



DAY TRIP TO SOUTH PASS CITY

From Lander • Fremont County, Wyoming



GOLD MINING



Photo: Anna-Katharina Stöcklin, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

STATE HISTORIC SITE

Run by Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails, with the Friends of South Pass City. Buildings open in summer; grounds and trails all year.

From Lander, South Pass City is a 46-minute drive and an easy day in summer. Walk the main street and the cabins in the morning, pan for gold in Willow Creek, and in the afternoon look at Miner's Delight, a ghost town the Bureau of Land Management manages near Atlantic City. Outside the building season you can still walk the grounds and trails.

A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 9:15 a.m. Leave Lander on US 287 and WY 28. The drive is 34.1 miles, about 46 minutes.
- ☐ 10 a.m. The buildings open. Start at the Dance Hall Gift Shop, then walk the main street: the hotel, the jail, the Exchange Bank and the cabins.
- ☐ 11:30 a.m. Pan for gold in Willow Creek. The gift shop sells vials for what you find.
- ☐ 12:30 p.m. Picnic lunch, then walk one of the three signed trails or look up at the Carissa Mine buildings on the hill.
- ☐ 2 p.m. Drive to Atlantic City and on to Miner's Delight. The BLM's directions: north on County Road 237 from Atlantic City, east about 2 miles on BLM Road 2324, then follow the signs. No fee; the path through the site is rugged.
- ☐ 4 p.m. Head back to Lander.

This plan works from Memorial Day to mid-October. The rest of the year the buildings are closed, but the grounds and trails stay open when weather allows. Coming from Casper? It's a 182-mile drive of about 3 h 39 min each way.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **Main street from the hillside.** The wide view on this page was taken from the sagebrush above the street.
- **Jackson's view.** William Henry Jackson photographed the town in 1870, and HABS repeated his view from the southeast in 1974. Both frames have the same rock outcrop in the foreground.
- **The Carissa headframe.** Shoot it from below against the sky, with the timber trestle running off to the right.
- **Cabins and wagons.** Old wagons sit in the sagebrush around the edges of town.
- **Drones.** The official pages don't mention them. Ask before you fly.



USGS topographic map, 1953 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	34 mi, about 46 min each way from downtown Lander. From Casper: 182 mi, about 3 h 39 min.
OPEN	Buildings and gift shop: every day, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Memorial Day to mid-October. Site and trails: sunrise to sunset all year, weather permitting.
ADMISSION	\$8 a day for adults, \$4 for Wyoming residents, free for 17 and under (the state's 2026 historic-site fees).
TOURS	The Friends of South Pass City run Carissa mill and English Tunnel tours by reservation on their tours page. The page doesn't give tour dates or prices, so check before you count on one.
TIME ON SITE	Neither the state nor the Friends give a figure.
RESTROOMS	The pages we read don't mention restrooms. Ask at the gift shop.
FOOD AND WATER	The pages we read don't mention food service. Bring lunch and water from Lander.
ON FOOT	A gravel main street and grass between the buildings, plus three hiking trails with interpretive signs. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail passes through town.
PHOTOGRAPHY	The state's page says nothing about photography or drones. This is state property; ask at the gift shop before flying.
WEBSITE	wyoparks.wyo.gov/index.php/places-to-go/south-pass-city

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 42.46833, -108.79972 • 42°28'06"N
108°47'59"W

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/wyoming/south-pass-city/

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.