Blood Run National Historic Landmark was established in 1970 in recognition of the large American Indian trade center and ceremonial site that flourished there between 1500-1700 A.D. While the name "Blood Run" might suggest the site of a great battle, the name probably came from European explorers who named the creek "Blood Run Creek" because iron gave the water a reddish coloration.

The site was a trading and ceremonial center where peace was made between tribes. When a portion of the land was purchased by the State, the name "Good Earth" was suggested by tribal representatives to more accurately reflect the true nature of the site. Good Earth State Park was designated South Dakota's 13th state park in 2013.

History

Archaeologists believe the site of Blood Run was used minimally as early as 6,500 B.C. The Oneota occupation, however, came much later, likely becoming intensive about 1500 A.D. with the most active and important use occurring at the end of the 17th century (1650 to 1710). At its peak, 10,000 people may have been present at various times throughout the year, gathering for trade fairs and attending seasonal ceremonial celebrations. Both culturally and linguistically related, the descendants of these people are known today as the Omaha, Ponca, Ioway and Otoe.

Archeologists believe the people who lived at Blood Run from about 1500 to 1700 A.D. controlled the trade of the soft red stone (known as catlinite) that came from the quarries at Pipestone National Monument in southwestern Minnesota. This beautiful red stone was highly regarded by Native Americans and was used for various ceremonial items including pipes. Large pieces were brought to Blood Run, and it was there that people from other tribes would come throughout the year and trade for this extremely valuable commodity used in ceremonies by tribes all over North America.

By 1714, the Dakota Sioux took over the control of the pipestone trade in the region and the site now known as Blood Run was abandoned. The people that lived there moved away. Their descendants include the Omaha and Ponca now located in Nebraska, the Ioway who are in two locations, Kansas/Nebraska and Oklahoma, and the Oto located in Oklahoma with the Missouria.

The Prairie Peninsula

In prehistory, this area was part of the vast tall grass "Prairie Peninsula" biome that stretched from western Indiana to the edge of eastern South Dakota. Great tracts of tall grass with occasional thickets of chokecherry and wild plum were often punctuated only by a single great Bur Oak or small oak groves. Bur Oaks survived the frequent natural and man ignited fires because of their thick, fire-resistant bark and an ability to withstand long droughts. The numerous river valleys that drained the rolling tall-grass prairies were comprised of Silver Maples, Cottonwoods, Elms, Ash, Hackberries, Basswoods and willows.

Good Earth State Park features a large, remnant Burr Oak forest that marks what was formerly the far western edge of the Prairie Peninsula. Many of the great Oaks in the forest may be over 200 years old.

At the foot of the Oak covered hills, adjacent to the bottomland, stand old, mature trees that include American Elms (very rare), Basswoods, Hackberries, Green Ash and Boxelders. On the floodplain forest next to the river are stands of mature Silver Maple, Boxelder, Cottonwoods and willow--all growing in the same primeval proximity and relationships typical of earlier times.

The other natural treasure of Good Earth State Park is the rare, remnant stands of native tall grass prairie savannahs that have persisted on the various ridge sites.

Good Earth State Park presently has about 3 miles of undeveloped trails that wind back and forth between sunny grasslands and deeply, shaded forest ravines. It features an abundant variety of birds along with views that are both delightful and dramatic.

Make a Contribution

To make a contribution to the development of Good Earth State Park, contact:

South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation
605-673-4017 or 605-941 3156
brownassociates@goldenwest.net
parkswildlifefoundation.org

GOOD EARTH STATE PARK

PHYSICAL ADDRESS
48072 270th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
GPS Coordinates: 43.475595, -96.5942

PARK HEADQUARTERS
C/O Newton Hills State Park
28767 482nd Avenue
Canton, SD 57013
605.987.2263
newtonHills@state.sd.us
www.gfp.sd.gov

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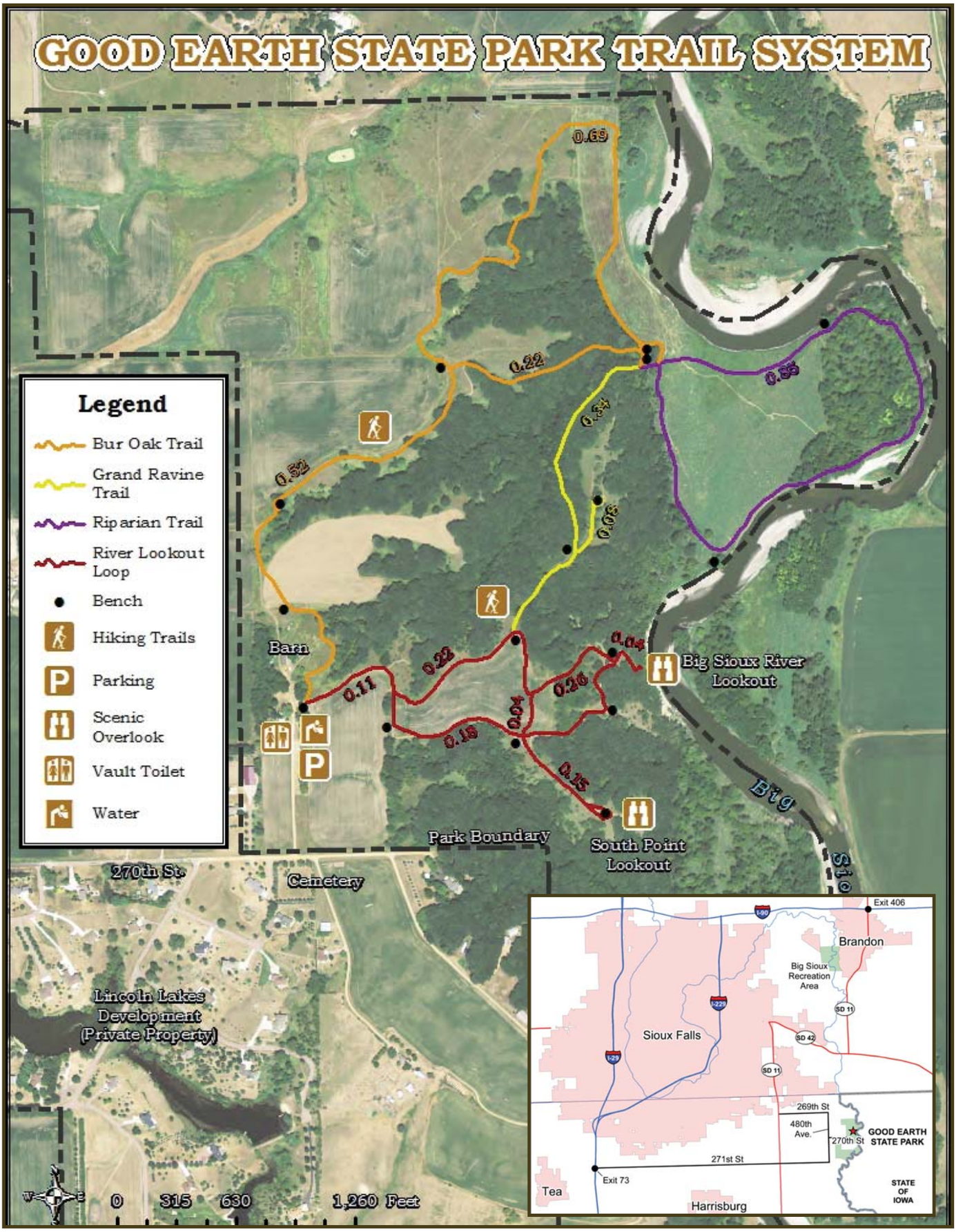
GOOD EARTH STATE PARK

AT BLOOD RUN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

trail guide

South Dakota STATE PARKS
Department of Game, Fish and Parks



Trail Guidlines

- Please stay on the trails.
- No campfires or camping allowed.
- Pets must be leashed. Please clean up after pets.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife.
- No motorized vehicles beyond parking areas.
- Mountain bike and equestrian use not permitted.
- Please do not litter. Leave the area better than you found it.
- Do not remove any natural or cultural resources; let others enjoy the same features that you enjoy.
- South Dakota State Park entrance licenses not required at this time.