

CUSTER STATE PARK

WINTER PROGRAMING

2021-2022



BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

GREETINGS AND WELCOME TO THE CUSTER STATE PARK EDUCATION BROCHURE!

Custer State Park is excited to work with you in offering a variety of quality educational programs. Our programs are designed to encourage life-long interest and appreciation of the outdoors. We invite you to schedule a visit to the park or have us come to your site for a nature adventure.

Don't See what you are looking for? Classes offered are only limited by your imagination. We can adapt or design a program to meet your needs!

PRESCHOOL - (AGES 4-6)

LITTLE EXPLORERS (ON-SITE)

Exploring is fun but we need to know how to safely use our five senses. We will practice staying together as a group, learning to ask before we touch and giving wildlife their space.

REPTILES (HERP MANIA):

What makes amphibians different from reptiles? In this hands-on program students will get a close look at these two vertebrate groups and their adaptations. A game will be played to test their memory to see if they can always find the difference.

THE MITTEN

From the Jan Brett's classic book, adapted from a Ukrainian folktale, Students will discover the different animals in Jan Brett's book as well as camouflage techniques of some of the animals. Students will also discover how Custer State Park's wildlife survive in the winter and some of their adaptations.

KINDERGARTEN

WHO IS SLEEPING IN MY BED?

The animals that live in the Black Hills have homes and beds too. Biologists call them habitats. Learn about the different habitat's animals call home and about those pesky invasive species that are messing up some habitats.

ANIMALS CAN'T TALK, OR CAN THEY?

Learn the language of the wild ones. Together we will explore how animals use their five sense to communicate with each other.

FEATHERS FOR LUNCH

Explore the feathery world by reading a story and helping students identify birds on the book based on their color, shape, size, and song. Students will learn about why birds are important, why their feathers are important. Students are also encouraged to use their senses of sight and hearing to identify birds.

LEARNING TO EXPLORE (ON-SITE)

Explore and gain observation skills using the five senses. Students will be encouraged to ask and answer their own questions. Together we will learn about the plants and animals that call Custer State Park home.

FIRST GRADE

BALD EAGLE

Many recognize the Bald Eagle as an important symbol of our freedom but it is also a raptor or bird of prey. Students will learn how raptor's body helps it to hunt and what they can do to help preserve our national emblem.

TATANKA

Native tribes of the great plains used the bison for many things including food, clothing, tools, and decorations. Students will take an up close look at some bison parts and learn how each of them were used.

LEARNING TO EXPLORE (ON-SITE)

Explore and gain observation skills using the five senses as students are guided through the park. Come discover and learn about the plants and animals that call Custer State Park home.

SECOND GRADE

ANIMAL GROUPS

Students will discuss animal classification and the differences between animal groups. Starting with a summary of how to classify organisms, students will learn the classification system. We'll discuss how to classify things into domains and then work through the system talking about classifying into kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. We will then focus on the animal kingdom going through the five different phyla focusing on invertebrates and vertebrates. Students will learn about the animal classes mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Through hands-on exploration of various animal parts, students will learn about the similarities and differences between animal groups and other kingdoms of classification.

FOOD CHAINS

Squirrels eat nuts, coyotes eat rabbits, and raccoons eat anything. Students will get a hands-on look at the differences between herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores. An active simulation game will wrap up the experience.

WHO NEEDS A TREE?

From the roots underground to the branches up high, a tree is home for many creatures. Students will observe and compare different tree parts and discover how animals—even people—need trees. Students will learn the parts of a tree and how different wildlife depends on trees for food and shelter. Students will also learn the importance of trees for people.

BUTTERFLIES

Come explore the world of beautiful butterflies. Students will model the metamorphic life cycle and learn about how butterflies' peculiar behaviors help them survive.

HABITATS OF THE PARK (ON-SITE)

Students will explore and discover the plants and animals that live in Custer State Park. They will learn to identify components of habitat, food, water and shelter.

THIRD GRADE

WHAT IS A POLLINATOR?

Students will learn about what pollinators are, who they are, and how they impact Custer State Park. Students will explore pollinator habitats and look for key features that create a healthy environment.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER, FLOCK TOGETHER

Students will learn how bird's beaks are specially adapted for the food they eat. However, bird features don't stop there, students will also study how birds have specific adaptations for survival.

FOURTH GRADE

BADGER TALES

Learn about the literary tales of Badger Clark. In this program students will explore Clark's relationship with Custer State Park and how his work provides a window into the past.

MYSTERY MINERALS

Become geologists and perform a series of geological tests to identify minerals. Participants will then learn how those minerals form rocks to create the landscape around us.

GORDON STOCKADE HISTORIC DAY (ON-SITE)

Take a step back in history of Custer State Park at the Gordon Stockade. Students will learn explore the history behind the construction of the stockade. They will also get see if they would be successful at surviving at the time of the exploration out west.

FIFTH GRADE

WILDLIFE FOR SALE

Wildlife is a valuable resource in Custer State Park and around the world. Students will discover the laws and regulations that help protect wildlife and why they are needed.

WHO ATE WHO?

Squirrels eat nuts, coyotes eat rabbits, and raccoons eat anything. Students will get a hands-on look at the differences between herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores. An active activity will wrap up the experience and have them solve a nocturnal mystery.

ECOSYSTEMS

Students will compare and contrast the flora and fauna found in ecosystems such as prairies and woodlands, and observe the area where the area (ecotone) where the two meet. Some time will be spent on the biodiversity of ecosystem centers vs. ecotones and forest/prairie dependent species vs. generalists. The students should be able to list the different adaptations the flora and fauna use to survive in each ecosystem.

HOMESCHOOL RETREAT TO THE PARK

Bring your homeschool group out to Custer State Park to join others in the area for our Homeschool Retreat field day. Starting at 9:00 a.m and ending at 2:30 p.m. we will have a day filled with nature-based lessons for art, writing, science, math and more! These lessons are designed for ages 5-7 and 8-10 and registration is required. You must bring your own lunches and snacks.

TOOLS OF TRADE

How is a woodpecker's beak like pliers, or a badger's claws like a hand rake? Students will explore the amazing adaptations of animals and then search outdoors for examples of these masters of survival.

SURVIVING NATURES ELEMENTS (ON-SITE)

Students will gain some outdoor "street smarts" during this program where we discuss the "Do's and Don'ts" of safe outdoor recreation. Students will gain hands-on experiences with orienteering and shelter building.

SIXTH GRADE & UP

BISON GENETICS 101

Take an up-close look at Custer State Park's bison management program by taking a tour of the bison corrals and discussing how the bison are "worked". Students will also explore why it is important to manage the herd numbers for the health of the Park's ecosystem.

FERRETS AND PRAIRIE DOGS

Prairie Dogs are a keystone species, meaning they create a niche environment for their species. Students will explore the way prairie dogs alter their environment to provide habitat for other species. Also learn about the re-introduction of the endangered black footed ferret. An animal dependent on the prairie dog for survival.

PREDATORS INFLUENCE

Predators affect the entire ecosystem. Humans also influence this already complex interaction between predator and prey populations. Students will model prey and predator population fluctuations and examine how the behavior of prey changes with or without a predators presence.

FIRE: "GOOD, BAD AND UGLY"

Fire is both good and bad. In this hands on program students will learn about the different types of fires and how the park uses fire as a tool. Students will end the program by creating a public information poster on the positive and negative benefits of fire.

BISON BISON (ON-SITE)

Take a tour of Custer State Park's bison management program by visiting the bison corrals and discussing how the bison are "worked". We will also discuss why it is important to manage the herd numbers for the health of the Park's ecosystem

ALL GRADES

- Meet the Animals: Learn about one of our snakes or toads. Availability is subject to change.
- Take a Hike: Guided hikes are available year-round and can include snowshoeing and other activities!
- Scavenger Hunt - Discover and explore the world of Custer State Park.
- Playscape: Visit the outdoor natural playground at the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center.

BUILD YOUR OWN ON-SITE FIELD TRIP (7 YRS +)

Note each subject last at minimum approximately 1 hour. You can choose up to 4 programs depending on your available time, number of students and season.

- Hike
- Canoeing (must be 50lbs or more)
- Archery
- Rock Climbing (must be 50lbs or more)
- Orienteering
- Scavenger Hunt

HIKING TRAIL OPTIONS

- Exploring Grace Coolidge Creek – 2nd Grade
- Little Devils Tower Geology Trail Track – Middle School and High School
- Prowling the Prairie Trail – 3rd Grade
- Sylvan Lake in a Day – K and 1st Grade

VIRTUAL OPTIONS

Educators across the world can sign up for any of these curriculum-based virtual programs for students. Presentations engage students in a live video and allow participants to interact with a Park Naturalist in real time.

**DON'T SEE WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?
CLASSES OFFERED ARE ONLY LIMITED BY YOUR
IMAGINATION. WE CAN ADAPT OR DESIGN A
PROGRAM TO MEET YOUR NEEDS!**

SCHEDULE YOUR VISIT

We invite you to come visit the park or have us come to your site for a nature adventure. You will need to make reservations for your program, you can do that by calling 605.255.4515 or emailing custerstatepark@state.sd.us

We strongly encourage you to complete the form below before calling or emailing.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to call us at 605.255.4515

School Name: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Date of Program: _____ Alternative Day: _____

Number of classes: _____ Total Number of Students: _____

PROGRAM TITLE	GRADE(S)	#STUDENTS	TEACHER NAME	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS STUDENTS QUIET SIGN

Additional Information (Parking Location, security protocols): _____



CUSTER STATE PARK EVENTS

January 1 (Sat)

First Day Hike

START YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT WITH A HIKE! JOIN US FOR THE TRADITIONAL 1ST DAY HIKE. PLEASE DRESS FOR THE WEATHER.

January 17 (Mon)

Full Moon Hike

COME VIEW THE MOON AT CUSTER STATE PARK! THIS NATURALIST LED HIKE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE NOCTURNAL HAPPENINGS OF THE PARK.

February 12 (Sat)

Lovers Leap Snowshoe Hike

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY SNOWSHOEING? JOIN CUSTER STATE PARK AND WE WILL PROVIDE THE SNOWSHOES. IF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN, FEEL FREE TO BRING THEM AND JOIN US AS WELL. REMEMBER TO DRESS FOR THE WEATHER. PLEASE NOTE: RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THIS HIKE.

March 18 (Fri)

Moon Hike

COME VIEW THE MOON AT CUSTER STATE PARK! THIS NATURALIST LED HIKE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE NOCTURNAL HAPPENINGS OF THE PARK.

March 20 (Sun)

Bluebird Box Workshop and Hike

CELEBRATE WORLD WILDLIFE DAY WITH CUSTER STATE PARK. BIOLOGIST WILL BE GIVING TALKS ALL COOL ANIMALS SUCH AS FISHERS, BIG HORN SHEEP, BISON AND MORE. THERE WILL ALSO BE A TELEMTRY DEMONSTRATION AND AS ALWAYS FUN FOR THE KIDS.

April 10 (Sun)

Stockade Lake Snowshoe Hike

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY SNOWSHOEING? JOIN CUSTER STATE PARK AND WE WILL PROVIDE THE SNOWSHOES. IF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN, FEEL FREE TO BRING THEM AND JOIN US AS WELL. REMEMBER TO DRESS FOR THE WEATHER. PLEASE NOTE: RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THIS HIKE.

May 20-22 (Fri-Sun)

Custer State Park Open House and Free Fishing Weekend

June 4 (Sat)

National Trails Day

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY ON THE FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE RECOGNIZES ALL THE INCREDIBLE BENEFITS FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL TRAILS PROVIDE FOR RECREATION AND EXPOSURE NATURE. EVENTS HELD THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES HELP PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE WIDE VARIETY OF SERVICES THE TRAILS SYSTEMS OFFER.

LOOK OUT ON FACEBOOK AND OUR WEBSITE FOR OUR SPECIAL PROGRAM SERIES DESIGNED FOR ALL AGES IN OUR COMMUNITY!

KNEE HIGH NATURALIST:

Preschoolers, join us with an adult for a special nature base story time the third Tuesday every month. We will read a story, do a short activity, take a short stroll, and end at our Nature playscape. Prepare to be outdoors. Limited to 30 participants, please call 605-255-4515 to register.

WILD WOMEN IN THE WOODS:

Women, take a step into the woods and join us to learn and become more comfortable with the outdoor world. Each month dive into a new outdoor skill and new ways to recreate in Custer State Park. Prepare to be outdoors. Limited to 20 participants, please call 605-255-4515 to register.

RAMS AND LAMBS:

Fathers and Daughters, join us on an adventure as we build outdoor life skills through different events and activities all year. Grow stronger relationships, communication, and leadership skills through a new adventure with our Dads. Prepare to be outdoors. Limited to 30 participants, please call 605-255-4515 to register. Must be at least 7 years of age to participate. .

LIONS AND CUBS:

A day of family fun, exclusively for moms and sons! A day of adventure, fun and excitement as we explore new things outdoors. Moms and sons will test their skills at different outdoor activities all year round. Prepare to be outdoors. Limited to 30 participants, please call 605-255-4515 to register. Must be at least 7 years of age to participate.

DATE NIGHT

Enjoy a night out at your favorite park with your favorite person. Join us as we explore fun outdoor skills that will build communication and teamwork. Limited to 10 couples, please call 605-255-4515 to register.