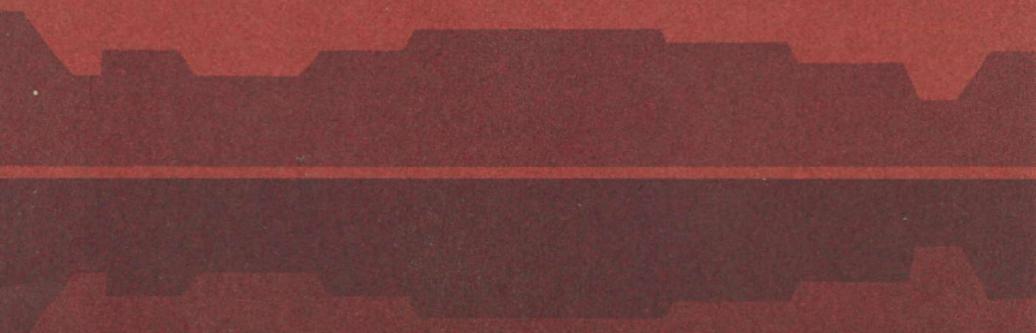
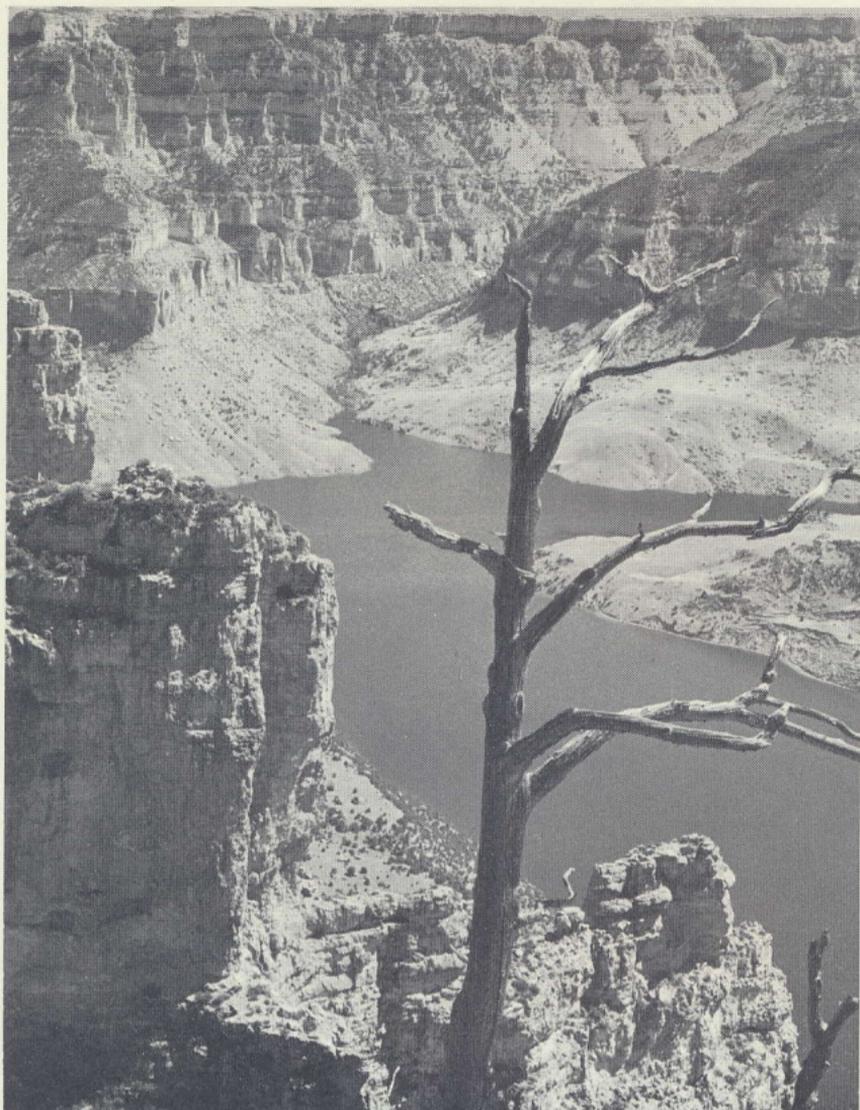


bighorn

national recreation area

canyon





BIGHORN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

The Yellowtail Dam across the Bighorn River in the heart of the Crow Indian Reservation backs up a 71-mile-long blue-water reservoir, Bighorn Lake. Its lower 47 miles lie within a rugged steep-walled canyon hundreds of feet deep, cut through two mountain ranges, the Pryors and the Bighorns.

Constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the dam—a thin-arch type with a symmetrical double curvature—rises 525 feet between the canyon walls.

The National Park Service is responsible for developing and maintaining recreational facilities on the reservoir and for interpretation of the natural scene. When development is completed, water-related activities will be the basic attraction, with outstanding opportunities for boat trips and scheduled cruises. Fishing should be good, whether along the river below the dam, in the reservoir, or in the various trout streams that flow into the reservoir.

But the setting will invite a variety of other activities, such as camping, picnicking, hiking, riding, hunting, and wildlife watching. A visitor center near the dam provides audiovisual programs, showing construction of the dam, and historical displays.



A LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

Every turn of the rugged canyon will reward you with spectacular scenery.

This section of the sparsely vegetated West is a geologist's delight, since textbook examples of the earth's changing face stand out sharply—testimony to earth forces that have distorted and bowed once-level layers of rock into immense swells called anticlines. The largest of these is the Bighorn. The great arch extends along an axis southward from Yellowtail Dam and, rising in elevation, forms the Bighorn Mountains.

Just upstream from Yellowtail Dam, the Bighorn River has sliced deeply through the arch. Spectacular cliffs almost one-half mile high loom over the river. These and other colorful cliffs along the entire canyon contain fossils, relics of times when this region was a shallow sea, a coastal area of tropical marshes, or dinosaur-inhabited conifer forests. Exposed rocks span more than 500 million years.

Other notable wrinklings in the earth's blanket of rock show up around the Bighorn Canyon country. Among these are an anticline at Devils Canyon, near the Montana-Wyoming border, and the bulge that forms the Pryor Mountains.

A MYRIAD OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Dwarf juniper forests, mountain-mahogany, chokecherry, sumac, buffaloberry, and sage grow on the hillsides. Lodgepole and limber pine, fir, and spruce on the surrounding mountains provide a dark green backdrop.

Wildlife abounds in the area—elk, mule deer, black bear, grouse, chukkar and Hungarian partridge, pheasants, waterfowl, cottontail, muskrat, beaver, and mink. Wild horses, descendants of early ranch stock, roam along the Pryor Range.

MAN'S INFLUENCE ON BIGHORN CANYON

Human exploitation of this area began in the dim recesses of antiquity. We do not know when man first made his appearance here, but studies indicate that it was probably more than 9,000 years ago.

Crow Indians, from whom parts of the land for the recreation area and the powersite were purchased, were one of the earliest peoples to live in the Bighorn region. They came from North Dakota and were well established when Charles Francois Larocque met them at the mouth of the Bighorn River in 1805. He was the first non-Indian to visit

the Crow in this region and leave a record of his experience.

One year later, Capt. William Clark explored the mouth of the Bighorn. Records of river travel through the canyon indicate fur-trade origins, with the bullboat seemingly the most popular vessel. Because of navigation difficulties, this part of the river never became a popular avenue of commerce, even during the fur-trade era.

When gold was discovered in western Montana the Bighorn region made a brief but significant entrance into the pages of American history. The discovery opened the Bozeman Trail as a means of supply and access between Fort Laramie, Wyo., and Virginia City, Mont. This trail, traces of which can still be seen on the right bank of the river, forded the Bighorn about 3 miles below the damsite.

In 1866 an infantry post, Fort C. F. Smith, was established downstream from the trail as the northernmost of a chain of forts built to protect travelers from the Sioux and the Cheyenne—who considered the trail an encroachment on their hunting grounds.

The fort was abandoned in 1868 when, after 2 years of isolation, blizzards, and the constant threat of attack, troops were withdrawn to southern Wyoming. Almost before the soldiers were out of sight, Sioux tribesmen set fire to whatever would burn.

The Indians in time were confined to reservations. As the gold fever subsided, ranchers moved into the region.

PRESENT FACILITIES

Afterbay. Launching ramp, camping, picnicking

Barry's Landing. Launching ramp, camping.

Frozen Leg Bay. Docking, fishing supplies, gasoline and oil.

Horseshoe Bend. Launching ramp, swimming, camping, picnicking.

Kane Bridge. Launching ramp, camping, picnicking.

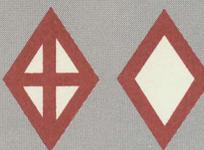
NEARBY ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotels and motels, restaurants, service stations, and grocery and sporting goods stores are available in Lovell, Wyo., and in Hardin, Mont. Restaurants, service station, and grocery stores are available in Fort Smith, Mont.

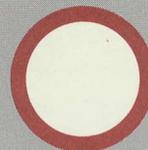
ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is open all year; the normal visitor season is from mid-April to late October. The area has little rainfall and low humidity with plenty of summer sunshine. In spring and autumn, temperature fluctuations are frequent.

Activities include almost every form of outdoor recreation, including hunting, boating, and fishing. The reservoir is stocked with trout and walleye.



1. Swim Area/Danger



5. Controlled Area



2. Information



6. Diver's Flag



3. Anchor or Mooring Buoy



7. Red-Striped White Buoy



4. All-Red Buoy



8. All-Black Buoy

1. Diamond shape with cross: boats keep out, Diamond shape warns of danger.

2. Square or rectangle gives information, names, distances, permitted activities.

3. Indicates anchorage area.

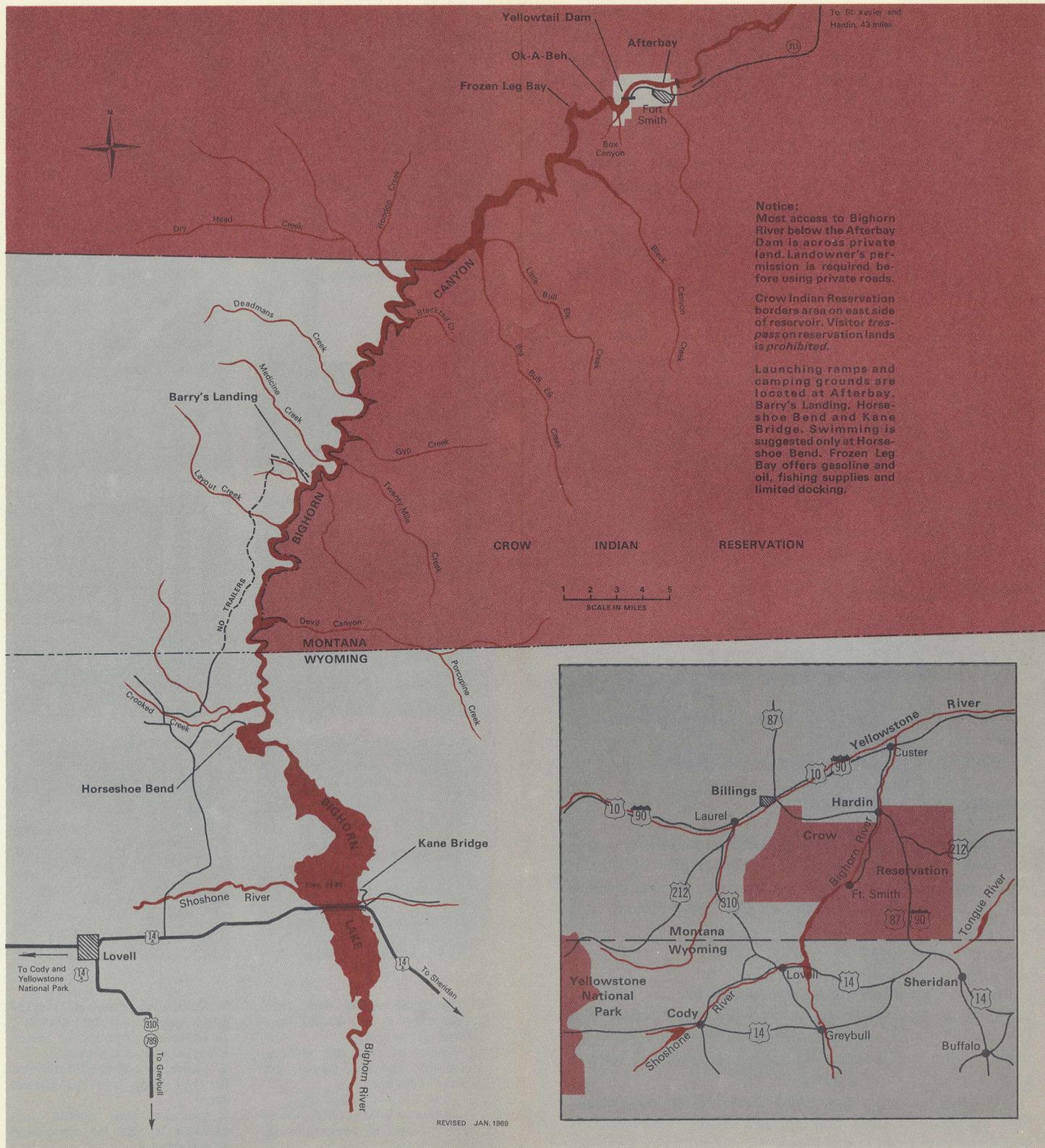
4. Indicates boat should pass between it and its companion all-black buoy.

5. Controlled area as marked (e.g., speed limit for boats).

6. Indicates presence of diver. Boaters must keep away.

7. Indicates boat should not pass between buoy and the nearest shore.

8. Indicates boat should pass between it and its companion all-red buoy.



HOW TO REACH BIGHORN CANYON

The southern part of the area is best reached via U.S. 14A; the northern part and Yellowtail Dam via Mont. 313 south 43 miles from Hardin, Mont.

Scheduled airlines serve Cody, Wyo. (60 miles west of Lovell); and Billings, Mont.

Transcontinental buses serve Cody, Greybull, Lovell, and Powell, Wyo., and Billings and Hardin, Mont.

There is no public transportation to the area from any of the nearby communities, but rental cars are available.

TIPS FOR YOUR BOATING SAFETY

Boating on the waters of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area must be in accordance with Federal and State regulations, which are posted at each launching ramp. You are urged to follow these basic safety tips:

Should you encounter boating difficulties in the canyon, beach your craft and remain with it. Foot access in and out of the canyon is difficult and even though you might make the top at certain locations, you would be many miles from overland help. If you remain with your craft, the water patrolman will be able to find you.

While on the water, wear your lifejackets.

Avoid the small side canyons during inclement weather, as flood hazards exist in these areas. Look for high-water marks in these drainages; if you camp, camp above them.

Carry adequate supplies of food, water, and gasoline. By properly preparing yourself, you can enjoy a safe, memorable trip. Safety is basically the exercise of commonsense.

If you have any doubt about your skill or the stability of your craft in rough water, find protection from the wind and wait it out.

Register at the visitor-registration box adjacent to the launching ramp before you start your boat trip. This will provide rangers with knowledge of your location and proposed length of stay should you run into difficulties.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND

Camping is restricted to designated campgrounds or campsites, unless you have a permit to camp or build a campfire outside such developed campgrounds. **Pour water on your fire to make sure it is out before you leave.**

Fishing. You must have a fishing license for each State in which you fish.

Pets must be under physical control in developed and/or concentrated public-use areas.



Firearms. Carrying loaded firearms or explosives in developed and/or concentrated public-use areas is not allowed.

Waste or trash disposal. The dumping or discharging of any waste or trash, including human wastes, into the waters of the area is not allowed. All vessels must have a waste receptacle aboard.

First-aid kit. Because poisonous snakes are a possibility, a snake-bite kit is recommended as part of your first-aid kit.

ADMINISTRATION

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is administered by the National Park Service through agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation.

A superintendent, whose address is Box 458 YRS, Hardin, Mont. 59035, is in immediate charge of the area.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States — now and in the future.

National Park Service
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