guides and visitor use assistant (along with the permanent staff) also handle many of the duties of fee collection. Three of the seasonal park guide positions are part of the Student Training and Education Program (STEP). The park guide stationed at Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center is paid through an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. The visitor use assistant is the only position supported by funds from the fee program.

In addition to its staff, the park also received a total of 516 VIP hours of interpretive service from volunteers in FY2010.

Park interpretation also benefits immensely from the efforts of the Resource Management Division, which offers a well-established field school program that commands some 6,000 volunteer hours per year.

## Programs Offered

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area offers a variety of interpretive programs from late May through early September. These include campground programs, ranch tours, and guided walks on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. New programs offered in FY2010 included the first campground programs in over a decade in the North District (at Afterbay Campground Amphitheater) and programs at OK-A-Beh marina store patio, as well as South District tours of all four historic ranches (eight consecutive summer weekends), programs at the Horseshoe Bend Campground Amphitheatre, and talks at the Taggart Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center.

One of the more fascinating aspects of the history of the Bighorn Canyon is the Bad Pass Trail. This trail was used for thousands of years by prehistoric people, and it was used by the fur trappers and hunters two hundred years ago. To keep the fur trade history alive, interpreters will be performing living history talks and demonstrations about the rugged mountain men who traversed what is now the western United States. Park interpreters will be talking about the mountain men and the fur trade, and they will be demonstrating how the Hawken Rifle was loaded and fired. These living history performances are sure to attract large crowds to the park.

The park also offers programs by appointment for organized groups such as historic societies, church groups, political leaders, Wyoming tourism representatives, and tribal groups.

Roving rangers and other park staff provide a limited number of informal programs and visitor interactions as staffing permits.

## School and Education Programs

A number of school groups, primarily K-5, visit the South District and use the park's web-based educational curriculum. The interpretive staff also does off-site programs for schools within 100 miles of the park, site tours, geology walks for high-school students, and several Boy and Girl Scout programs each year.

In FY2010 the Chief of Interpretation instituted an in-school education program in the North District to introduce students from grades 4 through 8 to the park. This program met with great success, with 35 programs reaching an estimated 1,400 students on the natural and/or cultural history of Bighorn Canyon. The park intends to expand similar in-school visits in the South District.

The Resource Management team also provides educational outreach, specifically with the Bighorn Canyon field school, a well-established program offering archeology and historic restoration opportunities for college students.

## Outreach Services and Special Events

In the past, outreach has been confined largely to a park presence at outdoor shows that focus on the recreational aspect of Bighorn Canyon. While these are good for disseminating information to the public, they appear to have minimal effect on building visitor awareness and appreciation of the resource.

In FY2010, the park interpretive staff played a role in Earth Day at the local high school in Lovell, Wyoming; the first-ever Crow Skills and Trade Fair (sponsored by the Western National Park Association) at the Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center; and a movie night in the South District featuring footage of the Last River Trip. In the North District, a special event was done in conjunction with the Lodge Grass ROTC, which visited the Fort C.F. Smith site and the Grapevine Creek battlefield.



## Interpretive Media (Non-Personal Interpretation)

### Audiovisuals

- Audio driving tour – South District. In 2011, this program is available for purchase (\$1.00) on cassette tape but receives limited use due to its outdated technology; most vehicles now have CD or MP3 players. Covering a range of topics, from Native American history to the “mountain men,” the historic ranches, wildlife, and geology, this self-guided driving tour starts at the Bighorn Canyon entrance sign and continues to Barry’s Landing.

No audio tour exists for the North District, although some preliminary work was done for a tour of OK-A-Beh Road in summer 2010.

- Park films – The park has several films available for public viewing:
  - “Land of the Bighorn,” completed in 2004, is a high-quality short film (approximately 20 minutes long) that gives visitors a sweeping overview of the park’s natural and cultural resources, ranging from magnificent scenery to water-based recreation, frontier history, and American Indian legacies in the region.
  - “Geology of Bighorn Canyon,” a 12-minute film produced in 2009 with assistance from Montana State University, offers an in-depth look at the creation and natural history of Bighorn Canyon and the powerful geologic forces that have shaped and reshaped the area over millions of years. In addition, a 3-minute close-up movie on the erosion of the canyon is shown in the exhibit area of the Cal S. Taggart Visitor Center.
- Other films available for public viewing include “Mustangs on the Mountain,” produced by the BLM on the wild horses; “Medicine Wheel,” produced by the USDA Forest Service; and “Buildup on the Bighorn,” which portrays the construction of the Yellowtail Dam and is typically shown only at the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center. All three of these films exist only on videotape; none is yet available on DVD.
- Cell phone tour – A cell phone tour on the history of the structures and operation of the Mason/Lovell Ranch was tested at the site (one of the few places to receive cell phone signals within the park) in 2010-2011. Test results in 2010 found that from May until the end of September, 69 visitors called in and spent an average of 3.8 minutes per station. Due to the level of use, this tour was discontinued following the 2011 summer season.
- Podcasts – The park film “Land of the Bighorn” as well as the park’s geology film have been broken up into short podcast segments that are available for viewing on the park website and on iTunes.

## Interior Exhibits

Bighorn Canyon NRA currently has two large spaces to house interior interpretive exhibits – the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center in the North District and the Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center in the South District. In addition, the two existing Visitor Contact Stations offer smaller venues for interior exhibits.

- The interpretive exhibits in the Bureau of Reclamation-managed Yellowtail Dam VC date from the 1970s. The physical structures, imagery, and interactive devices show significant wear, and the interpretive content reflects a pervasive emphasis on the “new” dam of 40 years ago, with no additional materials to address current concerns and contemporary research.
- Replacement exhibits for the Taggart VC in Lovell have already been designed and are waiting funding for fabrication and installation. The new exhibit plan, developed by Main Street Design

and overseen by Harpers Ferry Center, was finalized in December 2009. Once fully funded and installed, these new interpretive exhibits will engage visitors with interactive, hands-on interpretive displays and striking graphics highlighting the natural and cultural resources of Bighorn Canyon. In the interim, the existing exhibits were enhanced a few years ago with a relocation of the topographic map of Bighorn Canyon as well as new displays on geology and on bighorn sheep (including two magnificent taxidermy specimens).

- Recently the homemade river boat used by Doc Barry to travel through the canyon was removed from Barry’s Landing and placed on exhibit in the Cal S. Taggart Visitor Center, in order to provide a higher level of protection.

## Wayside Exhibits

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area has approximately 37 wayside exhibits dispersed throughout the park. Created over the past two decades as funding became available, the majority of these signs focus on geology, ranching history, bighorn sheep, wild horses, Crow history, and dam history. As of 2011, only three existing wayside signs have been produced using NPS Graphic Identity standards (minimal text and consistent, ADA-compliant typography) while the earlier signs display varying emphases, writing styles and word lengths, graphic styles, materials, and mounting posts. The park has no formal wayside plan.

This LRIP includes information to support the development of a Wayside Exhibit Proposal in Appendix C. This appendix documents the need for wayside exhibits parkwide and provides specific information regarding the approximate number of waysides needed, including their suggested



The bookstore inside the Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center.

locations in the park and the associated topics (basic information, orientation and safety messages and/or interpretive subjects), as well as recommended panel styles – upright, low profile, or kiosk. The information presented during this LRIP process will inform the development of an HFC Class C funding estimate for a future wayside project.

### Wayfinding Signage

Many directional signs in the park are faded, cracked, confusing in their placement or instructions, or simply missing. A new signage plan was developed by an internal sign committee in winter FY2010. The North District portion of the plan was implemented during the first half of FY2011 and proved to be a dramatic improvement. The South District portion is still awaiting implementation. During the November 2011 workshop, both stakeholders and park staff emphasized that Bighorn Canyon NRA is in critical need of updated wayfinding and directional signage.



Wayside exhibits help educate visitors as they drive through Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

### Print Publications

The park provides a variety of printed materials produced by the NPS, the WNPA, the BLM, and state and local tourism organizations. A synopsis of existing NPS and WNPA materials is provided here.

- The NPS unigrid brochure for the park was reprinted in 2007; however, its content has not been thoroughly revised since 2002. As currently written, the unigrid brochure offers a useful overview of the park but contains minimal information on important topics such as geology, Crow culture, fly fishing in the Bighorn River, and other offerings in the North District. The brochure does not reflect the 2006 addition of the Taggart name to the visitor center in Lovell, which may be confusing to visitors.
- A number of site bulletins and similar print publications have been produced for the park over the years, primarily through funding by the Western National Parks Association. These include the park newspaper (reestablished in 2010 after a five-year hiatus), a lake map, a map highlighting existing wayside exhibits, a Yellowtail Habitat map, Junior Ranger booklets, the map and guide for the Mason/Lovell Ranch cell phone tour, and a site bulletin on Mountain Men on the Bad Pass Trail.
- A matching set of small brochures provides concise, well-packaged interpretation regarding the Mason/Lovell Ranch, the Lockhart Ranch, the Hillsboro Ranch, and the Ewing-Snell Ranch, as well as brochures on bighorn sheep, raptors, Pryor Mountain horses, and geology.



- A series of older broadside sheets (produced on copy paper) offers historical information on the Bozeman Trail, Fort C.F. Smith, the Hayfield Fight, the Legend of Big Metal, and the Crow People.
- Additional interpretive materials are available for purchase. The South District bookstore offers a wide range of books and interpretive materials on the natural and cultural history of Bighorn Canyon, as well as sections devoted to local history, Native American history, and the nearby Bighorn Mountains. The North District bookstore offers a modest selection of titles, with an emphasis on American Indian culture and history.
  - A short photo booklet, “Bighorn Canyon,” contains a well-written essay by a former staff member on the park’s natural and cultural history. The booklet is published by WNPA, sells for \$1.00, and is popular with visitors.
  - A Bighorn Canyon hiking guide developed by the interpretive staff and printed by WNPA is also a popular, inexpensive publication that fills a visitor need. As the park’s trail plan is finalized, this booklet will need to be updated.
  - The introductory film “Land of the Bighorn” is also for sale in the bookstores. This DVD includes information that consolidates topics and materials presented in many different park bulletins into one presentation. The DVD also includes six historic photo galleries featuring more than 50 rare images of late 19th-century Crow life, early ranching, construction of the Yellowtail Dam and more.

## Web-based Materials

The park website was upgraded significantly in FY2010, with continuing upgrades and timely maintenance ongoing. Since the upgrade work began, web interpretive content has increased from fewer than 50 pages to more than 400 pages – and readership has increased commensurately, with some 150,000 hits in the past year.

In addition, the staff has created Twitter feeds and started a Facebook page and has posted daily updates on these social media sites throughout the past year.

## Archives and Collections

According to the 2011 Collections Management Report, the park has collections totaling 266,923 objects in the following categories:

Archeology	264,204
History	282
Archives	302,272
Art	1
Biology	1,606
Paleo	14
Geology	144

Of these items, 46% are cataloged; the great majority of items backlogged for cataloguing are archival objects accessioned in 2011.

The park is also actively working on the NPS-wide Archives Initiative to reduce the archival backlogs. Future interpretive access to information contained on catalogued items potentially can enrich various aspects of park interpretation.



## Issues and Influences



## Size and Distance

With more than 120,000 acres encompassing a huge lake and traversing two states, the sheer size of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area makes management, interpretation, and visitor access a constant challenge. The park headquarters and the Chief of Interpretation reside in Fort Smith, Montana, a remote location best accessed by deliberate planning. Yet the majority of the park's lands and accessible visitor sites lie in the south, in a vast area running northward from the town of Lovell, Wyoming, across the Montana state line. Door-to-door travel time between Fort Smith and Lovell is typically at least three hours by car and about two hours by boat in the summer (and impassable by boat in winter).

For visitors, these distances mean that most travelers choose either a north or a south location to visit – but seldom both. For the interpretive team, the distance and differing emphases in the north and south districts makes developing parkwide interpretive materials and programs difficult.

It is important to note, however, that while the NPS staff routinely identifies the “North District” and the “South District” as separate entities, the dividing lines are historically unclear; furthermore, this nomenclature exists for administrative convenience only and may be confusing to the visiting public.

## Visitors on a Quest

Many visitors to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area come for one of two reasons: (1) serious, world-class trout fishing, or (2) recreation on Bighorn Lake. For visitors on a quest – and a tight timeframe – to “catch” the maximum allowable limit of the Bighorn River's famous rainbow trout, a

ranger-led tour of cultural sites or a visit to museum-quality interpretive exhibits is unlikely.

How can or should the park interpretive division make available the full range of interpretive possibilities, unobtrusively but effectively, to time-pressed and focused visitors who come primarily for fishing, hunting, or boating? Both stakeholders and park staff cited this concern as a factor in expanding and strengthening the interpretive program at the park.

In all probability, the park's previous lack of a well-developed interpretive program may have contributed to an internal staff perception that many recreational visitors do not want or will not avail themselves of interpretive services. However, as vibrant new interpretive services are offered and enhanced throughout the park, this perception may change, especially as “the other people in the car” find more visitor opportunities at the park than they expected.

## Defining the Park

From a visitor perspective, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is hard to define and may suffer from an identity crisis. Though it is not named as a “park,” it is managed by the National Park Service – but the river flowing through its heart is controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the Yellowtail Dam. The recreation area borders on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Crow tribe, the state of Wyoming, the state of Montana, and private landowners. Some areas are jointly managed with other state and federal entities, such as the Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area (managed by the state of Wyoming) and the Pryor Mountain National Wild

Horse Range (managed by the BLM). On occasion, rules and regulations change as visitors move from one area to another. Crow land, in particular, is inviolate but is sometimes traversed unknowingly or without permission by park visitors.

These uncertainties about the park's ownership, management, and boundaries influence both local and visitor perceptions and should be carefully considered in planning for future interpretation and wayfinding throughout the site.

### Interpreting Native Cultures

In all its interpretive programming and materials, the park is committed to being sensitive to and respectful of the ancient cultures and sacred sites of American Indian tribes. At the same time, the interpretive staff – working closely with its Crow and other tribal partners – would like to share aspects of these rich cultures with visitors in order to enhance their understanding and appreciation of early and contemporary American Indians.

What information should be made available to the public? How should the location of cultural resources be



This stone circle where a tipi once stood hundred of years ago is ancient evidence of the Native American people who called Bighorn Canyon home.

referenced in interpretive materials? How can this information be provided without opening the door to potential looting or other undesirable activities? The park has an outstanding array of native sites (predominantly Crow and prehistoric), but until recently, it had offered little interpretation of these resources or the cultures that produced them, except in the context of the field schools supervised by cultural resources personnel. In 2011, several interpretive programs on aspects of Native cultures were presented as campfire talks at campgrounds, with more programs scheduled for 2012.

### Access for All

Without question, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is rough country. Universally accessible sites that can adequately serve persons with disabilities have been and will remain a logistical challenge. In addition, access to the historic ranches and many other cultural sites within the park requires driving long distances over rough roads to isolated areas. For many visitors, finding these sites is difficult without an escort or guide.

While challenging, Federal laws and Servicewide policies mandate that when developing new programs, media and facilities, the park, in so much as possible, should plan for universal access. The following excerpt from the National Park Services' Management Policies notes:

All reasonable efforts will be undertaken to make NPS facilities, programs, and services accessible to and usable by all people, including those with disabilities. . . One primary tenet of accessibility is that, to the highest degree reasonable, people with disabilities should be able to participate in the same programs and activities available to everyone else. In choosing

among methods for providing accessibility, higher priority will be given to those methods that offer programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate. Special, separate, or alternative facilities, programs, or services will be provided only when existing ones cannot reasonably be made accessible. The determination of what is reasonable will be made only after careful consultation with persons with disabilities or their representatives. Any decision that would result in less than equal opportunity is subject to the filing of an official disability rights complaint under the departmental regulations cited above. **Chapter 8.2.4 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, NPS Management Policies**

Recommendations in this LRIP address how to accommodate the widest range of visitors possible.

## **Economic Considerations**

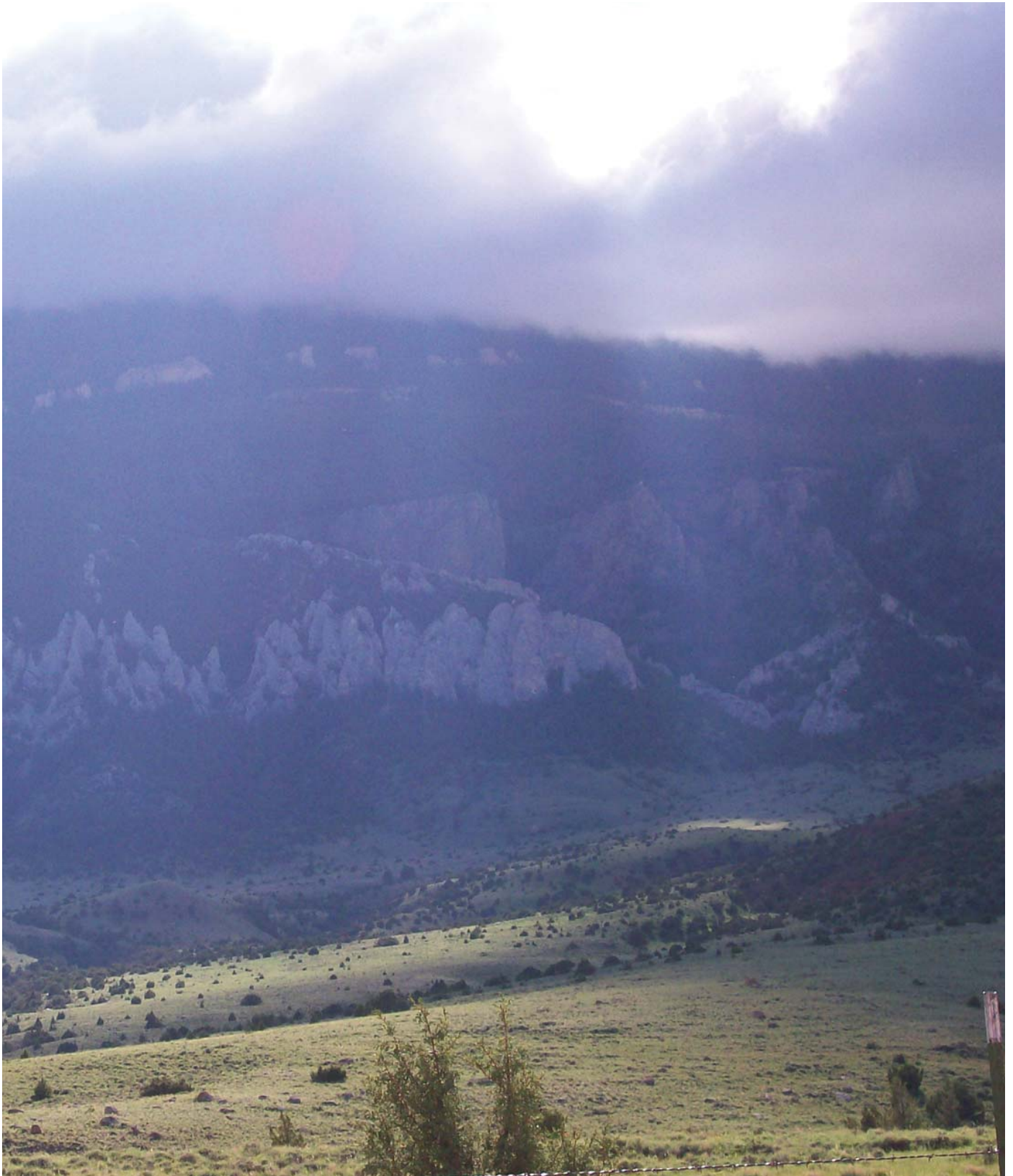
A more subtle challenge for visitors wishing to access the full range of the park's resources is economic – because boats and personal watercraft are expensive. Much of the park's recreational activity, as well as many of its significant geologic and natural history sites, can be accessed most readily (or in some cases, exclusively) by watercraft. Visitors who come to the park without their own watercraft or without the funds to take the whole family on a commercial tour boat ride are unable to engage in many of the desired visitor experiences in the park.

## **“Floating” Interpretation**

Another concern might be termed “floating” versus “stationary” interpretation. Because so much of the park's resource value is central to or viewable from the water, how can the interpretive program best provide high-quality, engaging (but unobtrusive) interpretive materials to the thousands of visitors who spend most of their time in the park on boats and personal watercraft? And should these materials be duplicated on land?

An easy answer to this dilemma in most settings might be the creation of multi-platform programming residing in cyberspace and available for download, but wireless and wi-fi signals are unavailable in most of the park, a situation that is unlikely to change given the terrain.





## Recommendations

The interpretive planning team has identified many exciting opportunities for strengthening and enhancing interpretation at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area over the next seven to ten years. Overall, these recommendations aim to guide the park in communicating the full range of its interpretive themes and providing opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the park in both planned and newly discovered ways.

As the planning team reviewed multiple suggestions from stakeholders, partners, and park staff, several distinct areas of emphasis emerged:

- Workshop participants emphasized that the park interpretive program should reach out to local and regional audiences, many of whom may be unaware of the full range of recreational, historical, scientific, educational, and cultural heritage resources in the park.
- Future interpretive media utilizing technology and new media will play an important role in helping the park provide accessible, self-guided interpretation and information about and within the park. During discussions, the planning team also acknowledged some of the limitations of the use of technology in the park, due to the canyon's geographical features impeding the transmission of modern wireless telecommunications.
- There is a need to share the park's broad interpretive offerings and inspire more engagement and stewardship among recreational users. Future interpretive media and staff interactions with park visitors should convey opportunities and be sensitive to a visitor's desire for solitude or the simple enjoyment of fishing or boating in the park.
- The park needs to enhance NPS and BICA visibility and identity internally within the entire recreation area.

In addition to these concerns, the planning team also focused on the time-tested tools of interpretive services delivery: personal services; familiar interpretive media such as audiovisuals, print publications, interior exhibits, and exterior interpretive and informational signs; and a wide range of new media, including the park website, social media sites, and programming designed to be downloaded to users' personal electronic devices.

The recommendations that follow are designed to assist Bighorn Canyon NRA in developing a strong, flexible interpretive program in practical, manageable stages over the next seven to ten years. Although some progressions may overlap, recommendations are prioritized within their respective categories as short-term (within the first one to three years), mid-term (four to six years out), and long-term (seven to ten years in the future) in the *Implementation Guide* located at the end of this section. Depending on funding and future technology options, implementation of some recommendations will need to be flexible but will not alter the overall guidance of the plan.

## Interpretive Outreach

The following section focuses on interpretive outreach initiatives to help increase visibility and awareness of among local residents and communities.

### Short-term:

- Implement a consistent outreach effort aimed at the commercial tourism industry serving the region. This outreach should include the following:
  - Establish personal contact and distribute the park rack card and the seasonal park newspaper to hotels, local welcome centers, and commercial tour operators throughout the region.
  - Publicize scheduled park events, including interpretive programs, via email, web calendar, or printed flyers at commercial tourism establishments.
  - Prepare and distribute simple loose-leaf binders containing park publications (unigrid brochure, site bulletins, site flyers) for desk and guest use at selected hotels.
- Cultivate commercial tourism contacts; advise them of the potential for pre-arranged, customized group programs on-site at the park.
- Continue to develop and implement the park's new wayfinding and identity signage program, begun in 2010 and implemented in the North District in 2011. By clearly and consistently marking the park's presence, the new signs not only improve wayfinding but also serve as visible, permanent outreach tools for elevating the park's stature in the community.
- Explore the possibility of purchasing and installing several colorful, inexpensive vehicle wraps to identify and draw attention to interpretive vehicles as they move through the park and in surrounding communities.
- Work to establish an artist-in-residence program.



Ranchers once lived in an isolated area of scenic beauty that is now part of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. The ranches are popular sites for visitation.



- Identify and work with local and regional media, including print, broadcast, and online media, to craft and disseminate appealing interpretive stories about Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area across the region, reaching thousands of existing and potential audiences with one article. These stories can be generated in several ways:
  - Park staff can create occasional or monthly articles for publication in local and regional media. These short, informal articles could be bylined from the superintendent or from a roster of park staff or volunteers, with topics ranging across the full range of themes and subthemes crafted in this plan: archeology, boating safety, cultural history, geology, fly fishing tips, historic ranches, law enforcement in the park, mountain lion research, and much more.
  - The park can actively seek ways to build relationships with local and regional media – for example, by staging an annual “media day/press tour” for media and their families at appealing venues within the North and South Districts of the park.
  - Park staff and volunteers can plan or participate in special events that attract media coverage on site or in community venues. These events may be large festivals open to the public, landmark or anniversary events for the park (such as events surrounding the NPS Centennial in 2016), or unique opportunities for individual journalists to interview a visiting expert on native fish, join a mountain lion research team for a day (after relevant safety training), or go “behind the scenes” with a restoration team at a historic ranch.
- Network with other recreational, cultural, and historic sites in the area to leverage interpretive messages across multiple venues, reach out to diverse audiences, and support and share interpretive resources where



Canoeing is a favorite visitor activity in Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

- appropriate. Specific networking recommendations include the following:
- Distribute rack cards and other materials about Bighorn Canyon NRA at cultural and historic sites throughout the region, including state and federal public lands gateways (NPS sites, National Forests, BLM and Reclamation sites, Wyoming and Montana state parks and historic sites), Crow Reservation venues as deemed appropriate by the Crow Tribe, and regional museums such as the Bighorn County Historical Museum and Visitor Center in Hardin and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody.
  - Create a listserv or email string to share events calendars, encourage occasional guest-interpreter/lecturer expertise, coordinate traveling exhibits or artifacts, etc., on topics of mutual interest.
  - Consider cosponsoring events with sites sharing topical interests with Bighorn Canyon NRA.
- Work with the Crow Tribe to create mutually beneficial opportunities for Crow tribal members to provide programs, exhibits, and personal interpretation of Crow culture, history, and contemporary lifestyles to Bighorn Canyon NRA visitors.
    - Explore options for collaboration with Crow tribal members through the NPS Intermountain Region’s Native Places and Voices program to train tribal college students as interpreters who can educate the public on their culture. A future pilot program could include an identified Student Training and Education Program (STEP) position.
  - Develop a set of consistent, year-round interpretive outreach activities in the communities surrounding the recreational area – activities that, over time, will increase public awareness of the breadth of recreational and learning opportunities in the park. For example:
    - Host an annual winter speaker series at the Taggart Visitor Center auditorium featuring park-based research, resources, archeology, local authors, history, and similar topics.
    - Offer regular, free interpretive “familiarization tours” of the park for local residents; target and promote these tours as necessary to build interest among such groups as teachers, Chamber of Commerce members, civic clubs, county employees, and historical society members.
    - Continue working with the Big Horn County Centennial Planning Committee in preparation for the county’s 100th anniversary in January 2013.
    - Seek regular opportunities to have a dynamic NPS presence (a roving ranger or a booth with interpreters, hands-on activities, and portable displays) at local events such as fairs, festivals, and other community gatherings.

## Educational/Youth Outreach

Interpretive outreach aimed at children and youth can be an extremely effective way to engage communities in park visitation and stewardship across diverse populations and generations. The following recommendations build upon existing educational outreach programs – as well as the longstanding Archeology Field School programs run by the BICA cultural resources team – in both the North and South Districts of the park.

### Short-term:

- Continue to pursue existing avenues of outreach to area schools, building on individual relationships with educators in different schools and districts to offer lesson plan samples, ranger visits, traveling trunks for check-out, and use of the existing online curriculum.
- Using the 2010 “Bighorn Canyon in Your Classroom” as a model, assess the feasibility of developing additional topical programs for in-class presentations in area schools.
- Seek ways to formalize ongoing programs such as annual field trips at the school district level via partnership agreements or other means, so as to ensure program continuity as individual educators and NPS staff retire or relocate.
- Seek opportunities to participate in school festival or career days to offer interpretation of Bighorn Canyon NRA, the NPS, and NPS careers.
- Collaborate with local school systems to research grants to fund school buses to transport students to visit the park.

### Mid-term:

- Create Junior Ranger programs and booklets specific to each of the four historic ranches in the South District.
- Work with the Crow Tribe and the park’s cultural resource management staff to develop a Junior Ranger program on historic and contemporary Crow culture in the Bighorn Canyon region.
- Explore options for expanding the interpretive staff through the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program. The TRT program enables the park to hire a K-12 teacher as an interpreter during the summer, with the teacher becoming an in-school liaison who wears the NPS uniform and presents programs on NPS at his or her school during National Park Week each spring.

### Long-term:

- Convene an educator committee to review and revise the existing online curriculum as needed to conform to contemporary Wyoming and Montana state education standards.
- Explore the possibility of establishing accredited park-specific teacher training through a local university. This future program could serve two purposes: (1) to provide teachers a resource-specific, in-depth training opportunity related to the curriculum; and (2) to assist interested teachers in maintaining their teaching reaccreditation requirements through this program offering.



## Personal Services

In the field of interpretation, personal services – programs delivered in person, where park staff interacts with visitors face-to-face – have long been the standard against which other interpretive approaches are measured. In a setting the size of Bighorn Canyon NRA, the challenge is to find or create opportunities to deliver personal services to a widely scattered audience engaged in many different activities with diverse interests. The BICA staff has made significant strides in expanding the delivery of ranger-led interpretive programs in recent years; this plan recommends continuing the park’s momentum in both the North and South Districts.

### Short-term:

- Continue to publicize and present campground programs on a regular schedule on summer weekends in amphitheaters at Afterbay Campground in North District and Horseshoe Bend Campground in South District. If possible,
- promote these programs earlier in the afternoon by offering roving interpretation at the selected sites to generate interest.
- Introduce programs at Ok-A-Beh Marina with topics geared toward anglers and recreational boaters. The interpretive team may want to begin this effort with short roving sessions and pocket programs on demand, while assessing the potential for regular weekend programs during the season.
- Introduce programs at the boat-in only Black Canyon campground. Depending on campsite audiences, these programs could range from fishing and boating topics to wildlife, geology, or Crow history.
- Provide occasional roving interpretation with short “pocket programs” as much as possible during summer months at sites with highest use: campgrounds, marinas, overlooks, visitor contact



Mule deer use Bighorn Canyon as a place to thrive. Wildlife talks are an important element of Bighorn’s interpretive programming.

- stations, and visitor centers. Utilize the “Interpretive Bag of Tricks” technique by developing backpacks that include photographs and hands-on materials representing park features and points of interest or to reinforce important safety messages. This addition to “pocket programs” may help to engage a wider variety of visitors with different learning styles.
- Staff the Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station with a combination of volunteers, seasonal interpreters, and other staff such as law enforcement to provide regular visitation hours on holidays and weekends (Friday through Sunday) all summer.
  - Work with concessionaires to assist them in providing interpretive programs for their customers by offering to provide ranger-conducted programs on their boats and by providing interpretive training for boat operators wishing to offer their own programs.
  - Develop staff-conducted programming aimed at specific groups and activities, such as step-on bus tours (“Ranger on a Bus”) offerings for tour companies, local tourism groups, or special interest groups such as AARP, boating groups, and others.
  - Seek ways to use the park’s two full-size auditoriums to inspire interpretive programming such as guest lecturers/authors/scholars, living history, dramatic and musical presentations, personalized travelogues with slides and narration, and similar opportunities.
    - A narrated PowerPoint digital photography event featuring visitors’ images of Bighorn Canyon projected on “the big screen” could be a simple but very effective tool for fostering local interest and building new audiences for the park.

#### Mid-term:

- Provide full-time staff for the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center (including trained interpreters as well as volunteers and visitor use assistants) in the summer. With new exhibits and greater outreach in the coming years, visitation will likely increase at this site, with correspondingly greater opportunities for offering personal interpretation.

## Interpretive Media

### A Word about Technology

Over the past decade, the field of interpretation has benefitted tremendously from the worldwide explosion of new media – cell phone and smart phones; digital audio, video, and photography, and an ever-changing array of web-based wireless communications. Yet in a vast, sparsely populated region like Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, the canyon’s geographical features often impede transmission of modern wireless telecommunications; instant access to radio, wifi, smart phones and cell phones is all but impossible here. At the same time, self-accessed cyber-based interpretation seems an especially suitable medium in this wild, natural setting: it is unobtrusive, portable, changeable, personalized, cost-effective, and leaves no adverse impacts on the resource.

### Park Technology

#### Short-term:

Many of the interpretive media recommendations in this plan necessarily depend on technology. The challenge is to find ways to adapt or provide this technology for visitors roaming a terrain that is largely “off the grid” of our ubiquitous 21<sup>st</sup>-century devices. The following recommendations aim to provide the park with a baseline of relatively inexpensive technology-based tools that can enable delivery of high-quality, on-demand interpretation to visitors, wherever they may choose to access it.

- Install AM 1016 radio transmitters at the most heavily visited locations in the park to enable broadcast of brief informational and interpretive programs. At a minimum, AM transmitters should be considered

for the Taggart Visitor Center, the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center, Eye of the Needle on the Crow Reservation (if the tribe is open to this suggestion), and at selected intervals along the Bighorn River and Bighorn Lake. Although AM radio is not a new, cutting-edge technology, it remains an inexpensive, reliable method of providing short-range coverage, and AM radios are widely available in most vehicles and as small battery-powered units for campers.

- If at all possible, create public-access, open-source wi-fi hotspots for visitor use in the Taggart Visitor Center, the Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station, the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center, and the Afterbay Contact Station to enable visitors to download the park materials (podcasts, mobile apps, driving tours, trail guides) onto their handheld devices.
- Ground-truth all GPS coordinates and develop accurate directions, addresses, and maps linked to GPS coordinates online. Post notes on website pages as appropriate to advise visitors to use park-provided GPS coordinates instead of those from commercial providers.
- Work with the Bureau of Reclamation to obtain large flat-screen monitors in the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center, in order to show a virtual tour of the hydroelectric facility (now off-limits to visitors due to security concerns).

Once these technological tools are in place, almost any content the interpretive team decides to develop can be accessible for visitors wherever and however they wish to access it.



## Audiovisuals

### Short-term:

- Convert the existing South District audio driving tour cassette tape to digital media for use as a CD and MP3 formats as a web/smartphone download.
  - Provide a large-print transcript as a printout on demand for visitors requesting auditory or visual accommodation.
- Complete the proposed audio tour for the North District, building on the preliminary work done in 2010 for a tour of Ok-A-Beh Road.
  - Provide a large-print transcript as a printout on demand for visitors requesting auditory or visual accommodation.
- Convert existing interpretive films from videotape to DVD for routine use. A copy of each of these films – “Mustangs on the Mountain,” “Medicine Wheel,” and “Buildup on the Bighorn” – should also be transferred to an archival-quality DVD format for long-term preservation.
- Seek screening and conversion rights to the film “The Last River Trip,” shot in 1965 just before the canyon was inundated by Bighorn Lake, to convert to DVD and use in the Taggart and Yellowtail visitor centers, as well as for special showings where appropriate.
- Make informal digital recordings of personal tours and/or reminiscences from Cultural Resources’ Chris Finley for use in future podcasts and other programming.
- Explore options for adding universal access/closed captioning capabilities to all newly developed or converted audiovisual media.

### Mid-term:

- Review and revise the existing driving tour for the South District, as it will be more than a decade old and the content will be out of date.
- Work with Reclamation to develop a virtual tour of the Yellowtail Dam hydroelectric facility for use in the visitor center there.
- Develop additional podcasts on topics that draw on expertise and voices from the park staff and volunteers.
  - Simple podcasts can be created using short excerpts from digital recordings of park staff or volunteers doing live presentations or guided tours in the park.
- Explore options for making excerpts of the park’s audio oral history recordings available in small listening booths or exhibit kiosks in the visitor centers and visitor contact stations. Each audio track can be accompanied by an online transcript.

### Long-term:

- Plan and seek funding for a major new film about the park. Collaborate with the Crow Tribe to focus on stories of Crow culture and with the Bureau of Reclamation for stories related to the technology and construction of the dam.
- Review and revise the existing driving tour for the North District to refresh the presentation and bring it up to date.

## Wayside Exhibits and Wayfinding

Two distinct needs for exterior signs were identified by the planning team.

First, the recreation area needs a parkwide sign plan that includes wayfinding and identification of key visitor destinations. A sign plan will help the park improve NPS identity within the park and at key approaches in the surrounding communities, as well as connect the park to the entire national park system.

Second, a wayside exhibit plan is needed to address new sites and features to be interpreted, orientation panels throughout the park at key visitor destinations, and current wayside exhibits that are dated or showing wear.

Accordingly, this plan recommends the following:

- Seek funding to support the development of a parkwide wayfinding assessment and master plan. A future scope of work for this project should include “a request for a wayfinding assessment with options for the development of a future sign/wayfinding master plan.” Consult with Harpers Ferry Center to develop a cost-estimate needed for a PMIS funding request.
  - Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area has a sign shop. An important future discussion will include whether or not the park desires to contract for the production of all new signs identified in the new BICA Wayfinding Master Plan, while using the in-house sign shop to replace signs when damaged (using new NPS BICA sign designs). Alternately, will it be more cost-effective to utilize the park sign shop to manufacture and install the signs from the new BICA
- Seek funding to develop wayside exhibits. This funding will need to cover the development of a Wayside Exhibit Proposal and Wayside Exhibit Plan, acquisition of original artwork or photography where important illustrations do not exist or support important interpretive themes/concepts, fabrication of the wayside exhibit panels and bases, and audio description for all waysides. (Audio description provides programmatic access to visually impaired visitors and can also serve visitors whose preferred learning style is auditory rather than visual.)
  - Consult with Harpers Ferry Center for the development of the cost estimate needed for a PMIS funding request. Future discussions will determine the most suitable material to be used for the interpretive panels, based on budget, long-term maintenance, the potential for vandalism, and environmental conditions. HFC can also assist with developmental strategies for planning, fabrication, and installation based on funding and park priorities over a series of fiscal years.
  - When this project is funded, an important tool available to the staff is the publication *Wayside Exhibits: A Guide to Developing Outdoor Exhibit Panels*. The guide is an overview of the National Park Service wayside exhibit standards and

Wayfinding Master Plan, guided by a prioritized replacement strategy that incorporates new and replacement signs? Part of this discussion will address the capacity of the shop to produce signs and the technological ability of the shop to manufacture signs that meet NPS fabrication standards, which are stringent.

work processes. The guide emphasizes best practices and good examples of site-specific outdoor interpretation based on visitor use data. This guide is available electronically on the Harpers Ferry Center’s website under the extended pages devoted to wayside exhibits.

During the workshop, the planning team reviewed and assessed the park’s existing interpretive signs and bulletin boards. Appendix C lists future interpretive waysides by location and topics identified by the planning team.

The planning team also discussed the following points:

- Signs on NPS-managed lands should be clearly identified. On signs for which another entity such as an interest group or a local college has assisted with funding, graphic design, or other services, the contribution should be graciously acknowledged on the sign with a brief sentence, attribution, or credit line. But unless the contributing group shares management or ownership

responsibilities with NPS on the site – such as the Crow Tribe, the Bureau of Land Management, or a state agency – non-NPS logos and brand names should not be placed beside the NPS arrowhead on the sign, so as to avoid confusing visitors about which entity’s rules and regulations govern the site.

- In areas where cell phone or WiFi service is available, signs may include stick-on, changeable QR codes or SmartTags that will prompt visitors to use their smartphones to link to additional information.
- In locations with existing bulletin boards, care should be taken to create additional signage structures that complement the existing wooden kiosk structures, or if desired, the existing bulletin board structures should be replaced with all-new structures that match. Park staff, including maintenance, interpretation, and the sign shop, should work together to determine the most appropriate approach for integrating new orientation signage alongside existing bulletin boards.



Wild horses often greet visitors near the roadside providing a unique experience for all ages.



## Exhibits

### Short-term:

- Obtain funding to fabricate and install the new exhibits designed in 2009 for the Cal S. Taggart Visitor Center.
- Work with the Bureau of Reclamation as needed to support the ongoing upgrade of the exhibit space in the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center (begun in 2011).
- Develop a set of portable exhibits (retractable window-shade displays; digital photo displays; and tabletop “traveling trunks” with models, small artifacts and touchable objects) for rotating use at park facilities, community festivals, school presentations, and special events outside and within the park.

### Mid-term:

- Develop additional exhibits within the Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station to complement the existing display on the four historic ranches. Although small in scale, these exhibits could feature images and objects that evoke aspects of the



Hiking is a very popular activity for visitors of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and updated trail maps assist in communicating trail etiquette.

park’s primary interpretive themes, along with informative details on places to go and things to do.

- Assess the need for revamped exhibits at Afterbay Visitor Contact Station.

### Long-term:

- Procure and outfit two portable trailer/mobile units for use as seasonal visitor contact stations in the North and South Districts. These mobile units can offer a flexible range of visitor services at Afterbay Campground, Ok-A-Beh Marina, Horseshoe Bend Campground, Barry’s Landing, and other sites – including off-site venues – as needed.

## Publications

### Short-term:

- Revise and update the NPS unigrid brochure content, design, and imagery (now ten years old) to reflect physical changes in the park and to emphasize the interpretive themes developed in this LRIP. Among other changes, the revised unigrid brochure should incorporate the name change for the Taggart Visitor Center (and delete emphasis on the now-defunct solar information); extend the discussion of American Indians to include living, contemporary Crow culture; and highlight the world-famous fly fishing in the North District.
- Create an NPS rack card for wide distribution to promote the recreational, scenic, and cultural offerings of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Rack cards, designed for mass printing and wide distribution, are typically printed in color on two-sided card stock in a 3.5” x 8.5” size for use in

standard brochure racks in locations ranging from other NPS sites to state welcome centers, hotels, and local tourism sites.

- Revise the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area Hiking Guide to incorporate changes brought about by the new Trails Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (in progress 2012). In addition to trail maps and interpretation, the revised guide should include park emergency contact information and consistent legends for each trail regarding trail use restrictions (i.e., non-motorized biking, hiking, equestrian, etc.), accessibility, trail tread width and surface, and elevation (incline/grade).

#### Mid-term:

- Reformat and reprint the existing broadsheet interpretive handouts to match the existing “History” site bulletins on the four historic ranches and “Biology” site bulletins on bighorn sheep, raptors, and wild horses. The existing unformatted handouts include:
  - Mountain Men on the Bad Pass Trail
  - The Legend of Big Metal
  - Fort C.F. Smith
  - The Bozeman Trail
  - Hayfield Fight
- Assess the need for additional site bulletins to round out coverage of park interpretive themes. Areas for consideration may include mountain lions and bobcats (Biology), a sequence on geology, and a sequence on Crow culture.

#### Long-term:

- Plan for anticipated revisions and reprints of the park unigrid brochure and site bulletins as these publications age and become out of date.

## Web-based Media

### Park Website

#### Short-term:

- Continue to expand and update the park website with fresh materials, including audio, video, seasonal images, and relevant links.
- Review all existing web pages and revise to delete contacts and phone numbers that are no longer current due to retirements and personnel changes.
- Consider developing a mobile version of the park website, with key features and downloadable materials in a format that can be easily accessed, viewed, and navigated on smartphones.
- Create an application (an “app”) that will enable quick downloading of key features of the park website for use and retention on smartphones. This app will enable visitors to download important park information and interpretation wherever they choose, without needing a wireless signal. (For a recent NPS example, see the NPS Mobile App for the National Mall at <http://www.nps.gov/nama/photosmultimedia/app-page.htm>.)

### Social Media Sites

#### Short-term:

- Continue the strategic use of social media – Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube – to promote the recreation area and interact with the social media audience. Whenever feasible, try to assess the impact of social networking regarding park visitation, public awareness, community support, and opportunities or invitations for outreach.

- Create a Flickr account to display photographs of the recreation area by staff and friends of the park.
- Expand the Wikipedia entry for Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (currently listed as a “stub”) and review periodically for accuracy and timeliness.
- Review and respond as needed to comments and questions about the park posted on established travel/ consumer review sites such as TripAdvisor and Travelocity.
- As plans develop for new exterior exhibits, a similar process should begin to compile relevant photographic images.
- Digitize and catalog selected historical photographs and documents for use in interpretive media, following established permissions/rights and identification protocols to the full extent possible.
  - If more historical photos are desired for use in programming, consider issuing a “community call” for individuals to bring in their old photographs and have them digitized (scanned) by the park.

## Research Needs in Support of Interpretation

### Short-term:

- Create a digital photography catalog with high-resolution digital photographs suitable for use in interpretive graphics such as wayside signs, interior exhibits, and online media. For each photograph, include the name of the photographer, permissions/rights of use if applicable, and signed release permits for individuals pictured if they are clearly recognizable.
- Review the existing exhibit plans for the Taggart Visitor Center, ascertain the current in-house availability of high-resolution photographs for these exhibits, and compile a working shot list of desired images that can be distributed to photographers (both staff and volunteer) willing to help build the park’s photo catalog over the coming years. Then, when funding comes through for the exhibits, the park will have a range of excellent, readily available photos on hand.
- Work with the Resources Division as needed to develop a comprehensive museum and archives program in support of interpretive programming. Such a program can provide interpreters with a wealth of resources for program development.
  - Artifacts, recordings, documents, and drawings as well as historic photos can be reproduced on an as-needed basis for use in displays, interpretive media, and hands-on programming.



## Staffing

Current park staffing is inadequate to meet the needs of an expanding interpretive program at Bighorn Canyon NRA. In addition, the long distances and travel times between and within the North and South Districts of the park affect interpreters' ability to work together conveniently and "cover all the bases" in delivering interpretive services. The planning team recommends the following staffing changes.

### Staffing

#### Short-term:

- Add one full-time interpretive position in the North District to provide a full range of recommended programming, including more campground and marina programs, roving interpretation, development of new interpretive exhibits and signs, and expanded educational and community outreach.

#### Mid-term:

- Add one subject-to-furlough Park Guide position in the North District for spring through fall, with the goal of keeping the Afterbay Visitor Contact Station open full-time during the shoulder seasons and summers. With a seasonal ranger on duty in Ft. Smith, the chief of interpretation will be able to pursue additional program development and community and educational outreach.
- Add one subject-to-furlough Park Guide position in the South District for six to eight months per year, with the primary assignment of staffing the reception desk in the Taggart Visitor Center from April through October. This addition will enable the two existing full-time interpreters to devote more time to developing education programs, completing interpretive projects such as exhibits, site bulletins, and signage, fulfilling visitor information requests, planning and coordinating special events, and performing other duties.

## Training

#### Short-term:

- Create and implement cross-training opportunities, including boat excursions, for interpreters and other staff so they can enhance their interpretive skills and experience the park from a visitor's perspective.
- Offer regular interpretive training for seasonal employees, concessions staff, and volunteers.



National Park Service employees enjoy a summer day working in Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

## Implementation Guide

Implementing the recommendations in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan will be a gradual process, and park decision makers will reevaluate and make adjustments in the plan as circumstances change. This implementation guide is designed to help Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area interpretive staff set priorities and make concrete, measurable progress toward strengthening and expanding its interpretive program over the next ten years.

The chart below presents step-by-step sequences for each major category of recommendations. Indicators (xx) mark each action as short-term (within the next three years), mid-term (within the next four to six years), or long-term (seven to ten years away). Entries with indicators across all three timeframes should be considered as continuous, ongoing activities.

The cost projection column provides a rough estimate of the projected costs of each recommendation. The symbol \$ estimates a moderate annual cost (under \$50,000); the \$\$ indicates annual expenditures estimated between \$50,000 and \$100,000; and the \$\$\$ indicates major expenditures, usually capital expenditures such as facilities remodeling, exhibit installations, visitor transportation vehicles, etc.

The theme column illustrates the connection to the interpretive themes.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>Short-term 1-3 years (2012-14)</b>	<b>Mid-term 4-6 years (2015-18)</b>	<b>Long-term 7-10 years (2019-22)</b>	<b>Cost Projection</b>	<b>Theme Addressed</b>
<b>Interpretive Outreach</b>					
Work to establish an artist-in-residence program	X			\$	All themes
Explore purchasing and installing several colorful, inexpensive vehicle wraps for interpretive vehicles	X			\$	All themes
Continue to develop and implement the park’s new wayfinding and identity signage program	X			\$	n/a
Implement a consistent outreach effort aimed at the commercial tourism industry	X				All themes
Establish personal contact and distribute the park rack card and the seasonal park newspaper to hotels, welcome centers, and commercial tour operators	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Publicize scheduled park events at commercial tourism establishments	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Prepare and distribute simple loose-leaf binders containing park publications for desk and guest use at selected hotels	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Advise commercial tourism contacts of the potential for pre-arranged, customized group programs on-site at the park	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Identify and work with local and regional media to generate interpretive stories about BICA	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Park staff can create occasional or monthly articles	X	X	X	\$	All themes
The park can seek ways to build relationships with local and regional media through media days and events	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Park staff and volunteers can plan or participate in special events that attract media coverage		X	X	\$	All themes
Network with other recreational, cultural, and historic sites to enhance opportunities and audiences for interpretation	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Distribute rack cards and other materials about Bighorn Canyon NRA at cultural and historic sites throughout the region	X	X	X	\$\$	All themes
Create a listserv or email string to share events calendars, encourage occasional guest-interpreter/lecturer expertise, and share resources	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Consider cosponsoring events with sites sharing topical interests with Bighorn Canyon NRA		X	X	\$	All themes
Work with the Crow Tribe to create mutually beneficial opportunities for interpretation	X	X	X	\$	Theme 3: Crow cultural heritage
Explore options for collaboration with Crow tribal members through the NPS Intermountain Region’s Native Places and Voices	X	X		\$\$	Theme 3: Crow cultural heritage
Develop a set of consistent, year-round interpretive outreach activities in the communities around the park	X	X	X	\$\$	All themes
Host an annual winter speaker series at the Taggart Visitor Center auditorium	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Offer regular, free interpretive “familiarization tours” of the park for local residents	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Continue working with the Big Horn County Centennial Planning Committee in preparation for the county centennial in 2013	X			\$	All themes; especially Themes 3 & 4
Seek regular opportunities to have a dynamic NPS presence at local events	X	X	X	\$	All themes



<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>Short-term 1-3 years (2012-14)</b>	<b>Mid-term 4-6 years (2015-18)</b>	<b>Long-term 7-10 years (2019-22)</b>	<b>Cost Projection</b>	<b>Theme Addressed</b>
<b>Educational/Youth Outreach</b>					
Build and expand educational outreach programs				\$\$	All themes
Continue to pursue existing avenues of outreach to area schools	X			\$	All themes
Using the 2010 “Bighorn Canyon in Your Classroom” as a model, assess the feasibility of developing additional topical programs for in-class presentations	X			\$	All themes, especially where related to state education standards
Seek ways to formalize ongoing programs such as annual field trips at the school district level	X			\$	All themes
Seek opportunities to participate in school festival or career days	X			\$	All themes
Collaborate with schools to research grants to fund school buses to transport students to the park	X			\$\$	n/a
Expand the Junior Ranger program		X		\$\$	All themes
Create Junior Ranger programs and booklets specific to each of the four historic ranches		X		\$	Theme 4
Work with the Crow Tribe to develop a Junior Ranger program on historic and contemporary Crow culture		X		\$	Theme 3: Crow cultural heritage
Explore options for expanding the interpretive staff through the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program		X		\$\$	All themes
Convene an educator committee to review and revise the existing online curriculum			X	\$\$	All themes
Explore establishing accredited park-specific teacher training through a local university	X			\$\$	n/a
<b>Personal Services</b>					
Continue to publicize and present campground programs at Afterbay and Horseshoe Bend Campgrounds	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Introduce programs at Ok-A-Beh Marina with topics geared toward anglers and recreational boaters	X			\$	Themes 1, 2, 5, and 6
Introduce programs at the boat-in-only Black Canyon campground	X			\$	All themes; especially Themes 2, 5, and 6
Provide occasional roving interpretation	X			\$	All themes
Staff the Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station full-time on weekends	X			\$\$	All themes, especially in South District
Work with concessionaires to assist them in providing interpretive programs	X			\$	Themes 1, 2, 5, and 6
Provide full-time staff for the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center		X		\$\$	All themes; especially Theme 5
Develop staff-conducted programming aimed at specific groups and activities		X	X	\$	All themes
Seek ways to use the park’s two full-size auditoriums more effectively for interpretive programming and visitor engagement		X	X	\$	All themes

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>Short-term 1-3 years (2012-14)</b>	<b>Mid-term 4-6 years (2015-18)</b>	<b>Long-term 7-10 years (2019-22)</b>	<b>Cost Projection</b>	<b>Theme Addressed</b>
<b>Interpretive Media</b>					
<b>Park Technology</b>					
Install AM 1016 radio transmitters at the most heavily visited locations in the park, including sites that will transmit on the water	X			\$\$	All themes
If possible, create public-access, open-source wi-fi hotspots for visitor use in downloading interpretive materials to smart phones	X			\$\$	All themes
Ground-truth all GPS coordinates and develop accurate directions, addresses, and maps linked to GPS coordinates online	X			\$	n/a
Work with Reclamation to obtain large flat-screen monitors in the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center for a virtual tour of the power plant		X		\$	Theme 5
<b>Audiovisuals</b>					
Convert the existing South District audio driving tour cassette tape to digital media	X			\$	All themes
Complete the proposed audio tour for the North District	X			\$	All themes
Convert existing interpretive films from videotape to DVD	X			\$	All themes
Seek screening and conversion rights to the film “The Last River Trip”	X			\$	Themes 5 and 6
Make informal digital recordings of personal tours and/or reminiscences from Cultural Resources’ Chris Finley and other longtime park employees and volunteers	X			\$	All themes
Explore options for adding universal access/closed captioning capabilities to all newly developed or converted audiovisual media.	X			\$	All themes
Review and revise the existing driving tour for the South District		X		\$	All themes
Work with Reclamation to develop a virtual tour of the Yellowtail Dam hydroelectric facility		X		\$\$	Theme 5
Develop additional podcasts on topics that draw on expertise and voices from the park staff and volunteers		X		\$	All themes
Explore options for making excerpts of the park’s audio oral history recordings available in small listening booths or exhibit kiosks		X		\$	All themes
Plan and seek funding for a major new film about the park			X	\$\$\$	Themes TBD; possibly Theme 3 (Crow)
Review and revise the existing driving tour for the North District			X	\$	All themes
<b>Wayside Exhibits and Wayfinding</b>					
Seek funding for a parkwide wayfinding assessment and master plan	X			\$\$	All themes
Seek funding to develop wayside exhibits via a wayside exhibit proposal and a wayside exhibit pan		X		\$\$	All themes
Review the park’s older interpretive signs and replace as needed with newly created interpretation that meets NPS/HFC design standards			X	\$\$	All themes

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>Short-term 1-3 years (2012-14)</b>	<b>Mid-term 4-6 years (2015-18)</b>	<b>Long-term 7-10 years (2019-22)</b>	<b>Cost Projection</b>	<b>Theme Addressed</b>
<b>Interior Exhibits</b>					
Obtain funding to implement fabrication and installation of the new exhibits designed in 2009 for the Taggart Visitor Center	X			\$\$\$	All themes
Work with the Bureau of Reclamation as needed to support the ongoing upgrade of the exhibit space in the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center	X			\$\$	Themes 5 and 6
Develop portable exhibits for use at school and community events	X			\$	All themes
Develop additional exhibits within the Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station		X		\$\$	All themes
Assess the need for revamped exhibits at Afterbay Visitor Contact Station		X		\$	All themes
Procure and outfit two portable trailer/mobile units for use as seasonal visitor contact stations in the North and South Districts			X	\$\$\$	All themes
<b>Publications</b>					
Revise and update the NPS unigrid brochure content, design, and imagery	X			\$\$	All themes
Create an NPS rack card for wide distribution	X			\$\$	All themes
Revise the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area Hiking Guide to fit the new trail management plan as it is finalized	X			\$	Themes 1 & 2
Reformat and reprint the existing broadsheet interpretive handouts to achieve a uniform look for all park publications		X		\$	All themes
Assess the need for additional site bulletins to round out coverage of park interpretive themes			X	\$	All themes
Plan for anticipated revisions and reprints of the park unigrid brochure and site bulletins			X	\$\$	All themes
<b>Web-based Media</b>					
Continue to expand and update the park website with fresh materials	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Review all existing web pages and revise to delete outdated contacts and phone numbers	X			\$	All themes
Consider developing a mobile version of the park website for easy retrieval by smartphones	X			\$	All themes
Create an application (an “app”) that will enable quick downloading of key features of the park website for use and retention on smartphones	X			\$\$	All themes
<b>Social Media</b>					
Continue the strategic use of social media -- Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Create a Flickr account to display photographs of the recreation area	X			\$	All themes
Expand the Wikipedia entry for Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area	X			\$	All themes
Review and respond to comments about the park on established travel/consumer review sites	X	X	X	\$	All themes



RECOMMENDATIONS	Short-term 1-3 years (2012-14)	Mid-term 4-6 years (2015-18)	Long-term 7-10 years (2019-22)	Cost Projection	Theme Addressed
<b>Research Needs in Support of Interpretation</b>					
Create a digital photography catalog	X			\$	All themes
Review the existing exhibit plans for the Taggart Visitor Center and begin compiling/shooting photographs	X			\$	All themes
Begin assembling photos for proposed new exterior exhibits	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Digitize and catalog selected historical photographs and documents for use in interpretive media	X	X	X	\$	All themes
Consider issuing a “community call” for individuals to bring in their old photographs for scanning and digitizing	X	X		\$	Theme 4
Work with the Resources Division as needed to develop a comprehensive museum and archives program	X	X	X	\$\$	All themes
<b>Staffing and Training</b>					
Add one full-time interpretive position in the North District	X			\$\$	All themes
Add one subject-to-furlough Park Guide position in the North District		X		\$	All themes
Add one subject-to-furlough Park Guide position in the South District		X		\$	All themes
Create and implement cross-training opportunities, including boat excursions, for interpreters and other staff	X			\$	All themes
Offer regular interpretive training for seasonal employees and volunteers.	X	X	X	\$	All themes



## Appendices



## Appendix A: Legislation

### Public Law 89-664 October 15, 1966 | [S. 491] 80 Stat. 913

#### AN ACT

#### To provide for the establishment of the Bighorn Canyon National Reservation Area, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That (a) in order to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the proposed Yellowtail Reservoir and lands adjacent thereto in the States of Wyoming and Montana by the people of the United States and for preservation of the scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters, there is hereby established the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area to comprise the area generally depicted on the drawing entitled “Proposed Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area”, LNPMW-10A-BC, November 1964, which is on file in the Office of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

(b) As soon as practicable after approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall publish in the Federal Register a detailed description of the boundaries of the area which shall encompass, to the extent practicable, the lands and waters shown on the drawing referred to in subsection (a) of this section. The Secretary may subsequently make adjustments in the boundary of the area, subject to the provisions of subsection 2(b) of this Act, by publication of an amended description in the Federal Register.

#### SEC. 2.

(a) The Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, exchange, or otherwise, lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of the area. The Secretary is further authorized to acquire, by any of the above methods, not to exceed ten acres of land or interests therein outside of the boundaries of the area in the vicinity of Lovell, Wyoming, for development and use, pursuant to such special regulations as he may promulgate, as a visitor contact station and administrative site. In the exercise of his exchange authority the Secretary may accept title to any non-Federal property within the area and convey in exchange therefor any federally owned property under his jurisdiction in the States of Montana and Wyoming which he classifies as suitable for exchange or other disposal, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Property so exchanged shall be approximately equal in fair market value: *Provided*, That the Secretary may accept cash from, or pay cash to, the grantor in such an exchange in order to equalize the values of the properties exchanged. Any property or interest therein owned by the State of Montana or the State of Wyoming or any political subdivision thereof within the recreation area may be acquired only by donation or exchange.

(b) No part of the tribal mountain lands or any other lands of the Crow Indian Tribe of Montana shall be included within the recreation area unless requested by the council of the tribe. The Indian lands so included may be developed and administered in accordance with the laws and rules applicable to the recreation area, subject to any limitation specified by the tribal council and approved by the Secretary.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act or of any other law, the Crow Indian Tribe shall be permitted to develop and operate water-based recreational facilities, including landing ramps, boathouses, and fishing facilities, along that part of the shoreline of Yellowtail Reservoir which is adjacent to lands comprising the Crow Indian Reservation. Any such part so developed shall be administered in accordance with the laws and rules applicable to the recreation area, subject to any limitations specified by the tribal council and approved by the Secretary. Any revenues resulting from the operation of such facilities may be retained by the Crow Indian Tribe.

(2) As used in this subsection, the term “shoreline” means that land which borders both Yellowtail Reservoir and the exterior boundary of the Crow Indian Reservation, together with that part of the reservoir necessary to the development of the facilities referred to in this subsection.



**SEC. 3.**

(a) The Secretary shall coordinate administration of the recreation area with the other purposes of the Yellowtail Reservoir project so that it will in his judgment best provide (1) for public outdoor recreation benefits, (2) for conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment and (3) for management, utilization, and disposal of renewable natural resources in a manner that promotes, or is compatible with, and does not significantly impair, public recreation and conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, or other values contributing to public enjoyment.

(b) In the administration of the area for the purposes of this Act, the Secretary may utilize such statutory authorities relating to areas administered and supervised by the Secretary through the National Park Service and such statutory authorities otherwise available to him for the conservation and management of natural resources as he deems appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Act.

**SEC. 4.**

The Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the recreation area in accordance with the appropriate laws of the United States and of the States of Montana or Wyoming to the extent applicable, except that the Secretary may designate zones where, and establish periods when, no hunting or fishing shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, fish or wildlife management, or public use and enjoyment, and except that nothing in this section shall impair the rights under other laws of the Crow Tribe and its members to hunt and fish on lands of the Crow Tribe that are included in the recreation area, or the rights of the members of the Crow Tribe to hunt and fish under section 2(d) of the Act of July 15, 1958. Except in emergencies, any regulations of the Secretary pursuant to this section shall be put into effect only after consultation with the Montana Fish and Game Department or the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

**SEC. 5.**

There is hereby authorized to be appropriated not more than \$355,000 for the acquisition of land and interests in land pursuant to this Act.

Approved, October 15, 1966.

## Appendix B: Planning Team

### National Park Service

#### Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

Jerry Case, Superintendent  
Keith Biermann, Facility Manager  
Cassity Bromley, Chief of Resources  
James Charles, Administrative Officer  
Chris C. Finley, Cultural Resources Program Manager  
Brooke Henthorne, Park Ranger, Protection  
Dale Kissner, Supervisory Park Ranger, Protection  
Valerie Newman, Park Ranger, Interpretation, transferred  
Cindy Norum, Archeological/Museum Technician  
John Osgood, Retired  
Jim Stabler, Retired  
Kevin Tillman, Chief Ranger, Protection  
Chris Wilkinson, Chief of Interpretation, transferred  
Shawn Williams, Park Ranger, Interpretation

#### Other NPS Attendees

Marvin Dawes, Sr., Park Ranger, Interpretation, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument  
Mary Mallen, Contracting Officer's Representative, Harpers Ferry Center  
Peggy Scherbaum, Contracting Officer's Representative, Harpers Ferry Center  
Kenneth Woody, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

#### Partner and Stakeholder Participants

Linda Auch, Educator, Billings (MT) Schools  
Geoff Baumann, Educator, Powell (WY) Schools  
Emily Buckles, Buffalo Bill Historical Center  
Shirley Bye-Jech, Bureau of Land Management, Cody Field Office  
Bob Cochran, USDA Forest Service  
Brenda Cothron, Horseshoe Bend Marina  
Bob Croft, Friends of Bighorn Lake  
Jack Eckley, Educator (Retired)  
Kim Garrison, Hidden Treasure Charters  
Mark Garrison, Hidden Treasure Charters  
Lori Graham, Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center  
Keith Grant, Bighorn County  
Doug Habermann, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks  
Elaine D. Harvey, Representative, Wyoming State Legislature  
Gretchen Henrich, Buffalo Bill Historical Center  
Jerry LaFleiche, Friends of Bighorn Lake  
Jerry Leggate, Bureau of Reclamation  
Nick Mann, Custer Country Regional Tourism  
E. Denney Neville, Artist  
David Peck, Editor, The Lovell Chronicle  
Lynn Richardson, Friends of Bighorn Lake  
Diana Scheidt, Big Horn County Historical Museum

Marry Slattery, Hardin/Bighorn County Historic Preservation Commission  
Susan Stewart, Chief Plenty Coups State Park  
Burton Pretty on Top, Cultural Affairs Liaison, Crow Tribe  
Curt Talbot, Park friend  
Jerri Tillett, Park friend

**Consultant Team**

Faye Goolrick, Certified Interpretive Planner, Goolrick Interpretive Group  
Shannon Kettering, American Institute of Certified Planners, Pond|Ecos



## Appendix C: Wayside Exhibit / Concept Proposal

### NORTH DISTRICT LOCATIONS

#### Afterbay Contact Station

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign, placed beside the bulletin board outside the contact station office

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

This master sign will be duplicated and used in every entry/portal NORTH DISTRICT position.

#### Afterbay Campground

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: What Is the Afterbay?

Suggestion visuals: aerial view of dam and afterbay, people enjoying themselves on the site

#### Black Canyon Campground

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign beside existing bulletin board

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

#### Fort C.F. Smith Historic Site

Interpretive wayside with roadside pull-off

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: the role of the fort

Suggestion visuals: diagram of the historic fort, images of fighting

#### Four Winds

Interpretive wayside style rail-mounted signs (existing)

Upgrade the existing signs by reprinting on phenolic resin or porcelain enamel if the existing artwork for these signs is available. If the artwork is no longer available or the Crow tribe wishes to change the messaging, the park interpretive team should assist the Crow in seeking the necessary funding to redevelop the signs for this important stop.

Note: Because vertical signs are large and may obstruct scenic views, the planning team recommends that the park use only low-profile wayside styles in this location.

### **M.K. Hill Picnic Area**

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Crow Culture; work with Crow Tribe to develop

Suggested visuals: historic and contemporary images of Crow people and lifeways, subject to advice from Crow cultural liaison

### **Ok-A-Beh Marina**

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Reading the Rocks at Ok-A-Beh (revision of existing sign; update images; priority: long-term)

### **Pretty Eagle Point**

Signs are not recommended for this site.

### **Three-Mile Boat Launch**

NORTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign; consider relocating the bulletin board to cluster with the new sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with NORTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: The Hayfield Fight

Suggested visuals: clear, readable image of the monument; historic images of Hayfield-era fighters; perhaps a map of the territory at the time.

### **Yellowtail Dam Approach/Pull-off**

Interpretive wayside as visitors approach dam

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: From River to Lake

Suggested visuals: before and after images of the canyon; dam under construction

Note: Because vertical signs are large and may obstruct scenic views, the planning team recommends that the park use only low-profile wayside styles in any overlook location.

### **Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center exterior**

**NORTH DISTRICT** overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with **NORTH DISTRICT** highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in North District

Bureau of Reclamation sign (vertical twin to the NPS master sign)

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: TBD by Bureau of Reclamation; suggestions include overview of BoR, its role in managing public lands, including the hydroelectric facility here, and how this electricity serves the region

Visuals: Suggestions include close-ups of dam and hydroelectric facility

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Jim Bridger

Suggested visuals: existing images

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Brief description of dam and hydroelectric plant and how it works

Suggested visuals: Close-up of the hydroelectric plant; high-voltage electrical lines

## **SOUTH DISTRICT LOCATIONS**

### **Taggart Visitor Center**

**SOUTH DISTRICT** overview/orientation sign, placed so as not to obstruct or interfere with existing stone portal sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with **SOUTH DISTRICT** highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District

This master sign will be duplicated and used in every entry/portal **SOUTH DISTRICT** position.

### **Barry's Landing**

**SOUTH DISTRICT** overview/orientation sign, placed so as not to interfere with the existing wayside interpretive sign on the trip south to New Orleans.

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with **SOUTH DISTRICT** highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District

Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Existing story of trip to New Orleans by boat, but reformatted to NPS style with arrowhead (priority: long-term)

Suggested visuals: historic photos of the men and the boat

### **Crooked Creek Visitor Contact Station**

**SOUTH DISTRICT** overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with **SOUTH DISTRICT** highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District



### Devil Canyon Overlook

Note: Because vertical signs are large and may obstruct scenic views, the planning team recommends that the park use only low-profile wayside styles in any overlook location.

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: NPS/BICA overview and orientation information (similar to vertical overview signs but in horizontal format)

Suggested visuals: map, plus activities in South District (same as overview visuals)

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Existing geology topics, revised and updated (priority: long-term)

Suggested visuals: close-ups of rock types, cutaways of canyon sides (simplified, non-technical)

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Existing topics on raptors, revised and updated (priority: long-term)

Suggested visuals: raptors in flight, a raptor's nest high in the canyon walls

### Horseshoe Bend Marina and Campground

#### SOUTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with SOUTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Existing topic on geology, revised and simplified (priority: long-term)

Suggested visuals: simplified diagrams; if dinosaur reference remains in title, use dinosaur image on the sign

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Waterbirds

Suggested visuals: bird species using the lake

#### Interpretive wayside

Style: Low-profile wayside

Topic: Wild horses that can be seen nearby

Suggested visuals: horses on the range

### Medicine Creek Campground

#### SOUTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with SOUTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District

### **Ranches**

Three of the park's historic ranches (Mason-Lovell, Hillsboro, and Lockhart) already have a minimal number of high-quality interpretive signs. This plan recommends adding SOUTH DISTRICT overview/orientation signs at each of the four ranches, as well as creating a limited number/TBD of additional low-profile signs for the Hillsboro, Lockhart, and Ewing-Snell Ranches, depending on restoration and access decisions in the coming years.

### **Trail Creek Campground**

SOUTH DISTRICT overview/orientation sign

Style: Large vertical upright

Content: Overview/orientation of whole park with SOUTH DISTRICT highlighted

Visuals: Map, images of selected sites in South District







## Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

Headquarters

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