
The path is marked by hundreds of rock cairns and numerous tepee rings. Fur trappers and mountain men began using the Bad Pass Trail from the Bighorn Basin of Wyoming, through Bighorn Canyon to the bison hunting grounds of south-central Montana. The trail was located on the banks of the Bighorn River.

Washington Irving recorded Captain Bonneville's account of his 1833

process involves the formation of carbonic acid (H$_2$CO$_3$) when carbon dioxide (CO$_2$) dissolves in water.
Things To Do / Hiking

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

The Pryor Mountains

She will like this short walk into another time. A 1.6 mile loop from the road down to the ranch, through the corrals and back up a dirt road to the starting point. We think you will enjoy a 2.2 mile walk to the spring at Layout Creek, 1.1 miles after 0.2 miles burned area with small cliffs of Pennsylvanian Tensleep Sandstone on both sides of road, 1.0 miles to reach a bench and kiosk that is on the upper contact of the Madison carbonates that was an exposed erosional surface 1,000 feet below the present canyon rim. You can shout for echoes off the canyon walls at Devil’s Canyon overlook and Sullivan’s Knob trail. If you are there in fall, the aspens will be turning yellow and moderate temperatures. The blue-birds are here in great numbers and the red-shales are brilliant red. 

Caroline Lockhart was 55 years old when she bought this 160 acre ranch with a couple of buildings in 1926. At that point, she had been a correspondent and columnist for the Boston Post, Philadelphia Bulletin and Denver Post, a writer of short stories, articles and poetry. She was also a student of flutist and composer, Claude Debussy.

These rocks have been pulled up from deep below the surface of the Earth by the movements of the mountain building forces that formed the Pryor Range. These movements are a part of the great belt of mountain building forces called the Rocky Mountain fold belt that extends from the Canadian Arctic to central California. The area that the Pryors are in was a part of the ocean basin called the proto-Pacific ocean. In this ocean basin, sediment was deposited including sandstones (Tensleep Sandstone), limestones (Mississippian Madison and Ordovician Bighorn formations), and shales (Amsden Formation). These sedimentary rocks were deposited in layers and were then folded and uplifted by mountain building forces. When the rocks were uplifted above sea level they were weathered and eroded by wind, water and temperature changes. The precipitation that fell on the mountain tops was carried downhill by gravity to the bottoms of the mountains where the water was then able to move laterally along fractures in the rocks. The water carried away the material that had been weathered from the rock layers and this material was deposited farther down the hillsides and valleys. The rainwater that had collected underground also added to the amount of water that could be transported downhill. These processes have been ongoing over millions of years and have resulted in the formation of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area with its steep cliffs, deep canyons and dramatic scenery.

The Bighorn Basin was once covered with a shallow sea, and then became a desert with streams and oases. The streams were fed by the snowmelt from the mountains. The snowmelt carried the minerals and rocks downstream to the desert. The minerals were deposited along the stream banks, and the rocks were left behind. The rocks have been worn down by the forces of wind and water to form the layers of rocks that we see today. The layers of rocks were then folded and uplifted to form the mountains. The uplifted mountains were then weathered and eroded by wind, water and temperature changes to form the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. The Bighorn Basin is a unique place with a rich history.

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