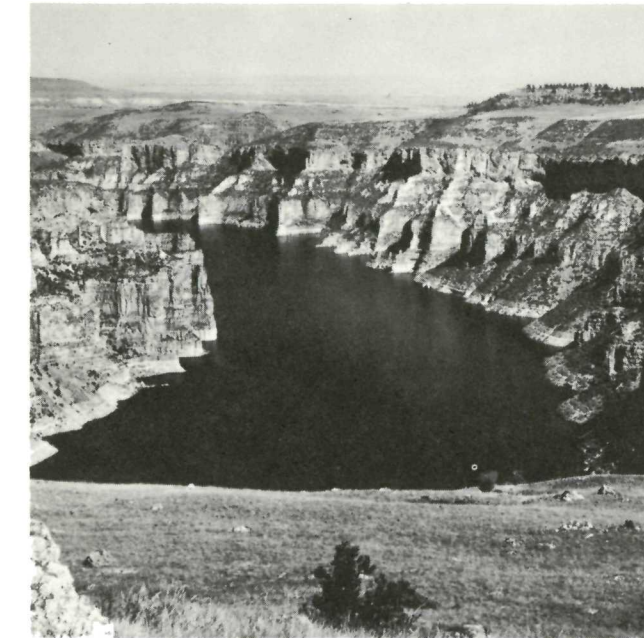


bighorn canyon

national recreation area
montana • wyoming



PRESENT FACILITIES

Afterbay: Launching ramp, camping, picnicking.

Ok-A-Beh: Launching ramp.

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

Black Canyon & Medicine Creek: Boat-in campground.

Barry's Landing: Launching ramp, camping, picnicking.

Horseshoe Bend: Launching ramp, swimming, camping, picnicking, food, gasoline, and oil.

ADMINISTRATION

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is administered by the National Park Service. A superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 458, Fort Smith, MT 59035, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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TIPS FOR YOUR BOATING SAFETY

Boating on the waters of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area must be in accordance with Federal and State regulations posted at each launching ramp.

Should you encounter boating difficulties in the canyon, beach your craft and remain with it. Foot access in and out of the canyon is extremely difficult. If you make it out, you still will have many overland kilometers to go for help. Remain with your craft and the ranger patrols will find you.

While on the water, wear lifejackets.

Avoid small side canyons during inclement weather. They are subject to flash flooding. Always camp above any highwater mark if you camp in a side canyon.

Carry adequate supplies of gasoline, food, and water. If you have any doubt about your skill or your boat in rough water, find protection from the wind and wait it out.

Sign in at the registration boxes at the launching ramps before you start so rangers will know of your location and proposed length of stay should you run into difficulties.

REGULATORY MARKERS



DIVER'S FLAG
indicates presence of a diver.

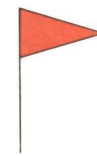


SWIM AREA
DIAMOND SHAPE with cross means BOATS KEEP OUT



DIAMOND SHAPE
warns of DANGER

STORM WARNINGS



RED FLAG
Small craft (wind to 38 mph)



2 RED FLAGS
Gale (up to 54 mps)



SQUARE RED FLAG—BLACK BOX
(whole gale)

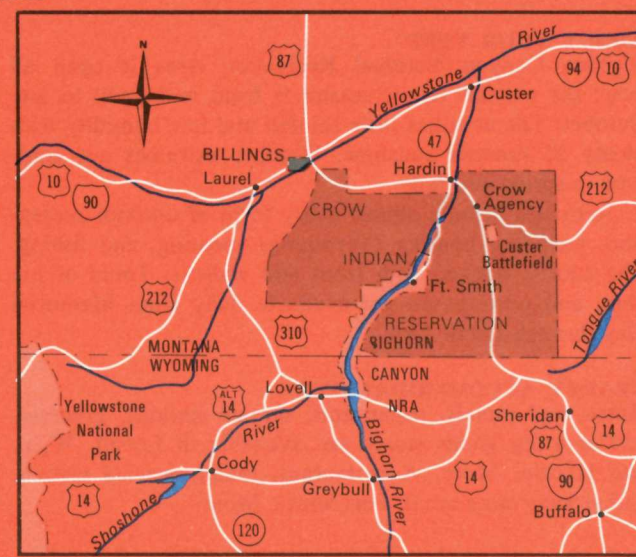
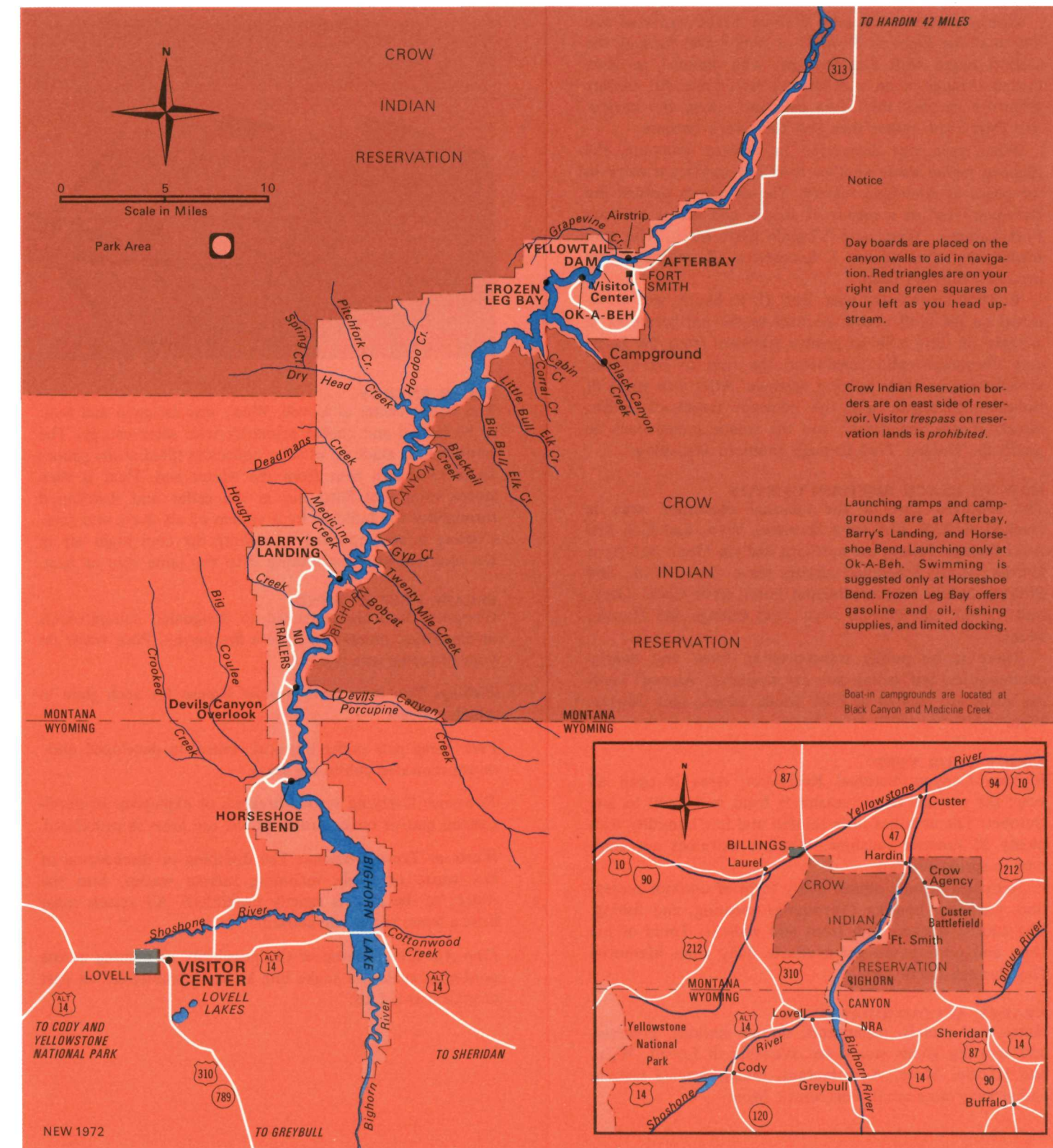


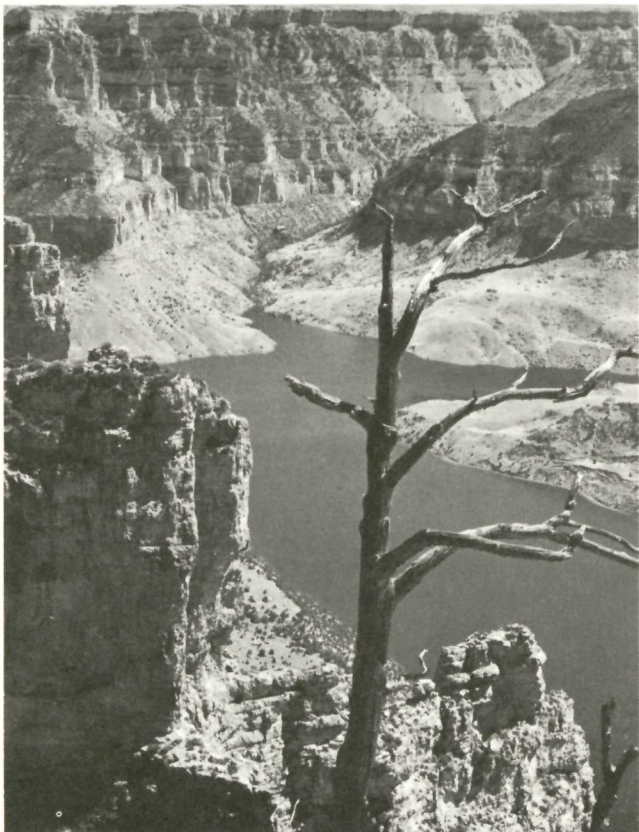
2 SQUARE RED FLAGS BLACK BOX
(Hurricane)

RED TRIANGLE—EVEN NUMBERS
Always on your RIGHT as you head UPSTREAM.

GREEN SQUARE—ODD NUMBERS
Always on your LEFT as you head UPSTREAM.

Day boards are placed on the canyon walls to aid in navigation.



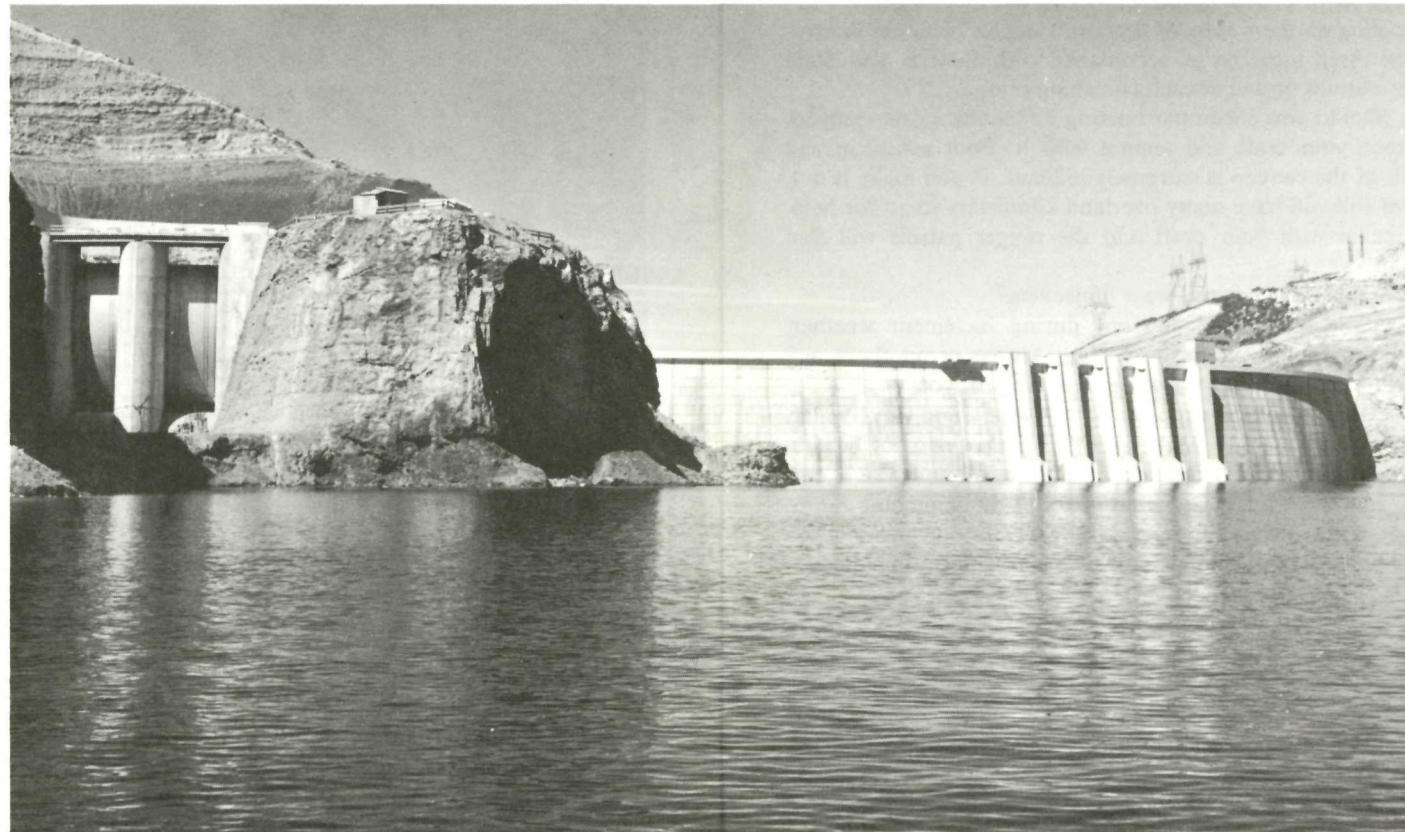


The Yellowtail Dam across the Bighorn River in the heart of the Crow Indian Reservation backs up a 113-kilometer (71-mile) long reservoir, Bighorn Lake, in Montana and Wyoming. Its lower 76 kilometers (47 miles) lie within a rugged, steep-walled canyon cut between two mountain ranges, the Pryors and the Bighorns.

Constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the dam rises 161 meters (525 feet) between the canyon walls near Fort Smith, Mont.

The National Park Service operates and maintains recreational facilities on the lake and provides interpretive facilities at points of scenic and historic interest. Water-related activities are the main attraction, with opportunities for boating, swimming, and water-skiing. Fishing is excellent, both in the lake and in the various trout streams that flow into it.

The setting invites a variety of other activities: camping, picnicking, hiking, riding, hunting, and wildlife watching. Visitor centers near the dam and at Lovell, Wyo., provide audiovisual programs and displays depicting the natural and cultural history of the area.



A GEOLOGIST'S DELIGHT

Spectacular scenery is commonplace here. Each turn of the canyon provides another view, changing hourly with the sun. Textbook examples of the earth's face stand out sharply—testimony to tremendous forces that distorted and bent once-level rock layers over eons of time into immense bulges called anticlines. One of the largest of these is the Bighorn Mountains. This great arch of rock extends southeastward from the vicinity of Yellowtail Dam, reaching its maximum height at 4,000-meter (13,175-foot) Cloud Peak near Buffalo, Wyo.

For 22.5 kilometers (15 miles) upstream from the dam the Bighorn River has sliced deeply through this arch, exposing the heart of the mountains to view. These cliffs, looming up over the river, contain fossils, relics of times when this region was a shallow sea, a tropical marsh, or a dinosaur-inhabited conifer forest.

Other wrinkles in the earth's surface—as they would seem to be if viewed from space—include smaller anticlines at Devil's Canyon and the bulge that forms the Pryor Mountains.

A MYRIAD OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Several plant communities occur in the area, including pine forests, desert, and grassland. They support a varied wildlife population, including elk, mule deer, black bear, and such smaller mammals as beaver, muskrat, and cottontail rabbit. Small reptiles include western fence lizard and the bull snake. Waterfowl and grassland birds abound.

MAN AND BIGHORN CANYON

Prehistoric man first inhabited this area in the dim recesses of antiquity. We cannot fix a precise date when man first made his appearance here, but studies indicate that it was more than 9,000 years ago.

Crow Indians migrated into this area from North Dakota and were firmly established when the first white men came through around 1805. The first recorded non-Indian to visit the area was Charles Francois Larocque, who met the Crow at the mouth of the Bighorn River in 1805.

One year later, Captain William Clark explored the mouth of the Bighorn. Records of river travel through the canyon begin with Jim Bridger, who claimed to have floated through it on a driftwood raft. Later fur traders preferred to pack their furs overland, along the ancient Bad Pass Trail, rather than risk the river's dangers.

When gold was discovered in western Montana, the Bighorn region made another brief but significant entry in 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. The trail forded the river about 5 kilometers (3 miles) below present Yellowtail Dam.

In 1866 an infantry post, Fort C. F. Smith, was established on the bluff above the ford as the northernmost in a chain of forts built to protect travelers from the Sioux and Cheyenne—who considered the trail to be an encroachment on their hunting grounds. After two years of isolation, blizzards, and the constant threat of Indian attack, it was abandoned, and the troops pulled back to guard the Oregon Trail through southern Wyoming.

HOW TO REACH BIGHORN CANYON

The southern part of the national recreation area is reached via U.S. 14A from Sheridan, Wyo., and U.S. 310 from Billings, Mont.; the northern end via Mont. 313 from Hardin, Mont. Scheduled airlines serve Cody, Wyo., and Billings, Mont. Transcontinental buses serve Cody, Greybull, Lovell, and Powell, Wyo., and Billings and Hardin, Mont.

There is no public transportation from any nearby communities, but rental cars are available. Aircraft landing strips are located at Fort Smith, Mont., and Cowley, Wyo.

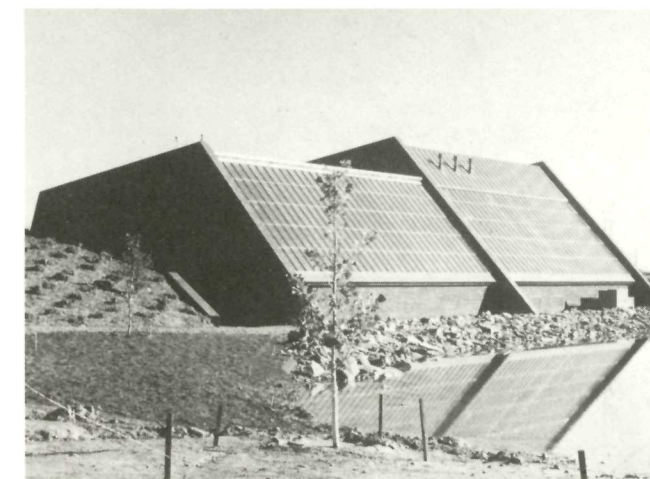
ABOUT YOUR VISIT

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. Weather extremes are common in spring and fall.

Activities include almost every form of outdoor recreation, including hunting (Wyoming), boating, and fishing. The lake is stocked with trout and walleye. Tours of the Dam and powerhouse are available daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

NEARBY ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotels and motels, restaurants, service stations, groceries and sporting goods stores are available in Lovell, Wyo., and Hardin, Mont. A restaurant, motel, service station, and grocery store are in Fort Smith, Mont.



SOLAR ENERGY

The visitor center at Lovell, Wyo., was designed and built to be heated and cooled primarily with solar energy. The south wall is made up of solar collectors tilted at the proper angle to absorb heat from the winter sun. Heat is then stored in a rock-filled bin in the cellar and distributed throughout the building by a system of air ducts and fans. Cooling is accomplished by storing the cool night air in the rock bin and distributing it in the same way as heat.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND

Camping: You are restricted to designated campgrounds or campsites, unless you have a fire permit. Pour water on your fire to be sure it is out.

Fishing: You must have a valid license for each state in which you fish.

Pets: Keep pets 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 prohibited.

Waste or Trash Disposal: The dumping or discharging of any waste or trash, including human wastes, into the waters of the area is strictly prohibited. All vessels must have a waste receptacle aboard.

First-Aid Kit: Because of the possibility of coming across poisonous snakes, a snake bite kit is recommended as part of your first-aid kit.