

# Show Your **Cowboy Character**

Out here in Wyoming, **Cowboy Character** is at the heart of who we are. We ask that while you visit, you follow the **Cowboy Code of the West** by following “Leave No Trace” and responsible recreation practices so that everyone can share our outdoor spaces. Follow these ten core principles as you explore our wild forests and plains:

**Live Each Day with Courage**

**Ride for the Brand**

**Always Finish What You Start**

**Talk Less & Say More**

**Take Pride in Your Work**

**Remember that Some Things Aren't for Sale (Or to Pet)**

**Do What Has to be Done**

**Know Where to Draw the Line**

**Be Tough, but Fair**

**When You Make a Promise, Keep It**



**SCAN THIS CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COWBOY CODE OF THE WEST**

## SNOWY RANGE SCENIC BYWAY



## Adventure Guide to the SNOWY RANGE MOUNTAINS

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## Exploring the Snowy Range Scenic Byway

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.

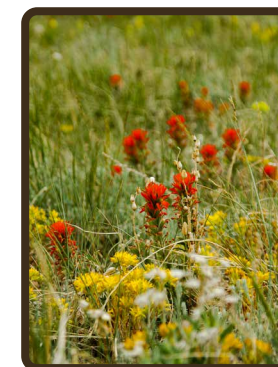
### History

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

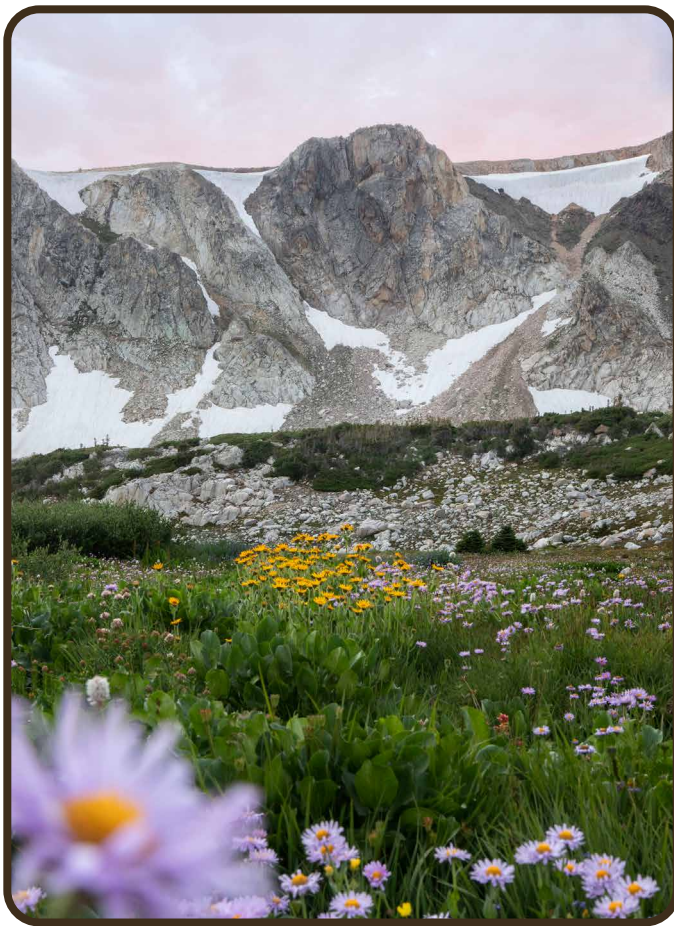
old, with even older rocks existing beneath them.

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 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. 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.



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.

# Start Your Tour

**Leaving Laramie** and traveling west on the Scenic Byway, you will drive through the high plains of the Laramie valley. Just twenty-seven miles west of Laramie, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, you'll find the historic mining town of Centennial. Be prepared before leaving town and grab enough water, snacks, and fuel for the rest of the trip.

## 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

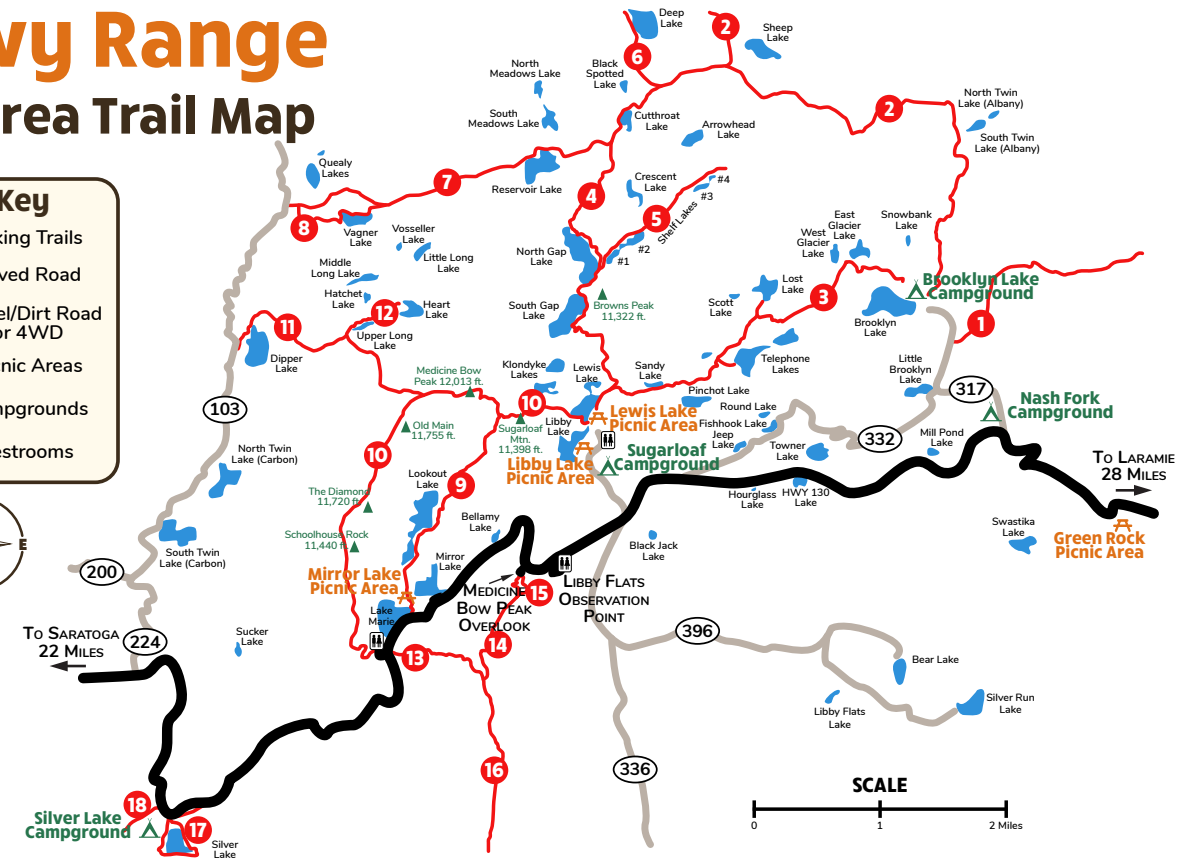
To the north just a few miles is the town of Saratoga, home to natural hot springs situated along the North Platte River. This quaint community houses the historic Wolf Hotel, restaurants, gift shops, art galleries, and a golf course. While there, be sure to stop at the Hobo Hot Springs, a mineral spring free and open 24 hours a day, year-round. Highway 130 continues on and intersects back with Interstate 80 just north of Saratoga. I-80 returns east to Laramie if driving the byway as a loop.

 <b>Snowy Range Hiking Trails</b>		Distance (Miles) One-Way	Elevation	Gain	Difficulty Level
1	North Fork	5.0	9,900'	1,300'	D
2	Sheep Lake	7.8	10,600'	1,300'	M
3	Lost Glacier Lakes	1.8	10,800'	200'	M
4	North Gap	2.3	11,000'	700'	D
5	Shelf Lakes	1.1	10,950'	120'	M
6	Deep Lake	1.77	10,500'	200'	M
7	Quealy Lake	4.1	10,500'	100'	M
8	Vagner Lake	0.5	10,500'	100'	M
9	Lakes	1.77	10,700'	900'	E
10	Medicine Bow Peak	5.33	11,200'	1,600'	D
11	Dipper Lake	3.4	10,800'	1,400'	D
12	Heart Lake	0.3	11,000'	200'	M
13	Lake Marie Falls	0.24	10,430'	40'	E
14	Tipple	4.0	10,500'	440'	M
15	Miner's Cabin	0.7	10,900'	500'	E
16	French Cr. Canyon	5.33	9,580'	1,520'	M
17	Silver Lake	1.72	10,200'	280'	M
18	Meadow Falls	2.8	10,400'	240'	M

# Snowy Range Peak Area Trail Map

**Map Key**

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



Paddleboarding at Mirror Lake.

the north is Brown's Peak, and to the east, Sheep Mountain and the Laramie Range.

### 9. Snowy Range Observation Point

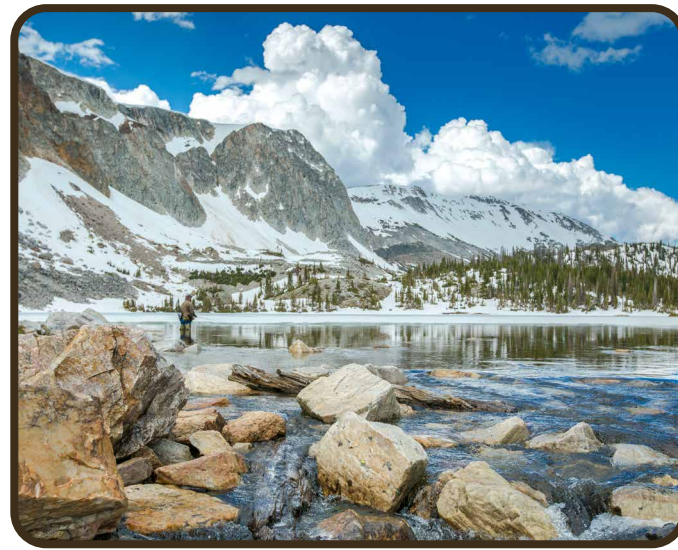
As the road curves just past Libby Flats, on the west side of the road is another observation area giving fantastic views of the Snowy Range. It makes a great group photo opportunity, and is also the location of the Miner's Cabin Trailhead. Out of operation since the 1920s, the trail passes old mining 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 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.



At 10,847 feet above sea level, Libby Flats is the highest point along the Byway.



Accessible high alpine fly fishing awaits at Lake Marie.

### 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 site 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.

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 and tells much of Centennial's mining and railroad history.

### 3. Visitor Center

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.

### 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 turnoff 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 Recreation 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

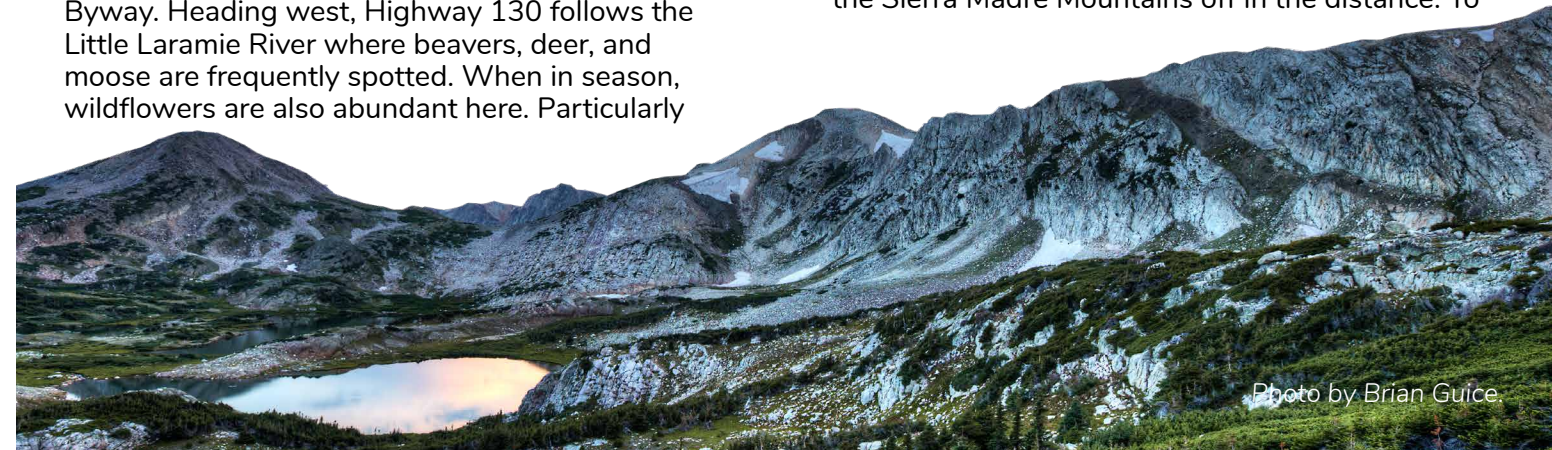


Photo by Brian Guice.



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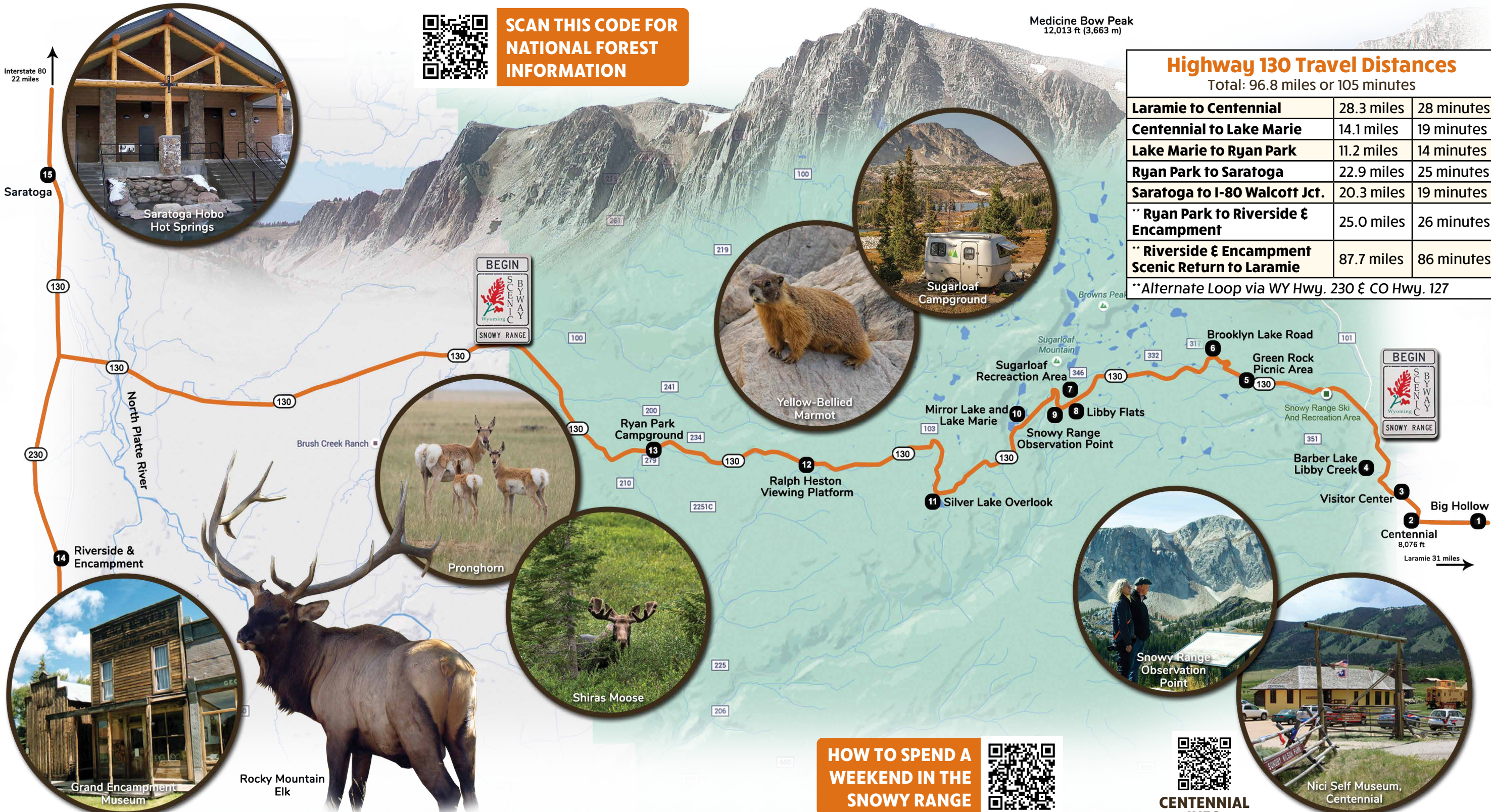
Medicine Bow Peak  
12,013 ft (3,663 m)

### Highway 130 Travel Distances

Total: 96.8 miles or 105 minutes

Laramie to Centennial	28.3 miles	28 minutes
Centennial to Lake Marie	14.1 miles	19 minutes
Lake Marie to Ryan Park	11.2 miles	14 minutes
Ryan Park to Saratoga	22.9 miles	25 minutes
Saratoga to I-80 Walcott Jct.	20.3 miles	19 minutes
** Ryan Park to Riverside & Encampment	25.0 miles	26 minutes
** Riverside & Encampment Scenic Return to Laramie	87.7 miles	86 minutes

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



HOW TO SPEND A WEEKEND IN THE SNOWY RANGE



CENTENNIAL INFO



Nici Self Museum, Centennial

Rocky Mountain Elk

Pronghorn

Yellow-Bellied Marmot

Sugarloaf Campground

Saratoga Hobo Hot Springs

Grand Encampment Museum

Interstate 80  
22 miles

Saratoga



Centennial  
8,076 ft

Laramie 31 miles