



2025

Buffalo Round UP

ARTS FESTIVAL
SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2025



60TH ANNUAL BUFFALO ROUND UP

The morning is chilly—not freezing, but definitely cold. The prairie isn't quiet, nor is it loud... it hums with the murmurs of excited guests, the quiet roll of vehicles as they find parking, birds squawking their displeasure at the growing crowd, coyotes sometimes adding their voices, and burros often taking one look before turning tail. They know today is not their day.: its Buffalo Roundup Day.

Bison have long been a part of the Custer State Park story, and the Roundup has become a major chapter in that story. In fact, this year marks the 60th official event.

The Roundup is part of the park's management plan to maintain a healthy balance between the number of bison and the available rangeland forage. The park can only sustain so many buffalo, depending on the condition of the grasslands and how much food is available for all animals in the park. The Roundup allows the park to sort the herd and auction off some animals in November. Buyers from many states come to purchase a Custer State Park bison.

The Roundup itself wasn't always

the large event it is today. In the early days, it was neighboring rangers who lent a hand. Families brought food, and it was a relaxed, low-key gathering. But it's grown since then—boy, has it grown. It's now one of South Dakota's largest events, with an average of 20,000 guests showing up each year to watch the herd come thundering in. For some, it's like stepping back in time. For others, it's the excitement of joining thousands on the prairie. And for many, attending the Roundup has become a family tradition. Whatever the reason, they come for the bison.

The Roundup involves about 1,400 buffalo. The park aims to gather most of the herd, except for the large bulls—those massive animals are just a bit too rough for the sorting equipment, so the herd manager is okay with letting them be. Around 60 horseback riders—made up of park staff, selected riders from an open application process, and invited guests—do most of the work driving the animals across the hills to the corrals. You'll also see a number of trucks in the mix. Though they tend to hang back, their job is to protect

and support the riders. Some carry media personnel, giving them an up-close view for their stories.

The Roundup is never exactly the same—it changes from year to year. Sometimes it's a fast scramble as the herd breaks rank and makes the riders work. On hot years, it's a slow, steady trot across the hills to avoid overheating the bison or the horses. Some years, it snows—and the crowds and animals alike bundle up and make the most of it. Most years? It's a combination of all the above.

What never changes is the excitement—from seasoned viewers to first-timers. Even park staff feel it on Roundup Day. There's a reason the event grows each year, and the 60th will be no different. It's a time-honored tradition that not only offers a one-of-a-kind experience—watching riders and park staff move the herd—but also plays a vital role in protecting these amazing animals in a beautiful place called Custer State Park.

*Enjoy the 60th Annual
Buffalo Roundup.*

ARTS FESTIVAL

A three-day celebration of regional art, music, and craftsmanship set against the backdrop of one of South Dakota's most iconic events.

The Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival: Where the West Comes Alive with Art, Music, and Community.

Each fall, as the thundering hooves of bison echo through the Black Hills, the Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival brings a different kind of energy to Custer State Park—one filled with creativity, culture, and community spirit.

What began over 30 years ago as a small gathering of regional artists has grown into a vibrant, three-day celebration that now welcomes thousands of visitors. Held in conjunction with the iconic Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup, the Arts Festival showcases the best of South Dakota's creative talent—from handcrafted jewelry and fine art to woodwork, photography, and homegrown goods.



The festival takes place on the beautiful State Game Lodge grounds, where rows of vendor booths stretch beneath golden aspens. Live music fills the air, food trucks dish up local favorites, and families explore hands-on activities, demonstrations, and kid-friendly zones. One of the festival's highlights is the large event tent—affectionately known as the Big Top—where daily performances, educational programs, and artist spotlights keep guests entertained.

More than just a shopping opportunity, the Arts Festival offers visitors a chance to experience the unique culture of the Black Hills and connect with the artists and makers who call this place home. It's a celebration of craftsmanship and tradition, set against the breathtaking backdrop of one of the most dramatic wildlife events in the country.

So whether you come for the bison or stay for the art, the Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival is a must-experience event that captures the heart and soul of Custer State Park.



THURSDAY

Welcome to the 2025 Custer State Park Arts Festival—where creativity, community, and the spirit of the Black Hills come together in one unforgettable weekend!

Big Top Tent

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.



Stringbean & Svenson Family

The Svenson Family Band has long been a favorite of the Buffalo Round up event and we are excited to have them back this year. Come sit a spell under the Big Top tent and listen to some good old country and bluegrass music.

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.



Johnny Hastings & Stillhouse Down

Hailed as one of South Dakota's brightest rising guitarists, Johnny Hastings has crafted an unforgettable blues experience in tandem with one of the tightest rhythm sections this side of the Mississippi. His soulful vocals and virtuosic lead playing resurrect a rare blues energy that is as danceable as it is captivating.

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.



Jalen Crossland

Hailing from Ten Sleep, Wyoming, Jalen Crossland is an award-winning American bluegrass, Americana, and alternative country singer-songwriter and musician.

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.



Devon Sants

Devon Sants is an independent, American storyteller who sees life through a darker lens. Whether it's Alt Pop, Murderfolk, or Roots Rock, he goes back to the origins of storytelling and allows each song to find its own unique sound.

FRIDAY

Buffalo Round Up Information

Please Note: These Round Up activities are near the Bison Center along the Wildlife Loop Road

Friday, September 26th

ROUND UP!

6:15 a.m.



Parking Lots Open

The Buffalo Roundup draws over 20,000 guests, so expect delays parking and bring something to help pass the time. Visitors must remain in the viewing areas until the herd is safely corralled, usually around noon. Breakfast starts at 6:15 a.m. in both viewing areas, with lunch available at the corrals after the roundup—both meals available for purchase.

~ 9:30 a.m.



Buffalo Roundup Begins

The Buffalo Roundup begins at 9:30 a.m., though timing may vary based on the herd's behavior. Guests must remain in the viewing areas until the buffalo are safely in the corrals, typically around noon.

12:00 p.m. - 3:00
p.m.



Buffalo Handling

Once the Roundup is complete and the bison are safely in the corrals, visitors are welcome to head to the corral area to watch park staff work a portion of the herd—this includes branding, ear tagging, calf vaccinations, and health checks on mature bison. The rest of the herd will be worked in October.

Friday - 7:00 p.m.

ARTS
FESTIVAL
GROUNDS



Hot Air Balloons

Stick around after Friday night's music for a night glow on the Arts Festival grounds—weather permitting!
Please note this event is dependent on the weather.

FRIDAY

Big Top Tent

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.



Badger Sett Band

The Badger Sett Band performs the poetry of Custer State Park's very own poet Badger Clark and sets them to music. Come and listen to these beautiful songs, i.e. Cowboy's Prayer, I Must Come Back.

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.



Ryan LittleEagle

Ryan LittleEagle is a Native American singer-songwriter and musician from San Antonio, Texas, now living in the Black Hills, South Dakota. Influenced by the likes of George Strait, Jason Isbell, Johnny Cash, Bill Miller, and R Carlos Nakai, LittleEagle blends the rich storytelling of Country/Americana music, and with the cultural roots of First Nations music creating a style called "Native Americana."

1:30 - 3:00 p.m.



Jalan Crossland

Hailing from Ten Sleep, Wyoming, Jalan Crossland is an award-winning American bluegrass, Americana, and alternative country singer-songwriter and musician.

3:30 - 5:00 p.m.



Brenn Hill

Brenn Hill is a singer/songwriter who reveals the heart of the West to anyone who will take the time to listen. He is not just an observer or narrator of western lore, but one of its strongest interpreters. The cowboy's trials and tribulations are his raw material. Brenn's career spans seventeen recordings of mostly self-penned music and over two decades performing his music on the road.

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.



The Wilt Brothers

Custer State Park is excited to welcome back The Wilt Brothers. With over 20 years experience this band brings the country into the park.

SATURDAY

8:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Pancake feed at the Big Top (\$)

Big Top Tent

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.



Kerry Grombacher

Kerry Grombacher plays guitar and mandolin and writes and performs contemporary folk and western songs. In the spirit of the troubadours of old, he paints vivid portraits and tells fascinating stories that are set in the landscape of the west.

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.



The Josh Cleavland Band

The Josh Cleveland Band brings a show that is both full energy and whole heart. Sitting directly between rock, country and soul, their original music and unique covers keep the audience engaged with a broad appeal. This is a band that will have you on your feet shouting for more and humming their hook and melodies for days.

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.



Lonely Rangers

The Lonely Rangers are back by popular demand! This upbeat Black Hills area acoustic country rock act has been a staple of the Buffalo Round Up.

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.



Rablin Rangers

The duo consists of Bonnie Jo Exton, who plays guitar, banjo, and dulcimer and sings harmony, and Brad Exton who plays six and twelve-string guitar and sings lead vocals. Both members have spent many years performing various types of music, such as rock, folk, country, and traditional music.

Thank you for joining us at the Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival—we're so glad you were part of the fun!

ARTS FESTIVAL

ARTS FESTIVAL HOURS

- THURSDAY, SEPT 25 - 10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, SEPT 26 - 10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.
- SATURDAY, SEPT 27 - 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.



Share your 2025 #CSPRoundUp Adventure!

BISON SELFIES? YES, PLEASE!

Bison are roaming all over the Arts Festival — in paintings, jewelry, sculptures, photos, and more! If you spot a bison at a vendor booth, snap a selfie with it and share it using #CSPRoundUp. At the end of the Roundup, we'll pick a winner to receive a gift basket from the park!

Just remember — **NO SELFIES WITH REAL BISON.** The artistic ones are much more cooperative.

Find a Golden Bison, Win a Prize!

Hidden throughout the Arts Festival grounds and vendor booths are 5-inch tall golden bison toys. If you spot one, bring it to park staff at the Big Top Tent with live music to claim your unique Custer State Park prize!

Each day, a new herd of 10 golden bison will be hidden — so everyone has a chance to join the hunt and win! *NOTE: LIMIT OF ONE PRIZE PER PERSON.*



Looking for More Fun?

Scan the QR code to check out our new online events portal!

Just search "Custer" (or any South Dakota State Park you're curious about) to discover hikes, festivals, educational programs, and special events happening all year long.

There's something for everyone — and your next adventure is just a click away!

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found Items will be held at the Big Top tent. Please check there with the Park Staff.

For More Information
Call 605.394.2693
or visit
custerstatepark.com