

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES, FORGED YEAR ROUND IN BILLINGS

Billings' iconic landscape tempts outdoor adventure seekers with every type of terrain and countless ways to explore it. Launch a canoe, kayak or raft along the Yellowstone River for a thrilling ride, or simply stay ashore and cast a line in the world-famous waters and try to catch a legend. Trails, parks and mountain passes inspire awe when explored by foot, bike or horseback, while ancient rock faces challenge explorers to reach new heights. And when the snow falls, it's prime time to ski the exhilarating Montana slopes.

TRAILS AND PARKS

Although Billings is Montana's largest city, you don't have to wander very far to experience big, open-air adventures, as Billings also is home to hundreds of acres of city parks and more than 47 miles of walking and biking trails of varying degrees of challenge.

The stretch of trail along the Rimrocks – sandstone bluffs estimated to be at least 70 million years old – is a must-see and perfect for gaining a bird's eye vantage of the surrounding territory of mountain ranges, plains and the iconic Yellowstone River. For some of the best views, explore the **FOUR DANCES RECREATION AREA** atop the Rimrocks. The hike from the parking area includes steep drop-offs along the trail that reach 500 feet over the Yellowstone River, so be extra cautious.

While certain spots along the Rimrocks can be accessed by car or leisurely hikes, **ZIMMERMAN PARK**, **ACTON RECREATION AREA** and **PHIPPS PARK** all take the adventure up a notch, offering more challenging hiking or mountain biking options for those seeking a stronger rush of adrenaline among the sandstone formations. On clear days, five mountain ranges can be seen from the trails: Pryor, Big Horn, Bull, Crazy and Absaroka-Beartooth.

An additional 7 miles of trails along with several parks along the Yellowstone River, including **DOVER PARK**, **RIVERFRONT PARK** and **TWO MOON PARK**, are perfect for leisurely hikes and bike rides while taking in the foliage and wildlife. Pack a picnic lunch and swimsuit to spend the day under Montana's big skies and splash about in the last free-flowing river in the lower 48.

For a cave experience without the need for spelunking gear, visit **PICTOGRAPH CAVE STATE PARK** and explore three caves that showcase evidence of habitation from more than 2,000 years ago. A gentle 3/4-mile loop trail descends 45 feet providing access to three separate caves – the Pictograph, Middle and Ghost Caves. Along the trail, visitors also will encounter interpretative displays identifying and explaining the natural features, prehistoric paintings and vegetation found in the area.

THE COWBOY WAY

Saddle up and explore Billings and the surrounding Montana lands cowboy-style. Several outfitters in and around Billings offer a wide variety of horseback trips exploring the rolling plains and picturesque mountains of the region.

Family-owned and operated **BITTER CREEK OUTFITTERS** offers leisurely guided horseback tours on a 7,000-acre cattle ranch, including the area's distinctive Rimrocks, ponderosa pines and fields of wildflowers. In addition to the natural landscape, wildlife such as mule deer and wild turkeys are often visible during the journey. Bitter Creek Outfitters is a woman-owned business and has been featured on Travel Channel's Hotel Impossible and on the cover of Distinctly Montana Girl magazine.



If you're really interested in immersing in cowboy culture, check out **ELK RIVER OUTFITTERS**. In addition to trips ranging from one hour to all day in Red Lodge, MT along the picturesque Rock Creek, the Pryor Mountain Adventure is a two- to three-night horseback-riding excursion that includes homecooked meals, snacks and lodging in either a tent or cabin.

ON THE WATER

The crown jewel of Billings' water adventures is the iconic, centuries-old Yellowstone River – a perfect waterway for every type of adventure from thrilling rafting to leisurely floats in the cool water, and from picnic lunches shoreside to casting a line in the blue ribbon trout waters. The wide turns the river makes through the Billings region lends to great swimming holes as well.

The Stillwater River, which begins in the Beartooth-Absaroka wilderness and flows into the Yellowstone, is another great site for exhilarating water sports. **ADVENTURE WHITEWATER'S** trips travel down the Stillwater, meandering through a one-sided canyon with whitewater and views of Montana's mountain peaks in abundance, along with the chance to spot wildlife including jumping trout, bear, deer and other species who call this wild river region home.



For calmer waters, check out the 64-acre reservoir, **LAKE ELMO STATE PARK** - an urban playground for outdoor adventurers. Enjoy non-motorized watersports like stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking and windsurfing, or cast a line off of Roger's Pier. Recently the new Montana state record largemouth bass was caught in these waters, weighing in at 9.575 pounds.

Along with the Yellowstone, the Stillwater and Bighorn Rivers are among Montana's premier flyfishing waters. Stop in at **STILLWATER ANGLERS** - the only full-service retail fly shop in the area and hub for all fly fishing related activity in the Billings area. They can get you fit with all the gear you need (as well as the necessary license) to begin exploring Montana's top cold water trout streams.

WINTER SEASON ADVENTURES

When cool weather moves in, outdoor adventure in Billings doesn't hibernate.

RED LODGE MOUNTAIN provides visitors with a fantastic location to ski, snowboard and even snowshoe, along with bunny hills and a convenient ski school option. For more snowshoe adventures, check out Two Moon or Riverfront Park for a beautiful hike right next to the Yellowstone River. Cross country skiing is available at many of Billings' parks, and sledding at Pioneer Park is a wintertime favorite that the entire family can enjoy.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK is our region's biggest draw, and while it is busiest in the summer, winter can still provide plenty of adventure. Access to the park is restricted during the winter months, but you can still tour using a guided snowmobile or snow-coach.