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Thank you for picking up a copy of the Saratoga Sun's 2021 SnoRag!

If you're a longtime reader of the Sun, you'll likely notice that our annual winter guide is a little different than in the past. As we did with our summer guide, Platte Valley Adventures, we decided to take things in a different direction this year. Similar to our summer guide, our hope is that you will take us along in whatever winter adventure you go on.

While there are plenty of things to do in the Valley in the summer, there are also a number of activities for visitors in the winter months as well. The Platte Valley is home to two blue ribbon fisheries, the North Platte River and the Encampment River, during the summer but is also home to one of the earliest and longest-running ice fishing derbies in Wyoming! Indeed, the Valley hosts a number of winter events that draw people from near and far. Many of these

events, such as the 38th Annual Saratoga Ice Fishing Derby, have long been a major feature of cold weather activities. Other events, such as the 5th Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races, have injected new life into the winter tourism that Saratoga and the surrounding areas see. Meanwhile, events such as the 13th Annual Wyoming Open Pool Tournament capitalize on one of Saratoga's most popular winter pastimes and brings in both professional and amateur billiard players.

If hanging out in and around Saratoga isn't what you're looking for, the Valley is surrounded by 2.2 million acres of National Forest that provide plenty of options. Snowmobiling, snowbiking, crosscountry skiing and snowshoeing are all popular pastimes in the area. In here, you'll find maps for snowmobile trails, courtesy of the Wyoming State Parks Trails Program, as well as trails for crosscountry skiing and snowshoeing. Before heading out on your

adventures, grab a warm drink or a hearty breakfast from one of our local eateries. When you return from a day on the ice or in the snow, a number of fine restaurants provide an option for a warm meal—and perhaps a cold drink—to bring an end to your winter adventure.

Included in the SnoRag are details on the events mentioned above, as well as many others that take place in the Valley. As of press time, all of these events had been scheduled to take place but we encourage readers to reach out to event organizers to determine if they have been postponed or cancelled due to potential state health orders. You can also reach out to the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce at 307-326-8855 or the Saratoga Sun at 307-326-8311 for more information closer to the date of the events.

Stay warm and stay safe!

Saratoga Sun

Established 1888



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MEMBER 2020

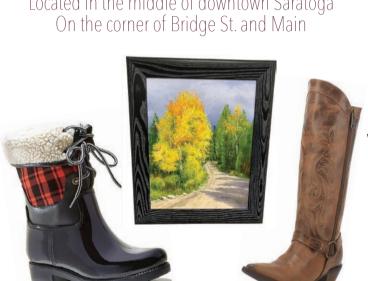
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Platte Valley December Events



Christmas Parade and Winter Wonderland

Saratoga's annual Lighted Christmas Parade will see some changes this year but with the same intention of bringing joy to children of all ages. While, in the past, the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce had organized the parade it will be organized by the Valley Service Organization this year.

The parade will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 12. The parade route will begin at the intersection of River and Constitution Avenue, venture south on River Street to loop around Kathy Glode Park for Saratoga Care Center residents and then head north on River Street to downtown Saratoga. From there, the parade will turn head west on Bridge Avenue and south on 2nd Street to end at the Platte Valley Community Center.

The theme for this year's parade,

due to the events of 2020, is "It's time to lighten up."

Businesses, organizations and individuals are asked to call Judy Hammel at 307-710-2440 by 5 p.m. on December 11 if they would like to enter in the parade. Line-up will begin at 5 p.m. on Saturday. The parade announcer and entertainer each year is local celebrity and personality Teense Willford.

Immediately after the parade, you can take the kids to the Valley Service Organization's Winter Wonderland in the Great Hall of the Platte Valley Community Center.

Santa Claus and his lovely wife will be available in Santa's House. Children of all ages can spend a few moments on Santa's lap and share their wish list. While waiting, refreshments will be served.

If you have any questions, you can contact organizer Judy Hammel at 307-710-2440.



Festival of the Trees
Gala and Auction

The 18th annual Festival of Trees Gala and Auction will begin at 6 p.m. on Friday, December 11 with appetizers and a cash bar at the Platte Valley Community Center. A local caterer will create the sumptuous repast for the shire. The live auction begins at 7 p.m. when auctioneer James "Jimmy" Hinkle will be on hand to keep things reined in if it gets out of control, all in the name of raising funds.

"We encourage community support and shopping at home every day, but especially during the Christmas season," says Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce CEO Leanna Jones. "It also brings attention to the generosity the communities have shown for this event for the past decade. More than \$41,000 has been donated back to organizations such as preschools, senior centers and local emergency medical founds.

In 2019, the Festival of the Trees raised \$6,000 three local non-profit organizations and the Chamber of Commerce. Approximately 150 people attended the event.

This year, there will be a small change to the event as trees will be placed in the Hall of Windows outside the Great Hall beginning on December 7 for people to view from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. while enjoying hot cider and cookies.

Tickets for the Gala are \$35 per person if purchased immediately from the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce office at 210 West Elm Street in Saratoga. No tickets will be available at the door since it often sells out. Purchases for tickets should be made by December 1. For more information, please call the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce at 307-326-8855 or visit www.saratogachamber.info.



Saratoga Hot Springs





Whether you've been out all day or are just nursing aching joints, there's no better medicine at day's end than a relaxing soak in Saratoga's mineral hot springs. Located along the North Platte River, the hot springs are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are also free to the public.

The springs were originally used by area Native American tribes, the Utes, the Arapahoe and the Cheyenne, who came from far afield to enjoy the springs they believed had healing properties.

As easterners settled the area, a smallpox epidemic ravaged native communities. When the hot springs

failed to halt the disease, many natives came to view the springs as "Bad Medicine" and abandoned them.

The first pioneers had no such fears. As the springs popularity grew, local resident William Caldwell built a three-room house next to them, complete with hot tubs for weary travelers and soldiers from nearby Fort Steele. People suffering from rheumatism, blood disorders, eczema, stomach trouble, kidney problems and other ailments began flocking to Saratoga, which was originally named "Warm Springs." In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed a

stone-encircled pool and the pools continued to grow in renown.

Few today believe that the springs can cure serious diseases, but they remain a popular balm for stresses and aches. Many repeat visitors and residents swear nothing soothes like a soak.

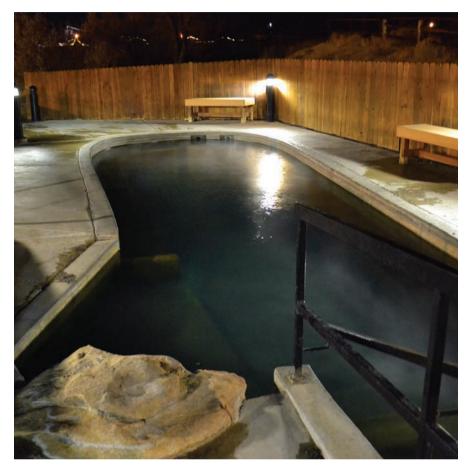
Since 1982, the hot springs have been owned and maintained by the Town of Saratoga. The town runs a heated bath house facility next to the pools with showers, toilets and a changing area.

Inside the hot pool, temperatures average around 108 degrees. For the brave, or reckless, there is a smaller pool known as "the

lobster pot" near the south end that averages 119 degrees. A recently added "not so hot pool" is usually 95-100 degrees and suits those less heat inclined.

No alcoholic beverages or glass containers are allowed in the pool area. Doctors advise visitors to avoid the pool after consuming alcohol or while smoking because the constriction of blood vessels can lead to fainting. Visitors are strongly advised to bring water with them while soaking and should exit the pool if they begin to feel lightheaded.

Not-So-Hot Pool



Hot Pool Mineral Content

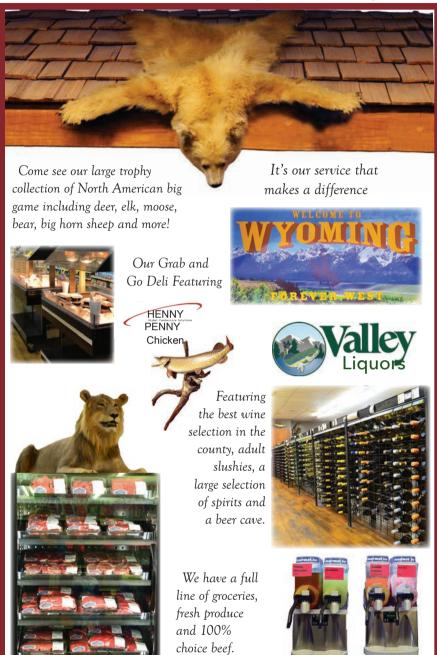
Mineral	Grains per gallon	
Silica	4.987	
Iron & Aluminum	0.227	
Lithia	trace	
Potash	6.467	
Soda	20.463	
Lime	28.067	
Magnesia	6.478	
Hydrocloric Acid	29.205	
Sulpheric Acid	17.789	
Carbonic Acid	4.665	
Less Oxygen Equivalent to Chlorine		
Total Solids	129.811	

The "Not-So-Hot" pool east of the original pool is for soakers who want a little less heat. The pool can be five to 10 degrees cooler than the main hot springs at any given

time. It is maintained at around 100 degrees and is separate from the other two pools (temperatures vary and occasionally the Not-So-Hot pool is warmer than the main pool).



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Ideal Location for Snowmachines



Avid snowmachiner and the manager of Saratoga's Polaris dealer, Ed Glode, says the Platte Valley enjoys all the qualities that make for optimal snowmobiling.

Glode likes to take his machine up to Bridger Peak, but points out there are other places to go. "We have two mountain ranges, a good trail system and we get great snow," Glode said.

Glode guessed the ratio of outof-staters to resident sledders is about 50-50.

There are over 300 miles of trails, both groomed and ungroomed, in the Snowy Range and nearly 150

miles of groomed and ungroomed trails in the Sierra Madre range.

The ideal amount of snow for sledding is 18-24 inches, Glode said. The peak season for snowmobiling has historically been in January and February, but March and April often provide a good base for sledders exploring the Snowies.

"Sledding in three feet of snow requires the group to be experienced, otherwise everybody will keep getting stuck, while four feet of snow is about the maximum for a modern sled," Glode cautioned. Like many winter sports, snowmobilers face risks like avalanches and exposure, and snowmachiners are encouraged to wear personal locator beacons.

Beacons sold in the Platte Valley will communicate with the Search and Rescue in this area.

"The evolution of the industry from the early 2000's, the high performance new machines were getting into nitrous oxide and custom-built engines. But the hot stuff now is the sleds are lighter, the suspension built better –and using turbo," Glode said explaining how newer machines are better at

taking hills. "The turbo charger is better for the high altitudes we have versus the midwest."

Glode said there is another snow toy getting more and more popular. "Another big buzz thing that has been growing is snow bikes," Glode said. "It is a dirt bike with a ski on the front, with a track system on the back."

Snowmobilers are also reminded the Snowy Range Ski Area, located on Highway 130, can only be accessed by way of snowmobile if coming from the west side of the Snowy Range.



The Safer Snowmachine



Take these items on your outdoor excursion



Cell Phone

A cell phone that uses the main provider in the area you are going to be

In many rural areas large cellular providers do not have coverage while smaller providers such as Union Wireless do.

Full Face Helmet/Clothing

A full-face helmet designed for snowmobiling can help protect against facial injuries. Proper clothing should be waterproof and wind proof, Dress in insulated layers



including boots, snow pants, snow jacket, long underwear and gloves.

Extra Fuel:

Can be used when you run out of fuel in your machine or to start a fire in a survival situation.



Extra Batteries For any electronic devices you are carrying. Also make sure any rechargeable devices are fully charged.

GPS/Maps/Spot GPS

Global Positioning System (GPS) unit that can provide your location. Most newer units will allow you to upload maps of the area you plan to visit. Maps help get a better terrain overview. Maps of the National

BLM lands can Forests and be purchased from local districts or ranger sporting goods retailers.

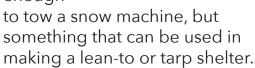
A SPOT GPS is basically a satellite texting device that can send vour

location to emergency management personnel via satellite.

Emergency Avalanche Locator Beacons are also available at area sporting goods retailers. The devices emit a radio signal to help rescuers locate avalanche victims.

Rope

Does not need to be strong enough

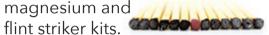




Fire starting kit

Generally waterand wind-proof matches and a strikina device in a water-tight case, there are also

magnesium and





Extra Food & Water

Enough food and water to survive 24 hours or more in the wilderness.



Come-along is used to free a stuck snow machine when no assistance is available.

Tow Strap should be strong enough for another snow machine to help free a stuck machine.

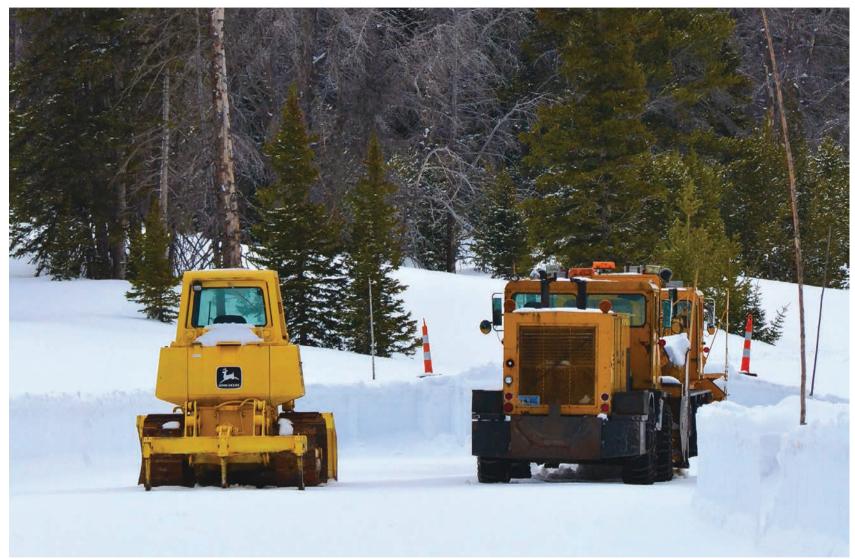


dig out a snow machine or make a snow cave for shelter.

Trail Preparation







For those looking to hit the trails this winter, the Good Times Valley, nestled between two mountain ranges, is a great place to start an adventure on hundreds of miles of trails.

The trails available are among the best in the nation, with the Snowy Range trails having been honored as top 15 trails for several years running by SnoWest Magazine.

There are over 300 miles of trails meandering throughout the Snowy Range, with most of those groomed by one of several agencies or organizations, including Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Division of State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails, the U.S. Forest Service and local snowmobile clubs. Maintenance on the trails begins before skiing and snowmobiling begin, with work crews staking and grooming trails early in the season.

During the season, trail maintenance, such as tree branch trimming and removal of fallen timber as well as general grooming, are done during nighttime hours to avoid interfering with those enjoying the trails. Grooming at night also

allows the trails to freeze, making for a safer experience and helping ensure the trails last longer.

Many trails also feature warming huts (small structures that have a wood stove installed) allowing trail users to stop in, start a fire and get a bit of warmth during the day's activities on the trails.

On the western side of the Snowy Range, there are a wide range of services available in the towns of Saratoga, Riverside and Encampment including sporting goods retailers, general provisioners and snowmobile sales, repair and rental services.

On the western side of the Valley, the Sierra Madre mountain range also offers visitors a network of nearly 150 miles of trails, with about 50 miles groomed and the rest ungroomed. In the Sierra Madres there are no services available, but the nearby towns of **Encampment and Riverside offer** many services to visitors.

For more information about the trails, see the maps inside this guide on pages 15-20, visit the website at wyotrails.state.wy.us or pick up a map anywhere snowmobile equipment is sold locally.



Snowmachine Safety Tips



- 1. Make sure someone knows what area you will be snowmachining in and what time you are returning. Don't deviate from your plan.
- 2. Know where you are. Have a GPS, be able to use it and have maps that you know how to read as a backup.
- 3. Don't snowmachine alone. Don't separate from others in your group. Avoid areas prone to avalanches.
- 4. Try to have a cell phone that uses a local carrier. Turn off your cell phone when snowmachining—this will save battery life. Turn your phone on only when you need to use it.
- 5. Emergency situations can occur at any time. Always





be prepared to spend the night, if necessary. The most important thing for overnight stays is the ability to start a fire.

- 6. Wear proper clothing (wind-proof, waterproof and insulated). A full-face helmet is recommended for any snowmachine activity.
- 7. Bring enough extra food and water for the people on the trip to eat and stay hydrated for a day.
- 8. Make sure your machine is in good running condition before you go snowmachining. Watch the fuel level in your snowmachine and, if possible, carry extra gasoline with you.
- Check the weather forecast for the area you plan to be in. While snowmachining, watch changes in the weather and know weather conditions can deteriorate very quickly.
- 10. If you get lost or stranded, remain calm and don't panic. Develop a survival plan using the resources you have available to you. If you set off an emergency beacon, stay at your location until emergency responders arrive.



Winter Survival Basics

d save your life

This information could save your life

ATTENTION: Hikers, Skiers, Campers, Fishermen, Hunters and Snowmachiners

Tell a neighbor, friend or relative where you are going, how long you will be there and when you will come back.

Follow these rules:

- 1. Do not travel at night.
- 2. Stop, make camp, REST!
- 3. Learn to use your survival gear, TAKE YOUR TIME!
- 4. If your group is lost, stay together. If you must separate, make plans for frequent contact.
- 5. Familiarize yourself with the area from a map, and always carry the map and a compass with you.
- 6. Make camp near a water source. Water is more important than food!
- 7. Know the distress sign: 3 signals repeated at regular intervals. Use a whistle and save your voice!
- 8. Be weather wise. Wetness and wind induce body heat loss and reduce your chances of survival. Fog changes the landscape and hides landmarks.
- 9. Have the proper equipment such as boots, suitable clothing and a survival kit just in case!
- 10. Be in good physical shape for the trip that you plan. Don't over exert yourself!
- 11. A fire at night not only keeps you warm, but provides a signal for searchers.
- 12. Don't panic! Take your time, your life will be in your own hands. Make sure it is in good hands!
- 13. Think! Your brain is your best tool for survival!!

ONCE YOU ARE LOST. . . It is too late to make up a survival kit

NOW is the time to make up such a kit. Carry it with you, place it with your outdoor gear. Make it a habit, like carrying your gun, fishing rod or camera. The purpose of this kit is to keep you alive through one or several nights in severe weather!

THE THREE ESSENTIALS FOR SURVIVAL ARE: HEAT, SHELTER AND WATER

BASIC SURVIVAL KIT

Map and compass
Saw or hatchet
Waterproof matches
Whistle
Cord (for lashing)
Tea bags (3+)
Space Blanket
Knife
9x12 Plastic tarp
Candle stubs
Metal container with lid
Sugar cubes (6+)

THIS PUBLICATION

Bouillon cubes (6+)

USE OF BASIC SURVIVAL KIT

PLASTIC TARP AND CORD: Raincoat ●
windbreak ● ground cloth ● shelter
METAL CONTAINER WITH LID: container for
vour small survival items ● drinking cup

your small survival items ● drinking cup cooking utensil ~ Boil in can, fry on lid

WATERPROOF MATCHES, CANDLE STUBS &

TOOLS: Cut slivers of wood and use to build a teepee over a candle stub

Light the candle stub with dry match ● Works well on wet wood!

(Better 10 matches and one candle than 100 matches and no candle)

BOUILLON CUBES: Add to hot water in metal container on fire. The broth will provide some energy, salt, flavor, and much contentment. **SUGAR CUBES:** A little quick energy • Goes

great in your tea!

TEA BAGS: Nothing tastes better when you are cold and tired!

BASIC FIRST AID KIT

6 Band Aids ● 1, 2-inch Ace Bandage ● 2 Triangular bandages • 12 Aspirin/Tylenol ● 1 Sunscreen ● 1 roll of waterproof adhesive tape ● 2 two-inch compress bandages ● 1 four-inch compress bandages ● 1 antiseptic agent ● 1 burn ointment

• 1 two-inch roll of gauze bandage





Platte Valley Community Center I 210 W. Elm Street I Saratoga, WY 82331 I 307-326-7822

Welcome to The Platte Valley Community Center

The Community Center is the perfect place to host your next event: The Center has plenty of room for art shows, wedding receptions and performing arts that need a quality auditorium with comfortable seating and splendid acoustics.

We also welcome meetings and formal presentations and have a variety of services and spaces to accommodate anything you plan.

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I'm a Grumpy Senior Wednesday (10% Off)



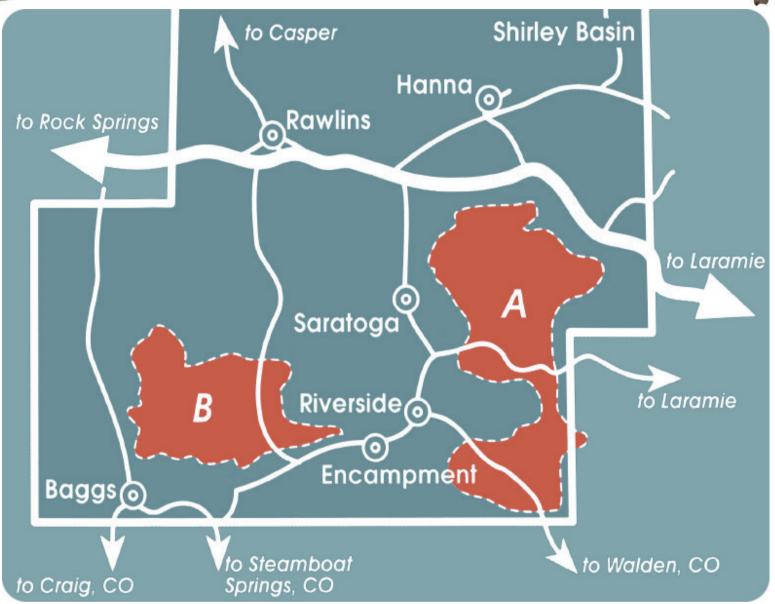








Trails in the Valley



The Platte Valley offers 472 miles of trails to explore in two separate areas. The skill level needed in these areas for the skier/snowmobiler ranges from novice and intermediate to extreme expert.

Area A: The largest and most developed area. Spans the width of the Snowy Range and a good portion of its length. This area is accessible from Saratoga, Riverside and Encampment. (See map on page 16 & 17. Northern Detail Map on page 18, Southern Detail Map on page 19.)

Total miles: 324 Groomed: 174 Ungroomed: 150 See pages 16-19 for more detail. There is a possibility of logging activity on the northern end of Snowy Range trails. Use caution.

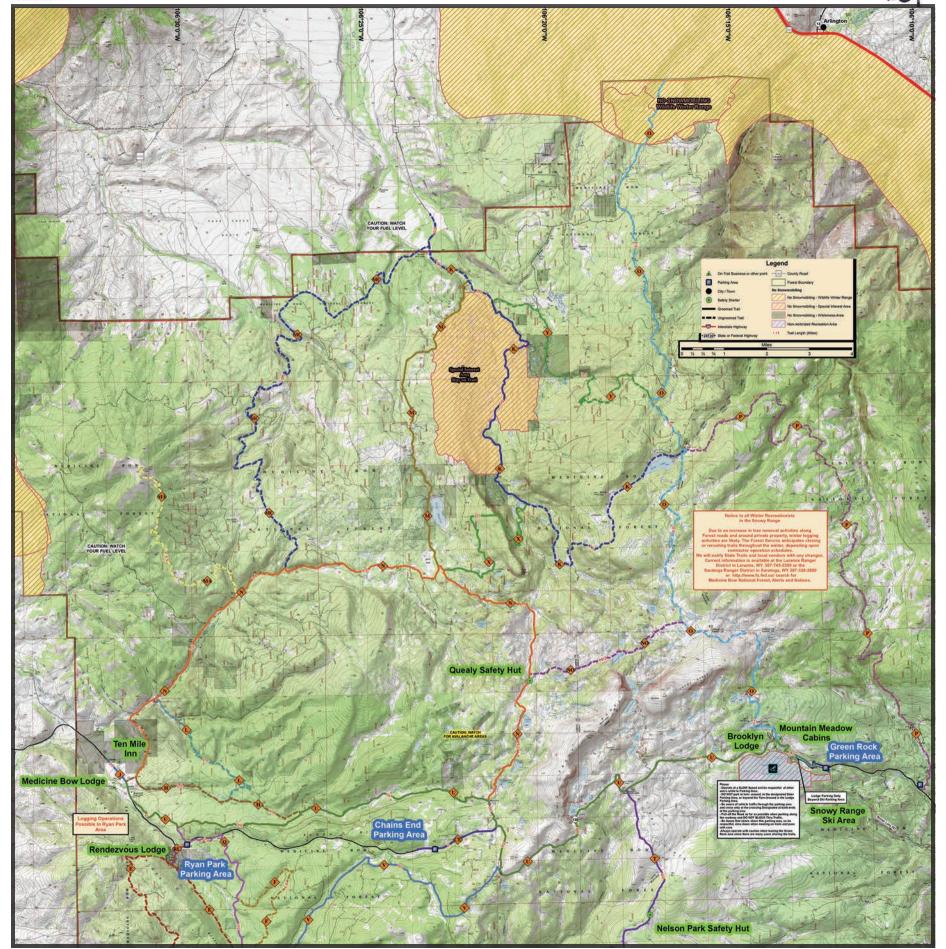
Area B: Accessible from Baggs in the west and Encampment and Riverside from the east. This area borders wilderness and features some of the most beautiful high country in the world. Area B also has the start of the Hog Park and Steamboat Springs trail. Total miles: 148 Groomed: 49 Ungroomed: 99 See page 18 for map

Please keep these few things in mind:

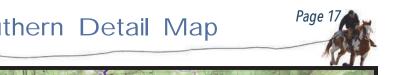
- Respect private property.
- GO PREPARED: see page 8 for winter survival tips.
- Buy your snowmobile stickerBEFORE you go!
- The U.S. Forest Service patrols for safety and stickers.
- Report downed signs at the USFS office.

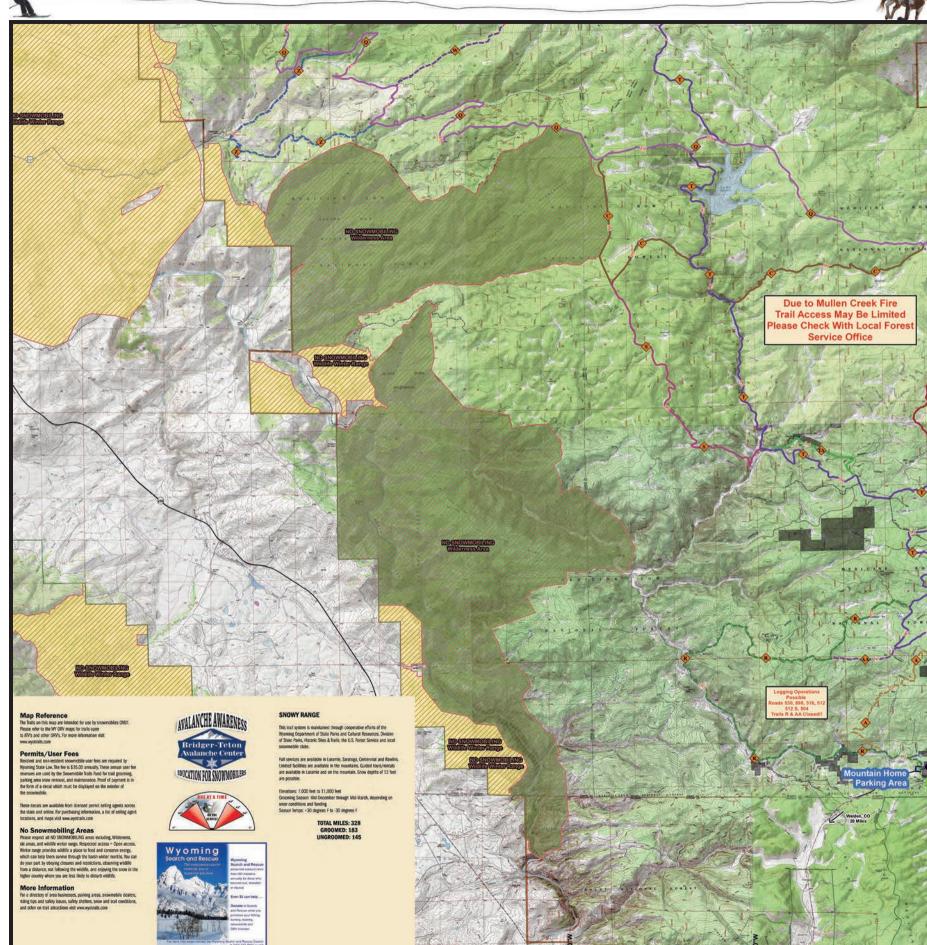
The Snowy Mountains - Northern Detail Map





The Snowy Mountains - Southern Detail Map

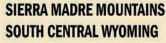




Sierra Madres Map



41°10'0"N



This trail system is maintained through cooperative efforts of the Wyoming Department of State Parks & Cultural Resources, Division of State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails: the U.S. Forest Service and the local snowmo-

This system holds 50 miles of groomed and 100 miles of ungroomed trails. There are facilities and services at Encampment. Snow depths range from 2 feet to 8 feet.

Elevations: 7,000 feet to 10,000 feet Grooming Season: Mid-December through Mid-March, depending on snow conditions and funding Season Temperatures: +30° F to -30° F

> **TOTAL MILES: 150 GROOMED: 50 UNGROOMED: 100**

X-Country Ski Trail Blazer

1/4 1/5 1/4 Legend Forest Boundary On-Trail Business or other point

28-30 State or Federal Highway County Road

No Snowmobiling - Wilderness Area Non-motorized Recreation Area Trail Length (Miles)

CAUTION: WATCH YOUR FUEL LEVEL! No Snowmobiling - Wildlife Winter Range No Snowmobiling - Special Management Ar

The Trails on this map are intended for use by snowmobiles ONLY. Please refer to the WY ORV maps for trails open to ATV's and other ORV's. For more information visit www.wyotrails.com

CAUTION: WATCH

YOUR FUEL LEVEL!

Caution:

Watch For

Avalanche Areas

Permits/User Fees

Resident and non-resident snowmobile user fees are required by Wyoming State Law. The fee is \$35.00 annually. These annual user fee revenues are used by the Snowmobile Trails Fund for trail grooming, parking area snow removal, and maintenance. Proof of payment is in the form of a decal which must be displayed on the exterior of

These decals are available from licensed permit selling agents across the state and online. For purchasing information, a list of selling agent locations, and maps visit www.wvotrails.com

No Snowmobiling Areas

Please respect all NO SNOWMOBILING areas including, Wilderness, ski areas, and wildlife winter range. Respected access = Open access. Winter range provides wildlife a place to feed and conserve energy, which can help them survive through the harsh winter months. You can do your part by obeying closures and restrictions, observing wildlife from a distance, not following the wildlife, and enjoying the snow in the higher country where you are less likely to disturb wildlife.

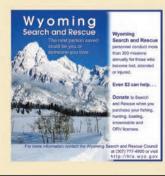
More Information

For a directory of area businesses, parking areas, snowmobile dealers, riding tips and safety issues, safety shelters, snow and trail conditions, and other on trail attractions visit www.wyotrails.com



NO SNOWMOBILING





SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS SOUTH CENTRAL WYOMING

Trails on this map are intended

for use by snowmobiles ONLY. Please refer to Wyoming ORV naps for trails open to ATV's and

other ORV's. For more information call 307-777-6323 or visit a local Forest Service office.

Grand Riverside

NO SNOWMOBILING

Encampment

This trail system is maintained through cooperative efforts of the Wyoming Department of State Parks & Cultural Resources, Division of State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails; the U.S. Forest Service and the local

CAUTION: WATCH YOUR FUEL LEVEL!

This system holds 50 miles of groomed and 100 miles of ungroomed trails. There are facilities and services at Encampment. Snow depths range from 2 feet to 8 feet.

Flevations: 7,000 feet to 10,000 feet Grooming Season: Mid-December through Mid-March, depending on snow conditions and funding Season Temperatures: +30° F to -30° F

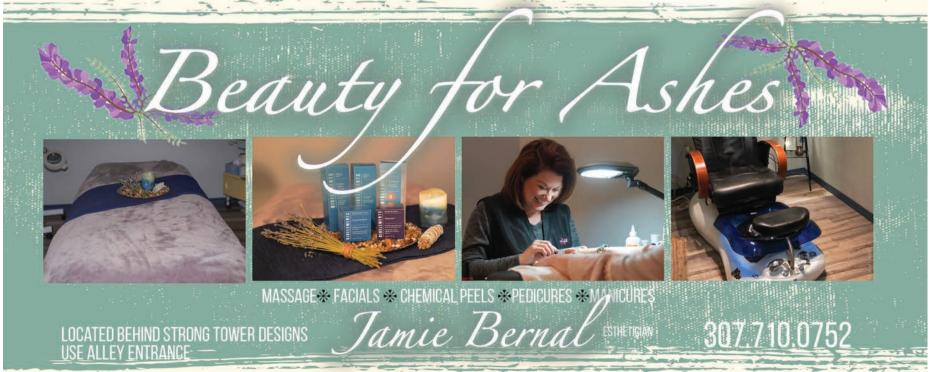
> TOTAL MILES: 150 GROOMED: 50 **UNGROOMED: 100**











Get Your West an SISIT



Ski and Snowshoe Trails





For winter visitors to the Good Times Valley, trail systems popular with summer hikers offer outdoor challenges for skiers and snowshoers from the novice up to the very advanced.

The Brush Creek trail system is located in the Snowy Range southeast of the town of Saratoga. Managed by the Brush Creek/ Hayden Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service, the trails wind through aspen, lodgepole pine stands and reclaimed clear-cuts on the western side of the Snowy Range. The trails are just under six miles and are suited to beginning skiers and shoers, as well as those with intermediate skills.

The Bottle Creek ski area, south of the town of Encampment, offers around eight miles of trails for the winter enthusiast. The trails include an ungroomed aspen run and challenging terrain. Because of its remote location, visitors should be aware that cell phone coverage in the area is spotty and unreliable, so it is important to follow all safety precautions, and to let someone know where you are going and when to expect your return. The mobile app at Avenza maps wyomingcarboncounty.com/resouces/maps, when downloaded, gives coordinates and position.

The trails are groomed by U.S. Forest Service crews. Both are scheduled to be groomed on Wednesdays during the winter, but the remote locations and weather may mean grooming is delayed.

Beginners and experienced skiers might also find Forest Service roads make good trails as well. To best experience these paths, skiers and snowshoers should get started early in the morning before snowmachine riders arrive.

The US Forest Service warns of hazardsincluding:changingweather conditions, snow, avalanches, landslides, caves, overlooks, falling trees or limbs, high or rushing water, contaminated water, wild animals, mining remnants, excavations, decaying structures, a wide variety of equipment and rapidly changing road or trail conditions.

Skiers and snowshoers should dress in layers and stay warm and dry to prevent hypothermia. Bringing a backpack is recommended, as

many skiers shed their layers while exercising in the sun. Just as with other winter sports, sunscreen is recommended because of solar reflection off the snow. Skiers should remember to plan their trip around their physical condition and experience in order to avoid overexertion. Any skier on a new trail should plan similarly and, when you begin to tire, determine what is faster: finishing the trail or returning the way you came. Don't ski alone and always let someone know where you are going and when to expect you home. Also carry extra clothing, food and survival equipment.

Please see pages 22 and 23 of this guide for maps of the Brush Creek and Bottle Creek trail systems.



Bottle Creek Cross Country Ski Trails



Bottle Creek ski area winds around the Sierra Madre Mountains west of Encampment on Highway 130. This area includes steep hills for intermediate to advanced skiers.

Snowmachines are not allowed on these groomed trails, so skiers or snowshoers can make tracks in peace.

Snowy Range weather can change rapidly, so be sure to check the weather report before you venture out for the day.

The US Forest Service warns hazards includina: changing weather conditions, snow, avalanches, landslides, caves, overlooks, falling trees or limbs, high or rushing water, contaminated water, wild animals, mining remnants, excavations, decaying structures, a wide variety of equipment and rapidly changing road or trail conditions.

Skiers and snowshoers should dress in layers and avoid hypothermia by staying warm and dry.

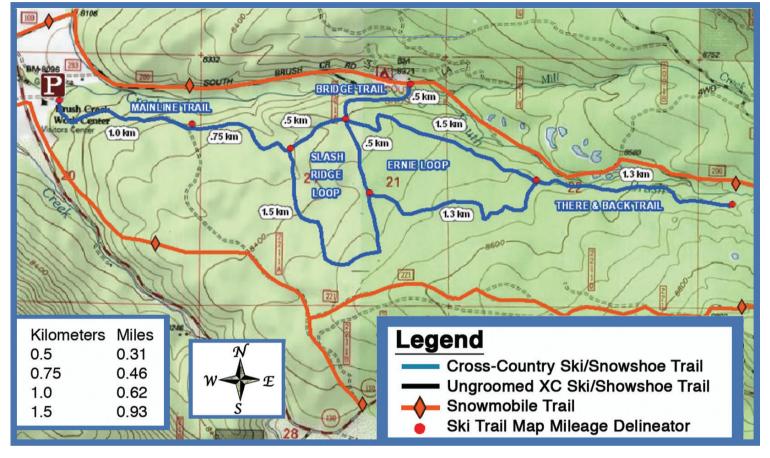
Avoid overexertion. Novice skiers should remember to plan their trip around their physical condition and experience. Any skier on a new trail should plan similarly and, when you begin to tire, determine what is faster: finishing the trail or returning the way you came.

Never ski alone and always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Also carry extra clothing, food and survival equipment.

Brush Creek Country Ski Trails







Avalanche Danger



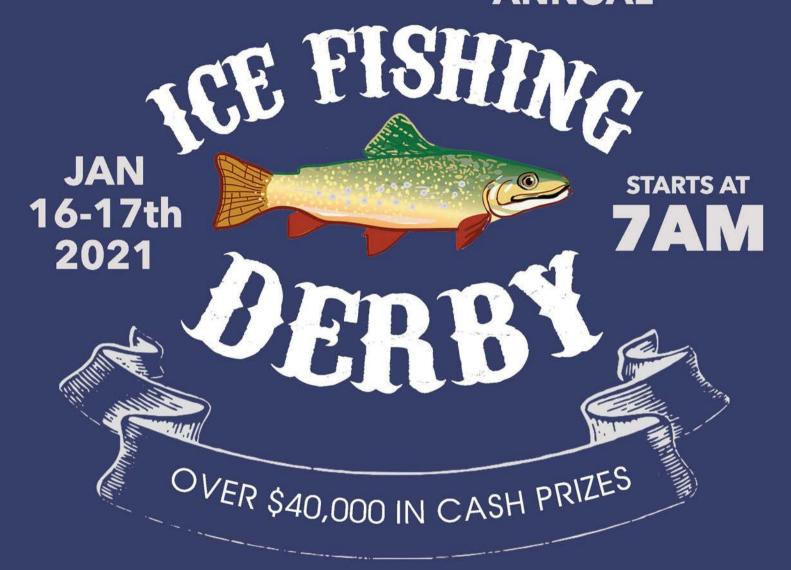
The Medicine Bow National Forest has an avalanche awareness/ prediction website, so those planning to snowmobile, ski, snowshoe or snowboard can be aware of avalanche dangers in the area.

The website, located at http:// jhavalanche.org/mbow/, links where people can report an avalanche event, snow pit or field observation. It also has snow telemetry (SNOTEL) links to individual stations, maps and the Wyoming SNOTEL Site Map. SNOTEL is an automated system of snow pack and climate sensors operated by the Natural Resources

Conservation Services, which is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Recreationists who plan to be in areas where there is significant avalanche activity may wish to consider buying a personal avalanche beacon. The devices emit a radio signal that can be tracked by search-and-rescue equipment, increasing the likelihood of an avalanche victim being found in a timely manner. The devices are available at several Valley retailers, including Shively Hardware North and Koyote Sports, both in Saratoga.

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38th Annual Ice Fishing



January 16-17, 2021



Prepare to "get hooked" on the ice fishing action at the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce's 38th Annual Saratoga Ice Fishing Derby from January 16-17, 2021.

Test your angling skills at Saratoga Lake just north of Saratoga and cast for more than \$6,000 in guaranteed cash prizes and up to \$35,000 in additional prizes.

The largest fish measured each hour during the two-day event earns \$100. The fishermen with the largest fish will have the opportunity to win \$2,000 for first place, \$1,000 for second place and \$500 for third place.

At the Derby, organizers have included three specially-marked trophy fish worth \$20,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000 if caught during the two-

day event. In 2020, Robert Medina of Laramie, Wyoming caught the largest fish of the weekend and won \$2,000.

Small fry fishermen (children age 14 and under) can enter for a chance to win a grand prize of \$100 in cash and a merchandise package. Hourly awards of \$20 are also available. In last year's event, Brody Wagner of Cheyenne, Wyoming won the small fry division.

Over the nearly 40 years that the Derby has been on the ice, it has evolved to include other events to make the weekend even more fun. These include the Best Hut contest, which was won by Jaren Marino of Saratoga in 2020, and Best Fishing Story, which was won by Ron Mears of Walden, Colorado.

A more recent addition is that of the Biggest Sucker Contest. Instead of throwing a sucker back under the ice, contestants are encouraged to bring them up to the judging tent. Last year, Joseph New of Loveland, Colorado won for Biggest Sucker. Dave Luegering of Cheyenne won for most suckers on the Saturday of the event while Silas Miller won for most suckers on the Sunday of the event.

The Saratoga Ice Fishing Derby runs from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on January 16 and from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on January 17. Event registration for adults anglers is \$35 while small fry anglers are only \$10. Interested persons can register at the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce at 210 West Elm in Saratoga during office hours.

People can also register on Friday evening, January 15, until 8 p.m. Registration will also be available at the lake on Saturday morning beginning at 6 a.m.

If the online registration is more your thing, you can do so by going to saratogachamber.info/play-here/fishingerby. Registration will also be available at any fine retail store in Saratoga or Encampment which sells fishing licenses.

Anglers will also have a choice of concessions. Food and drink will be provided by the American Legion Post 54 during the Derby as will other mobile eateries.

For more information, call 307-326-8855 or visit www.saratogachamber. info.



Sierra Madre Winter Carnival



January 22-23, 2021



Editor's Note: As of press time, it was unclear if the 35th Annual Sierra Madre Winter Carnival would move forward or not. Dates are tentative. Please look for a future edition of the Saratoga Sun for concrete details.

The 35th Annual Sierra Madre Winter Carnival, January 22-23, 2021, will offer opportunities for winter fun in Encampment for participants of every age. The carnival begins on Friday, January 22 with a funfilled treasure hunt. Teams will find clues around Encampment that will test their knowledge of the area and its history. The treasure hunt traditionally begins in the Tower Meeting Room of the Grand

Encampment Opera House at 622 Rankin Street. Winners receive a cash prize and all participants can enjoy a light dinner.

Kids' sled races are also a part of the action for the weekend. Past participants in the "Build Your Own" races have built bizarre contraptions using shopping carts, trash cans and bathtubs.

Participants race down McCaffrey Street in Encampment. Kids get cash prizes for placing in their age groups while the "Build Your Own" races have prizes for both the fastest sled and the most creative. Registration is at 8th Street and Ranking Street in Encampment and there is an entry fee for "Build Your Own" sleds.

"Human Saucer Bowling" is an event that is popular with both children and adults and is exactly as it sounds. Participants ride down McCaffrey Street on a saucer sled and try to knock down sand-filled two-liter bottles. It's much harder than it sounds.

The ever-popular Casino Night returns to the Grand Encampment Opera House on Saturday night with plenty of fun for the adults. Try your luck at Blackjack, Roulette, Craps and some games invented by the locals. While there, you may even get a chance to talk with different local personalities.

Buy your chips at the door and bid on unique prize baskets donated by local businesses in the Platte Valley community.

Other events over the weekend include the "Sixth Street Snowmobile Sprint" and "Snow Golf". Helmets and eye protection are required for the Snowmobile Sprint.

The Chili and Bread Cook-offs are also well attended events as the Valley boasts some of the best home cooks in Wyoming. The chili cook-off boasts a colorful array of entries including categories for red, green and white chili.

Precise scheduling had not been determined as of press time. For more information, call the Town of Encampment at 307-327-5501.

Skijoring

5th Annual Races February 6-7, 2021





For the fifth year in a row, the unique winter sport of Skijoring is returning to the Platte Valley. Combining horsepower and skiing, this rapidly growing sport will give visitors and locals alike plenty of snowy winter thrills (and some spills).

The event is organized by the Saratoga Lion's Club. Will Faust, member of the Saratoga Lion's Club, said "The Lion's Club is excited to host this fast-growing and fast-paced event for the fifth year."

Skijoring can vary from event-toevent. While the similarity is that a skier is towed through an obstacle course-comprised of jumps, slaloms, moguls and others-it varies as to if the skier is being towed by a horse, dogs or a vehicle. In the Valley's skijoring event, held annually east of Saratoga at Buck Spring's Arena, uses horses to propel skiers and combines the Valley's love of equestrian events

with it's history of skiing.

Teams of racers will compete not only for bragging rights, but for thousands of dollars in cash prizes. While skijoring is becoming more commonplace in the Valley as it enters it's fifth consecutive year, the sport is one that is stepped in tradition and history and is becoming increasingly popular each year among younger competitors. The word skijoring is Norwegian in origin, meaning "ski driving". Equestrian skijoring, which was especially popular in France, was demonstrated at the 1928 Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, Switzerland.

Since then, the sport has become popular in North America, with many towns across the country holding events that attract thousands of competitors and visitors. While some events are held in town, with horses and skiers racing down a main thoroughfare packed with snow and filled with

obstacles, the Platte Valley and the Lion's Club relies on it's long history of another equestrian sport that preceded skijoring. With the history that Saratoga had in holding successful chariot races at Buck Springs Arena, that knowledge has further improved the experience that skijoring teams have come to expect when visiting Saratoga.

The weekend will begin on Friday, February 5 with team registration and a welcome party for participants at Historic Hotel Wolf in Saratoga.

Saturday, February 6, the races will begin at 9:30 a.m. at Buck Springs Arena. Later that evening, after the day's races, participants and spectators will have the chance to warm up and celebrate at a party and concert at the Platte Valley Community Center in Saratoga.

The party and concert will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 7, the skijoring

competition will continue at 10 a.m. at Buck Springs Arena. The races will run until winners are determined and cash prize payouts will be awarded at an awards ceremony to be held at the back room of the Hotel Wolf.

Registration opens December 1 and those interested in competing must fill out the registration form online at www.saratogaskijoring. com. Registration for Open 3-D is \$50 per person; for Teams it is \$100; amateurs can register for \$25 per person and juniors-those under the age of 18-can register for free. Registration fees are due at team registration at the Hotel Wolf on Friday, from 2-7 p.m.

Those who will be bringing their horses to the event can take advantage of free horse boarding arranged by event organizers. Horse owners can make boarding reservations while signing up online.



Ben Romion Memorial Poker Run



February 14, 2021



While volunteers do most of the work, search and rescue operations in the harsh Wyoming winter don't come cheap. Search and rescue teams need fuel and special equipment in order to save lost snowshoers or stranded snowmobilers. These teams rely heavily on the charity of Valley residents and visitors to continue providing their vital services.

Luckily, giving can be fun. An annual benefit in Encampment serves to raise money for search and rescue operations in the Upper North Platte River Valley as well as honor those who risk their own safety for the benefit of others.

The 23rd Annual Ben Romios Memorial Poker Run is scheduled for February 14, 2021. This annual event is held in honor of the late Benamin F. Romios, an Encampment resident and 1995 graduate of Encampment High School. Romios, an experienced snowmachiner, tragically lost his life in January 1998 in an avalanche while snowmobiling with four other individuals. Romios, who passed away at the age of 21, was a member

of the Encampment Search and Rescue and had helped organize the unit.

The Ben Romios Memorial Poke Run will begin at 9 a.m. on February 14 when participants meet in the Bottle Creek parking area just west of Encampment on Wyoming Highway 70. An entry fee of \$10 for participants also covers the cost of lunch.

Those on the run can participate on snowmobiles, cross country skis or snowshoes as they collect playing cards at various stations to form a poker hand. A part of the proceeds will go to a scholarship fund for Encampment students that honors Romios.

For more information and to register, contact Cory Nuhn at 307-329-7055.

Wyoming Open

April 1-4, 2021





Pool players from around the world will congregate in Saratoga for the 13th Annual Wyoming Open Pool Tournament. While last year was supposed to be the 13th Annual Wyoming Open, the impact of the novel coronavirus led to organizers "permanently postponing" the event until 2021. The event has expanded over the years from a three-day event into a four-day affair with this year running from Thursday, April 1, to Sunday, April 4. The tournament has grown quite a bit in the last few years. In 2016, 35 tables were used for the event while, in 2018, nearly 50 tables were spread across Saratoga from the Platte Valley Community Center to local bars. Because organizers have had close to 100 players on previous waiting lists and a limit on the number of available tables has been reached, the event has expanded to four days to maximize the participation.

Event organizer Mark Osborne says one exciting and well-attended

event will be Thursday night's Open Pro-Am in which any player might join a professional in a Blind Draw Scotch Doubles. The Pro-Am costs \$20 to enter and has \$1,000 added to that night's pot.

Ed Glode, the original organizer of the event, said the Open is a favorite among many pool pros because of the friendliness and hospitality of people in the Valley. He does recommend that those wishing to attend the Open book a room early as several area hotels are often fully booked for the event.

The Wyoming Open regularly attracts Billiard Congress of American Hall of Fame members such as Rodney "the Rocket" Morris, Johnny "the Scorpion" Archer and trick-shot specialist Mike Massey. Future Hall of Famers Shane "the South Dakota Kid" Van Boening and Corey "Cash Money" Deuel also regularly attend the event along with a good mix of professionals from around the globe.

A total of 272 players will be

divided into four divisions by player skill level; the Masters Division, the Expert Division, the Classic Division and the Sportsman Division. Expert and Classic women's brackets were added to the 2018 Open and will be continued this year. There will also be a junior's division, the Nubbin's Juniors, that will be played Saturday and a Hard Luck Bracket played on Sunday.

The eight ball portion of the event is based on Valley National 8-Ball League Association (VNEA) rules, which can be found online at www. vnea.com and this year's event will have over \$10,000 added to the total pot.

There are two Calcuttas associated with the Wyoming Open; one held Friday night before play starts and one held Saturday for finalsqualifying players.

A "Saratoga" bracket will be also be played during the event. Saratoga, a game created by Glode, has grown in popularity across the region. The game is played with balls numbered one to six for both stripes and solids along with the black eight ball. Players must hit their own balls in numerical order from one to six to get the winning eight ball.

The Pro-Am bracket will begin with a Saratoga double elimination Thursday evening and end up with an Eight Ball single elimination on Sunday. For those unable to attend, but wishing to see the event, a good portion of the Masters and Expert games during the Open will be live streamed on ontherailty.com.

The Wyoming Open is sponsored by the Saratoga Lions Club and Carbon County Visitors Council. The Open begins at the Platte Valley Community Center, 210 W. Elm Street, and spreads across Saratoga. For more information on the Wyoming Open and its entry fees, contact Mark Osborne by phone at 307-710-1447 or by email at wyomingopen@gmail.com.



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Saratoga

Encampment/Riverside

Emergency	911	Emergency	911
Saratoga Police Department	307-326-8316	Encampment Police	307-327-5501
Wyoming Highway Patrol	800-442-9090	Encampment Town Hall	307-327-5501
Saratoga Town Hall	307-326-8335	Riverside Town Hall	307-327-5266
Platte Valley Clinic	307-326-3169	Post Office	307-327-5747
MHCC Health Center-Platte Valley	307-315-0158	School	307-327-5442
Dentist	307-326-5474	Library	307-327-5775
Valley Pharmacy	307-326-5129	Senior Center	307-327-5937
Game Warden	307-326-5583	Hanna/Elk Mountain/Medicine Bow	
Forest Service	307-326-5258	Emergency	911
Post Office	307-326-5611	Hanna Police	307-325-9444
Saratoga Sun Newspaper	307-326-8311	Hanna Town Hall	307-325-9424
School District	307-326-5271	Elk Mountain Town Hall	307-348-7333
Airport	307-326-8344	Medicine Bow Town Hall	307-378-2386
Library	307-326-8209	Hanna Post Office	307-325-5742
Chamber of Commerce	307-326-8855	Elk Mountain Post Office	800-275-8777
Senior Center	307-326-5564	Medicine Bow Post Office	307-379-2356
		HEM School	307-325-6545

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