

A river is more than  
an amenity, it is a  
treasure.

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.



Sheridan  
Community  
LAND TRUST

# TONGUE RIVER WATER TRAIL

SHERIDAN COMMUNITY LAND  
TRUST

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Prepared by Mindy Songer

Image courtesy of Larry Mayer at  
[billingsgazette.com](http://billingsgazette.com)



## HISTORY

The Tongue River water shed connects Wyoming and Montana. The river itself begins in the Big Horn mountains in northern Wyoming, travels up through southeastern Montana, and then flows into the Yellowstone River.

The Tongue River Sandstone that borders the river is best known for what is hidden in it's layers: coal. When this coal was discovered, underground mines were developed on the river and were the basis of the communities known as Monarch, Kleenburn and Acme. These places were founded around 1903.

Today, they are part of what is known as the Black Diamond Historic Mine trail of Sheridan County. These vacant communities can be found along the Tongue River about 7 to 10 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming.

A portion of the miners actually lived in the town of Sheridan and made the commute by trolly to one of the mines every day before they shut down in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These once booming mines played a major role in shaping Sheridan County even though they are no longer a part of it.

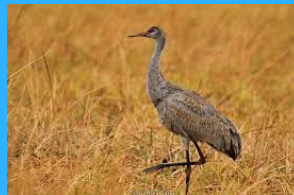
## ECOSYSTEM

There is about 445 species of birds in Wyoming...here are a few you can find by the river.

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**Cliff Swallow-** This species builds mud nests that can be found under bridges and structures. Because of this, their feet have adapted to perching instead of walking.



**Sandhill Crane-** Similar but unrelated to the heron, there are two species in Wyoming. These birds fly with their neck outstretched, not pulled back.



**Great Blue Heron-** Heron's are classified as "wading birds." Their diet mainly consists of small fish but they are opportunistic feeders, meaning they will eat what is available. They fly with their necks retracted unlike other long-necked birds.

## ON THE RIVER

River's make a great recreational opportunity for communities. Thanks to volunteers and businesses who have donated their time and energy to clearing the way, Tongue River is now more navigable for kayaks and other watercraft. The river has 15 access sites that are still being improved upon, making it easier and easier for the public to enter and exit the water. These sites make it easy to plan where your next stop is and what is available at that site like a playground, restroom, parking lot, or a picnic area. Maps of the river are available at [sheridancilt.org](http://sheridancilt.org).

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## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Fish
- Picnic
- Swim
- Bird-watch
- Geocache