

TATANKA



2018
GUIDE TO CUSTER STATE PARK

welcome

Thank you for choosing to visit Custer State Park, a place where you can leave your baggage and go home traveling light. I recently read a book called *Traveling Light* by Max Lucado. In his book, Max challenges us all to learn to travel light. We have all been known to pick up a few bags. Odds are you did while you prepared to take this trip.



"Somewhere between the first step on the floor and the last step out the door, you grabbed some luggage. You stepped over to the baggage carousel and loaded up. Don't remember doing so? That's because you did it without thinking. Don't remember seeing a baggage terminal? That's because the carousel is not the one in the airport; it's the one in the mind. And the bags we grabbed are not made of leather; they're made of burdens."

The suitcase of guilt. A sack of discontent. You drape a duffel bag of weariness on one shoulder and hanging bag of grief on the other. Throw on a backpack of anxiety. An overnight bag of loneliness and a duffle bag of fear. Add on a brief case of perfectionism. Pretty soon we're carrying more than a freight train. No wonder we are so tired at the end of the day. Lugging luggage is exhausting."

Take a deep breath and set that stuff down, leave it at the entrance to this 71,000-acre natural playground and don't bother to pick it up again. Staff will place it in the "lost and never to be found again" box. Custer State Park is a place of serenity, a place to relax, slow down and remember that while on vacation, life has one gear, slow. Take the time to reconnect with your inner senses. Pick up a trail guide and find that quiet place to sit down and enjoy the sounds and smells of nature around you. Sit quietly browsing one of the books in the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center fireside chat room while you let your kids explore the multitude of hands-on displays found throughout the building.

Regardless of what your niche is while visiting us, remember the most important thing you can do is to drop off your extra luggage and go home a lot lighter. And remember, if you find yourself carrying too much luggage, regardless of the time of year, we are always open and ready to take that extra luggage off your shoulders.

Matt Snyder, Superintendent
Custer State Park

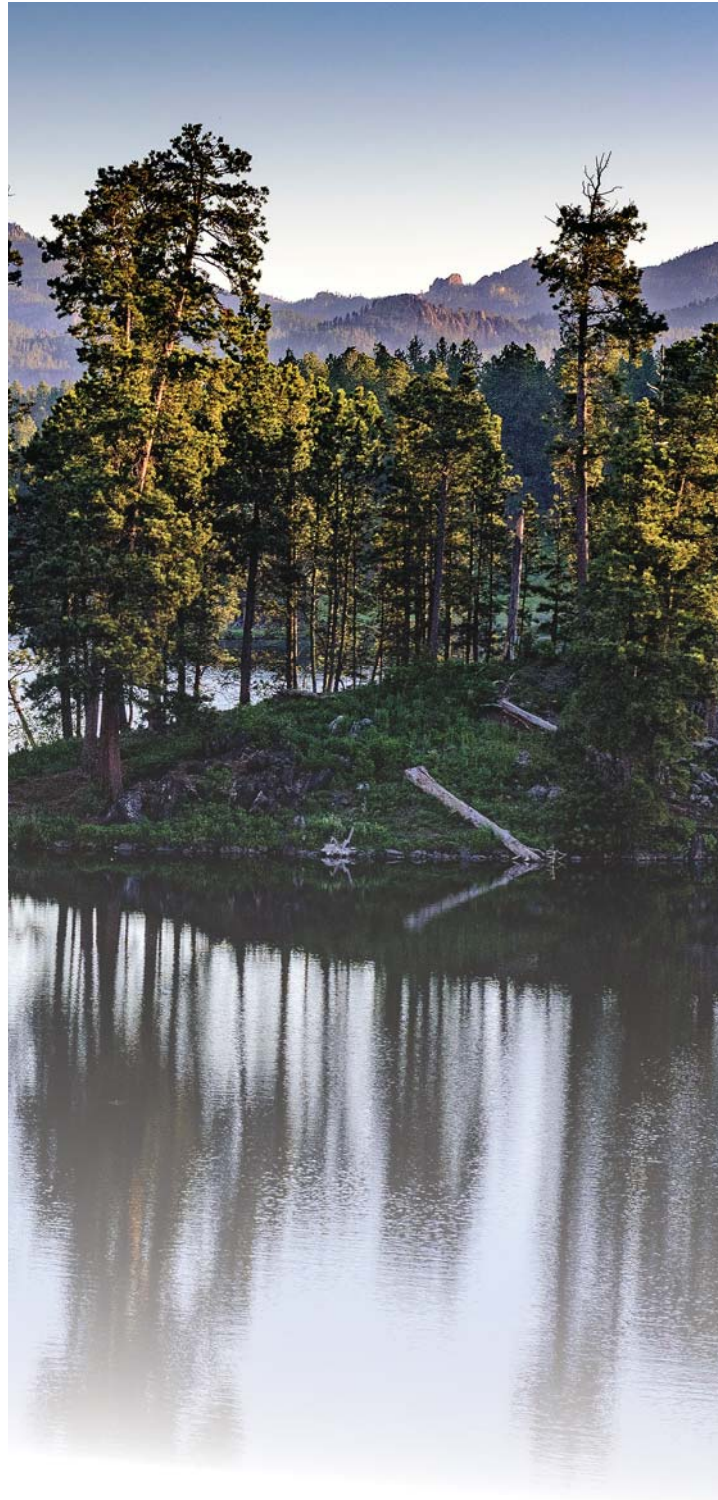
tatanka

Tatanka is the Lakota word for bison or buffalo.

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The *Tatanka* is published by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Dennis Daugaard, Governor of South Dakota; Kelly Hepler, Secretary SD Game, Fish and Parks; Katie Ceroll, Director, SD Division of Parks and Recreation; Matthew Snyder, Superintendent, Custer State Park; Brooke Smith, *Tatanka* Editor

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The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' mission is to provide sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities through responsible management of our state's parks, fisheries and wildlife by fostering partnerships, cultivating stewardship and safely connecting people with the outdoors.

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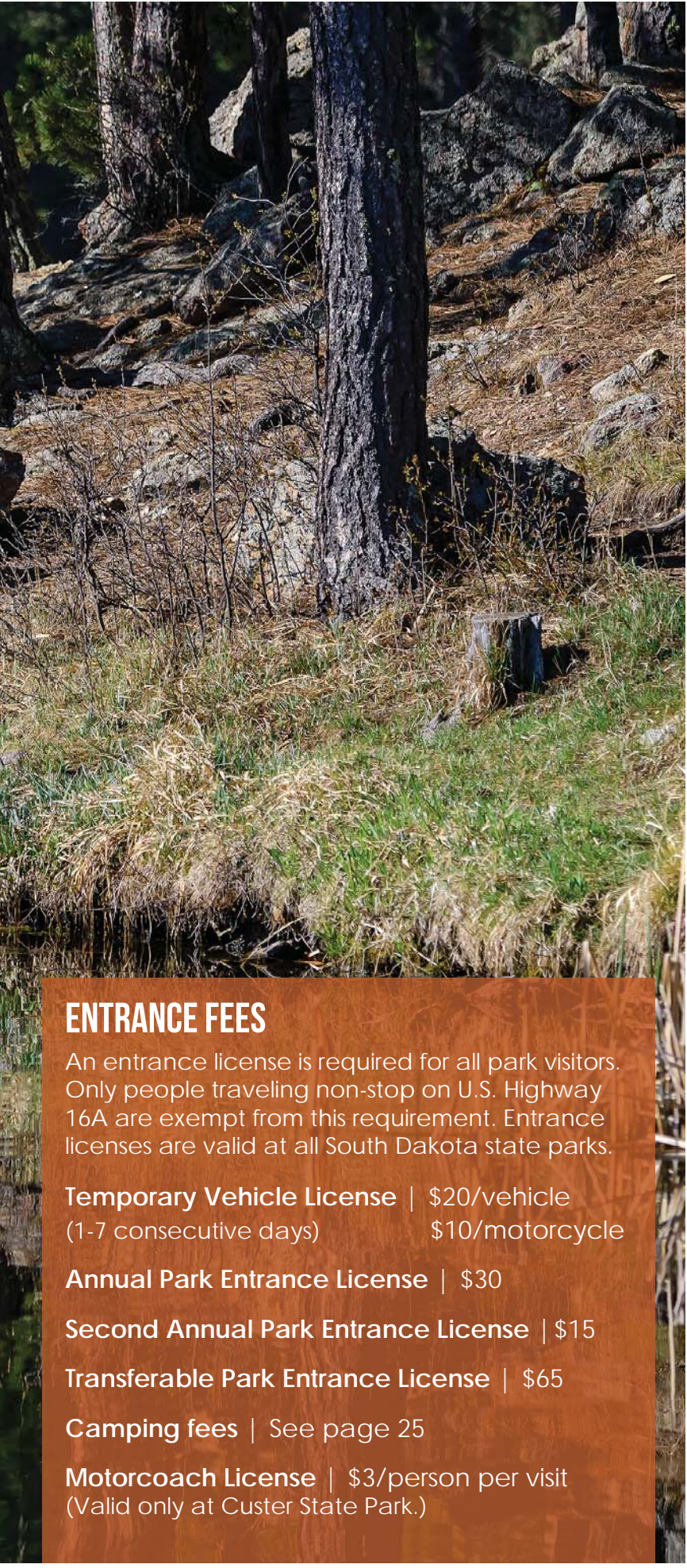
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THINGS TO KNOW





ENTRANCE FEES

An entrance license is required for all park visitors. Only people traveling non-stop on U.S. Highway 16A are exempt from this requirement. Entrance licenses are valid at all South Dakota state parks.

Temporary Vehicle License | \$20/vehicle
(1-7 consecutive days) | \$10/motorcycle

Annual Park Entrance License | \$30

Second Annual Park Entrance License | \$15

Transferable Park Entrance License | \$65

Camping fees | See page 25

Motorcoach License | \$3/person per visit
(Valid only at Custer State Park.)

park rules

Regulations are designed to protect both park visitors and park resources. Park rangers enforce the park's laws and regulations.

- » **DO NOT approach the buffalo.**
- » Do not feed or disturb wildlife.
- » No off-road vehicles.
- » Drones are not allowed in the park.
- » Open fires are prohibited unless in an approved fire grate located in campgrounds or picnic areas.
- » Pets need to be on a leash no longer than 10 feet. Pets are not allowed in any park buildings or on designated swimming beaches. Please clean up after your pet, and do not leave pets unattended. Service animals are welcome.
- » Removal of any natural or cultural features such as rocks or artifacts is prohibited.
- » Loaded firearms are not allowed in the park. Unloaded and cased firearms may be transported in a vehicle.
- » Open carry is not permitted. You may carry a concealed weapon with a valid permit.
- » Visitors are not allowed to jump or dive from bridges, rocks or cliffs into any of the park's lakes.
- » Only state-sponsored geocaches are allowed in the park.

lost and found

All lost and found items and records are kept at the park office. If you find or lose an item, stop at one of our entrance stations, visitor centers or the park office and fill out a lost and found form.

contact information

Camping reservations

1.800.710.2267 | campsd.com

Custer State Park

Park Office | 605.255.4515

custerstatepark@state.sd.us | custerstatepark.com

Custer State Park Resort

Information | 605.255.4772

Reservations | 1.888.875.0001

info@custerresorts.com | custerresorts.com

VISITOR CENTERS

DISCOVER HOW TO EXPLORE

The Peter Norbeck Visitor Center was transformed into the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center in 2017. This building fills a void in the park—a place for young visitors to learn about the outside world and surrounding park land.



▲ Custer State Park Visitor Center

Located at the junction of Wildlife Loop Road and Highway 16.

Memorial Day – Labor Day | Open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Labor Day – September 30 | Open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

October 1 – Memorial Day | Open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter | Closed

◀ Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

Located on Highway 16 near the State Game Lodge.

May 27 – September 30 | Open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

October 1 – Friday before Memorial Day | Closed

▼ Wildlife Station Visitor Center

Located on Wildlife Loop Road.

Memorial Day – Labor Day | Open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Labor Day – September 30 | Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

October 1 – Memorial Day | Closed



HISTORY



1893

Sylvan Lake Hotel is opened and operated by the Reder family.



1909

Department of Game, Fish and Parks is established.

1874

The Gordon Party arrived in the area in search of gold.

This illegal party built a stockade near present day Custer. Within five months, they were removed by the US Cavalry.



1912

Custer County Land is designated as Custer State Forest.

1953

President Dwight D. Eisenhower stays at the State Game Lodge.

1966

The first buffalo auction is held in February, with 100 head sold.



1957

Badger Clark, SD's first poet laureate and 30 year resident of Custer State Park dies. His cabin the "Badge Hole" is still open to the public.

1988

Galena Fire starts on July 4th by lightening and burns 16,002 acres over the next 5 days.

1967

The SD Legislature created the park entrance license; a \$2 fee for each vehicle entering any of the state parks.

1994

Custer State Park celebrates its 75th anniversary.

1914

First 36 bison are brought to Custer Wildlife Preserve from Scotty Phillip's herd at Ft. Pierre.

1922

After burning down in 1921 the State Game Lodge is rebuilt and reopened.



1919

Custer State Forest becomes Custer State Park.

1945

The first state parks are added to the state park system since Custer State Park in 1919: Bear Butte, Harford Beach, Lake Herman, Lake Louise, Llewellyn Johns Memorial, Oakwood Lakes.

1930s

The Civilian Conservation Corps makes many improvements throughout the park, including the Peter Norbeck Center, Mount Coolidge tower and Wildlife Station visitor Center.

1927

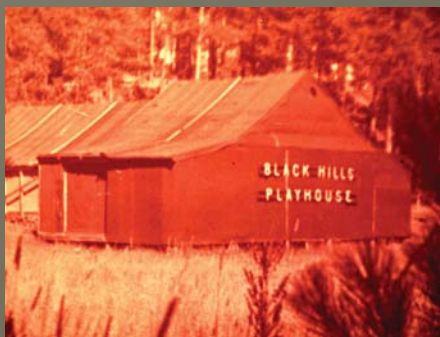
President Calvin Coolidge makes Custer State Park his "Summer White House."

Burros are introduced into the park in 1927 to provide transportation to Harney Peak.



1946

The first Black Hills Playhouse Company inhabits the CCC Camp Lodge as they rehearse and build shows, opening *Penny Wise* at the State Game Lodge on July 8.



1935

The Sylvan Lake Hotel burns and is rebuilt in its present location overlooking the lake.

2017

The Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center is remodeled and opens in September.

2004

The Divisions of Custer State Park and Parks and Recreation merge.

2016

The Custer State Park Visitor Center opens.

2019

South Dakota State Parks will celebrate their 100th anniversary.



WILDLIFE





KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

When viewing wildlife, please remain in your vehicle or stay at least 100 yards from bison, elk and other animals. Regardless of distance, if any wild animal changes its behavior due to your presence, you are too close. Please back away.

Custer State Park wildlife

Custer State Park is one of the few places in the world where you are able to see an abundance of wildlife in their natural habitat. Visitors may encounter a variety of wildlife throughout the park's 71,000 acres, including along trails, in the campgrounds and beside the road. Wildlife Loop Road is particularly known for its common sightings of buffalo, pronghorn and prairie dogs, but keep an eye out for white-tailed and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep and a host of birds and smaller wildlife as well. For the best results, travel the loop during the early morning or later in the evening, when wildlife are most active.

WILDLIFE



ELK

Elk are the second largest member of the deer family with only moose larger. Mature bulls grow and shed heavy, wide antlers each year. They are shy and seldom seen during the daytime hours. They are best found in early morning or late at night.

COYOTES

Coyotes hunt in all habitats of Custer State Park. Their diet is varied, but consists mainly of small mammals.



MOUNTAIN LIONS

Chiefly nocturnal and reclusive toward humans, mountain lions are found within the Black Hills and Custer State Park. These predators feed on several species, including deer, elk, rabbits and wild turkeys.



BIRDS

The park's diverse habitat makes for exciting bird watching. Visitors can find the mountain bluebird, white-winged junco, golden eagle, prairie falcon and western tanager, to name but a few.

HUNTING: A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Some animal species in the park are managed through hunting programs. Hunting helps reduce the size of populations, preventing overcrowding within the park. Control of numbers ensures an adequate supply of food for all species and prevents habitat loss and competition between species.

Most hunting seasons typically occur from mid-September through early January. Turkey hunting takes place in the spring from mid-April through mid-May each year.

The fees collected from hunting licenses generate revenue which help fund wildlife management programs.

Species managed through hunting in the park include bison, elk, deer, pronghorn, mountain lion and turkey.



BIGHORN SHEEP

A herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep was introduced to Custer State Park in 1922. Rams have thick, curled horns and ewes have smaller curved horns.

BURROS

The burros in Custer State Park are not native to the Black Hills. They are descendants from the herd that once hauled visitors to the top of Black Elk Peak. The rides were discontinued years ago and the burros were released into the park.



MOUNTAIN GOATS

The mountain goat was not found in South Dakota until 1924, when it was introduced to the Black Hills. Today, they are found in the granite outcroppings and crags around Black Elk Peak, Needles and Mount Rushmore areas. The all-white mammal feeds on grasses, ferns, moss and lichen among other high-elevation plants. Both sexes have sharp, slender, black horns.



PRONGHORNS

Pronghorns, commonly referred to as antelope due to their similar appearance, live on the open grassland. The name pronghorn comes from the buck's large pronged horns. The horn sheaths are shed each year. The fastest land animal in North America, pronghorns can run 60 mph for great distances.



PLEASE DON'T FEED US!

Feeding the park's wildlife is prohibited. In fact, feeding any wild animal can be dangerous to both you and the animal.



PRAIRIE DOGS

The black-tailed prairie dog is found on the dry, upland prairie. It is a rodent that lives in large social groups called towns. Prairie dogs get their name from their bark-like call.



WHITE-TAILED DEER

White-tailed deer live mainly in the timberlands. As its name implies, the white-tailed deer has white hair on the underside of its tail. When the animal runs, the tail is flipped up and looks like a waving white flag.



MULE DEER

These deer are aptly named for their large ears. Their black-tipped tails, which are short and narrow, are carried down when the deer runs. Mule deer often bound with a stiff-legged gait as if bouncing on powerful springs when they flee.

SCENIC DRIVES

TUNNEL INFORMATION

Tunnels are found on three highways in or near Custer State Park. Drivers of travel trailers, campers, recreational vehicles and buses should be aware of the tunnel sizes.

Iron Mountain Road — US 16A N

Doane Robinson	13' 2" Wide	12' 2" High
C.C. Gideon	13' 0" Wide	11' 0" High
Scovel Johnson	13' 2" Wide	12' 4" High

Sylvan Lake Road — SD 87/89, North of Sylvan Lake

Hood Tunnel	10' 6" Wide	9' 10" High
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Needles Highway — SD 87 N

Needles Eye Tunnel	8' 4" Wide	11' 3" High
Iron Creek	9' 0" Wide	11' 4" High

TAKE YOUR TIME

These winding drives are enjoyed at a slower pace. When making plans, please allow ample time to travel at a safe speed – generally 25 miles per hour or slower.

"You're not supposed to drive here at 60 miles an hour. To do the scenery half justice, people should drive 20 or under; to do it full justice, they should get out and walk."

-Peter Norbeck



Needles Highway | 14 miles

- » Expect travel time of about 45 to 60 minutes.
- » Closed in the winter.

The Needles Highway is more than a 14-mile road – it's a spectacular drive through pine and spruce forests, meadows surrounded by birch and aspen and rugged granite mountains. The road's name comes from the needle-like granite formations which seem to pierce the horizon along the highway.

◀ Iron Mountain Road | 18 miles

- » Expect travel time of about 45 to 60 minutes.

This winding road runs between Mount Rushmore National Memorial and the junction of US 16A and SD 36. Constructed in 1933, only a portion of this road lies within the park, but it is a must-see.

Along the highway, visitors will find wildfire exhibits, pigtail bridges, magnificent Black Hills scenery and tunnels that frame Mount Rushmore.

Wildlife Loop Road | 18 miles

- » Expect travel time of about 45 minutes.
- » Open year-round.

The 18-mile Wildlife Loop Road takes visitors through the open grasslands and pine-speckled hills that much of the park's wildlife call home.

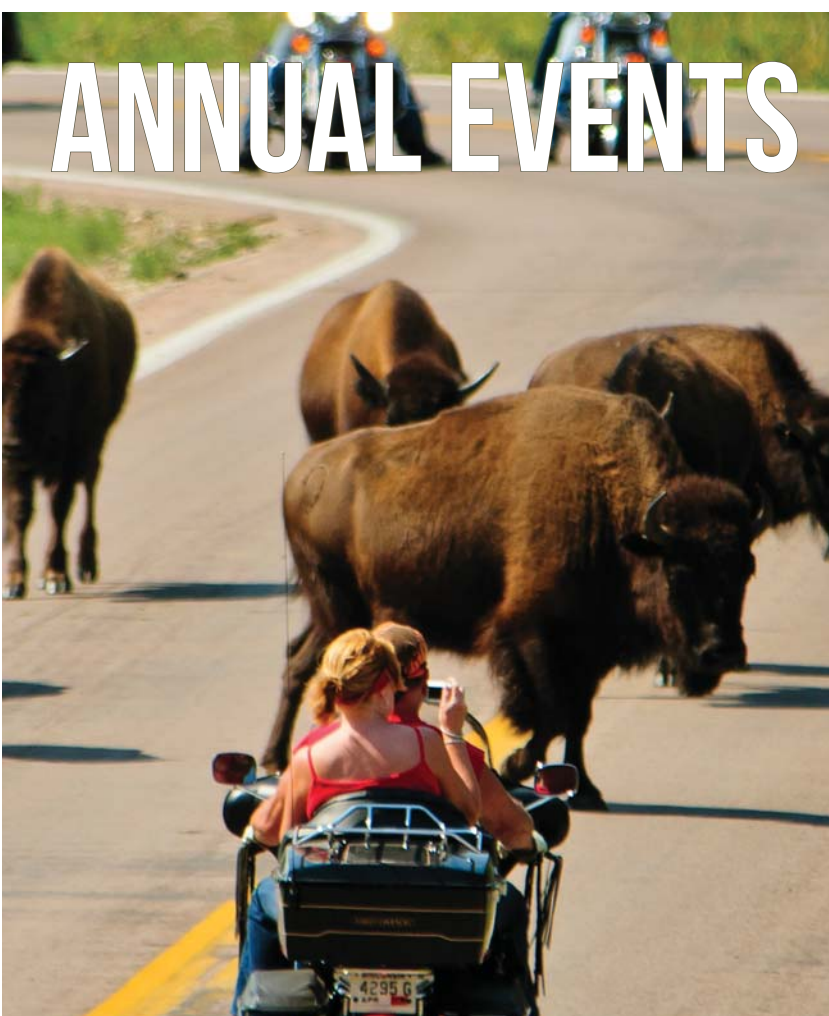
Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway

- » Expect travel time of about two to three hours.

The Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway complements the park's three scenic drives and includes some of the most dramatic natural and historic features in the Black Hills.

Sites include the Needles, Mount Rushmore and a bird's eye view of the rocky peaks and forested hills of the Black Hills National Forest.

ANNUAL EVENTS



STURGIS MOTORCYCLE RALLY | AUG 3-12, 2018

Every August, thousands of motorcyclists visit the Black Hills during the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

Below are the next several years' rally dates, so you can either join 'em or avoid 'em.

Aug. 2-11, 2019 | Aug. 7-16, 2020 | Aug. 6-15, 2021

January

First Day Hike

January 1, 10 a.m.

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

Game Lodge Snowshoe Hike

January 13, 1 p.m.

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

February

Valentine's Lover's Leap Snowshoe Hike

February 10, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

March

Sylvan Lake Snowshoe Hike

March 10, 10 a.m.

Sylvan Lake General Store

April

Earth Day Bluebird Box Workshop

April 22, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

May

State Park Open House and Free Fishing Weekend

May 18-20

Statewide | Free entrance

Custer State Park Seasonal Volksmarch Trail Open

May 29 - Sept 30

June

National Trails Day - June 2

Prairie Trail Hike, 9 a.m.

Meet at Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

Little Devil's Tower Hike, 1 p.m.

Meet at Sylvan Lake General Store

Badger Clark Trail Hike, 4 p.m.

Meet at Badger Hole Historic Site

Nature Day Camp: Kids Fishing Day (ages 7-12)

June 27, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Custer State Park Game Lodge Campground Playground

July

Nature Day Camp: Track Detectives (ages 7-12)

July 25, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Custer State Park Game Lodge Campground Playground

August

Nature Day Camp: All About Buffalo (ages 7-12)

August 15, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Custer State Park Game Lodge Campground Playground

September

25th Annual Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival

September 27-29

53rd Annual Buffalo Roundup

September 28

Free entrance

October

Halloween Night Hike

October 26-27, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

November

53rd Annual Buffalo Auction

November

Free entrance

December

Festival of Trees

December 1 - January 1

Events are subject to change. Visit custerstatepark.com or call 605.255.4515 for more information.

PARK PROGRAMS



JUNIOR NATURALIST | AGE 7-12 **PUPS PROGRAM | AGE 4-6**

Custer State Park offers two programs for our younger visitors to learn and explore the park around them. Each program is broken out into different levels of activities.

interpretive programs

Weekly interpretive programs are provided at Custer State Park visitor centers and education center. Current schedules are posted in the campgrounds or can be picked up at any of the visitor centers.

Come join us at any of these great programs and explore the park.

BUFFALO ROUNDUP

what is the purpose?

The park began to gather the herd back in the 1960s when the decision was made to eradicate the disease brucellosis from the herd. The herd was certified brucellosis free in 1965 allowing the sale of live animals. Since that time, the roundup has been used in conjunction with the fall sale as a way to manage the size of the herd and to provide an opportunity to brand and vaccinate the calves.

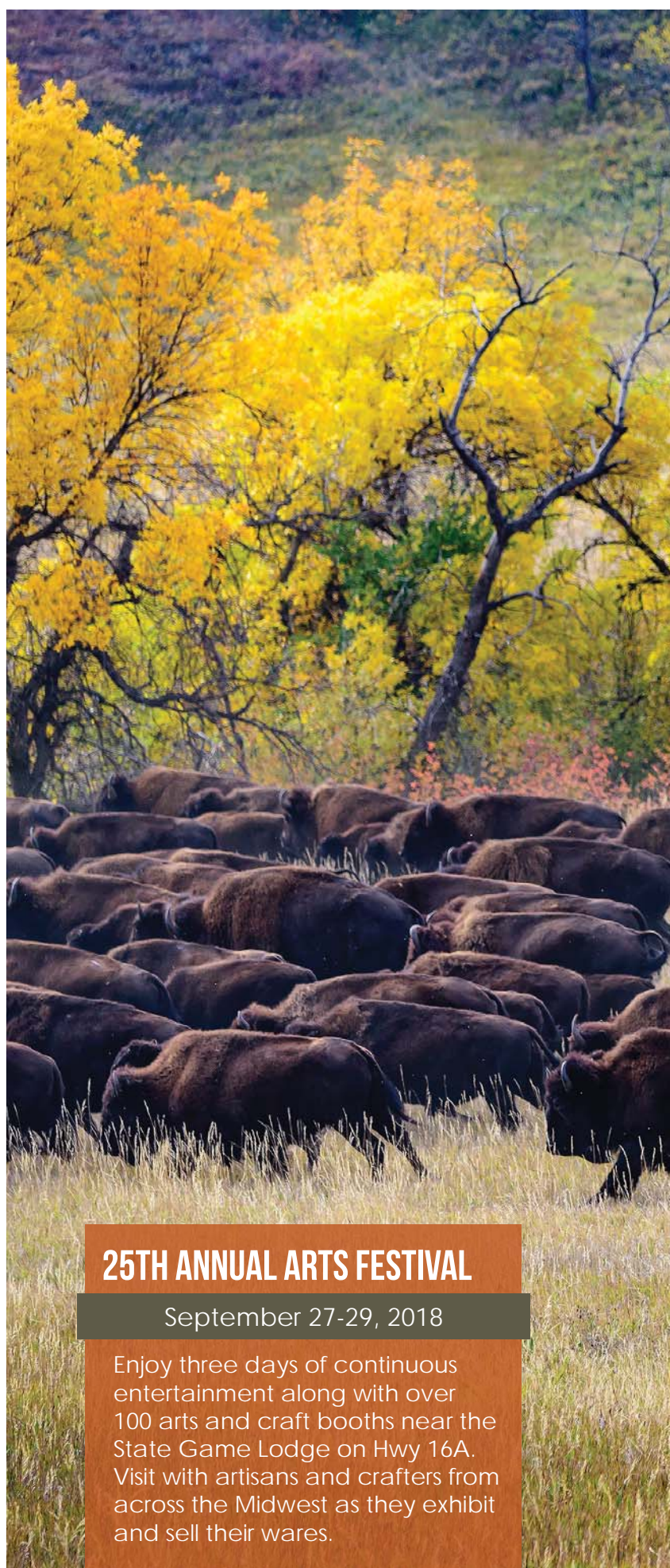
“Studies show that during normal moisture years, the park’s grassland can support about 1,400 head of bison,” explains Chad Kremer, herd manager for Custer State Park. “That number fluctuates depending on rainfall and the available rangeland forage.”

The buffalo are on their own to forage. The park does not supplement their food supply.

“We inventory the range conditions each year and that determines the number of buffalo we sell at the fall auction in November,” said Kremer. “We need to keep the buffalo numbers compatible with available forage, and that is why you may see varying numbers for the size of our herd. This year we have about 1,300 buffalo in the herd, and we’ll be building back to that target number of 1,400 in the future.”

Kremer points out that for Custer State Park, the Buffalo Roundup is a management tool to prepare for the annual buffalo sale. But he says, “It is an event that is open to the public, and we are happy to share it with the thousands of guests who come to experience something out of the old west.”

“It truly is a magnificent sight to see—buffalo rumbling across the plains driven by cowboys and cowgirls on horseback. It takes you back to days gone by and lets the spectators catch a glimpse of old west history,” adds Kremer.



25TH ANNUAL ARTS FESTIVAL

September 27-29, 2018

Enjoy three days of continuous entertainment along with over 100 arts and craft booths near the State Game Lodge on Hwy 16A. Visit with artisans and crafters from across the Midwest as they exhibit and sell their wares.



BUFFALO ROUNDUP

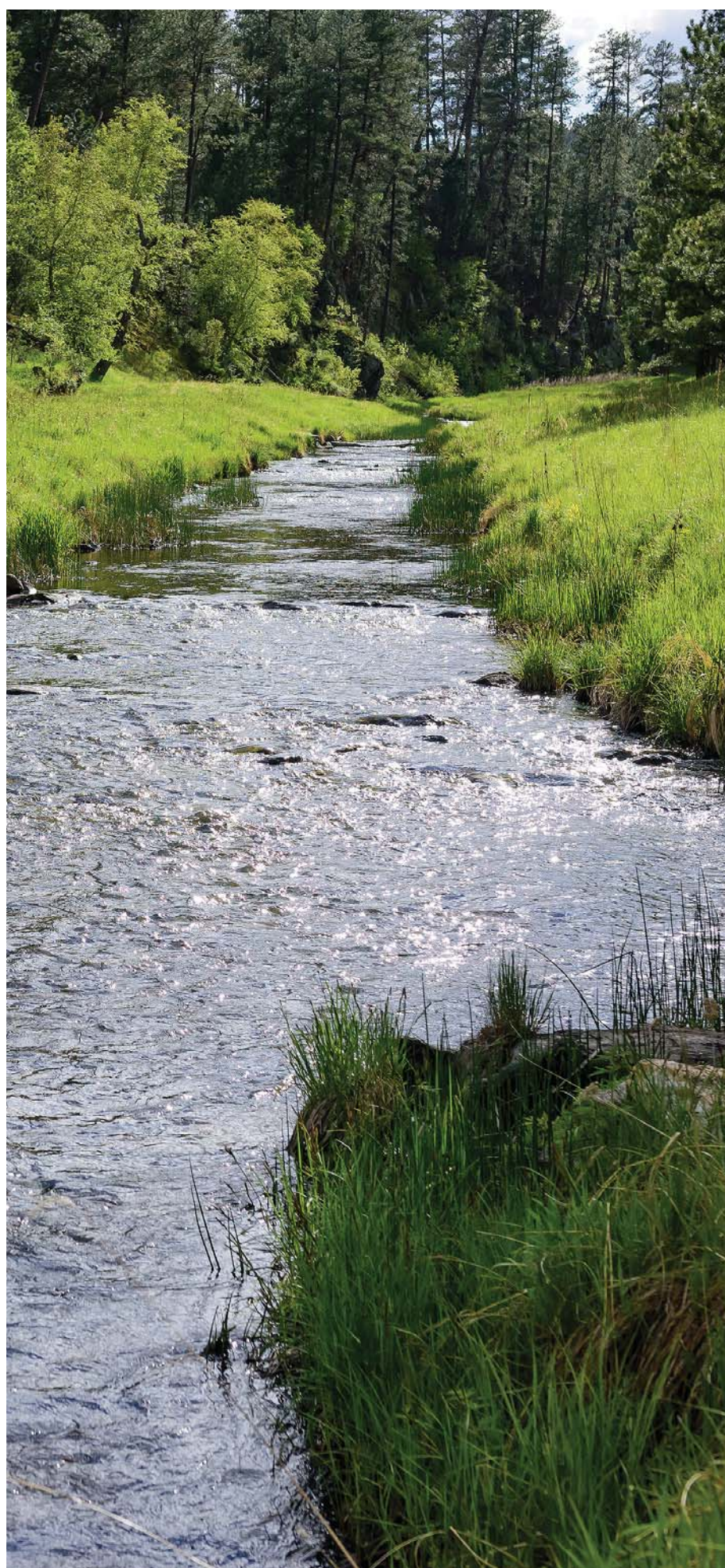
Friday, September 28, 2018

- » The roundup takes place near the corrals on Wildlife Loop Road.
- » Two viewing areas are set aside for spectators—the north and south viewing areas.
- » Arrive between 6:15 and 7:30 a.m.
- » The buffalo are usually corralled around noon, with sorting to take place at the corrals starting at 1 p.m.
- » Reservations are not required.
- » Food concessions available on site.
- » Free park entrance.

LAKEs AND STREAMs

FISHING LICENSE FEES

License	Resident	Non-Resident
One-Day	\$8	\$16
Three-day	N/A	\$37
Annual	\$28	\$67
Youth Annual	N/A	\$25



swimming

Swimming is allowed at the park's five lakes: Center Lake, Legion Lake, Stockade Lake, Sylvan Lake and the Game Lodge Pond.

There are no lifeguards on duty. Jumping from cliffs and rocks into the water is illegal and strictly prohibited. Pets and glass containers are prohibited from all zoned swimming beaches.

boating

For your safety, wear a personal flotation device (PFD), or life jacket, whenever you are on the water. PFDs are mandatory for all people riding in a boat on South Dakota waters.

Boating is permitted within Custer State Park with the following restrictions:

- » Sylvan Lake, *Electric motors only*
- » Legion Lake, *Electric motors only*
- » Stockade Lake, *All boats allowed*
- » Center Lake, *Only slow, non-wake boating allowed*

fishing

Fishing is allowed anywhere in Custer State Park. A valid South Dakota fishing license is required and can be purchased online at gfp.sd.gov.

Anglers will find rainbow, brown and brook trout in the park's waters. Only one trout can exceed 14 inches, but there is no minimum size restriction. (Stockade Lake has a 15-inch minimum size limit on large and smallmouth bass.)

It is legal to use artificial lures, flies, worms or other bait. A variety of sport and panfish are found in Stockade Lake including northern pike, bass, perch, crappie, bluegill and bullhead.

Licenses, bait and tackle are available at each of the four resort areas. For daily limits and rules, please refer to the *2018 Fishing Handbook*, available at the visitor centers and the the park office. The handbook is also available online at gfp.sd.gov and on our mobile app, SDGFP Outdoors.

SYLVAN AREA HIKING TRAILS	LOCATION	LENGTH	DIFFICULTY
Cathedral Spires	2.5 miles east of Sylvan Lake on Needles Highway (Hwy 87)	1.5 miles to Spires (one-way)	Strenuous
Little Devil's Tower Trail	1 mile east of Sylvan Lake on Needles Highway (Hwy 87)	1.25 miles (one-way)	Strenuous
Sunday Gulch Trail (Closed during winter season)	Reach the trailhead by following the Sylvan Lake Shore Trail to behind the lake dam.	2.8 miles (loop)	Strenuous (ice may be present along trail in June)
Sylvan Lake Shore Trail	Sylvan Lake, the trail may be accessed at various points along the lakeshore.	1 mile (loop)	Easy
Sylvan Lake Trailheads to Black Elk Peak (formerly Harney Peak) <i>(Black Elk Peak is located in the Black Hills National Forest, however several trailheads are located in Custer State Park.)</i>	Sylvan Lake Day Use Area: <i>Trail #9:</i> begin just across the footbridge leading to the swimming beach. <i>Trail #4:</i> begins at the furthest southeast corner of the day use parking area.	Trail #9: 3.3 miles to Black Elk Peak (one-way) Trail #4: 3.5 miles to Black Elk Peak (one-way)	Moderate to Strenuous
OTHER HIKING TRAILS	LOCATION	LENGTH	DIFFICULTY
Badger Clark Historic Trail	0.5 miles south of US 16A on Badger Clark Road	1 mile (loop)	Moderate
Creekside Trail	Trailheads at visitor center and Grace Coolidge Campground on US 16A	2 miles (one-way)	Easy, paved
French Creek Natural Area Trail <i>(There are no trail markings. Follow the stream.)</i>	West Trailhead - 3 miles from Blue Bell Lodge on North Lame Johnny Road (CSP4); East Trailhead - 4 miles south of the visitor center on Wildlife Loop Road.	12 miles (one-way)	Moderate, non-established trail
Grace Coolidge Walk-In Fishing Area Trail	Southern Trailhead - Parking area along US 16A, across from Grace Coolidge Campground; Northern Trailhead - Adjacent to the beach at Center Lake.	3 miles (one-way)	Easy to Moderate
Legion Lake Trail	Legion Lake Campground	1 mile (loop)	Moderate to Strenuous
Lover's Leap Trail	Across US 16A from the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center. Behind the Pavillion.	3 miles (loop)	Moderate to Strenuous
Prairie Trail	Along Wildlife Loop Road, 13 miles from the Visitor Center or 5 miles from the Blue Bell Entrance Station	3 miles (loop)	Moderate
Stockade Lake Trail	0.3 miles south of US 16A on Stockade Lake Drive	1.5 miles (loop)	Moderate
South Dakota Centennial Trail (#89)	3 Centennial Trailheads in Custer State Park <i>Iron Creek Trailhead</i> - North of SD Hwy 87, Needles Highway on Camp Remington Rd. <i>Badger Hole Trailhead</i> - 0.5 miles south of US 16A on Badger Clark Road. <i>French Creek Trailhead</i> - 3 miles from Blue Bell Lodge on North Lame Johnny Road.	Approximately 22 miles of the Centennial Trail are located within Custer State Park. The three trailheads provide access points to the park's portion of the trail.	

TRAIL RATINGS

Easy: The trail mainly follows level ground.

Moderate: Parts of the trail follow steep slopes and rocky areas.

Strenuous: Much of the trail follows very steep slopes and rocky areas.

TRAIL GUIDE

For maps and detailed information about the trails, stop at the park's visitor centers.

BLACK ELK PEAK AREA MAP

A more detailed map of the Black Elk Peak (formerly Harney Peak) area trails is available at the visitor centers and at Sylvan Lake entrance station, store and lodge.

CAMPING



INFORMATION

Bulletin boards with information are located in each campground. They also offer a listing of activities and park-related programs.

camping reservations

CAMPSD.COM | 1.800.710.2267

1.714.602.4453 (international)

Reservations required

Campsite and group areas can be reserved one year in advance.

Camping cabin reservations can also be made a year in advance, but must be made at least two days prior to your arrival. Call the park office at 605.255.4515 to check on availability for last minute trips.

Fees

There is a non-refundable reservation fee of \$7.70 for non-residents.

A \$2 fee is assessed to all phone reservations.

Camping fees for the entire stay must be paid at the time the reservation is made.

Cancellations

If you cancel your reservation, you will be charged one night's camping fee for each campsite reserved or \$25 per camping cabin.

Because of its unique use, French Creek Horse Camp cancellation policy is:

- » *30 or more days before arrival:* you will be charged one night's fee for each campsite reserved.
- » *29 - 14 days prior to arrival:* one-half of your entire camping fee.
- » *Less than 14 days prior to arrival:* non-refundable.

same day reservations

Center Lake Campground

- » All open sites can be reserved beginning at 6 a.m. MT each day.
- » Checkout time is noon MT.
- » Campers occupying a "same day reservation" site must call before 6 a.m. MT to extend their stay.
- » Campers are required to occupy their site by 10 p.m. MT on the night of their arrival. If they fail to do so, they are charged a cancellation fee and forfeit the remainder of their reservation.

camping

Camping fees are collected daily and are based on the number of camping units in your party. A camping unit is a powered vehicle, motorhome, camping bus, pull-type camper, tent or any other device used for sleeping.

Additional tents for a family (parents or grandparents and minor children) are considered a single camping unit.

CHECKOUT

Checkout time for campsites is noon and 11 a.m. for camping cabins.

primitive camping

For a primitive outdoor experience, backpackers should try the French Creek Natural Area. Hikers using this area can camp anywhere along the canyon bottom. Open fires are prohibited. Campers must self-register at the stations located on each end of the natural area. The fee is \$7 per person, per night.

camping cabins

LOCATIONS

Blue Bell, Game Lodge, Stockade South, French Creek Horse Camp

ABOUT CABINS

- » Sleep four to five people.
- » Linens are not included.
- » Check-in time is 4 p.m.
- » Checkout time is 11 a.m.
- » No smoking or cooking in the cabins.
- » Pets, except for service animals, are not permitted in cabins.

AMENITIES

- » Heating and air conditioning
- » Electricity
- » Picnic table
- » Fire ring
- » Porch
- » Bunk bed and double bed
- » Table
- » Benches

group camping

Group campgrounds are located near Stockade Lake and the Game Lodge Campground. These areas feature picnic shelters, vault toilets, fire grates, picnic tables and water on site. Showers and flush toilets are available within walking distance from the campgrounds. Evening programs are located nearby on most nights during the summer. Designated swim beaches can also be found close by. Call 1.800.710.2267 for reservations. Reservations are not available online.

non-profit youth camping areas

The park offers two primitive areas (Shady Rest and Center Lake) for non-profit youth tent camping only. Call 1.800.710.2267 for reservations. Reservations are not available online.

CAMPGROUNDS	Number of sites	Campsite fee	Campsite w/electricity	Camping cabins*	Camping cabin fee	Showers	Flush toilets	Vault toilets	RV dump station	Large trailer sties	Handicap access	Laundromat	Concessions	Fuel	Evening program	Hiking trail	Fishing dock	Boating (motorized)	Swimming	Fishing	Playground	Reservable sites*	Accessible sites
Blue Bell*	31	\$21	\$25	23	\$50	●	●	●		●	●	✓	✓	✓	●				✓			30	1
Center Lake+	71	\$19				●		●		●					●	●		●	●	●	●	71	
Game Lodge*	57	\$21	\$25	11	\$50	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	✓	●	✓			●	●	●	55	2
Grace Coolidge*	27	\$21	\$25			●	●			●	●	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	●		26	1
Legion Lake*	22	\$21	\$25			●	●			●	●		✓			●	✓		✓	✓	✓	21	1
Stockade Lake North*	42	\$21	\$25			●	●	●		●	●				●	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	40	
Stockade Lake South*	25	\$21	\$25	13	\$50	●	●	●			●				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	23	
Sylvan Lake*	39	\$21	\$25			●	●	●			●	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		36	
French Creek Horse Camp*	29		\$35	3	\$50	●	●	●	●	●	●					●				●		26	
SPECIALIZED CAMPING AREAS																							
French Creek Natural Area	\$7/person															●				●		0	
Calvin Coolidge Group Area**	\$7/person, minimum \$140					✓	✓	●	✓	●		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	●	✓	all	
Stockade Group Area**	\$7/person, minimum \$140					✓	✓	●							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	all	
Non-profit Youth Areas**	\$0.50/person, minimum \$6							●															

* Reservations available at campsd.com or by calling 1.800.710.2267. ** Reservations only available by calling 1.800.710.2267. ● Within the campground

✓ Available within two miles + Same day reservation, see above. Camping fees subject to sales tax.



LODGING, RESTAURANTS AND ACTIVITIES



STATE GAME LODGE



BLUE BELL LODGE



LEGION LAKE LODGE



SYLVAN LAKE LODGE

DISCOVER THE FIVE DISTINCTLY UNIQUE LODGES OF CUSTER STATE PARK RESORTS.

Your stay is your adventure. From a casual afternoon at Legion Lake, to the stately historic delights of the State Game Lodge White House Dining Room, to the prettiest little log cabin ranch hideaway at Blue Bell Lodge, you are bound to find your family's new favorite. Or, discover South Dakota flavors like buffalo, elk, walleye and more at Sylvan Lake Lodge while sharing in the splendor of our crown jewel. Bring an appetite; we aim to please.

Cabins and lodge rooms

Private lakeview cabins, historic suites, modernized lodge rooms...and about everything in between. Embrace the possibilities; our lodging options are about as diverse as the park's terrain. And with final stages of a three-year-long resort master plan moving to completion in 2018, each lodge boasts recent beautifications.

Activities

Wildlife, the way nature intended. Your best chance at a close encounter is found by signing up for a guided activity like our authentic Hayride and Chuckwagon Cookout (featuring a 45-minute tour of the backcountry) or our Buffalo Safari Jeep Tour. Travel to each lodge to explore the trails by hoof, foot or wheel to catch it all; and along the way, may you encounter many buffalo jams.

LODGING AND DINING

SPECIALTY CABINS

Elevate your expectations; these cabins dress to impress. If your group is looking for a home base and hospitality suite, look no further.

Features

- » Full designer kitchens
- » Impressive great rooms with 2-story gas fireplaces
- » 4 bedrooms
- » 4 full private baths
- » Guest 3/4 bath
- » Propane grill, firepit, picnic tables, and patio/deck
- » Sleep 20-28

Located

- » State Game Lodge
- » Sylvan Lake Lodge
- » Legion Lake Lodge





Blue Bell Lodge

Tucked in the peaceful pines, western comfort awaits.

Located 1 mile off the Wild Life Loop Road

RESORT AMENITIES

- » Restaurant and bar
- » C-store and gasoline
- » Horseback trail riding
- » Hayride chuck wagon cookout
- » Cabins only (no lodge rooms)

DINING

605.255.4531

Comfortable Old West saloon-style setting. Specialty burgers and sandwiches, salads, buffalo and steak. Peaceful patio overlooking French Creek.

◀ Sylvan Lake Lodge

You don't want to miss this view.

Located along the Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway and one-half mile from the Black Elk Peak trailhead

RESORT AMENITIES

- » Restaurant, lounge and veranda
- » Sylvan General Store
- » Boat and water sport rentals
- » Cabins and lodge rooms
- » The park's Crown Jewel

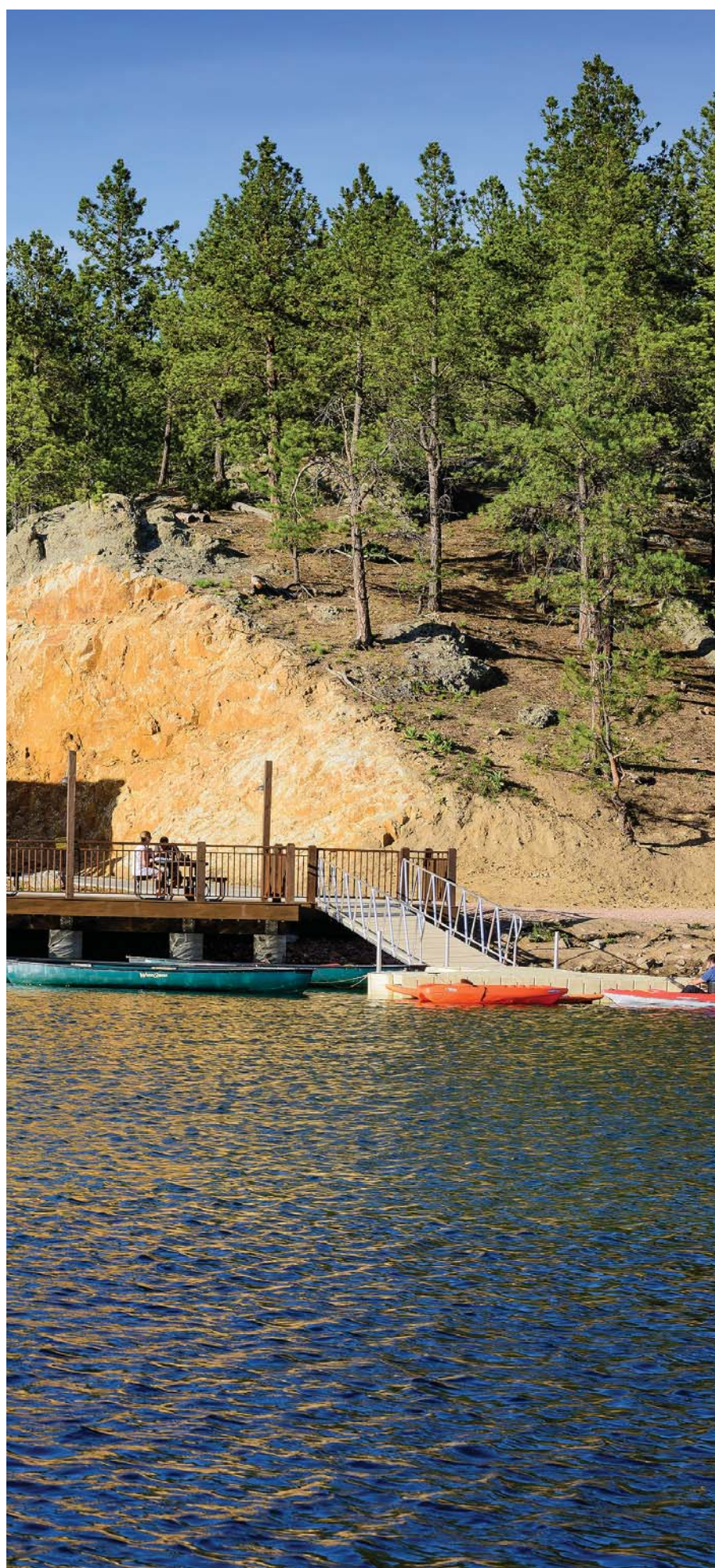
DINING

605.574.2561

Fantastic forest views! Newly remodeled. Exquisite cuisine featuring buffalo, fresh fish and wapiti (elk) tenderloin. Reservations recommended.

LODGING AND DINING





State Game Lodge

A stately residence in a prime location.

Located 1/2 mile from the Visitor's Center and Wildlife Loop Road entrance; 1 mile from Iron Mountain Road entrance

RESORT AMENITIES

- » Restaurant, lounge, and historic front porch
- » Gift shop
- » Buffalo Safari Jeep Tours
- » Cabins, lodge rooms and 7 historical suites
- » President Coolidge's "Summer White House"

DINING

605.255.4541

Eloquently historical. Dinner is a culinary treat. Entree selections highlight local game such as walleye, pheasant, buffalo and rattlesnake. Reservations recommended.

◀ Legion Lake Lodge

Delight in a day at the water's edge.

Located 1 mile from Needles Highway entrance

RESORT AMENITIES

- » Lakeside restaurant and deck
- » Gift shop
- » Swimming beach and playground
- » Boat and water sport rentals
- » Cabins only (no lodge rooms)

DINING

605.255.4521

Relaxed and inviting atmosphere for families. No reservations. Breakfast, lunch and dinner on the lakeside deck. Specialty ice cream, coffee and local beer on tap.

ACTIVITIES



Hayride Chuck Wagon Cookout

Blue Bell Lodge

- » Reservations required by 2 p.m. | 605-255-4531
- » Arrive at Blue Bell Lodge by 5 p.m.
- » Departure at 5:30 p.m.
- » Arrive back at 8 p.m.

A vehicle-drawn hay wagon takes you on back roads to a mountain meadow canyon for a chuck wagon feast. Singalong country/folk music entertains everyone throughout the evening. A souvenir cowboy hat and bandanna for each paying guest.

Chuck Wagon Cookout Menu

- » An 8 oz. choice sirloin steak or a 1/3 lb. hamburger entrée (vegetarian option available)
- » Cowboy beans
- » Corn bread
- » Potato salad / coleslaw
- » Watermelon
- » Cookies
- » Coffee and lemonade

Adults | \$58

Children (11 & under) | \$51

Children 3 years and under | Free (if child sits on a parent's lap on the ride and eats from a parent's plate).

◀ Buffalo Safari Jeep Tour

State Game Lodge

- » Reservations Required | 605.255.4541
- » 1-1.5 to 2 Hour Tours
- » Departing 6 a.m. thru 6 p.m.

Driver/guide takes you where only they are permitted - off-road - to provide historical and educational information about the park and wildlife on this scenic tour of the backcountry. Named "Top 10 Safaris in the US" by MSN.

Adults | \$55

Children (11 & under) | \$50

Buffalo Safari Jeep Tour and Cookout

State Game Lodge

- » Reservations required by 2 p.m. | 605-255-4531
- » Departs at 4 p.m. each night

Jeep Safari takes you on a 1.5-hour tour followed by the Chuckwagon Cookout at Blue Bell Lodge. Jeeps bring you back to the Game Lodge after the cookout.

Adults | \$93

Children (11 & under) | \$86

Children 3 years and under | Free

Horseback Trail Riding

Blue Bell Lodge Stables

- » Reservations Required | 605.255.4700
- » Arrive 30 minutes prior to scheduled trail ride to complete the required insurance-related paperwork.
- » Children must ride alone and meet minimum safety requirements.

1-hour trail ride

Adults | \$52

Children (11 & under) | \$45

2-hour trail ride

Adults | \$74

Children (11 & under) | \$54

Half-day ride with lunch

\$170 per person

Full-day ride with lunch

\$260 per person

Boat and Water Sport Rentals

Legion Lake Lodge | 605-255-4521

Sylvan Lake Lodge | 605-574-2561

- » All persons under 18 years of age must have an adult sign for rental with adult supervision while in the water.
- » Life jackets are furnished and required to be worn.

Capacities

- » Paddleboats | 3-5 people
- » Paddleboards | 1 person
- » Canoes and kayaks | 1-3 people

Half-hour | \$14 per person

Family rate | \$50

4-6 people for 1 hour/1 boat

1-hour | \$24 per person

BLACK HILLS PLAYHOUSE

Professional theatre in Custer State Park



June 8 – 17

Romantic Comedy
Rated PG-13

Wonderful romantic comedy that explores empty-nest syndrome, complications of long-term romance and the relationship of adult children with their parents as the parents proclaim their intention to divorce after 37 years of marriage. Each partner seeks solace at the homes of their grown children, and hilarity ensues. Topher Payne calls his work “Parent Trap” for grown-ups.



June 22 – July 8

Quirky Musical
Rated PG-13

Six unusual adolescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime, run by three equally unusual grown-ups. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming “ding” of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Six spellers enter; one speller leaves! At least the losers get a juice box.



July 13 – 28

Romantic Musical
Rated PG

Set in the West, just after the turn of the century, the high-spirited rivalry between the local farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a winsome farm girl, play out their love story. With these two romantics holding the reins, love’s journey is as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road. That they will succeed in making a new life together we have no doubt, and that this new life will begin in a brand-new state provides the ultimate climax to the triumphant OKLAHOMA!



August 3 – 19

Comedy Thriller
Rated PG

It is December 1936, and Broadway star William Gillette, admired the world over for his leading role in the play Sherlock Holmes, has invited his fellow cast members to his Connecticut castle for a weekend of revelry. But when one of the guests is stabbed to death, the festivities in this isolated house of tricks and mirrors quickly turn dangerous. It is then up to Gillette himself, as he assumes the persona of his beloved Holmes, to track down the killer before the next victim appears. The danger and hilarity are non-stop in this glittering whodunit set during the Christmas holidays.

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Tues - Sat: 7:30 p.m.
Wed and Sun: 2 p.m. matinees

Vistors advised to arrive 1/2 hour before curtain, reservations recommended.

For tickets, call 605.255.4141 or purchase online at blackhillspplayhouse.com.

TICKET PRICES

Adults | \$34

Senior/Military | \$31

Student (college age) | \$25

Kids (18 and younger) | \$16

**BLACK HILLS
PLAYHOUSE 2018**

\$3 PER PERSON

off theatre performance

Present this coupon for discount or use online with code CSP18. Discount offers may not be combined.

Black Hills Playhouse is Located at 24834 S Playhouse Road in Custer State Park.

Tickets and information: 855.584.4141 | blackhillspplayhouse.com

AREA STATE PARKS

Your Custer State Park entrance license is valid at all South Dakota State Parks including Angostura Recreation Area near Hot Springs, Bear Butte State Park near Sturgis and Rocky Point Recreation Area near Belle Fourche.

An additional trail pass is required for the George S. Mickelson Trail.

There is no fee for Spearfish Canyon Trails.



Angostura Recreation Area

Located 10 miles southeast of Hot Springs, off US 18/385
605.745.6996

Angostura Reservoir is a water-lover's haven in the southern Black Hills. With plenty of room for boating, fishing, swimming and camping, this recreation area attracts visitors to its clear waters and natural sand beaches.

Bear Butte State Park

Located 6 miles northeast of Sturgis off SD 79
605.347.5240

Mato Paha or "Bear Mountain" is the Lakota name given to this site. The mountain is sacred to many American Indian tribes. A rugged two-mile hike to the summit rewards visitors with a view of four states.

◀ George S. Mickelson Trail

Runs 109 miles from Edgemont to Deadwood
605.584.3896

Additional pass required.

The George S. Mickelson Trail runs through the heart of the Black Hills. The trail's gentle slopes and easy access enables people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the scenery of the area.

Rocky Point Recreation Area

Located 8 miles east of Belle Fourche off SD 212
605.641.0023

A popular fishing and boating park, Rocky Point Recreation Area is located on the 8,000-acre Belle Fourche Reservoir.

Spearfish Canyon Trails

Located 1 mile west from the Scenic Byway at Savoy on FDR 222 in Spearfish Canyon
605.584.3896

The Roughlock Falls Nature Area is located in Spearfish Canyon and is considered one of the most beautiful locations in the Black Hills. The water feeding Roughlock Falls flows into Spearfish Canyon from Little Spearfish Creek.

CUSTER STATE PARK

BEWARE OF WILDLIFE
Give them their space.

