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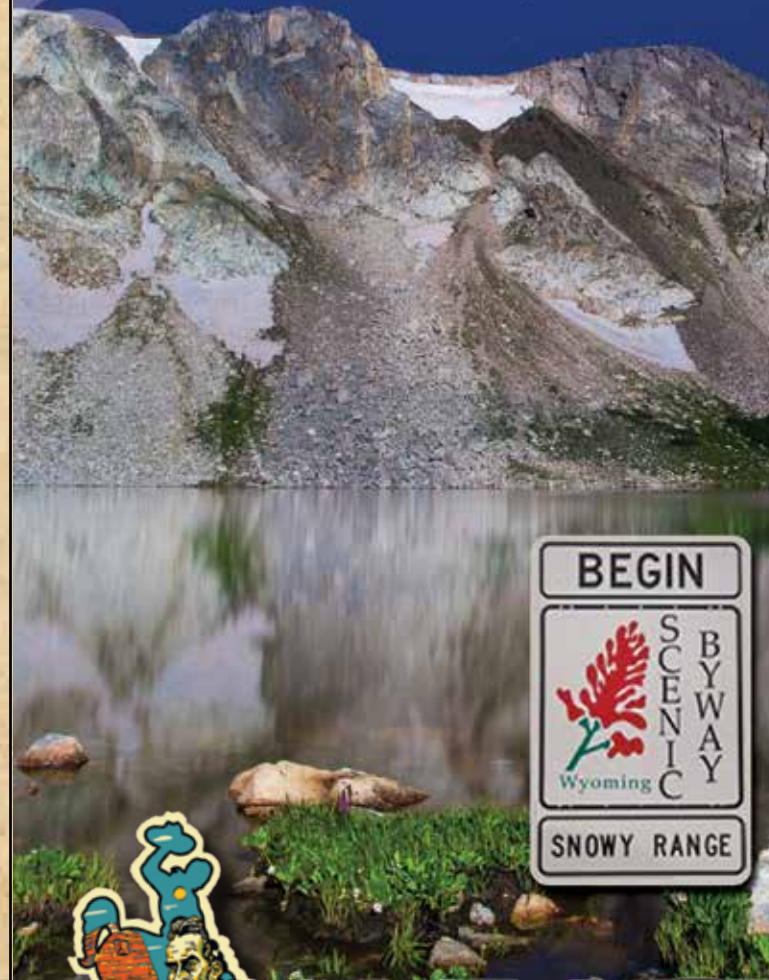
- Medicine Bow National Forest maps may be obtained at the Forest Service Byway Visitor Centers or at the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Office at 2468 Jackson Street, in Laramie.



MORE INFO:

- The Snowy Range Scenic Byway is open from late May until closed by snow again on early to mid-November.

"THE GREAT SKY ROAD" SNOWY RANGE SCENIC BYWAY



LARAMIE
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
**REAL HISTORY.
TRUE ADVENTURE.**



EXPLORING THE SNOWY RANGE SCENIC BYWAY

The Snowy Range Scenic Byway (WY 130) offers countless opportunities for outdoor adventures. Possible activities include camping, fishing, hiking, biking, climbing, wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and lodging in resorts and cabins throughout the mountains. During your travels on the Scenic Byway, there will be many chances to view wildlife, foliage, high alpine lakes and a variety of ecosystems that are teeming with life.

The Snowy Range Scenic Byway was originally a wagon road built in the 1870s. In the 1920s the road was widened and smoothed using horse-drawn equipment. It was later paved in the 1930s and in 1988 was designated as the nation's second Scenic Byway. Once completed, it came to be known as the "Great Skyroad." This route over the Snowy Range is one of the shortest of Wyoming's scenic byways. Visitors can enjoy a daytrip through the region, or stay multiple nights atop the mountain or in any neighboring town. The Byway is the second highest mountain pass in Wyoming. Snow typically closes the highest section of the road in the month of November, and it remains closed for the duration of the winter and well into spring. Snowplows usually work to re-open the road in May, right around Memorial Day weekend.

The land known as the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest has a rich and expansive history dating back an estimated 8,000 years. It is believed that ancestors of

Plains Indian tribes inhabited the region. The Northern Arapaho, Oglala Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Eastern Shoshone, and the White River Utes all frequented the area. The land was ideal for peoples who could be nourished by the abundance of resources. From the forests they could gather the prime lodgepole pinewood to be used for teepee poles and firewood. The soothing mineral hot springs along the banks of the North Platte River provided a welcome place to "make medicine" to cure their ills and to hold ceremonial pow-wows.

Truly a "land of many uses," the Snowy Range today supports an active timber harvesting industry in addition to providing traditional livestock forage, watershed and outdoor recreation benefits. The Scenic Byway has variety of look-out points where visitors can stop to appreciate the panoramic views along the Snowy Range. During your drive remember to be cautious of wildlife near the road, especially during early morning and late evening hours.



Indian Paintbrush give color to our foothills and prairies. The official flower of the state of Wyoming, this symbol was adopted by the Scenic Byway program and appears on roadside signs all across the state.

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START YOUR TOUR

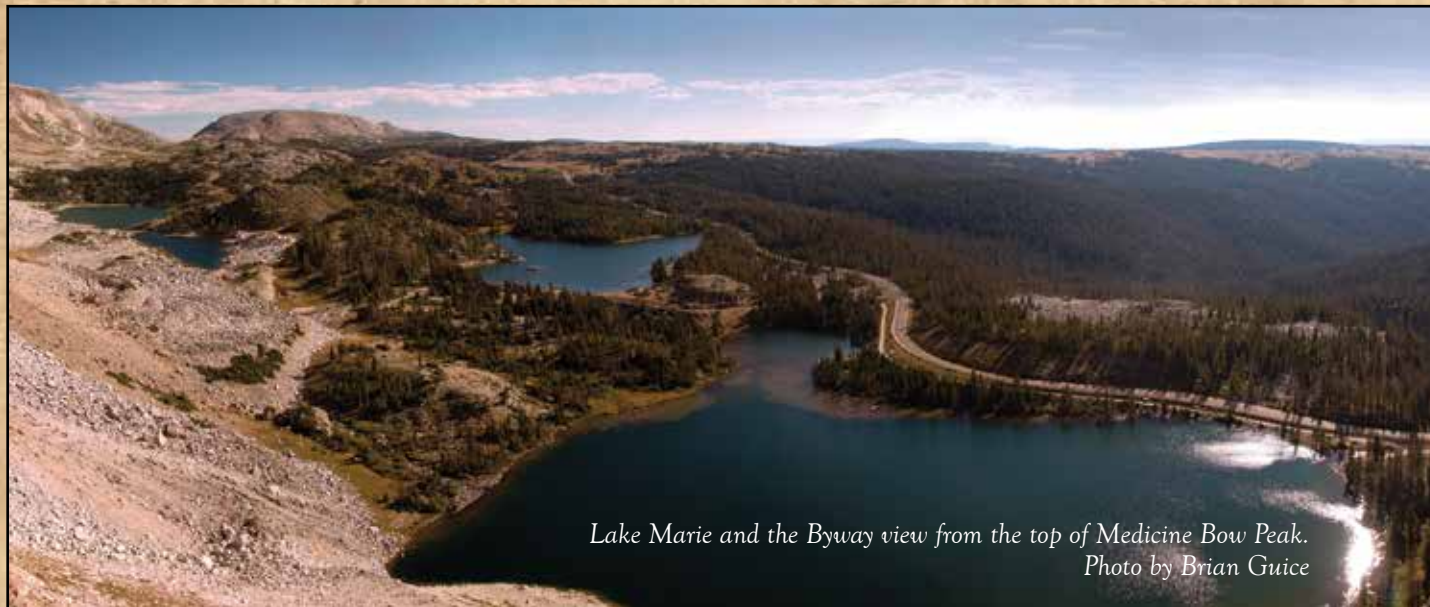


A study in contrast, patches of snow cover Medicine Bow Peak while brightly colored wildflowers and lush green vegetation display the diversity of Wyoming's landscape. Photo by Joyce Powell

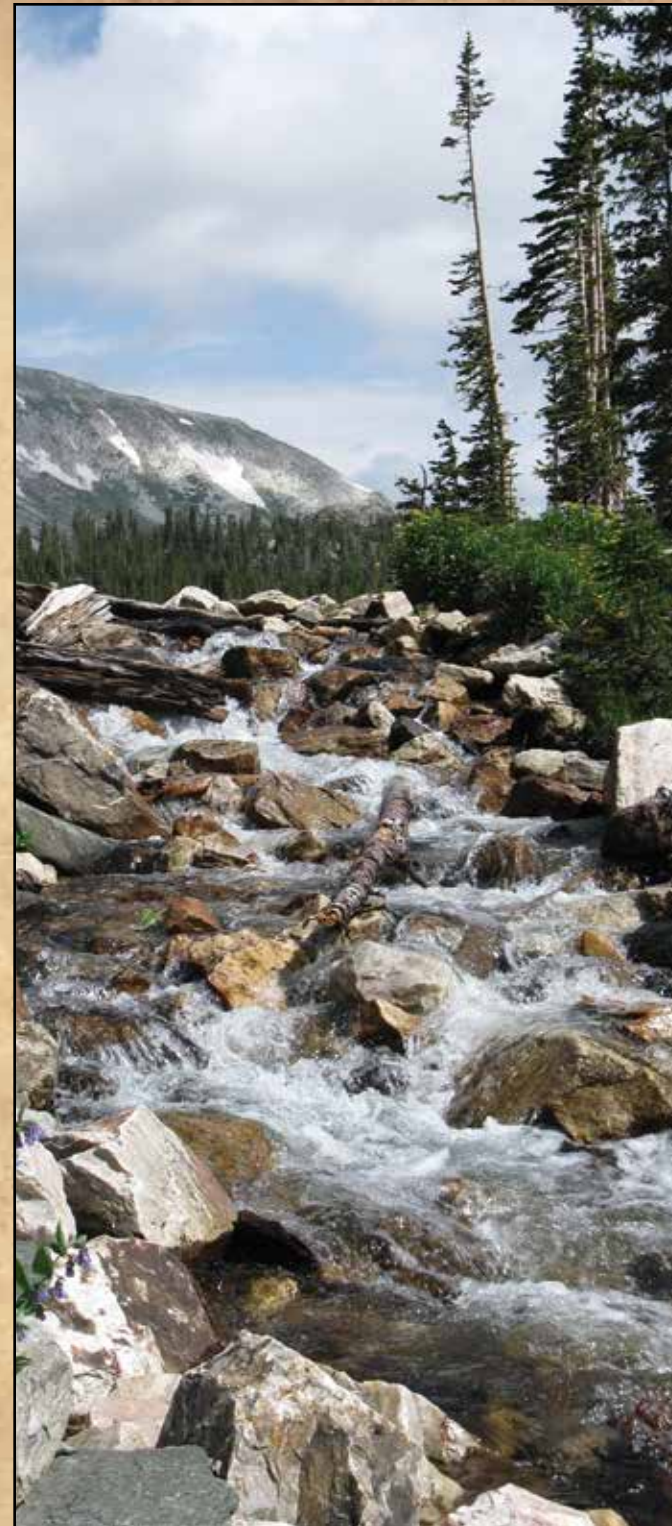
Leaving Laramie and traveling west on the Scenic Byway, you will drive through the open plains of the old west where it is not uncommon for visitors to see deer and antelope play. Just twenty-seven miles west of Laramie, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, you'll find the historic mining town of Centennial.

Special Attractions

The region near Medicine Bow Peak is home to the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, yellow-bellied marmots, pikas and blue grouse. The many mountain lakes and streams in the area are rich with rainbow trout, brook trout and the cutthroat (Wyoming's only native trout). The Scenic Byway takes travelers from sagebrush prairies to a high-altitude alpine environment that is representative of the diversity of life within the Rocky Mountains. Near the summit is an old growth spruce-fir forest containing the unique krummholz trees which have been shaped over time by the blustering winds and freezing temperatures high atop the mountain. The abundance of large trees, and understory of young trees, together with the presence of krummholz and decaying logs, furnish a home to wildlife not found in younger forests. The pine marten, red-backed vole, ruby-crowned kinglet, three-toed woodpecker and boreal owl are but a few of the species that inhabit Wyoming's oldest forest.



*Lake Marie and the Byway view from the top of Medicine Bow Peak.
Photo by Brian Guice*



*The sounds of rushing water peacefully cut through the quiet on the mountaintop as snowmelt runs off a glacier lake.
Photo by Conrad Chavers*

eagles, and wild turkeys may also show themselves along the waterways in the area and in the lower lands outside the Scenic Byway.

12. Ryan Park Campground

Ryan Park Campground is one of the largest in the forest. It was named after the historic internment camp also known as Ryan Park. The camp was built to house German prisoners during World War II and is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

13. Riverside and Encampment

As the Scenic Byway drops out of the mountains, the road splits. To the south are the towns of Riverside and Encampment. The latter is home to the Grand Encampment Museum. Lodging, meals, gas, gifts and western style saloons are all accessible roadside. Laramie can be reached from Riverside and Encampment via Hwy 230 North.

14. Saratoga

To the north just a few miles is the town of Saratoga, situated on the North Platte River. This pleasant community is home to a historic old west hotel, other lodging and restaurants, gift shops, art galleries, a golf course and a bustling airport. While there, relax in the natural hot springs (free to the public and open 24 hours a day, year-round). This side of the mountain presents varied travel options depending on your personal timetable and intended destinations. Snowy Range Scenic Byway, highway 130, through the beautiful Snowy Range Mountains intersects with I-80 just north of Saratoga. Laramie is accessible from Saratoga via I-80 East or Hwy 287 South.



Locals and visitors alike can enjoy great fishing in the lakes and rivers of Wyoming. Featured here is a brown trout caught on the North Platte River. Photo by BHP Images

7. Libby Flats

The highest point on the Snowy Range Scenic Byway, Libby Flats is over 10,000 feet above sea level. From the scenic overlook at the summit, a breathtaking view of several mountain ranges cascades before you. This observation site provides visitors the experience of amazing scenery in all directions. This includes Rocky Mountain National Park to the south, Medicine Bow Peak to the west, the Sierra Madre Mountains, Mt. Zirkel Wilderness Area, and the Laramie Mountains to the east.



At 10,000 feet above sea level, Libby Flats is the highest point along the Byway. This scenic overlook offers a breathtaking view of several regional mountain ranges. Photo by Elinor Olson

8. Snowy Range Observation Point

A short distance past Libby Flats, on the west side of the road, is the trail to the Miner's Cabin. A loop trail from the observation point leads to the Red Mask Mine. Out of operation since the 1920s, the trail passes old mining equipment and a nearby miner's cabin. Interpretive signs along the trail describe these sites and identify the unique vegetation that has adapted to the sometimes inhospitable climate. At this high altitude, strong winds are the norm and precipitation comes mostly in the form of snowfall.

9. Mirror Lake and Lake Marie

Below the summit are the picturesque Mirror Lake, and its sister, Lake Marie. Both lakes are glacier-fed and reflect the majesty of Medicine Bow Peak. On a clear day, visitors can see the Wyoming sky reflected on the surface of these crisp mountain waters. Because of their incredible beauty, these lakes are frequented by artists and photographers. During the early summer months, take note of the pink "watermelon" snow caused by bacteria that thrives on the year-round glacial snow. The quartzite peaks are estimated to be two billion years old, with even older rocks existing beneath them. Across from the Lake Marie parking



Looking west from the Snowy Range Scenic Byway. The landscape has a history all its own. Photo by Conrad Chavez

area visitors can take a quick walk to Lake Marie Falls. A second parking area nearby serves as trailhead parking for French Creek Canyon Trail, Tipple Trail and Miner's Cabin Trail on the south side of the Scenic Byway.

10. Silver Lake Overlook

On your way down the mountain, a pullout on the south side of the road offers a spectacular view of Silver Lake and the surrounding area. Trails lead to the lake and to the Meadow Falls. Expect some campground and picnic area closures due to hazardous trees in the area. West of Silver Lake, the Scenic Byway descends through a spruce, fir, and pine forest, past mountain lakes and streams, and eventually the Headquarters Park parking area. A rough four-wheel drive road provides access to the north and west sides of the Snowy Range and Medicine Bow Peak.

11. Ralph Heston Viewing Platform

The Ralph Heston Viewing Platform features an accessible fishing pier over French Creek. Here the creek meanders slowly through willows, providing wildlife with plenty of food and shelter. Nearby, an interpretive information site gives visitors a glimpse into the world of the local beaver population. Nearby, an interpretive information site illustrates the beavers' world in human terms. Keep an eye out for mule deer, common inhabitants of the area. Moose, elk, bears, bald eagles, and wild turkeys may also be present along waterways in the region and in the lower lands outside the Scenic Byway.

BYWAY ITINERARY

1. Centennial, Wyoming

Centennial was founded in 1876. This small, friendly town offers an assortment of services, various points of interest, and a vibrant creative community to visitors of all kinds. Attractions include a local museum, lively eateries, lodging, rustic cabins, gifts, and several buildings that maintain their old western charm. The Centennial Valley, along the Little Laramie River, is dotted with working cattle and guest ranch facilities. Stop by the Nici Self Museum which houses the historic railroad depot, or pick up a walking tour brochure of Centennial.

2. Visitor Center (east end)

The Scenic Byway climbs into the Snowy Range Mountains and enters Medicine Bow National Forest. Just east of Centennial is a Visitor Center that is typically open 9am-5pm, Tuesday through Sunday, from Memorial Day weekend through mid-October. Opening dates and times can vary, however, depending on staffing availability. Here visitors can obtain maps, brochures, passes, permits, books, and schedules for interpretive programs. After the Visitor Center, the drive follows Libby Creek and winds past the Snowy Range Ski Area just five miles up the road from Centennial.

3. Barber Lake and Libby Creek

Barber Lake Road, just off the main Scenic Byway, leads to several small campgrounds. These sites are able to accommodate both tent and RV campers, though it should be noted that electrical hookups are not available. This side road takes visitors alongside Libby Creek before rejoining the Scenic Byway. The views in autumn are particularly spectacular along this road, and during the winter months it doubles as a cross-country ski trail. Taking Barber Lake Road bypasses the entrance to the Snowy

Range Ski Area, a popular winter destination for skiers and snowboarders, and the turnoff for Sand Lake Road, a gravel forest road accessing trails on the north end of the Snowy Range.

4. Greenrock Picnic Area

Greenrock Picnic Area is just west of the intersection of Barber Lake Road and the Scenic Byway. Heading west, Highway 130 follows the Little Laramie River where yellow-bellied marmots can be seen sunbathing on granite rocks. When in season, wildflowers are also abundant here. Particularly notable is the Indian Paintbrush, Wyoming's official state flower. Once heavy snowfall arrives, the Scenic Byway closes at this point and snowmobiling becomes a very popular attraction.

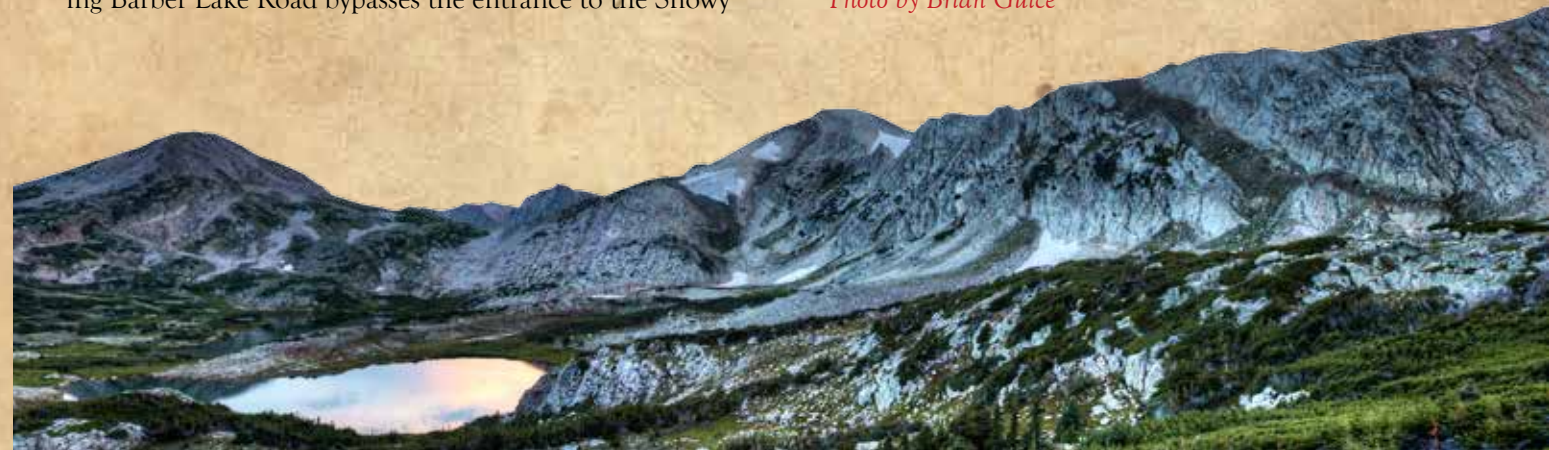
5. Brooklyn Lake Road

Continuing west on the Scenic Byway is the turnoff for Brooklyn Lake Road. An excursion down this road leads to several lakes that are easily accessible by automobile. Other lakes can be reached via a network of hiking trails from this point. Saint Alban's, a small outdoor Episcopal chapel near Little Brooklyn Lake, is frequently the site of weddings and other ceremonies in the warmer months.

6. Sugarloaf Recreational Area

As the altitude increases, a definite ecological shift in the vegetation marks the turnoff for the Sugarloaf Recreation Area. Also nearby are Libby and Lewis lakes and picnic grounds. The gravel road ends at a trailhead which leads to over eighty mountain and glacial lakes as well as the summits of Sugarloaf Mountain (11,398 ft.) and Medicine Bow Peak (12,013 ft.), both popular destinations for adventurous hikers.

Wherever you are along the Scenic Byway, have your camera ready to capture the memorable views around every bend. Photo by Brian Guice



SNOWY RANGE SCENIC BYWAY



Yellow-bellied Marmot perched near Libby Flats Observation Lookout.



CAMPING IN THE SNOWIES

Safe, scenic and secluded campsites available year-round.



Visit the Nici Self Historical Museum in Centennial for an authentic community experience celebrating the region's unique history.



Bull Moose spotted grazing lakeside along Highway 130.



FLY-FISHING WYOMING

Great fishing in the pristine, open waters of Wyoming.



Wildflowers, one of the greatest joys along the Scenic Byway.

Mule deer are often seen grazing roadside in Centennial.



Open areas along the road are home to Willow, Aspen, and Cottonwood trees.

- Key
1. Centennial, WY
 2. Visitor Center (east end)
 3. Barber Lake & Libby Creek
 4. Greenrock Picnic Area
 5. Brooklyn Lake Road
 6. Sugarloaf Recreation Area
 7. Libby Flats

8. Red Mask Mine
9. Mirror Lake & Lake Marie
10. Silver Lake Overlook
11. Ralph Heston Viewing Platform
12. Ryan Park Campground
13. Riverside & Encampment
14. Saratoga

