

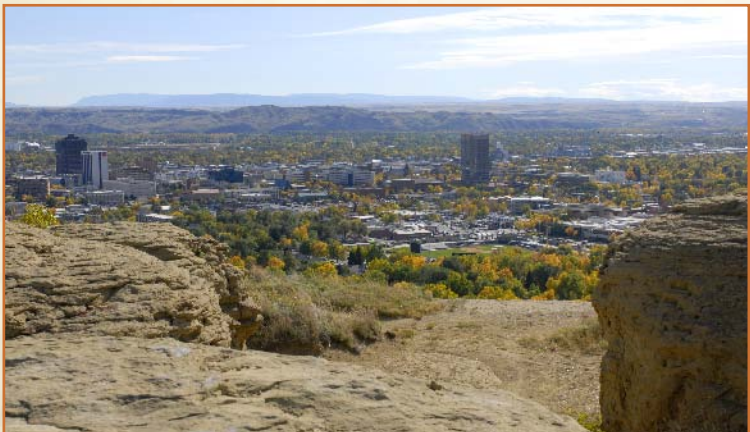


YELLOWSTONE RIVER

Along the river's 678 miles are changes in water temperature, turbidity (sediment) and fish species. Near Billings, the Yellowstone River begins the transition to warmer water and wider braided channels, where you might as easily hook a trout, a cold water species, or a walleye, a warm water species. Historically, Lewis & Clark used the Yellowstone for transport in their expedition. The calm, dependable flow was perfect for exploration. Look to the south to take it in, or continue on the trail system to navigate all the way to the river.

HISTORY OF SWORDS RIMROCK PARK

George Sword's deeded rim top land to Billings in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the city changed the name of the park to "Swords Rimrock Park." The road that ran through it, completed in 1938, was named in honor of late Crow Indian Chief Black Otter. Black Otter was killed in 1861 and laid to rest near the high point of the park, near the present location of Yellowstone Kelly's grave. Interestingly, Crow oral traditions show no records of a chief Black Otter.



Coulson, established along the banks of the Yellowstone River in 1877, buried their dead at the Coulson "Boothill" Cemetery, just below the Place of the Skulls. The cemetery was abandoned in the 1880s, shortly after Billings was established, and the land was later deeded to the city by I.D. O'Donnell, who erected a small obelisk to commemorate those buried at Boothill Cemetery. It was named Boothill cemetery because many of Coulson's residents died violently with "their boots still on."

BOOTHILL CEMETERY

The surrounding landscape, described by Lt. James H. Bradley, April of 1876, as "The Place of the Skulls," was the location of several Crow [Absaaloake] Indian graves. Dr. W.A. Allen, a resident of the nearby town of Coulson, recalled bright colored cloth hanging from the trees at "Skeleton Cliff" and "bodies were draped in bright blanket shrouds and bound to the trees with rawhide thongs." These graves were associated with smallpox epidemics that killed thousands of Crow [Absaaloake] Indians.

SKELETON CLIFF





Luther Sage "Yellowstone" Kelly was a famous western scout for General Nelson Miles in the late 1870s. Kelly hunted and trapped in the Yellowstone Valley for several years before becoming a scout, and later accompanied scientific expeditions to Alaska, served as a Captain in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, and was U.S. Agent for the San Carlos Reservation, Arizona. He died in December 1928 and requested to be buried in Montana. The Billings Commercial Club (today's Chamber of Commerce) decided to bury him on "Kelly Mountain" right in Swords Rimrock Park.


YELLOWSTONE KELLY

What are the incredible rock formations Billings is situated around? The cliffs surrounding Billings are composed of a cemented layer of fine-grained sand and silt mud, known as Upper Cretaceous Eagle Sandstone, deposited 70 to 80 million years ago in offshore bars of a great inland sea. The rimrocks north of the city, where Swords Rimrock Park is located, tilt to the north toward Alkali Creek. Called La Roche Jaune by early French fur traders, the "River of the Yellow Rock," or "Yellow Stone" River, takes its name from the distinctive orange and tan colored rimrocks lining the river.


RIMROCKS








MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
815 South 27th Street • Billings, Montana 59101
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MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

SWORDS RIMROCK PARK
TRAIL MAP

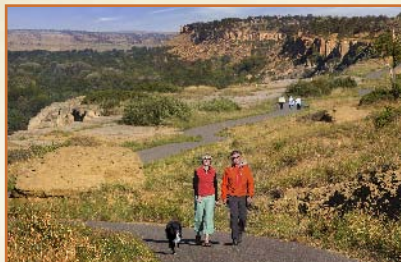


BILLINGS
MONTANA

Free. Paid for with Tourism Business Improvement District funds.

SWORDS RIMROCK PARK

...IS YOUR TRAILHEAD FOR RECREATION



BILLINGS IS THE TRAILHEAD TO MONTANA, and Swords Rimrock Park is the trailhead to Billings. This in-town escape provides breathtaking views, historic icons, paved recreational trails, and a Billings experience that should not be missed. Enjoy 2 miles of paved trail in the park, and go on to enjoy the approximate 5 mile ride to the river.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Trailhead
- 2 Black Otter Trail
- 3 Yellowstone Kelly's Grave
- 4 Rimrocks
- 5 Skeleton Cliff
- 6 Sacrifice Cliff View Point
- 7 Boothill Cemetery
- 8 Yellowstone River

← ZIMMERMAN PARK

BLACK OTTER TRAIL

A road only to be traversed by hearty vehicles, this is best explored by bike or on foot. The roadway was named for Crow Indian Chief Black Otter in 1938.

SKELETON CLIFF

Skeleton Cliff, or The Place of Skulls as it was historically known, is the gravesite for many Crow Indians.

BOOTHILL CEMETERY

A historic cemetery with mostly unknown gravesites from the historic Coulson community. "Muggins" Taylor, the scout who carried the news of Custer's Last Stand to the world, is buried there.

SACRIFICE CLIFF VIEW POINT

Nestled behind MetraPark, see Sacrifice Cliff, the place where two Crow Warriors blindfolded their horses and rode off the cliffs, sacrificing themselves to stem the smallpox epidemic thrashing their tribe.

TRAILHEAD P

Park your vehicle, hop on the trail, and take a moment to breathe in the beauty that lays before you. Five mountain ranges meet your eyes as you look out: the Pryor, Big Horn, Snowy, Crazy and Beartooth. Downtown Billings is nestled below, and historic icons and forever views await.

YELLOWSTONE KELLY'S GRAVE

Truly a man of the frontier, Luther "Yellowstone" Kelly requested to be laid to rest in Montana, thus this iconic veteran is buried here.

RIMROCKS

The cliffs surrounding Billings are composed of fine-grained sand and silty mud deposited 70 to 80 million years ago in offshore bars of a great inland sea.

YELLOWSTONE RIVER

The longest running undammed river in the United States runs through our back door. Along the river's 678 miles are changes in water temperature, turbidity (sediment) and fish species. Historically known for Lewis & Clark's use of it.

Information provided courtesy of the Western Heritage Center. Visit them to learn more: ywhc.org.



P Parking



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