The Snowy Range Scenic Byway (Wyoming Highway 130) is a scenic drive through the jaw-dropping vistas of the Snowy mountain range and Medicine Bow Peak, the highest mountain peak in southern Wyoming. This scenic road trip offers a detour from Interstate 80, bringing visitors unforgettable alpine views.

This drive is an iconic experience typically open from late May to mid-November, at which point the byway becomes a haven for snowmobilers and skiers alike. In any season, the area is a fantastic way to experience Wyoming's wildlife, high alpine lakes, towering peaks, and wild Wyoming history.

Adventure abounds in the Snowy Range, with countless opportunities for adventures and scenery. Activities include camping, fishing, hiking, biking, climbing, wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and cabin getaways in hideaways throughout the mountains.

History
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, it was designated as the nation’s second Scenic Byway. Once completed, it became known as the “Great Skyroad.” The Byway is the second-highest mountain pass in Wyoming. The quartzite peaks are estimated to be two billion years old, with even older rocks existing beneath them. 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 Ute tribes all frequented the area. From the forests they gathered prime lodgepole pine wood 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. This is how the name "Medicine Bow" came to be. 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 a variety of look-out points where visitors can stop to appreciate the panoramic views along the Snowy Range.

Explore the Snowy Range Scenic Byway
The official flower of the state of Wyoming, the Indian Paintbrush symbol was adopted by the Scenic Byway program and appears on roadside signs all across the state.
Patches of snow cover Medicine Bow Peak while brightly colored wildflowers display the diversity of Wyoming’s alpine ecosystems.

1. Big Hollow (Deflation Basin)
   The Big Hollow is a wind-eroded deflation basin located to the west of Laramie. It is the largest deflation basin in North America, and the second-largest wind-eroded depression in the world. As you drive, you will recognize it as a deep valley along the south side of Highway 130 just west of the airport. During the Pleistocene, the Big Hollow was actually a hill composed of soft sedimentary bedrock. Wind continued to erode the bedrock until the former hill became lower than the river channels which once flowed around it, called “topographic reversal”. The Big Hollow is an undrained basin, and is 11 miles (18 km) long, 4 miles (6.4 km) wide, and up to 200 feet (61 m) deep.

2. Centennial, Wyoming
   Centennial was founded in 1876. Attractions include a local museum, lively eateries, frequent live music, lodging, rustic cabins, gifts, and historic buildings that maintain their old western charm.

14. Riverside and Encampment, Wyoming
   After 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, as well as the entrance to Battle Pass Scenic Byway through the Sierra Madre range to the west. Lodging, meals, gas, gifts and western style saloons are all accessible roadside in each town. Highway 230 south from Riverside returns to Laramie if driving the byway as a loop.

15. Saratoga, Wyoming
   To the north just a few miles is the town of Saratoga, home to natural hot springs situated along the North Platte River. This quaint community houses the historic Wolf Hotel, restaurants, gift shops, art galleries, and a golf course. While there, be sure to stop at the Hobo Hot Springs, a mineral spring free and open 24 hours a day, year-round. Highway 130 continues along the North Platte River. This quaint community houses the historic Wolf Hotel, restaurants, gift shops, art galleries, and a golf course. While there, be sure to stop at the Hobo Hot Springs, a mineral spring free and open 24 hours a day, year-round. Highway 130 continues along the North Platte River.

### Snowy Range Hiking Trails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiking Trails</th>
<th>Distance (Miles)</th>
<th>Elevation</th>
<th>Gain</th>
<th>Difficulty Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Fork</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9,900'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheep Lake</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>10,300'</td>
<td>1300 M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Glacier Lakes</td>
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<td>11,000'</td>
<td>200 M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Gap</td>
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<td>Shelf Lakes</td>
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<td>Deep Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quealy Lake</td>
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<td>100 M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagner Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<td>900 E</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine Bow Peak</td>
<td>5.33</td>
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<td>1600 D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dipper Lake</td>
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<td>1400 D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart Lake</td>
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<td>Lake Marie Falls</td>
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<td>Tipple</td>
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<td>500 E</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Cr. Canyon</td>
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<td>11,580'</td>
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<td>Silver Lake</td>
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<td>Meadow Falls</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>10,400'</td>
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### Snowy Range Peak Area Map

- Paved Road
- Gravel/Dirt Road or 4WD
- Hiking Trails
- Picnic Areas
- Campgrounds
- Restrooms

**Map Key**

**Scale**

1. North Fork
2. Sheep Lake
3. Lost Glacier Lakes
4. North Gap
5. Shelf Lakes
6. Deep Lake
7. Quealy Lake
8. Vagner Lake
9. Lakes
10. Medicine Bow Peak
11. Dipper Lake
12. Heart Lake
13. Lake Marie Falls
14. Tipple
15. Miner’s Cabin
16. French Cr. Canyon
17. Silver Lake
18. Meadow Falls
the north is Brown’s Peak, and to the east, Sheep Mountain and the Laramie Range.

9. Snowy Range Observation Point
As the road curves just past Libby Flats, on the west side of the road is another observation area giving fantastic views of the Snowy Range. It makes a great group photo opportunity, and is also the location of the Miner’s Cabin Trailhead. Out of operation since the 1920s, the trail passes old mining equipment and a nearby miner’s cabin from the Red Mask Mine. Interpretive signs along the trail describe these sites and identify the unique vegetation that has adapted to the mountain climate.

10. Mirror Lake and Lake Marie
Below the summit are the must-see picturesque beauties of Mirror Lake, and its sister, Lake Marie. Both lakes are glacier-fed and on a clear day, visitors can see the Wyoming sky reflected on the surface. Because of their incredible beauty, these lakes are frequented by artists and photographers. An accessible paved walking trail joins the two lakes for incredible views, as well as additional trailheads for Medicine Bow Peak and Lookout Lake. Across from the Lake Marie parking area are the trailheads for Medicine Bow Peak and Lookout Lake. An easily accessible paved walking trail joins these sites and identify the unique vegetation that has adapted to the mountain climate.

11. Silver Lake Overlook
On your way around the mountain, a pullout on the south side of the road offers a spectacular view of Silver Lake and the range to the south. A steep trail leads down to the lake and to the beautiful Meadow Falls below. 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.

12. 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 sign gives visitors a glimpse into the world of the local beaver population. 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.

13. Ryan Park Campground
Ryan Park Campground is one of the largest in the national forest. It was named after the historic internment camp also known as Ryan Park. The camp was built to house German and Italian prisoners during World War II and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. If returning to Centennial and Laramie, this is the final destination.

4. 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 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 and campgrounds on the north end of the Snowy Range.

5. Green Rock Picnic Area
Green Rock 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 beavers, deer, and moose are frequently spotted. 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.

6. Brooklyn Lake Road
Continuing west on the Scenic Byway is the turnout to Brooklyn Lake. An excursion down this road leads to a campground and several lakes that are easily accessed by automobile with views of the Range. Saint Alban’s Chapel, a small open-air venue near Little Brooklyn Lake, is a frequent site of weddings and church services in July and August.

7. Sugarloaf Recreational Area
As the altitude increases, a definite shift in the vegetation marks the turnoff for the Sugarloaf Recreational Area. The gravel road ends at a trailhead which leads to over eighty alpine and glacial lakes, as well as Sugarloaf Mountain (11,398 ft.) and Medicine Bow Peak (12,013 ft.), both popular destinations for adventurous hikers. Easily accessible are Libby and Lewis Lakes, perfect photogenic spots for fishing or a picnic.

8. Libby Flats
The highest point on the Snowy Range Scenic Byway, Libby Flats, is over 10,000 feet above sea level. From the scenic observation area, a breathtaking view of several mountain ranges cascades before you. To the south, the view includes Colorado’s Front Range and Rocky Mountain National Park. To the southwest is the Park Range of Routt National Forest. To the immediate west, the Snowy Range, Sugarloaf Mountain, and Medicine Bow Peak tower with the Sierra Madre Mountains off in the distance. To
### Highway 130 Travel Distances

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<tr>
<td>Laramie to Centennial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centennial to Lake Marie</td>
<td>14.1 miles</td>
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<td>Lake Marie to Ryan Park</td>
<td>11.2 miles</td>
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<td>Ryan Park to Saratoga</td>
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<td>Saratoga to I-80 Walcott Jct.</td>
<td>20.3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Park to Riverside &amp; Encampment</td>
<td>25.0 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside &amp; Encampment Scenic Return to Laramie</td>
<td>87.7 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alternate Loop via WY Hwy. 230 & CO Hwy. 127**

![Map of Snowy Range National Forest](image_url)

**How to Spend a Weekend in the Snowy Range**

- **Day 1:** Visit Mirror Lake and Libby Flats, then head to Ranch Creek for a picnic. End the day at Saratoga Hot Springs.
- **Day 2:** Drive to Lake Marie and then visit Ryan Park. Spend the afternoon at Yellow-Bellied Marmot Recreation Area. In the evening, hike to Snowy Range Overlook.
- **Day 3:** Drive to Riverside & Encampment, stop at Pronghorn and Buffalo Chip, then visit Grand Encampment Museum. End the day in Laramie.