

History of Wyoming's Public Lands

SWOOSH!!! Jets of hot water and steam roar up into Wyoming's skies. Geysers explode on the skyline and into the minds of the first European settlers exploring the west in the early 1800s. The beautiful landscape of northwest Wyoming attracted the attention of settlers, scientists, and presidents alike. In 1872, before Wyoming was even a state, President Ulysses S. Grant designated this remote area as a national park.



Norris Geyser Basin, Yellowstone National Park

Wyoming pioneered the first national park, first national monument, and first national forest, making this unique land a hot spot for early tourists. Yellowstone, the first national park, is home to remarkable hot springs, geysers, and wildlife. Its fame draws people worldwide to experience the breathtaking sights and natural beauty.

In 1906, the northeastern side of Wyoming became home to the first national monument. Devils Tower, a geological wonder, was handed this designation by President Theodore Roosevelt. This volcanic tower rises 867 feet from base to summit. On average, over 400,000 visitors come to hike around its base or climb its columns.

Another outdoor first for Wyoming was the Shoshone National Forest. Created in 1891, it remains one of the wildest parts of the continental United States. This forest provides chances for people to hunt, hike, camp, and fish.

Wyoming became known world-wide through Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, which sensationalized the wild West. Wyoming continues to welcome tourists who are seeking a taste of the West and take pleasure in Wyoming's extraordinary public lands. The state hosts an average of 8.5 million overnight visitors a year. These travelers and the people in Wyoming have the chance to enjoy the diverse landscape from mountains to vast grasslands.

Around half of Wyoming is public land, owned by the federal government and the State of Wyoming. This means there is an unique opportunity for people to explore. Not only does Wyoming have beautiful scenery, it offers history in various forms. In addition to the National Historic Site, Ft. Laramie National Historic Site, there are twenty-five national Historic Landmarks and two national monuments: Devils Tower and Fossil Buttes. To keep these destinations accessible, private land owners, along with state and federal agencies, such as the Game and Fish, National Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, work to provide balance in conserving these resources for future generations.

Whether enjoying Wyoming's great outdoors in the 1800s or visiting historic and recreational sites today, we can all appreciate the stewardship practiced on our public lands. In order to maintain these unique areas for current and future generations, we each have a responsibility as a steward. What role do you play as a steward of these natural resources?



3-2-1

Think about three things you learned about **stewardship**, two connections you made between **yourself and stewardship**, and one thing you **wonder** about. Record your answers below.

I learned...

① _____

② _____

③ _____

Connections...

① _____

② _____

I wonder...



