

THE SINKS AND THE RISE

Sinks Canyon is so named because of the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie, a rushing mountain river that flows out of the Wind River Mountains and through the canyon. Halfway down the canyon, the river abruptly turns into a large limestone cavern, and the crashing water “sinks” into fissures and cracks at the back of the cave. The river is underground for 1/4 mile until it emerges down the canyon in a large calm pool called “The Rise.” It then continues its course into the valley below.

Where the water goes while it is underground is unknown. The sinks narrow to small, unexplorable log and rock jammed fissures. The Sinks and Rise occur in the thick, easily eroded off-white Madison Limestone formation.

The amount of water flowing into the Sinks varies with the season. The average amount of water in the river is 150 cubic feet per second. High water occurs during spring run-off with over 500 cubic feet of water per second roaring down the rocky Popo Agie River channel.

For many years, it was unproven that the water flowing into the Sinks was the same water flowing out at the Rise. Dye tests have proven it is the same water but have revealed other mysteries: it takes the water flowing into the Sinks over two hours to reappear at the Rise. Geologists speculate that while underground the water circulates up and down and through many narrow, winding passages and pools until it resurfaces. It was also discovered that more water flows out at the Rise than goes in at the Sinks. The additional water may be coming from underground springs or other sinks formations in the area.

It is unknown exactly how old the Sinks are, although they are likely an Ice Age feature thousands of years old. The massive glaciers that carved the canyon exposed the soft limestone and the millions of gallons of water from the melting ice helped erode the underground passages.

Native Americans knew of Sinks for generations. The first white men to see them were fur trappers in the early 1800s.

For more information about the Sinks and Rise, and the history and ecology of the canyon, visit the Sinks Canyon Visitor Center at the Sinks, open 9 a.m. until 7 p.m. every day in the summer.



WILDLIFE, FLORA AND FAUNA

Sinks Canyon is the home to a myriad of wildlife, birds and plants. There are three major habitats in the canyon and each is unique. The most dramatic contrast in habitats is between the heavily forested north facing slope and the drier, sagebrush and juniper covered south facing slope. The third habitat is the Riparian zone along the Popo Agie River.

All of these habitats make Sinks Canyon a rich place to observe nature. Surrounding National Forest and wilderness areas extend the opportunity to experience Wyoming’s beauty at its best. Remember, you are a visitor to the home of the Bighorn Sheep, Marmot and the Golden Eagle. Please respect the wildlife, observing them from a distance, and please leave the wildflowers for others to enjoy.

POPO AGIE

The name Popo Agie (pronounced Po - Po - shuh) is a Crow Indian word. Though there is confusion about it’s meaning, most people believe it means “gurgling river” for the sound the water makes as it goes underground at the sinks.

RAINBOW TROUT

The Rainbow and Brown trout in the Rise are not stocked. They arrived naturally and stay because it is a protected area with an extensive food supply.

No one has weighed or measured the fish but some of the larger ones probably weigh up to 12 pounds. There is no fishing in the Rise, but visitors enjoy throwing fish food to the trout from the observation platform above the Rise.

PARK RULES

- Obey signs, traffic barriers and speed limits
- Motorized vehicles shall be operated only on roads, trails or areas designated for such use. A valid driver’s license or learner’s permit is required.
- Use of firearms and fireworks is prohibited.
- Camping in designated camping sites is restricted to one camping unit (tent, travel trailer or motor vehicle designed for camping) plus two licensed vehicles (car or boat, RV trailer) plus a maximum of 10 people (immediate family members, kids, grandparents, etc. of permit holder) may exceed this number.
- Camping is permitted for a maximum of 14 consecutive days. Valid camping permits are required.
- Quiet shall be maintained in all camping areas from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- All pets must be kept on a leash
- Fires are permitted in provided fireplaces/grills and must be extinguished before leaving.
- Glass containers must be used in vehicles or camping structures.
- Fishing and boating are permitted subject to the regulations of the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission
- No fishing within 20 yards of any boat ramp/dock or designated beach area
- Park dumpsters are for park refuse only – litter and trash must be disposed of in provided containers.
- A complete list of rules and regulations is available at the Park office.

WYOMING STATE PARKS, HISTORIC SITES & TRAILS

Sinks Canyon State Park



Sinks Canyon State Park offers hiking trails, abundant wildlife viewing, bird-watching, fishing, and the Sinks and the Rise, a geological phenomenon.

ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

Sinks Canyon State Park is administered by the Division of State Parks and Historic Sites, Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. <http://wyoparks.state.wy.us/>

Sinks Canyon State Park



- ADA
- Ballfield
- Boat ramp
- Camping
- Dam
- Drinking Water
- Fishing
- Group Picnic Shelter
- Interpretive Trail
- Park Headquarters
- Phone
- Picnic Area
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Trail
- Trailer Sanitary Station
- Viewing area
- Visitor Information
- No-vehicle area
- Park boundary
- Railroad
- Gravel road
- Paved road

PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	911
Fremont County Sheriff	332-5611
Park Headquarters	332-6333
Park visitor center	332-3077
Shoshone National Forest	332-5460
Wyoming State Parks & Historic Sites (Cheyenne)	(307) 777-6303

The Sinks & Visitor Center
 Open Labor Day to Memorial Day
 9 a.m.-7p.m. daily

OVERFLOW CHANNEL

The Rise

Sinks to Rise Trail,
 .25 miles

Sawmill Campground
 6,200 ft. elevation

6 miles to Lander →