

# Medicine Wheel Passage

*From the Ancients, Preserved in Time*



4 Days/3 Nights

Gateway City: Sheridan, Wyoming



Thousands of feet atop northern Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains lies an 80-foot-circular mystery made of stone. There are as many legends surrounding its origin as there are theories regarding its purpose. Some are sure it's a monument built in tribute to a leader. Others maintain it serves as a calendar, its 28 components aligning with the sunrise at summer solstice. And then there are those who believe it is a navigational tool, pointing the way to anyone who holds the key. While we may never know the full story behind the carefully placed pieces of limestone, we do know the Bighorn Medicine Wheel was and continues to be a powerful and sacred place for Native Americans of dozens of different tribes throughout history. The best way to view this archeological wonder is on the Medicine Wheel Passage, a 27-mile route through the Bighorn National Forest. An ancient trail leads to the ceremonial site, but know that a visit to the Wheel calls for a moment of reverence, a time to slow down and connect with a culture that may be unlike your own. Wind through steep canyon terrains, watch as the sagebrush-covered desert turns into dense mountain forest, and breath fresh alpine air as prayer cloths wave in the Medicine Mountain winds. The Bighorn Medicine Wheel is one of the largest and best-preserved medicine wheels on the northern Plains, and no drive along the Medicine Wheel Passage is complete without a visit to this important and spiritual site.



### **Touring the Byway**

We recommend starting your journey in Sheridan, an authentic cowboy town with a Wild West vibe. Learn about the region's history at Museum at the Bighorns, get a glimpse of Victorian-era frontier life at Trail End State Historic Site, and see one of the West's best collections of Native American art at the Brinton Museum before spending the evening in a converted flour mill.

Day Two brings you to the Medicine Wheel Passage. Keep an eye out for wildlife as you twist and turn along WY-14 – moose sightings are common in this spectacular stretch of high-country scenery. Get a panoramic view of the Bighorn Basin at Sand Turn Interpretive Site and Bighorn National Forest Visitor Center, then make sure to continue on to WY-14A after the road splits at Burgess Junction in order to stay on the Medicine Wheel. Further on, the Medicine Wheel, is a National Historic Landmark measuring 80 feet in diameter. Afterwards, head to Lovell when

you can learn the history of Northern Big Horn at the Lovell-Kane Area Museum before relaxing in a rustic Western-themed hotel.

On Day Three, you're headed to Greybull, a charming town in the heart of the Bighorn Basin where you can discover area artifacts from photos to fossils at the Greybull Museum and the Bighorn Basin Geoscience Center, and learn about brave firefighting efforts at the Museum of Flight and Aerial Firefighting. Your accommodations for the evening are in a century-old traditional brick hotel.

Get ready to step back in time on Day Four – all the way back to the Jurassic Period – when you stop at the Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite to explore hundreds of perfectly preserved dinosaur tracks. As you make your way back to Sheridan, pause in Dayton for a tour of the Hans Kleiber Studio Museum, which pays homage to a noted local artist who found inspiration in the natural beauty of the Bighorn Mountains. From there, we wish you a safe passage if you're continuing your journey on another Wyoming Scenic Byway, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



## DAY ONE



### **Sheridan**

Expansive western history right out of the movies, dramatic mountain vistas, new world comforts, and wide-open spaces define this city named after Union Civil War General Philip Sheridan. Founded in 1882 after a series of clashes with Native Americans, the arrival of the railroad in 1892 and the discovery of coal stimulated growth. In that era, the town's social activity centered around the bars, pool halls and brothels where outlaws made history. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody made the Sheridan Inn his headquarters for tryouts for his Wild West show. Set against the magnificent backdrop of the Bighorn Mountains, Sheridan now offers modern hospitality with old west vibes. In fact, *True West Magazine* ranked Sheridan as the number one Top Western Town. The downtown's historic buildings have been rebuilt and repurposed to house galleries, boutiques, shops, restaurants, and more.

### **Museum at the Bighorns**

The Museum at the Bighorns makes a priority of promoting a greater understanding of the American West and exploring history through the ears and eyes of the men and women who settled Sheridan County. Exhibits feature the hearty ranchers, railroaders, miners, and soldiers, all of whom arrived from around the world to settle in the shadow of the Bighorn Mountains.

850 Sibley Circle, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-675-1150, T-Sat May-Aug  
9AM-5PM, Sept-Oct 1PM-5PM, Adult \$6

### **Trail End State Historic Site**

This 1908 Flemish Revival style historic home, was built by Wyoming cattleman, banker, governor, and U.S. Senator, John B. Kendrick. Trail End elegantly displays different aspects of Wyoming's rich and colorful history in authentically furnished rooms surrounded by finely manicured lawns,

400 Clarendon Avenue, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-674-4589, April-May/Sept-Dec 1PM-4PM, June-Aug 9AM-6PM, Adults \$8



## **The Brinton Museum**

Connecting the past, present, and future of the American West and showcasing each in collections of unique and engaging artwork, the Quarter Circle A Ranch encompasses 620 acres also designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area with gardens and outdoor sculptures. Exhibits in the Historic Brinton Ranch House feature original watercolors, oils, pen and ink drawings, sculptures, and historic documents in their original setting. The Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building highlights founder Bradford Brinton's eclectic and extensive collections of his favorite artist's work, including Edward Borein etchings, hand-colored letters, and monotypes, the largest collection of Hans Kleiber art in existence, Gollings oils and drawings, and the Gallatin Collection of Plains Indian Native American art. All together, they comprise one of the most significant collections of Western and Native American art in the Rocky Mountain West. Enjoy indoor and outdoor dining with 180-degree views of the Bighorn Mountains.

239 Brinton Road, Big Horn, WY, 82833, 307-672-3173, May 31-September 5  
9:30AM-5PM, Free





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**The Mill Inn** 2161 Coffeen Avenue, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-672-6401 This historic property, once the Sheridan Flouring Mills, milling flour in the in the early 1890s, has been transformed into a Bed and Breakfast.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Pony Bar & Grill** 3 South Gould Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-674-7000 Informal restaurant serving classic American fare, with seasonal outdoor seating.

**Wyoming's Rib & Chop House** 847 North Main Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-673-4700 Chophouse serving aged steaks, seafood, slow-cooked ribs and beer in a relaxed, casual setting.

**Silver Spur Café** 832 North Main Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-763-2474, Great local place for large breakfasts and hearty lunches.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Mercantile & Co** 39 South Main Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-620-2917 A gift shop with a local, trendy vibe.

**Crazy Woman Trading Co** 134 North Main Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-672-3939 Clothing, gifts, home decor, Wyoming made products, and more.

**High Mountain Mercantile** 130 North Main Street, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-675-1055 Western clothing, boots, and hats, Western housewares and home décor, rusty signs made in the U.S.A., an exclusive blend of coffee roasted in Sheridan, and much more.

## DAY TWO

### **Drive the Medicine Wheel Scenic Byway**

This morning you'll be leaving Sheridan on US 14/I-90, going west until US 14 leaves the Interstate at Ranchester. Further on, US 14 A, the Medicine Wheel Passage leaves US 14. Follow US 14 A to Lovell.

### **Sand Turn Interpretive Site**

Vista point offering spectacular views of the Tongue River Basin.  
US-14, Sheridan, WY, 82801, 307-674-2600

### **Connor Battlefield State Historic Site**

Now a quiet outdoor area, in summer 1865, this peaceful ground was the site of a fierce battle between General Connor's troops and an Arapahoe village from which the residents were forced to flee.

County Road 67, Ranchester, WY



## **Burgess Junction and Bighorn National Forest Visitor Center**

Enjoy a self-guided trail, exhibits, information, and beautiful scenic views.  
US-14, Dayton, WY, 82836, 307-674-2600, Memorial Day–Labor Day

## **Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area**

Part of the Bighorn National Cloud Peak Wilderness Area, which US Highway 14 passes through, the 4,100 acre Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area provides a protected range for elk and mule deer, especially in winter where food can be provided for the herds that coming down from the rolling hills.

Follow Signs on US 14



## **Bighorn Medicine Wheel**

Please keep in mind while you are exploring the Bighorn Medicine Wheel that you are walking on an active Native American sacred site, used by many different tribes before Euro-American contact to the present day. Located in the Bighorn National Forest, the structure is made of local white limestone laid upon a bedrock of sloping limestone. Archaeological evidence clearly indicates that the Medicine Wheel has been visited by Native Americans for nearly 7,000 years. Take the trail from the lower parking lot and interpreter's cabin to the Medicine Wheel, roughly 1.5 miles and a 3-mile round trip.

Lovell, WY, 82431





## **Lovell**

When Josiah Cook arrived in 1877 he built Cook's Road Ranch, as a stopping place for cowboys and ranch hands. In 1888, Cook established a post office named for well-liked rancher Henry Lovel. Nearly 20 years later, when Frank and Ellen Strong came across the Big Horn Mountains from Dayton, they acquired 720 acres of land that became the Lovell town site. They built a hotel, livery, and saloon, and sold out to Mormon settlers who arrived in 1900.

### **Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area – Cal Taggart Visitor Center**

The visitor center includes exhibits about ranches and Native American life in the area, as well as artifacts and information about regional geology, geography, the river before the dam, and a large relief map of the park and surrounding areas. Take advantage of free programs about the wild horses, canyon geology, and other local heritage.

20 U.S. 14, Lovell, WY, 82431, 307-548-5406, Daily 8:30AM-4:30PM

### **Lovell-Kane Area Museum**

While preserving the heritage of the Lovell, Kane, and Dryhead areas, the museum sponsors cultural programs to increase knowledge of the people and the historical and development of Northern Big Horn County.

354 Oregon Avenue, Lovell, WY, 82431, 307-548-2396, M-Sat 10AM-4PM





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Horseshoe Bend Motel** 375 East Main Street, Lovell, WY, 82431, 307-548-2221 Newly renovated, family owned and operated property specializing in vintage vacations with modern updates.

**Travel Lodge**, 595 East Main Street, Lovell, WY 82431, 307-548-2725  
Brand new commercial hotel with 14 rooms.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Mustang Café & BBQ** 483 Shoshone Avenue, Lovell, WY, 82431, 307-548-9370 Home cooked food in a range of choices and options from breakfast to dinner.

**The Barn Restaurant** 1782 US-310, Lovell, WY, 82431, 307-548-6050 Lunch and dinner offerings with an onsite bar and weekend specials.

**Minchow's Food Court**, 353 East Main Street, Lovell, WY 82431, 307-548-7979  
Mexican and subs.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Queen Bee Gardens** 244 East Main Street, Lovell, WY, 82431, 800-225-7553 Mouthwatering confections such as Pecan Pearls, Honeymoons, Truffles, English Toffee, and more.

## DAY THREE



### **Greybull**

Greybull takes its name from a local Native American legend that claimed a very revered great albino buffalo once roamed the area which they considered a sign from the Great Spirit. Native American arrowheads, fossils and semiprecious stones can be found around town. The Greybull Visitor Center has a host of information about the area and beyond, so don't hesitate to ask for information or recommendations.

521 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2100, M-F 9AM-4PM

### **Greybull Museum**

This museum houses war memorabilia, Native American artifacts, antique dishes, cookware, fossils, photos and large ammonite fossils, which date from the Mesozoic era when the Greybull area was under a large inland sea.

325 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2444, M,W & F 1PM-4PM,  
Free

## **Bighorn Basin Geoscience Center**

Dedicated to the display of the northern Bighorn Basin's natural resources, the center includes the Museum of Ancient Life displaying fossils in their appropriate geologic context and reproductions in the context of the environment that was prevalent in the timeframe the animals existed. The museum also features a 40-foot mural depicting the landscape, flora, and fauna of the Bighorn Basin 150 million years ago, enhanced with a display of actual fallen trees, rocks, and plantings. Be sure to watch the movie about first dig in the Basin, and touch a few of the fossils. 534 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2259, M-F 10AM-4PM



## **Museum of Flight and Aerial Firefighting**

Preserving the history of Aerial Firefighting, the museum displays many types of aircraft and fire retardant drop systems have been utilized to combat forest fires since the late 1920s.

2534 Hiller Lane, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2100, mid-May to Oct  
M-Sat 9AM-5PM





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**The Historic Hotel Greybull** 600 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-202-0329

This 1916 hotel has been lovingly restored to its previous grandeur to offer up true western hospitality.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Speakeasy Steakhouse** 600 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-202-0329 Featuring special recipe prime rib, ribeye steaks, seafood, pasta, and homemade desserts.

**The Tippy Cow** 540 1st Avenue South, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2007 Daily American specials in a friendly western atmosphere.

**Lisa's Western Cuisine & Spirits** 200 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-4765 Authentic Western and Southwestern Cuisine in a great setting near the Greybull River.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Big Horn Antiques and Gifts** 1336 North 6th Street, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2023 Take a stroll down memory lane as you browse antiques, gifts, and one-of-a-kind items.

**Crazy Woman Trading Post**, 529 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY 82426, 307-765-2916

**Wyoming Scene**, 513 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY 82426, 307-622-034

## DAY FOUR



### **Red Gulch Dinosaur Track Site**

Featuring hundreds of dinosaur tracks, this assemblage of fossil dinosaur footprints was discovered in 1997. It is the largest site in Wyoming, and one of only a few worldwide from the Middle Jurassic Period (160 million to 180 million years old). The site features a boardwalk, interpretive signs, picnic tables, benches, and trails. Travel approximately eight miles east of Greybull WY on US Highway 14 to the Red Gulch/Alkali National Back Country Byway turnoff. Head south on that Byway approximately five miles, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-347-5100

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**J.L. Blair Saddlery** 577 Highway 14, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-358-3232 Building the finest in custom saddles and hand built leather goods.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Shell Store and Taphouse**, 219 Main Street, Shell, WY, 82441, 307-765-2322  
Locally brewed beers, burgers, salads, wraps and homemade pastries.



## **Dayton**

Founded in 1882, fertile land and abundant water attracted many ranchers and farmers to the area. Timber harvested in the surrounding mountains was hewn into railroad ties and floated to Dayton via a wooden flume. This very progressive community elected Wyoming's first female mayor, Susan Wissler, in 1911 and during World War II saw the community protected by an all-woman volunteer fire department. Wyoming's first rodeo was held here in the 1890s.

## **Hans Kleiber Studio Museum**

This rustic cabin studio is dedicated to the legacy of German-born artist Hans Kleiber, known as the “Etcher Laureate of the Big Horns,” and poet, naturalist, Forest Ranger, and a self-taught intaglio (etching) printmaker. Many of his works featuring the outdoors are on display in the museum as well as displayed in many other galleries. He received the Silver Medal from The Printmakers Society and was given a special showing at the Smithsonian National Museum in Washington, DC.

605 Main Street, Dayton, WY, 82836, 307-751-8216, W-F 10AM-6PM, Free

