



# Canyon Echoes



Your Guide to Bighorn Canyon  
2010

Kleine Photo Collection

## Welcome to Bighorn Canyon

Welcome to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area- your park, your place of refuge, your place for rejuvenation and recreation. Bighorn Canyon has been called the “Grandest Canyon in the Northern Rockies” and I’m certain after you’ve had an opportunity to explore you will agree.

### New Interpretive Programs

With our first, revised edition of Canyon Echoes in your hands, I take great pleasure in thanking our new Interpretive Division, the folks responsible for bringing you this newspaper. They are also responsible for the packed schedule of interpretive and educational opportunities planned throughout the upcoming year. This publication will provide you with details of many of those activities. I am very excited about the upcoming summer programs and activities and I hope you are as well.

### Leave No Trace

If you are returning to “The Canyon” for a second, third, or even the 100th time, you will notice some new changes in the park. Among those changes are efforts in making park operations more sustainable, saving resources, and spending your tax dollars more wisely.

We are stepping up our promotion of “Leave No Trace”. The Canyon is a wild place and in respecting this fragile environment, we are asking our lake users to bring their trash back to the marinas and drop it off in the dumpsters provided. Much time and tax dollars are spent hauling trash from the lake. Being responsible for disposing of your trash will contribute toward Leaving No Trace in the backcountry of Bighorn Canyon.

In your wanderings through Bighorn Canyon every day is a new adventure, and it’s here for you to enjoy!



Superintendent Jerry Case

## How Much Time Do You Have?

Wondering where to start with the time you have?

### North End - Fort Smith, MT

One Hour: There are two short drives from Fort Smith. One will take you to the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center where you will learn the history of the Dam. The second will take you to Ok-A-Beh marina and boat ramp on the backside of Yellowtail Dam.

Two Hours: A short walk along the Beaver Pond Natural Trail and the Head Gate trail are a great addition to the short drives. Both trails offer wildlife watching opportunities.

Half-day: In a half day you could try your hand at fly fishing along the Bighorn River or explore the 3 Mile Access Trail.

One or More Days: A boat ride on the lake from one end to the other is a great way to spend a day or contact a local fishing guide for a float and fishing trip on the river. The Little Bighorn

Battlefield and Bighorn County Museum in Hardin are also nearby.

### South End - Lovell, WY

One Hour: Take a scenic drive up HWY 37 to Devil Canyon Overlook. At the overlook you are 1000 feet above the water with a magnificent view of Bighorn Canyon. You may also see bighorn sheep and a variety of birds.

Two Hours: Drive up HWY 37 to the end of the pavement at Barry’s Landing. A short hike along the way at Stateline or at Sullivan’s Knob offers a good break from the car.

Half-day: With a little more time, take a hike or visit the four historic ranches, which include the ghost town of Hillsboro and the ranch of famous writer, Caroline Lockhart.

One or More Days: A drive into the Pryor Mountains or a lake trip with Hidden Treasure Charters is a great way to spend a day.

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### Summer

#### Visitor Center Hours

Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center  
Fort Smith, MT  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily  
Memorial Day to Labor Day  
406-666-3218

Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon  
Visitor Center  
Lovell, WY  
8 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily  
Memorial Day to Labor Day  
307-548-5406

Crooked Creek Ranger Station,  
Horseshoe Bend, WY  
Hours may vary depending on staffing  
307-548-7326

Afterbay Contact Station  
Fort Smith, MT  
Hours may vary depending on staffing  
406-666-2452

For winter hours visit our website at:  
[www.nps.gov/bica](http://www.nps.gov/bica)

### Emergencies

Dial 911 or contact a Park Ranger

# Concession Services

## Ok-A-Beh Marina

The Ok-A-Beh Marina is located 10 miles from Fort Smith, Montana, south of Hardin. It is open everyday from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Marina offers:

- Gas and Oil
- Safety Equipment
- Fishing and Boating Supplies
- Boat Slip Rental
- Food and Beverages
- Pontoon Boat Rentals
- Lunch and Dinner

To contact the Ok-A-Beh Marina:

Phone: 406-666-2349

Address: Ok-A-Beh Marina, PO Box 515, Hardin, MT 59034.

## Horseshoe Bend Marina

The Horseshoe Bend Marina is located at Horseshoe Bend 14 miles outside of Lovell, Wyoming. It is open Memorial Day weekend through September 30.

Marina Offers:

- Gas and Oil
- Safety Equipment
- Fishing and Boating Supplies
- Paddle Boat Rental
- Food and Beverages
- Boat Slip Rental
- Lunch and Dinner

To contact the Horseshoe Bend Marina:

Phone: 307-548-7230 (Summer)

307-548-7110 (Winter)

Address: 575 E Main Street  
Lovell, WY 82431

## Hidden Treasure Charters & Wyoming Eco-tours

Hidden Treasure Charters offers scenic boat tours of Bighorn Canyon.

Services offered:

- 2 hour daily tours from Horseshoe Bend.
- Mon/Wed 10 a.m. (by reservation)
- Tues/Thur 4 p.m. (by reservation)
- Fri, Sat, Sun 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Large group tours by reservation
- Fishing charters by reservation

To contact Hidden Treasure Charters:

Phone: 307-899-1401

Email:

reservations@hiddentreasurecharters.com

or garrison@tritnet.net

Website: www.hiddentreasurecharters.com

# Boating on Bighorn Lake

Boating registers are located on the launch ramps at Ok-A-Beh, Barry's Landing, and Horseshoe Bend. For your boating safety, please sign the register prior to your departure and upon your return. The information on the register will assist us in locating you if necessary. If your boat stalls, NEVER attempt to climb out of the canyon. Stay with your craft until help arrives.

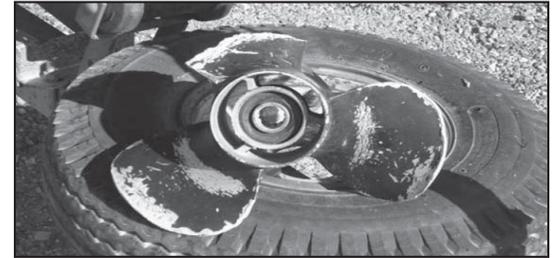
Watch for driftwood on Bighorn Lake. It can injure a skier and damage your boat's lower unit. Be prepared: carry a spare prop and shear pins.

A special permit is not required to operate on Bighorn Lake; however, boats must display valid registrations for the state in which they are registered. Vessels must carry appropriate lights for operating between sunset and sunrise, clean and operating flame arrester, proper ventilation, muffling system and a valid certificate of numbers. Depending on the type of boat, sound-producing devices and fire extinguishers may be required.

A Coast Guard approved, personal flotation device in good and serviceable condition, and of appropriate size for the intended

user is required for each person on board. Watercraft 16 feet and over (except canoes and kayaks in Montana) must also have a type IV throwable PFD on board and immediately available for use. In Montana and Wyoming children under 12 must wear a PFD on boats less than 26 feet that are in motion.

Detailed state and federal regulations and park maps are available at visitor centers and ranger stations. Bighorn Lake boating maps are also available on our website at [www.nps.gov/bica/planyourvisit/map.htm](http://www.nps.gov/bica/planyourvisit/map.htm).



Broken Prop, Photo Courtesy of Friends of Bighorn Lake

## Pack it In, Pack it Out, Recycle

In an effort to remove litter from the lake, decrease the cost of trash collection, and decrease bear activity at boat-in only campgrounds, all trash cans located on the lake have been removed. Bighorn Canyon is asking boaters to Pack It In, Pack It Out, and Recycle.

Did you know that much of the trash and litter found on the lake originates from the packaging of food items? Many of those items can be recycled. Aluminum cans and plastic bottles can be recycled in recycling containers located at Horseshoe Bend, Barry's Landing, and Ok-A-Beh. Community recycling trailers offer expanded recycling opportunities in Lovell,

Wyoming at the Red Apple Grocery store and in Fort Smith at the Park Service Headquarters office.

In addition to Pack it in, Pack it Out, and Recycle, please help us decrease our human footprint on the lake by:

- 1) always keeping a clean camp;
- 2) packing out all trash and placing it in trash bins located at the boat ramps;
- 3) not burning food or trash items in the fire pits;
- 4) not placing trash in the floating comfort station pits and
- 5) by using the aluminum and plastic recycling bins.

## Zap the Zebra

Zebra or quagga mussels are invasive freshwater mollusks that infest waters in large numbers, attaching to hard surfaces. Once the mussels invade a water way, they clog power-plant and public water systems. These creatures spread to new habitats on boats tailored by the public or by commercial haulers unaware they have hitchhikers. At this time Bighorn Canyon does not have zebra or quagga mussels. To ensure the lake remains mussel free, boat operators will be required to complete and display a mussel free certificate, beginning summer 2010. For more information inquire at the visitor centers or talk with a ranger.

**You can help stop aquatic hitchhikers by following these simple steps:**

**Clean:**

Remove all plants, animals and mud. Then thoroughly wash everything, including all crevices and other hidden areas on your boat and equipment.



Zebra Mussels, NPS photo

**Drain:**

Eliminate all water before leaving the area, including wells, ballast, and engine cooling water.

**Dry:**

Allow time for your boat to completely dry before launching in other waters.

## Personal Water Craft Regulations

Personal Watercrafts (PWC) are allowed on Bighorn Lake, in accordance with state and federal law, with the exceptions of seven closed areas. PWC is defined as a small vessel that uses an inboard jet drive for propulsion and is operated by sitting,

standing, or kneeling on or astride the vessel using motorcycle-like handlebars. They are the water equivalent of snowmobiles.

1. The reservoir and shoreline south of the area known as the South Narrows. This boundary is marked by buoys and is approximately 1 mile south of Horseshoe Bend.
2. Crooked Creek Bay.
3. Bighorn River from Yellowtail Dam to cable 3,500 feet north.
4. Afterbay Lake between dam intake works and buoy/cable line 100 feet west.
5. Government docks as posted.
6. Ok-A-Beh gas dock. (customers excepted)
7. Yellowtail Dam upstream to the orange log boom.

# You Need To Know

## Firearms:

As of February 22, 2010, a new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, to legally possess firearms in this park.

It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws. **Federal law prohibits firearms in all Government offices, visitor centers, ranger stations, fee collection buildings, and maintenance facilities.**

For more information on state firearm regulations, visit the following websites:

In Wyoming:

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/statutes/statutes.aspx?file=titles/Title6/T6CH8.htm>

In Montana:

[http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca\\_toc/45\\_8\\_3.htm](http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca_toc/45_8_3.htm)

## Trespass:

It is unlawful to go upon tribal, trust, or allotted lands on the Crow Reservation without tribal permission. The Crow land within the authorized boundaries of the recreation area is shown on the park map as part of the reservation. Lake users must stay below elevation 3,675. Bighorn River users must stay below the normal high water line unless granted permission by the adjacent landowner.

## Pets:

Pets must be kept on a leash when in developed areas and in areas of concentrated public use. This is for their protection, and the safety of other visitors. Pets must be cleaned up after in public use areas, campgrounds, and sidewalks. Pets are not allowed on the swim beach, trails, or in the backcountry.

## Campfires:

Campfires are permitted in designated campgrounds and picnic areas where fire grates are provided. Campfires are allowed in the backcountry and below the high water mark along Bighorn Lake. Fire restrictions during periods of high fire danger may close certain areas to fires and camping. Check at the campgrounds and visitor centers for restrictions.

Do not leave campfires unattended. High winds can spread a fire out of the fire ring. Only collect driftwood below the high water mark.

## Roads:

Off-road use by vehicles is prohibited. Motorcycles and ATVs must be operated on park roads; no off-road or trail use is allowed.

## Protection of Park Features:

Collecting, defacing or destroying any plant, animal, mineral, natural or archeological feature is prohibited by federal law.

# Fishing

## Bighorn Lake – Wyoming/Montana

Whether you choose to fish from a boat or from the shoreline, Bighorn Lake provides abundant opportunities to catch numerous species of fish while being surrounded by some of the most beautiful outdoor scenery in the northwestern United States. Brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout, walleye, sauger, smallmouth bass, black crappie, yellow perch, channel catfish, or even exotic ling (burbot) or shovel nose sturgeon are among the fish that may be caught in these waters.

## Bighorn River - Montana

The Bighorn River is one of the finest trout streams in the United States. Rainbow and brown trout are prevalent. Public access to the Bighorn River is limited to three points on the upper 13 miles of the river: Afterbay, 3 Mile (Lind Ranch) and 13 Mile (Bighorn Access). Fisherman can float and wade the

# Hiking

## Hike Bighorn Canyon

There are 13 trails that add up to approximately 27 miles. The trails offer varying sights and tranquil settings. Some trails go through historic areas, while other trails wander through areas of disturbance that nature has begun to reclaim.

Whether out hiking to be close to nature, for exercise, or just taking a break, stop to consider the effects of your own footsteps. What are you going to leave behind?

Enjoy your hike and remember to stop and look around occasionally. Sometimes the best views are behind you.

waters of the Bighorn, but are required to stay below the high water mark.

## Bighorn River - Wyoming

Over a dozen species of game fish call the Bighorn River between the Wedding of the Waters near Thermopolis, Wyoming and Bighorn Lake home. Rainbow and brown trout are found north and south of Thermopolis, while walleye, sauger, ling, shovel nose sturgeon, and channel catfish are found closer to Bighorn Lake. The Yellowtail Habitat offers public access. Other areas may require permission from private land owners. Please respect public and private access areas.

## Trail Safety and Tips

1. Carry plenty of water especially on longer hikes and on hot summer days.
2. Wear good, sturdy shoes with closed toes. The canyon trails are rocky and have a lot of spiny vegetation.
3. There may be rattlesnakes anywhere in Bighorn Canyon. Although they generally shy away from people, you need to watch where you put your hands and feet.
4. Don't forget sunscreen, a broad brimmed hat, and sun glasses to keep you protected from the sun.
5. After any spring or summer hike, check your skin and clothing for ticks.
6. If hiking alone, let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

Trail	Distance	Difficulty	Discription
	Round Trip		
Sykes Mountain Trail	3.75 Miles	Hard	Rugged hike up a desert mountain to amazing views of Horseshoe Bend
Mouth of the Canyon Trail	1.75 Miles	Moderate	Seldom seen views of the canyon and the Pryor and Bighorn Mountains
State Line Trail	1 Mile	Easy to Moderate	Hike to the rim through juniper shrub land above limestone plateaus
Ranger Delight Trail	.5 Miles	Easy	View one of many bends in the canyon from the same location as the bighorn sheep
Sullivan's Knob Trail	1 Mile	Easy to Moderate	A great place to try getting a triple echo
Lower Layout Creek Trail	3.5 Miles	Easy to Moderate	Amazing views in a popular wild horse use area
Upper Layout Creek Trail	4 Miles	Hard	A diverse trail with a waterfall and spring, nestled in a desert landscape
Hillsboro Trail	1 to 3 Miles	Easy to Moderate	The longer trail loop directs hikers along the seldom hiked, historic Hillsboro entrance road
Barry's Island Trail	4.5 Miles	Moderate	Hike along the lake in the footprints of cattle rustlers from the late 1800's and early 1900's
Lockhart Ranch	.5 to 2 Miles	Easy	After visiting the ranch buildings, walk around Caroline Lockhart's pasture lands
Bighorn Head Gate Trail	.10 Mile	Easy	See remnants of the Bighorn Head Gate system built in the early 1900's
Beaver Pond Nature Trail	.5 Miles	Moderate	Indications that Beaver and other wildlife use this area are abundant
Three-Mile Access Trail	1.3 Miles	Easy	A tranquil setting to watch the ducks float by on the Bighorn River

\*\*For more information, hiking guides may be purchased at the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center, the Cal S. Taggart Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area Visitor Center, the Afterbay Contact Station, or the Crooked Creek Contact Station.

# Wildlife Watching

## Bighorn Sheep Return

After having been hunted for millennia in Bighorn Canyon, bighorn sheep were extirpated from the area in the 1800s. They began to repopulate the area after a group was transplanted in the Bighorn Mountains in the early 1970s. Some of these sheep crossed the ice and by 1979 one mature ram and three ewes were living on the west side of Bighorn Canyon. In 1993, a population high of 210 was reported. By 2000, the population had dropped to between 85 -119 sheep.

Following the recommendations of a U.S. Geological Survey team that studied the population dynamics and habitat use of 30 collared sheep during 2000–2003, habitat treatments such as burning and clearing of juniper have been carried out to improve otherwise suitable sheep habitat in the park.

Evidence of habitat improvement projects can be seen at Hillsboro, Barry’s Island, and Mustang Flats. Today there is a healthy population of between 150 to 200 sheep.



Ewes Enjoying the Sunny Hillside, Klein Photo Collection

## Pryor Mountain Wild Horses

Pryor Mountain horses (*Equus caballus*) are one of the few wild horse populations in the US with strong Spanish ancestry. The population is restricted to the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range (PMWHR), created in 1968 and includes land inside and adjacent to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

The horses are protected as “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West” under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, which requires management to achieve and maintain a “thriving natural ecological balance” on public lands used by the horses. The population is considered a unique genetic resource since horses of this type are no longer present in Spain. The PMWHR is managed by an interagency group led by the Bureau of Land Management.



Pryor Mountain Wild Horses, Photo Courtesy of Kayla Grams

# Bighorn Canyon Camping

Campground	# of Sites	Description
Afterbay Campground	28 RV and tent sites An additional 12 sites without water are on the north shore	Open All Year Near Fort Smith, Montana, this campground is located on the south shore of the Afterbay. Composting vault toilets, RV dump station, drinking water No RV hookups.
Black Canyon Campground **	17 tent sites	Open All Year This boat-in-only campground, five miles south of Ok-A-Beh boat ramp, is along the lake shore in Douglas fir/ponderosa pine forest. A floating, vault toilet is available No drinking water available
Horseshoe Bend Campground	48 total campsites 3 are pull through sites 20 sites have been improved with water and electrical hook-ups Improved sites have a \$15 per night utility fee	Open All Year 14 miles north of Lovell, Wyoming Nestled in sagebrush and juniper woodland communities, overlooking the lake and the red sandstone cliffs of Sykes Mountain. Modern restrooms, a RV dump station, and drinking water is available during summer months. Some sites have shade shelters.
Medicine Creek Campground **	6 tent sites	Open All Year Boat-in or hike-in only to enjoy this lakeshore setting Vault toilet is available. No drinking water.
Trail Creek Campground at Barry’s Landing	10 RV sites for short RVs 5 tent only sites	Open All Year This primitive campground 27 miles north of Lovell, Wyoming, via WY Hwy 37 is located among the various deciduous trees that line the side canyon of Trail Creek. Vault toilets, No drinking water or RV hookups

All camping in Bighorn Canyon is on a first come first serve basis. No reservations will be taken.

\*\*Lake levels and seasonal weather can affect the proximity of the boat moorings to campsites at Black Canyon Campground and Medicine Creek Campground. Docks to these campsites are removed in the winter.

# Be Safe, Not Sorry

### Footwear

**Ankle injuries are our number one safety problem!** Wear hiking boots with good ankle support and traction.

### Park Roads

Observe speed limits. Drive only on established roadways. Watch for wildlife. Buckle up!

### Drink Your Water

Carry and drink plenty of water. Wear a hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses that block ultraviolet light.

### Steep Cliffs

Stay away from cliff edges. Loose and crumbly rocks can make footing treacherous. Falls can be deadly. Don’t throw rocks into the canyon; you may injure boaters below you.

### Lightning

During lightning storms, stay away from the rim and do not take shelter under trees.

### Don’t Feed The Animals

Human food is harmful to wild animals. Animals will bite and can transmit diseases such as rabies and bubonic plague. Watch wildlife from a distance.

# Camping with Bears

Black bears make their home in Bighorn Canyon and in the Bighorn and Pryor Mountains. Bear sightings are common from spring through fall in the Black Canyon boat-in campground and, more recently, in the Trail Creek campground at Barry’s Landing. The bear’s welfare depends on the ability and willingness of humans to follow these basic safety rules when visiting bear country.

\* Do not leave any fish or entrails on the lakeshore. Dispose of them (and all refuse) in bear-proof garbage cans. If garbage cans are not available, dispose of any fish parts by sinking them in deep water.

\* Odor attracts bears! Never leave food or garbage unattended

\* Use bear boxes and hanging racks for food storage. If unavailable, food should be kept in your motor vehicle.

\* Do not leave food, dirty dishes, empty food containers, or cooking utensils out or stored in a tent.

\* NEVER FEED A BEAR!

Bear problems are people problems, and they are preventable. Bears remember easily obtained human food sources and will return to them, becoming problem bears that have to be destroyed. By simply following these rules, we can ensure the preservation of this magnificent resident of Bighorn Canyon.

# Archeology Field Schools Focus on Stone Circles in Bighorn Canyon

Since 2005, Bighorn Canyon has been hosting an archaeological field school. Students from Indiana University (Bloomington, Indiana), Northwest College (Powell, Wyoming), St. Cloud State (St. Cloud, Minnesota), and Little Big Horn College (Crow Agency, Montana) are working together to document stone circles, or tipi rings, using 21st century technology. The work is part of a larger research project, Exploring Historical and Social Landscapes of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Prior to the use of wooden stakes as tent pegs, Plains Indians used stones to weigh down the edges of their tipis. When they moved camp, the stones stayed in place recording the location of camps and characteristics of the lodge. By recording, mapping, and studying stone circle sites, students learn a variety of skills in both Archeology and Anthropology. For the Crow students, it is a tangible way to link their own history to the stories they have heard through oral traditions.

By performing limited excavations within selected stone circles, students have learned that these sites were used up to 2,500 years ago and as recently as 300 years ago. They have also recorded more than 3,782 rocks from 72 stone circles and

documented data for over 2,109 stone tools and lithic scatters. The field school has been a successful program and continues to grow each year. The unique landscape and travel route along the Prehistoric Bad Pass trail system offers students a combination of experiences including academic research, sharing of culture, and resource management.



Tipi at Ewing Snell Ranch during the Crow Archeological Field Camp, NPS photo

# NPS, Wyoming Game and Fish, and the Wild Turkey Federation work to Improve Roosting Habitat

In cooperation with the Yellowtail Cooperative Resource Management group, and other partners including the National Wild Turkey Federation over 500 acres of tamarisk (salt cedar) and Russian Olive have been treated in the Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area (YWHMA) in the past 2 years.

Many areas of the YWHMA have become overgrown with dense stands of Russian olive and tamarisk. In places it is impossible to walk through, even for a deer or dog. Habitat managers wished to remove these invasive species and create a healthier riparian landscape.

A variety of different tactics have been used, including chainsaws, a bobcat with a mulching head, a Gyrotrack and a track hoe mounted mulching head. These pieces of equipment

all turn Russian olive and tamarisk into mulch, and are capable of avoiding cottonwood trees, leaving them intact. Follow up has included treating stumps or regrowth with chemicals or with goat grazing. Crews are also planting willows and cottonwoods, and grass in some areas.

These treatments have resulted in better, more accessible wildlife habitat. The cottonwoods serve as roost trees, and native species will be provided a broader range of food and shelter types than the dense stands of Russian olive or tamarisk. In addition these cleared areas work as fire breaks, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire.



Habitat Before Improvements, NPS Photo



Habitat After Improvements, NPS Photo

## Fees

### Entrance Fees

Vehicle Entrance Fees

\$ 5.00 – Day

\$30.00 – Annual

Commercial Tours

1 – 6 passenger \$ 25.00

7 – 25 passenger \$ 40.00

26 + passenger \$100.00

Interagency Annual Pass

The \$80 Interagency Annual Pass provides entrance or access to pass holder and accompanying passengers in a single, private non-commercial vehicle at most federal recreation sites across the country. The pass is valid for 12 months from date of purchase. The pass is not valid for Expanded Amenity fees such as camping or parking.

Interagency Senior Pass

The \$10 Interagency Senior Pass (62 and older) is a lifetime pass available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Pass is available to purchase in-person only and with appropriate documentation, such as official photo identification.

Interagency Access Pass

Free lifetime pass available to citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. who have been determined to be blind or permanently disabled. Pass is available only in-person and with appropriate documentation.

### Utility Fee

A \$15 per day utility fee is required when camping in the Horseshoe Bend campground in the improved sites with water and electric hook-ups.

## Local Attractions

**National Parks:**

Yellowstone National Park (100 miles west of Lovell, Wyoming)

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (40 miles north of Fort Smith, Montana)

Devils Tower National Monument (240 miles east of Lovell, Wyoming)

**Attractions Near Fort Smith, MT:**

Big Horn County Museum (45 miles)

Pompey's Pillar (70 miles)

Chief Plenty Coups State Park (60 miles)

Pictograph Cave State Park (90 miles)

Yellowstone County Museum (90 miles)

**Attractions Near Lovell, WY:**

Bighorn National Forest - Medicine Wheel (35 miles)

Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range  
Pryor Mountain Mustang Center

Buffalo Bill Museum (50 miles)

Homesteader Museum (30 miles)

Buffalo Bill State Park (60 miles)

# Activities

## Ranger Led Activities:

During the summer months, visitors can attend Friday and Saturday programs that include evening campground programs, guided hikes, and ranch tours. Times, locations and dates for these activities vary. Activities will be posted at the visitor centers and campgrounds.



Ranger Program at Horseshoe Bend  
Photo from the Loner Collection

## Swimming:

Swimmers are encouraged to use the roped off swimming areas at Ok-A-Beh and Horseshoe Bend where a lifeguard is on duty during busier periods. Because the water entering Yellowtail Dam is drawn from some depth, it is very cold and makes swimming impractical in the Afterbay and the Bighorn River. Do not swim in the harbors or launch areas.

## Diving:

Scuba divers should display a diving flag (red with white diagonal stripe or white and blue vertical bars) while diving. Under no circumstance should any motor powered craft approach to within 50 feet of a craft displaying either flag.

## Water Skiing:

Check out the area where you will be water skiing for driftwood before starting to ski. There must be at least two people in the towing boat: an operator and an observer.

## Picnicking:

Picnic areas are available at the M-K Hill Picnic Area near the Government Housing area at Fort Smith, and at Horseshoe Bend. A number of picnic tables are available on the grounds of the Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center in Lovell. The porch at the Ewing/Snell ranch is also a nice place to relax, take in the scenery, and have a picnic.

## Bicycling:

Bicycling is permitted only on established public roads and in parking areas. For mountain biking opportunities on the south end of the park, inquire at the Cal S. Taggart Visitor Center in Lovell, WY or at the Crooked Creek Contact Station. Lights and reflectors are required after dark. We strongly suggest that safety helmets be worn by all bicyclists. Park roads are narrow and winding and the scenery can be distracting.

# Historic Ranches

**Bighorn Canyon has four historic ranches.** They are each different, but have several similarities. Each ranch was remote and tucked away in a valley or near a hillside, sheltered from the harsh climate. Water ran through the sites making orchards and vegetable gardens common place. Cattle and horses roamed the surrounding pasture lands while milk cows and chickens were kept closer. It all sounds wonderful, but if you could ask the inhabitants, they would tell you it was a lot of hard work. The individuals that lived at these ranches had their own goals and ideas behind moving to the remote area of Bighorn Canyon.

**Henry Clay Lovell** was drawn to the area in 1883 by the open range. With the backing of Anthony L. Mason, Lovell established what was to be called the **ML Ranch**. During its heyday, the ranch ran an estimate 24,000 cattle as far south as Thermopolis and as far north as the Crow Reservation in Montana. Although the harsh winter of 1886-87 cut the herd in half, Lovell continued to ranch until his death in 1903.

**Erastus T. Ewing** came in 1896 with his family and his partners in search of gold. After finding only a minimal amount of gold, the partners left, but the Ewing family stayed and turned to ranching. After changing hands a couple of times, Philip and Alma Snell purchased the ranch in 1920. **The Ewing/Snell Ranch** is now named after the man who established it and the family that lived there the longest.

**Grosvener W. Barry** was drawn to the canyon by gold in 1903 and realized that he wasn't going to get rich. Being a promoter at heart, Barry and his family turned to dude ranching. He advertised his Cedarvale Ranch at **Hillsboro, MT** as a sportsman's paradise, where guests could stay all summer. Barry

is credited with being the first person to recognize and exploit the recreational opportunities of Bighorn Canyon.

**Caroline Lockhart** came later and was not the first resident at her ranch. She purchased what is now the **Lockhart Ranch** in 1926 as a retreat. By this point she had been a correspondent for the Boston Post, the Philadelphia Bulletin, and the Denver Post, and had published six novels. She had hoped that the pace of ranch life would allow her time to write more. She found, however, that ranching was hard work. When three loads of her steers topped the market in Omaha in 1953, Caroline must have felt that her hard work had paid off. In 1955 she sold the ranch and moved back to Cody, Wyoming.

Now abandoned by their previous tenants, these ranches are an important part of the Bighorn Canyon story. Visitors are invited to walk around and imagine how life was for the hardy folks that called these places home.



Historic Gate at the Lockhart Ranch, NPS photo

# Junior Ranger Program



Bighorn Canyon's Junior Ranger Program is a great way for children, as well as their parents, to experience Bighorn Canyon. By completing several different activities, the whole family will learn about the Yellowtail Dam, the history of the area, and the wide variety of wildlife. The booklets are available at the Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center in Lovell, Wyoming, the Crooked Creek Contact Station, the Afterbay Contact Station and the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center in Fort Smith, Montana. When the booklets are filled out, the children can return them to any of the above sites to receive their Junior Ranger badge and become an official Bighorn Canyon Junior Ranger. Check out our website at [www.nps.gov/bica](http://www.nps.gov/bica) for more Junior Ranger fun! Below is a word puzzle from the Junior Ranger Booklet. Use the list of words to fill in the blanks.

Flood Control	Industrial Water	-----Y
Mining	Irrigation	-----E_
Recreation	Wildlife	-----L
Beauty	Electricity	-----L
Swimming	Restrooms	-----O---
Power	Shopping malls	-----W-----
Weather	Airports	-----T
Municipal water	Fishing	-----A-----
		-----I---
		-----L-----

# Entrance Fees Support Bighorn Canyon and Historic Preservation

Bighorn Canyon is being cared for today and preserved for future generations by the American people. Funds for protecting our natural and cultural heritage, while ensuring that everyone visiting the canyon has a safe, enjoyable and educational experience are limited. While the number of visitors to our parks continues to climb, government funding available has not kept pace with the demand. The Recreation Fee Program helps parks to fund projects that may otherwise have gone unfunded.

One of many projects funded by your fee dollars is the stabilization of the historic Lockhart Garage. The Bighorn Canyon preservation crew began work on the garage in 2008. Vol-

unteers excavated the structure on three sides, exposing badly decomposed sill and wall logs. After replacing the decomposing logs the preservation crew went to work straightening the structure and rebuilding the sliding garage doors. During the summer of 2009 Montana Conservation Corp replaced the failing roof rafters and returned the soil to the sod roof. A French drain system and vapor barrier was placed along the log walls and the soil was backfilled. During the summer of 2010, the preservation crew plans to water the newly seeded sod roof and treat it for exotic plants with the goal of establishing a root system with healthy native vegetation.

# Yellowtail Dam

## The Construction of the Yellowtail Dam

Long before the Yellowtail Dam was built, the Bighorn River was used by thrill seekers and adventurers. The raging floods of spring often dwindled to almost nothing in the hot days of late summer leaving only a muddy prairie stream which was unreliable for irrigation.

The construction of the Yellowtail Dam provided many benefits, including predictability. At the Yellowtail Dam, the level of water can be monitored and controlled. It also supplies enough electricity for 124,000 households. The Afterbay Dam keeps the water level of the canal and river fairly constant, providing a reliable source of water for irrigation and a world class river fishery.

Seventy-one miles long, the reservoir has become a popular recreation area for boating and camping. It provides flood control that protects downstream homes and farms.



Yellowtail Dam, Photo courtesy of Sharon Genaux

# Bighorn Head Gate

The Bighorn Ditch was completed in the autumn of 1904, near present day Fort Smith, Montana. It took 12 years to construct. At the head of the ditch was the Bighorn Head Gate, constructed to divert 720 cubic feet of water per second into the ditch. The ditch, mostly dug by Crow men using horse drawn implements, opened 35,000 acres of arable land for irrigation. The ditch was twenty-eight miles long running from the mouth of Bighorn Canyon to Two Leggings Creek. The ditch brought water to the lands in the upper Bighorn valley from 1900 to 1965. When it was completed, irrigation experts came from all over the western United States. They reported the ditch and head gate were “one of the best and most substantial pieces of irrigation in the United States and reflects credit on the Department for ordering the work, the engineers who planned and superintended the same, and the Crow Indians who did the work.”

Many Crow used the skills they learned in construction of the Bighorn Ditch to secure work off the reservation. Fifty to sixty Crow men with their teams from the Black Lodge District were employed in 1903 and 1904 on an irrigation project in Rosebud County. They received 40 cents an hour for a ten-hour day. In 1906, Crow men were again employed on the Huntley Irrigation project.

In 1966, with the completion of the Yellowtail and Afterbay Dams, the upper section of the Bighorn Ditch was flooded. The remains of the head gate and beginning of the ditch can be seen at the end of the Head Gate Trail. There is a quiet picnic area at the end of the trail. During low water, banks of the upper Bighorn Ditch can be seen near the Afterbay Campground.



Bighorn Headgate Remains, NPS Photo

# WNPA

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is a nonprofit cooperating association of the National Park Service that manages the book sales area at the Bighorn Canyon Visitor Centers. Their mission is: to promote preservation of the national park system and its resources by creating greater public appreciation through education, interpretation, and research. The association is now located in sixty-three National Park areas in eleven states.

How does WNPA help Bighorn Canyon? Over the last couple years WNPA has been a tremendous help to the interpretive and resource divisions of Bighorn Canyon. They have worked with Bighorn Staff to print and publish several brochures including ranch brochures, hiking guides, lake maps, and mountain man brochures. Several natural and cultural resource research projects have also been funded. If you would like to learn more about WNPA you can go to their website at [www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org).

## Top 5 Sales Items at Bighorn Canyon

1. Land of the Bighorn DVD
2. Coud's Legacy DVD
3. Bighorn Canyon Lapel Pin
4. Among Wild Horses
5. Bighorn Canyon T-Shirt



WNPA Sales Area, NPS Photo

# Volunteer Your Time

We are looking for volunteers willing to share the wonders of Bighorn Canyon with the public and to work as part of the Bighorn Canyon team.

A variety of skills are needed, but most important is the willingness to help. Some projects require a block of time, while others need the occasional helping hand.

During the summer months, volunteers help visitors in the campgrounds, staff the contact station and work with park personnel on a variety of projects.

To volunteer, please contact Christy Fleming, the park volunteer coordinator, at the Bighorn Canyon Visitor Center in Lovell, WY or call:

307-548-5406

To apply online:

[www.nps.gov/bica/supportyourpark/volunteer](http://www.nps.gov/bica/supportyourpark/volunteer)

[www.volunteer.gov/gov](http://www.volunteer.gov/gov)

# Protecting the Crown Jewels

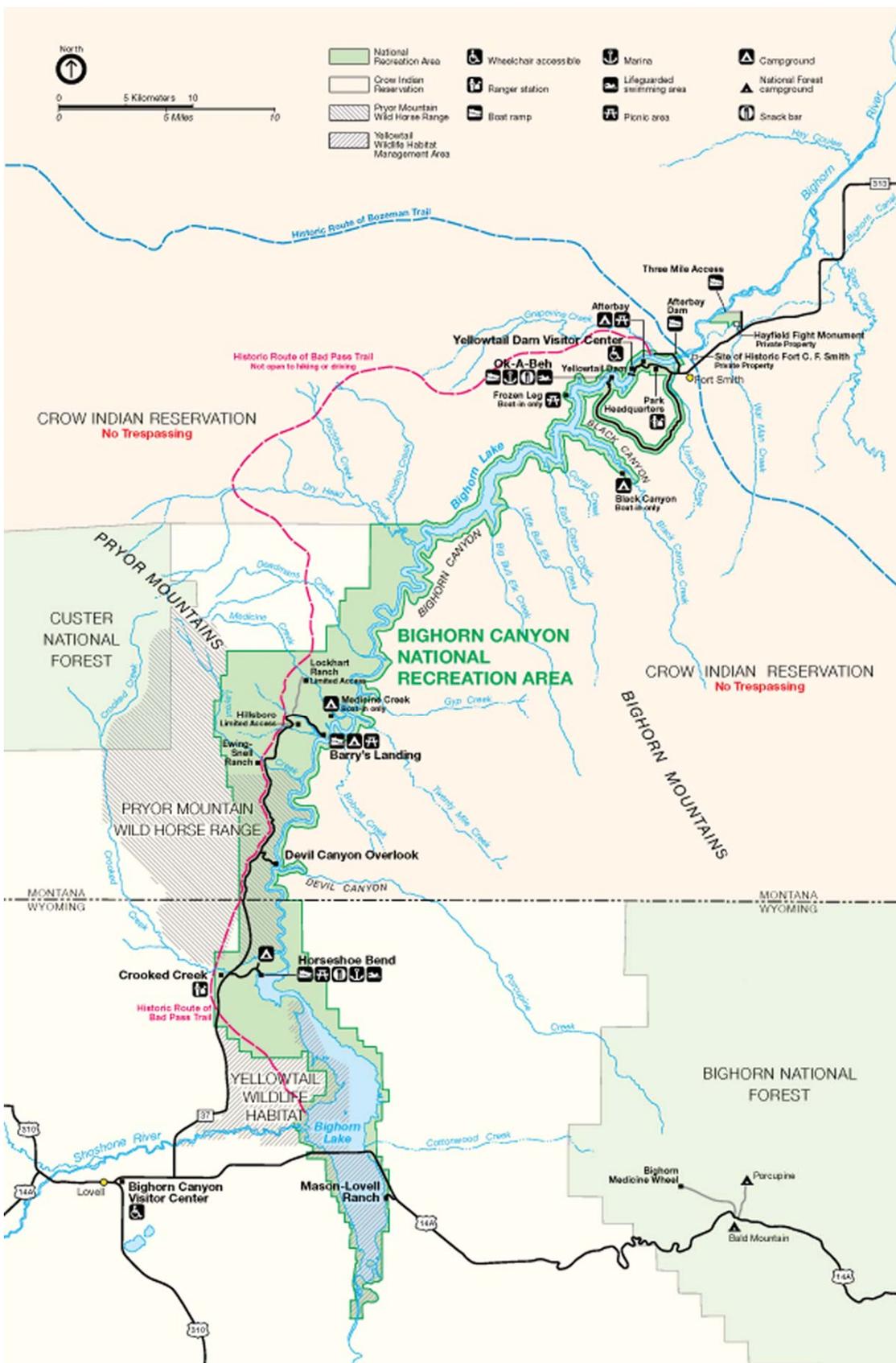
The National Park Service was established in 1916 to conserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife that would provide for the enjoyment of the resources leaving them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

What started out as an attempt to save some geological wonders and spectacular scenery, gradually took on a greater goal with a more focused mission. Parks have been set aside to save samples of most of the various types of landscapes found in our country from mountains to canyons, to deserts and swamps, and from seashores to prairies. Our cultural heritage has been set aside as well. From the American Revolution to the Civil War, the Yorktowns and the Gettysburgs teach us of our past and remind us of our progress.

How we manage our parks has changed through time. Park visitors have come to recognize the sensible regulations against collecting petrified wood at Petrified Forest National Park, cutting live trees for firewood in Yosemite Valley, throwing coins in a geyser at Yellowstone, taking fossils from Dinosaur National Monument, or sneaking off with pieces of pottery from Mesa Verde. But sometimes we don't stop to think that collecting arrowheads or taking home fossils from Bighorn Canyon is the same thing. Maybe we think that one or two won't matter, but when we are trying to protect an area for future generations, we need to realize that it does matter. Indian artifacts and fossils have received stronger protections in recent years with the passage of the Archeological Resources Protection Act.

The phrase "THE CROWN JEWELS" is often used to refer to our major parks like the Grand Canyon. Some jewels are in the back of the crown and not always noticed. To protect the crown, we need to protect all the jewels. The geological wonders of the canyon, the rich variety of plant and wildlife, the centuries old archeological sites and the more recent historical ranches, and recreation opportunities for boating, fishing, and camping, make Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area a multi-faceted jewel.

We invite you to experience the sparkle of the Bighorn Canyon jewel.



## Other Crown Jewels in Montana and Wyoming:

Little Bighorn Battle Field National Monument  
 Big Hole National Battlefield  
 Grand Teton National Park  
 Devils Tower National Monument  
 Glacier National Park

Grant Kohrs National Historic Site  
 Yellowstone National Park  
 Fort Laramie National Historic Site  
 Fossil Butte National Monument  
 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway