



SWEETWATER COUNTY TRAVEL & TOURISM PRESS KIT

About Sweetwater County, located halfway between Yellowstone and Canyonlands National Parks in southwest Wyoming, is home to 10,500 square miles of pure, high desert adventure. Known as “Flaming Gorge Country” the area is characterized by the 91-square-mile Flaming Gorge Lake, the famed Green River, expansive deserts and rugged mountains. Activities include camping, hiking, biking, fishing, golfing, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, hunting dinosaurs, shopping, and just plain getting away from it all. A perfect place to explore American history, Sweetwater County is also home to petroglyphs, pioneer trails and historical museums.

Getting Here **Drive:** Sweetwater County is located on highways 191 or 530 off the I-80 corridor
Fly: Salt Lake City International Airport – 2.5 hours
Denver International Airport – 5 hours
[Rock Springs-Sweetwater County Airport](#) – 7 miles east of Rock Springs

Activities

Camping	Ice Fishing
Cross-Country Skiing	Jeeping/4-Wheeling
Driving tours	Kayaking
Events	Mountain Biking
Fine arts	Museums
Fine dining	Shopping
Fishing	Sightseeing
Golf	Sledding
Hiking	Snowshoeing
Historic sites	Tubing
Hunting	Wildlife Viewing

Photos Available for download at <http://www.tourwyoming.com/adventure-gallery.html>

Online Media Center <http://www.tourwyoming.com/news-and-media/>

Social Media **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sweetwater-County-Travel-and-Tourism/63344983318>

Twitter: @SweetwaterWY

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/sweetwatertourism>

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SWEETWATER COUNTY STORY IDEAS – SUMMER

- **Make a Sweetwater County Pit Stop En Route to Yellowstone or Grand Teton National Parks**

With the open highway, endless blue skies and abundant wildlife, a family road trip to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks is among the most quintessential of American summer vacations. For many road trippers, a drive to these parks goes right through a beautiful – yet often undiscovered – corner of Wyoming, [Sweetwater County](#). Here, travelers can stretch their legs at Lake Flaming Gorge, literally trace the footsteps of early settlers by walking the most [still-visible pioneer trails](#) in the country, or check out the cool critters (wild horse herds, rare antelope and more!) of Sweetwater County.
- **Become Fascinated with Flaming Gorge Country**

Sweetwater County's backyard spans more than 10,500 square miles of rugged landscape and breathtaking scenery that includes the U.S. National Recreation Area of Flaming Gorge. Comprised of desert, national forest, mountains and a canyon-walled reservoir, [Flaming Gorge Country](#) fosters endless recreation opportunities from mild to wild. The Flaming Gorge-Green River Basin Scenic Byway is accessible from the towns of Rock Springs and Green River and covers 160 miles. There are hundreds of miles of hiking trails to explore the geography, vegetation and wildlife. The Flaming Gorge Reservoir's record-worthy-fish – lake trout, rainbow trout and brown trout – beckon anglers of any level to drop a line.
- **Rediscover the Wild West**

The wide open spaces of Sweetwater County bring to life the romance and mystique of the Wild West. Here, visitors can see where outlaw Butch Cassidy earned his nickname (at a butcher shop in downtown Rock Springs); pitch a tent at Hideout Canyon Boat-in Campground, which was once a hiding spot used by Butch Cassidy and his gang; cheer on modern day cowboys and cowgirls at world-class rodeo events, including the National High School Finals Rodeo (the “world’s largest rodeo”); explore the area’s still-visible pioneer trails (the most in the U.S.); watch herds of wild horses run; and visit Historic South Pass, which is a cornerstone of the history of U.S. westward migration in the 19th Century.
- **Take a Scenic Drive**

Sweetwater County boasts wide-open vistas and views at every turn. Ramble across the same high deserts and rugged mountains that were once traversed by Native Americans, mountain men, pioneers and even outlaws. Scenic overlooks allow many opportunities to stretch your legs. Highways 191 and 530 encircling Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area are designated state scenic byways. In addition to the notorious untamed horses of Wyoming, big game animals like moose, elk, deer, antelope and big-horn sheep also roam free. The Flaming Gorge-Green River Basin Scenic Byway is accessible from the towns of Green River and Rock Springs via Interstate 80. The 160-mile loop dips into Utah and takes about three hours. The Pilot Butte Wild Horse Scenic Tour north of Green River is only 24 miles long – about one hour of road time, depending on how many stops you make to check out the herds of wild horses.
- **Attend a Summer Event**

Family-friendly festivals reign supreme in Sweetwater County. Here’s just a sample of what’s in store. For a full event list visit the [Sweetwater County Events Calendar](#).

 - Overland Stage Stampede Rodeo (June 5-6)
 - Flaming Gorge Days (June 25-27)
 - National High School Finals Rodeo (July 12-18)
 - Red Desert Roundup Rodeo (July 23-25)
 - Wyoming’s Big Show (July 26-August 2)
 - Sweetwater Blues N’ Brews (August 8)
 - River festival (August 14-15)
 - Run with the Horses Marathon (August 15)
 - Sweetwater Downs Horse Racing (August 21-25)
 - Race on the Rock (August 29)

SWEETWATER COUNTY STORY IDEAS – FALL & WINTER

- **Visit One of Sweetwater County's Museums**

From the open plains where Wyoming's wild horses run to the historical sites where their dinosaur predecessors are offered in hulking replica, the untamed spirit of the West beckons visitors to Sweetwater County to experience touches of the past. Sweetwater County's [three museums](#) offer a comprehensive study of the area's fossils, photos and artifacts in a range of permanent and rotating exhibits.

- **Rock Springs Historical Museum:** Showcases the area's coal mining and multinational heritage, but the largest artifact is the building itself, constructed in 1894.
- **Sweetwater County Historical Museum:** Set on one of the few historical sites still preserved in the state, this museum offers snapshots of the county's history through its large photograph collection.
- **WWCC Natural History Museum:** Located at Western Wyoming Community College in Rock Springs this museum houses life-size dinosaur replicas, fish and plant fossils, pottery and other prehistoric artifacts.

- **View Wildlife & Fall Foliage**

Sweetwater County is home to wild horses, rare desert elk found nowhere else in the United States, and a national wildlife refuge. The landscapes in Sweetwater County range from high desert plains to colorful canyons and majestic mountains, which become even more multi-hued in the fall. The blazing autumn colors play against the plentiful wildlife in their natural habitats for a remarkable viewing experience. Visit Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge to see a variety of bird species, deer, moose and other animals. Take the Pilot Butte Wild Horse Scenic Loop Tour for a glimpse of the wild horse herds that call Sweetwater County home. Head to Killpecker Sand Dunes to see the largest migratory herd of pronghorn antelope in the lower 48 states and a rare desert elk herd, said to be the world's largest, which live in Sweetwater County's Red Desert.

- **Ice Fish for a Big Catch**

Sweetwater County is one of the region's premier ice fishing destinations. Ice fishing on the Flaming Gorge can be very good for burbot and rainbows, beginning in mid-December. Anglers also target lake trout through the ice. Smaller lake trout range freely and are often caught by anglers fishing for rainbows. Burbot were illegally introduced into the Green River drainage in Wyoming. These fish have made their way into the Gorge. Burbot compete with other native fish, but they also provide great ice fishing. Burbot look somewhat like a cod, and they get active under the ice during the winter.

- **Attend a Winter Event**

Visitors can put winter blues "on ice" in Sweetwater County with events that take advantage of the cold weather and the area's signature body of water, Lake Flaming Gorge.

- **Burbot Bash (January)**
The Burbot Bash is an ice fishing derby aimed at ridding the Flaming Gorge of the predatory burbot fish, which has recently made its way into the reservoir and threatens the local fishery. There is \$10,000 up for grabs in prize money for categories like catching the most burbot, as well as the largest and smallest fish caught.
- **Crystal Classic, February (February)**
Snowflakes fly and bitter temperatures blanket Wyoming, but in the midst of it all pristine sculpted ice creates a dream-like atmosphere. The weekend of winter fun is at Green River Expedition Island and includes lights, music, decorations, fireworks, food, professional ice sculpting and fun winter-themed competitions for all ages.