

CUSTER STATE PARK

JUNIOR NATURALIST GUIDEBOOK

2020 ONLINE VERSION

Name: _____

State: _____

Date: _____



Welcome to Custer State Park, South Dakota's largest and oldest state park. You hold in your hands the Junior Naturalist guidebook. This book will help you discover and explore this amazing park and lead you on some wonderful adventures. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to find one of the park staff.

Good luck, have fun and go explore!

JUNIOR NATURALIST PLEDGE

I, _____, am now a Custer State Park Junior Naturalist!

NAME

I traveled from _____ to this beautiful place!

HOME

I have learned:

Bison are dangerous, more than 100 yards is safe!

Badger Clark was a poet; he had lots of boots in that place!

There are three types of trout; and more prairie dogs than I can count!

Insects, animals and plants I assist,

By leaving things as they exist

Because, I am a Custer State Park Junior Naturalist!



EXPLORE AND DISCOVER THE PARK

Looking for a bit of adventure on your own? Want to learn more about the Park? Here are a couple ideas...

- **Kids in Parks** is a nation-wide network of family-friendly outdoor adventures called TRACK Trails. Each TRACK Trail features self-guided brochures and signs that turn your visit into a fun and exciting outdoors experience. Best of all, you can earn PRIZES for tracking your adventures!
- The **Custer State Park App** includes self-guided audio tours to help enhance the visitor experience, learn about the diverse wildlife, natural resources, and amazing scenic drives within the park.
- The **Custer State Park Trail Challenge** encourages visitors to get out and explore the many trails of the park. Participants collect medallion rubbings along the way to earn a special pin.



Custer State Park is managed by the Department of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. For more information, visit: www.custerstatepark.com

Or Contact or mail completed packets:
Custer State Park
Attn: Interpretive Programs Manager
13329 U.S. Highway 16A
Custer, South Dakota 57730
605-255-4515

The Junior Naturalist program has two levels: *Certificate* and *Patch*. Depending on your dedication and age, if you complete a certain number of pages and self-guided activities you can earn the rank of Pup or Junior Naturalist. Have a parent or caretaker track your completed activities and pages and once you have completed the requirements then mail your packet into the address on the opposite page or email a photocopy to custerstatepark@state.sd.us

PRAIRIE DOG PUPS LEVEL (AGES 4-6)

To earn a certificate - complete 2 pages in this booklet.

To earn a patch - complete 2 pages and submit a picture that answers the questions below.

PRONGHORN LEVEL (AGES 7-9)

To earn a certificate - complete 4 pages in this booklet.

To earn a patch - complete 4 pages in this booklet, write or draw and answer to the questions below.

BISON LEVEL (AGES 10-12)

To earn a certificate - complete 6 pages in this booklet.

To earn a patch - complete 6 pages in this booklet, write a short essay answering the questions below. Complete two self guide activities found on our webpage.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

Go outside in your backyard, neighborhood, or even a nearby park and answer the following question...

I noticed...

I wondered...

It reminds me of...

Hello! My name is Buddy the Dung Beetle. Watch for me in the book and I will share tips and facts to help you become an even better Junior Naturalist!



Use the list of words below to fill in the blanks and learn more about the buffalo in Custer State Park!

BUFFALO

BISON BISON

SUMMER

TEETH

HUMP

MOUNTAIN

AUCTION

YEARS

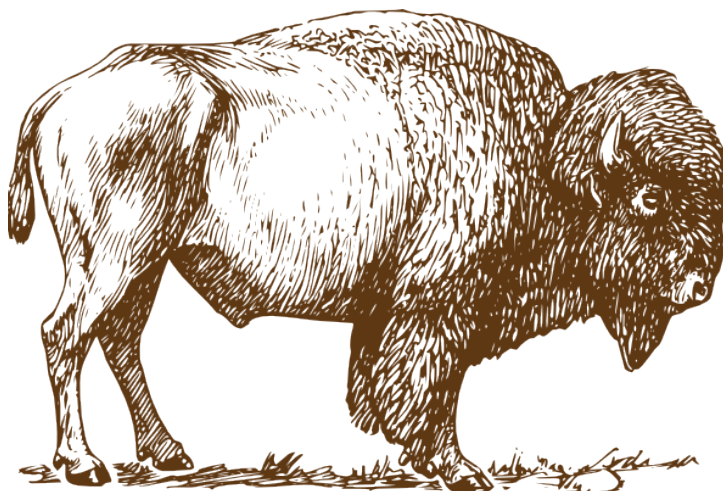
FEMALE

CALVES

FOOTBALL

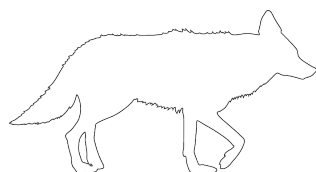
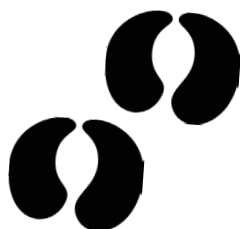
WALLOWS

BUFFALO

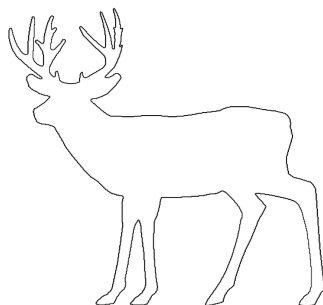


1. Buffalo create _ _ _ _ _ , or bare spots on the ground, where they can roll in the dirt.
2. Because of their large _ _ _ _ , buffalo cannot roll entirely over from one side to another.
3. During the annual roundup in September, park staff brand the buffalo _ _ _ _ _ with two symbols. The letter "S" and the last number in the year they were born. Do you know what this year's brand will be? _ _
4. Male _ _ _ _ _ are referred to as bulls. _ _ _ _ _ buffalo are referred to as cows.
5. Buffalo are dangerous! A person on foot should stay at least 100 yards, or a _ _ _ _ _ field's length, away from any buffalo.
6. Buffalo can live to be 30 _ _ _ _ _ old or older.
7. During the _ _ _ _ _ months, there can be up to 1,200 buffalo in Custer State Park.
8. Through an _ _ _ _ _ in the fall, some of the buffalo herd is sold to buffalo ranches around the country.
9. _ _ _ _ _ is one of the common names for these animals. _ _ _ _ _ is the scientific name. Much like *Felis concolor* is the scientific name for the _ _ _ _ _ lion.
10. As a grazer, buffalo (like deer and elk) do not have any top, front _ _ _ _ _ .

The wildlife in Custer State Park are sometimes hard to see or find, but they often leave a sign such as a foot print, or track, to tell us they were here!
Can you match the animal tracks to their pictures below.



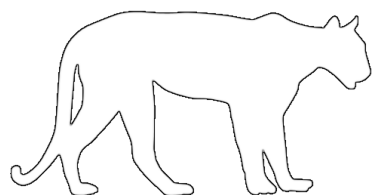
COYOTE (*Canis latrans*)
PAW LENGTH 2.5 INCHES



DEER (*Odocoileus* sp.)
HOOF LENGTH 2.5 INCHES



WOODHOUSE TOAD (*Anaxyrus woodhousii*)
TRACK LENGTH 0.5 INCHES



MOUNTAIN LION (*Felis concolor*)
PAW LENGTH 3.5 INCHES



STRIPED SKUNK (*Mephitis mephitis*)
PAW LENGTH 2 INCHES



BISON (*Bison bison*)
HOOF LENGTH 5.5 INCHES

In the box below, draw a real or imaginary animal and its track.













Animal Name _____

Decode the message below by filling in the blanks with the letter that matches the picture symbol.

Can you find evidence of these animals around your home?

Draw, or list, two of the clues you noticed.



	A		L		W		C
	N		O		F		D
	I		B		R		S

Every year the buffalo are rounded up by the park's buffalo herd managers. The buffalo are counted, given their yearly medicine and the calves are branded.

Can you help the herd managers find all of the buffalo around the park?

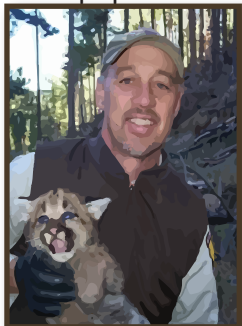
Circle all that you find.



How many buffalo did you find?

Do you know what a wildlife biologist or conservation officer does? Read below and find out! Then see if you can find the underlined words in the word search below.

My name is Brady and I am a wildlife biologist, someone who studies and/or manages wild animals and their habitats. As a wildlife biologist, I may be involved with the enhancement of wildlife habitat, controlling problem wildlife, working to save endangered species, or studying wildlife diseases. This requires experience identifying, tracking and trapping animals, but also knowledge of specialized computer software designed to track individual animals, map population dynamics, and compile data.



Hi everyone, Ron here, Conservation Officer for the Black Hills. My job is to manage wildlife, fisheries, and water and land resources while enforcing wildlife and water laws. Here in Custer State Park we have an abundance of wildlife for our visitors to enjoy. From rainbow trout to mountain goats, I will ensure the populations thrive and are protected.

A career in wildlife biology or as a conservation officer is an exciting way to explore your natural world, while conserving wildlife for future generations.

B	T	Y	B	I	C	U	S	T	E	R	S	T	A	T	E	P	A	R	K
L	L	O	D	H	J	Y	B	C	S	Q	T	H	S	D	J	Q	P	A	D
A	V	B	I	O	L	O	G	I	S	T	D	T	A	E	D	S	B	I	A
C	E	A	S	E	L	U	P	L	W	A	A	S	W	B	E	M	F	N	T
K	R	T	E	O	U	D	V	Y	S	O	A	Q	X	I	Q	A	Z	B	A
H	U	Y	A	H	N	B	G	R	G	W	E	S	C	D	C	B	K	O	P
I	P	K	S	R	W	S	G	N	A	E	D	E	M	N	B	V	X	W	E
L	H	K	E	L	I	O	I	P	E	X	P	L	O	R	E	T	Y	T	R
L	E	G	S	F	G	A	Q	W	L	S	M	V	D	S	A	L	G	R	P
S	S	G	Q	U	T	R	G	Y	D	A	D	E	Q	T	Y	F	D	O	R
J	D	H	A	N	A	D	A	E	H	A	B	I	T	A	T	S	F	U	F
W	T	R	U	J	S	S	R	D	S	W	R	E	A	G	E	H	E	T	G
S	Q	O	Z	K	C	E	R	A	E	I	T	L	B	D	N	R	R	G	Y
K	M	T	E	P	G	D	T	D	C	L	Q	R	W	C	Z	W	U	F	F
B	R	Y	D	N	V	G	Y	F	R	D	E	T	R	A	C	K	I	N	G
D	T	E	A	L	B	I	U	E	U	L	P	O	O	U	W	I	P	F	E
W	U	D	C	M	R	O	P	T	O	I	A	F	X	V	Q	R	L	H	W
M	N	C	R	R	G	P	L	U	S	F	F	T	D	W	S	Q	I	J	F
E	G	V	G	I	Q	C	C	S	E	E	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	E	D
L	R	B	B	H	O	F	W	D	R	C	J	K	L	S	D	P	R	L	P

Charles Badger Clark (also known as Badger) was South Dakota's first Poet Laureate. A poet laureate is a special honor given to someone who has written poems or stories about a state. In 1927, while Badger Clark was living in the park, he was given this title by the governor.

EXCERPT FROM "THE CAT PIONEERS" POEM
BY BADGER CLARK

No more important episode
Marked all those early years
Than that historic wagonload
Of feline pioneers,
For though the horse and dog were prized
and praised for this and that,
Who made the Black Hills civilized?
The cat, my friend, the cat!
I am the old breed down to date
For in that wagon's straw
Rode my great-great-great-great-great-
Great-great-great-grandmaw and paw
Those Rovers I'm descended from
And their blood rules me yet,
For though I am a gentle tom
I'll be no household pet.
Along beneath the mystic dark
I raid the pack rat's den
And range the wood of Custer park
And shun the haunts of men,
So, pardner, you and I are peers
And ere I leave you now,
We'll give three cheers for pioneers.
Meeyow! Meeyow! Meeyow!

YOUR TURN...

Draw a picture of this poem or try writing
a poem of your own.

Does your state have a Poet
Laureate? If so who are they?
See if you can find one of their
poems.



There are three types of trout in Custer State Park: rainbow, brown, and brook trout. The most common trout caught in the streams and lakes in the park are rainbow and brown trout. Color the fish below and trace the letters to find out who is who.



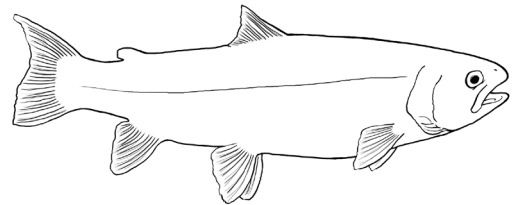
Any of the lakes in streams have fish in the park. You can get a fishing license from our general stores!



Rainbow Trout

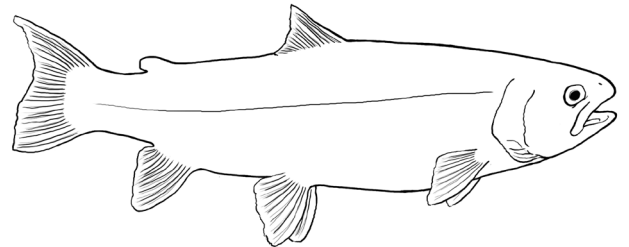


© Joseph Tanalieri



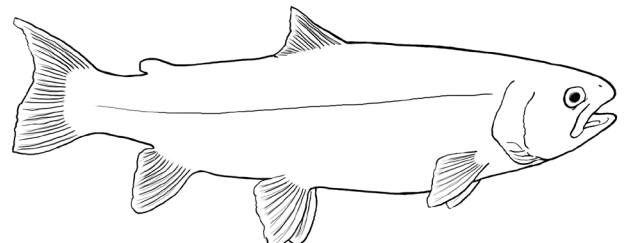
Only trout with a pink stripe along its body.

Brown Trout

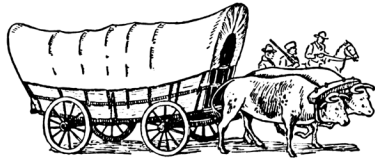
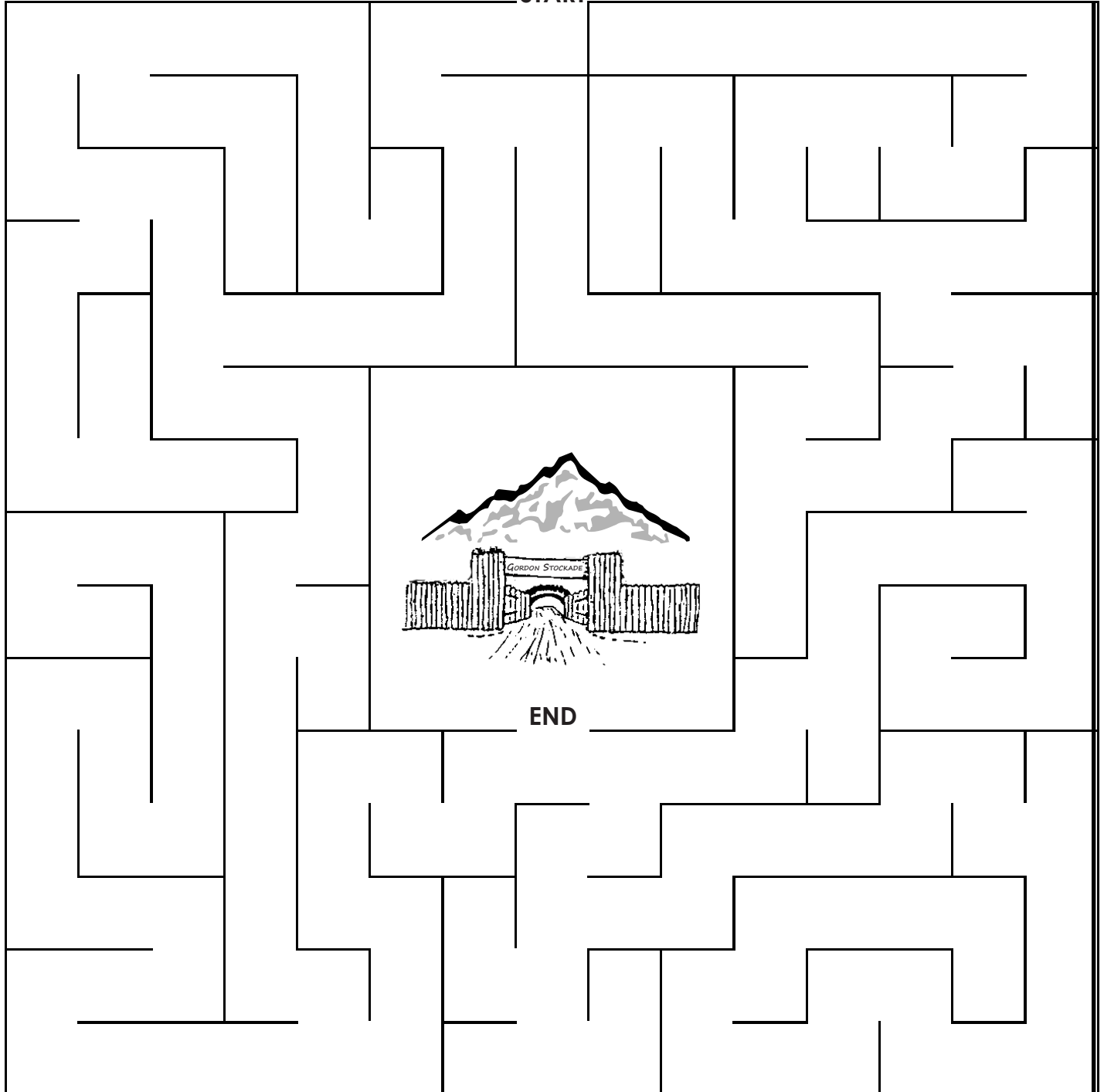


Tan body with black and red spots.

Brook Trout



Spurred by rumors of gold, many prospecting groups illegally entered the Black Hills in the 1870s. At that time this area was still part of the Great Sioux Reservation. A group of 28 people eluded the US cavalry across the Dakota Territory. Named after its leader, John Gordon, the Gordon Party built the first illegal settlement structure known as the Gordon Stockade, located on the west side of the park.

**START****END**



JUNIOR NATURALIST CERTIFICATE

This certifies that

*Has successfully met the requirements of becoming a Junior Naturalist at
Custer State Park and accepts the duty and responsibility of taking care of
natural places.*



Custer State Park Staff / Date



I visited

Custer State Park

