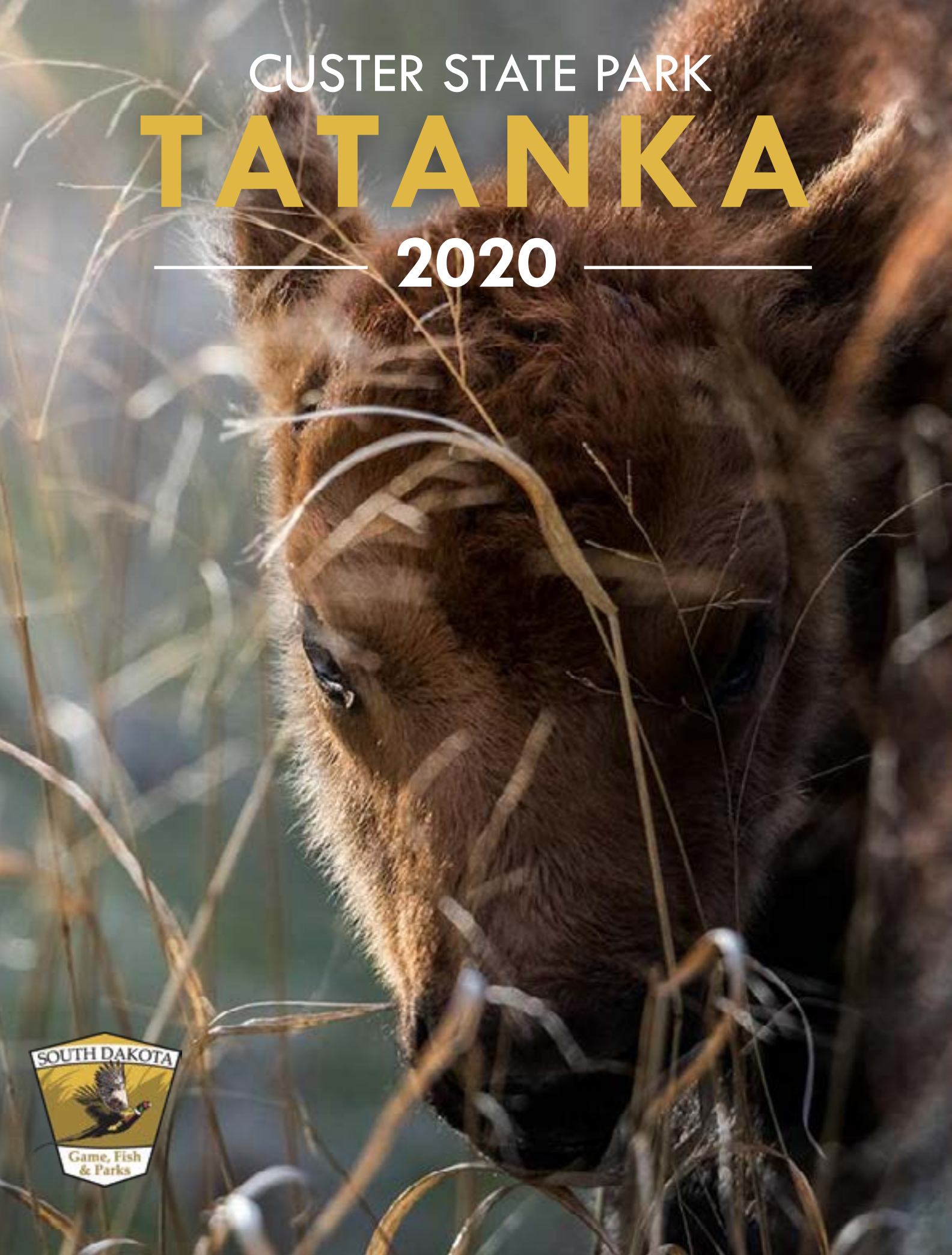

CUSTER STATE PARK
TATANKA
2020
SOUTH DAKOTA
Game, Fish
& Parks

WELCOME TO CUSTER STATE PARK

This past year Custer State Park turned 100 years old. The goal of Custer State Park has always been to continue the long tradition of stewardship and finding a balance between use and preservation. That tradition has been established from our beginning and carried out by those prior.

Staff has stopped to reflect on what the vision is as we begin the next 100 years. As stewards of the land, what do we need to do to live up to the vision of Peter Norbeck, founder of Custer State Park? Norbeck stated early in the development of Custer State Park, "See this park as I see it, and I do not think there is a single argument against preserving this land for the future. Fifty, 75 years from now, my only wish is that the picture I see today will not have faded. If I could come back somehow, say 75 years from now, and be greeted with the same trees, the same rugged canyons and towering mountains, I shall know I died a man who fought for something worthwhile. Knowing that I somehow helped preserve a special part of America is all I ask out of life."

Custer State Park was set aside to be enjoyed through exploration of scenic drives, or getting out of your vehicle and taking a hike on one of the many trails that offer close encounters with nature. For those who are quiet and tread lightly, the opportunities are endless to experience wildlife in their natural setting — to sit down and enjoy the sounds of the chickadees or watch the chipmunks scurry around. Water lovers can choose to paddle a serene lake in the early morning light while watching the ripples of trout as they welcome the morning sun. There is something for everyone to explore.

Behind the scenes, staff are committed to Norbeck's vision of finding balance between use, preservation, sustainability and the curve balls Mother Nature throws at us. Staff come to work day in and day out ready to play ball. We are always looking for best practices and strategies to keep with Norbeck's vision. We can't stop the evolution of Mother Nature, but we can strive to find the balance between use and preservation.

Tread lightly as you explore Custer State Park, so the same views, landscapes, and spires you're experiencing today are there for your children, grandchildren and future generations to explore and admire. Help keep the picture you see today from fading.

Matt Snyder, Superintendent
Custer State Park

TATANKA

Tatanka is the Lakota word for bison or buffalo.

Volume 41 • 2020

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

Photos provided by SD Departments of Tourism and Game, Fish and Parks, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and CSP Regency Adventures.

FRONT COVER PHOTO

Centennial Tatanka Photography Contest Winner:
Joel Bielstein *Through the Looking Grass*

The mission of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks 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.

CONTENTS

4 THINGS TO KNOW

6 VISITOR CENTERS

8 HISTORY

10 WILDLIFE

14 SCENIC DRIVES

16 ANNUAL EVENTS

17 PARK PROGRAMS

18 BUFFALO ROUNDUP

20 WINTER

22 LAKES AND STREAMS

24 HIKING TRAILS

26 CAMPING

CUSTER STATE PARK RESORTS
LODGING, DINING, SHOPPING

28 STATE GAME LODGE

30 SYLVAN LAKE LODGE

32 BLUE BELL LODGE

34 LEGION LAKE LODGE

36 RESORT ACTIVITIES

38 BLACK HILLS PLAYHOUSE

39 AREA STATE PARKS

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501-3182; or to the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Office of the Secretary, Washington, DC 20240.

245,000 copies of this publication were printed by Aradius Group at a cost of 24 cents each.

THINGS TO KNOW

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 ENTRANCE LICENSE | $20/VEHICLE (1-7 CONSECUTIVE DAYS)

ANNUAL PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE | $36

SECOND ANNUAL PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE | $18

TRANSFERABLE PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE | $80

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.

» All vehicles must stay on designated road ways.

» Drones in South Dakota state parks are permitted but must follow state park and FAA rules and guidelines.

» 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.

» Any person, regardless of their residency, who is able to lawfully possess a firearm/pistol can conceal their weapon without permit while in South Dakota.

» 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*

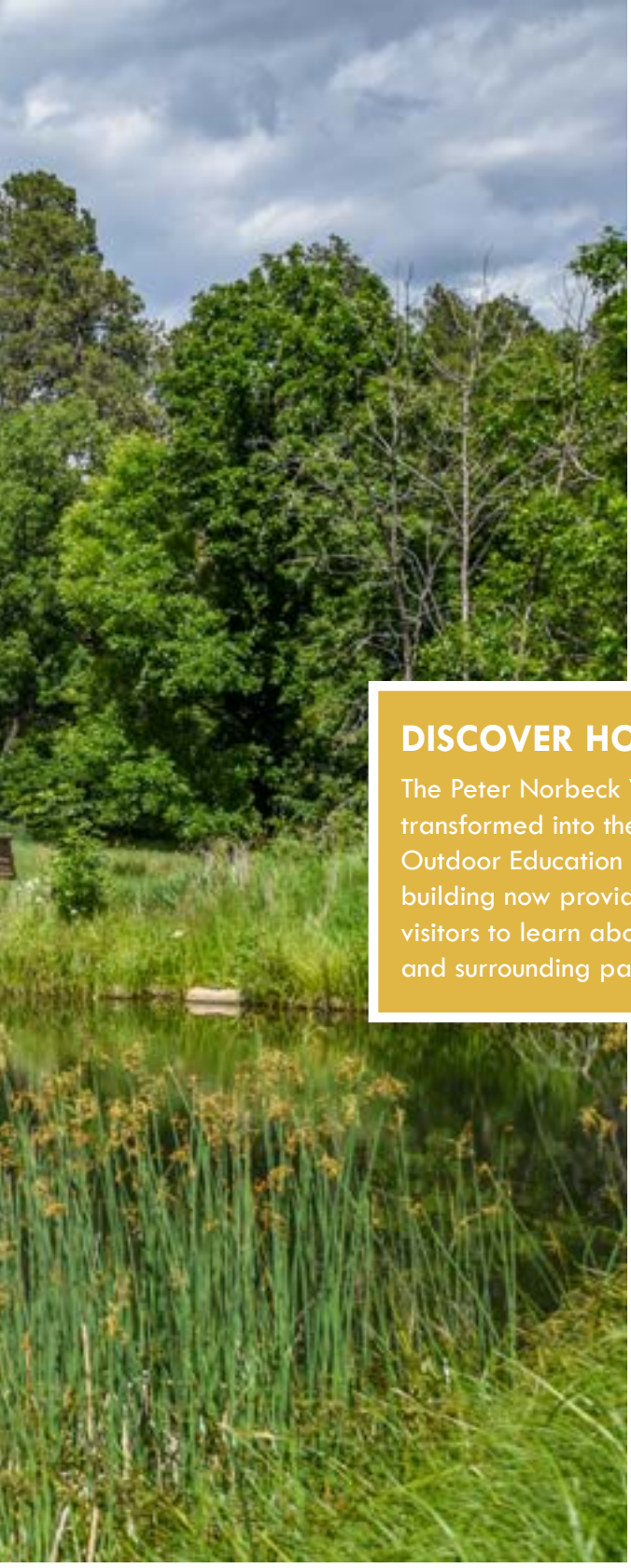
Custer State Park Resort
Information | 605.255.4772
Reservations | 1.888.875.0001
info@custerresorts.com | *custerresorts.com*

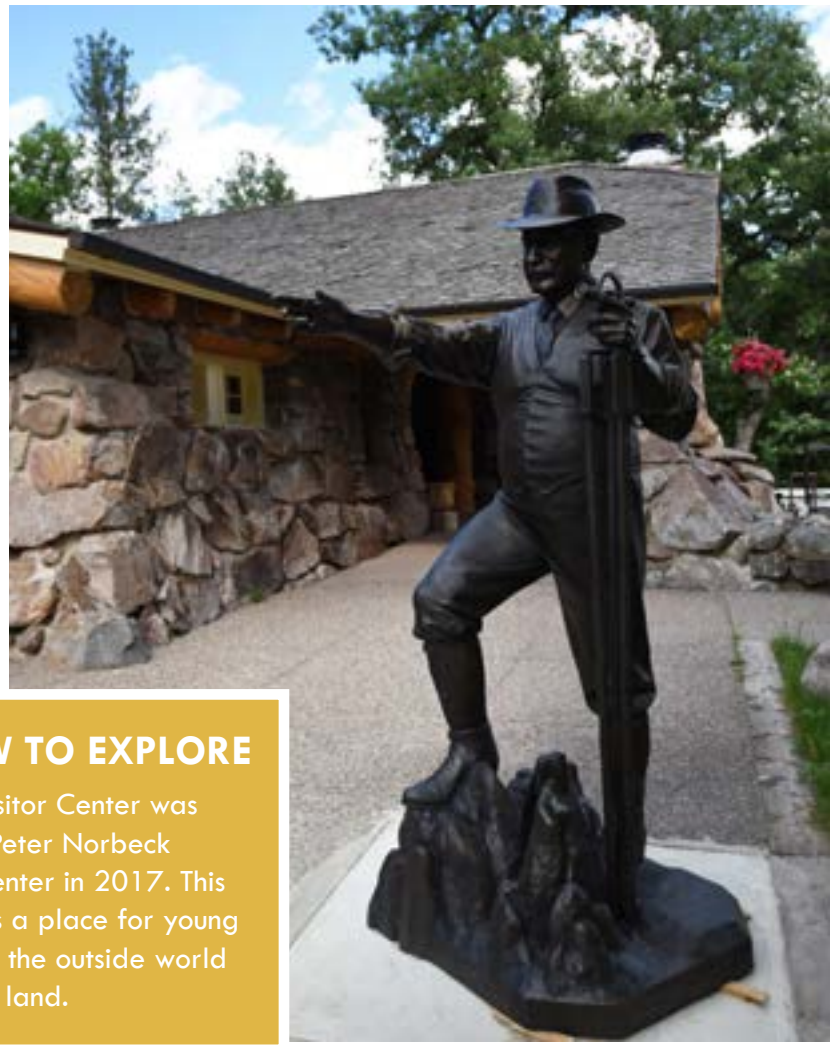
VISITOR CENTERS

CUSTER STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER

The visitor center is located at the junction of Wildlife Loop Road and Highway 16A

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





DISCOVER HOW TO EXPLORE

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

PETER NORBECK OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER

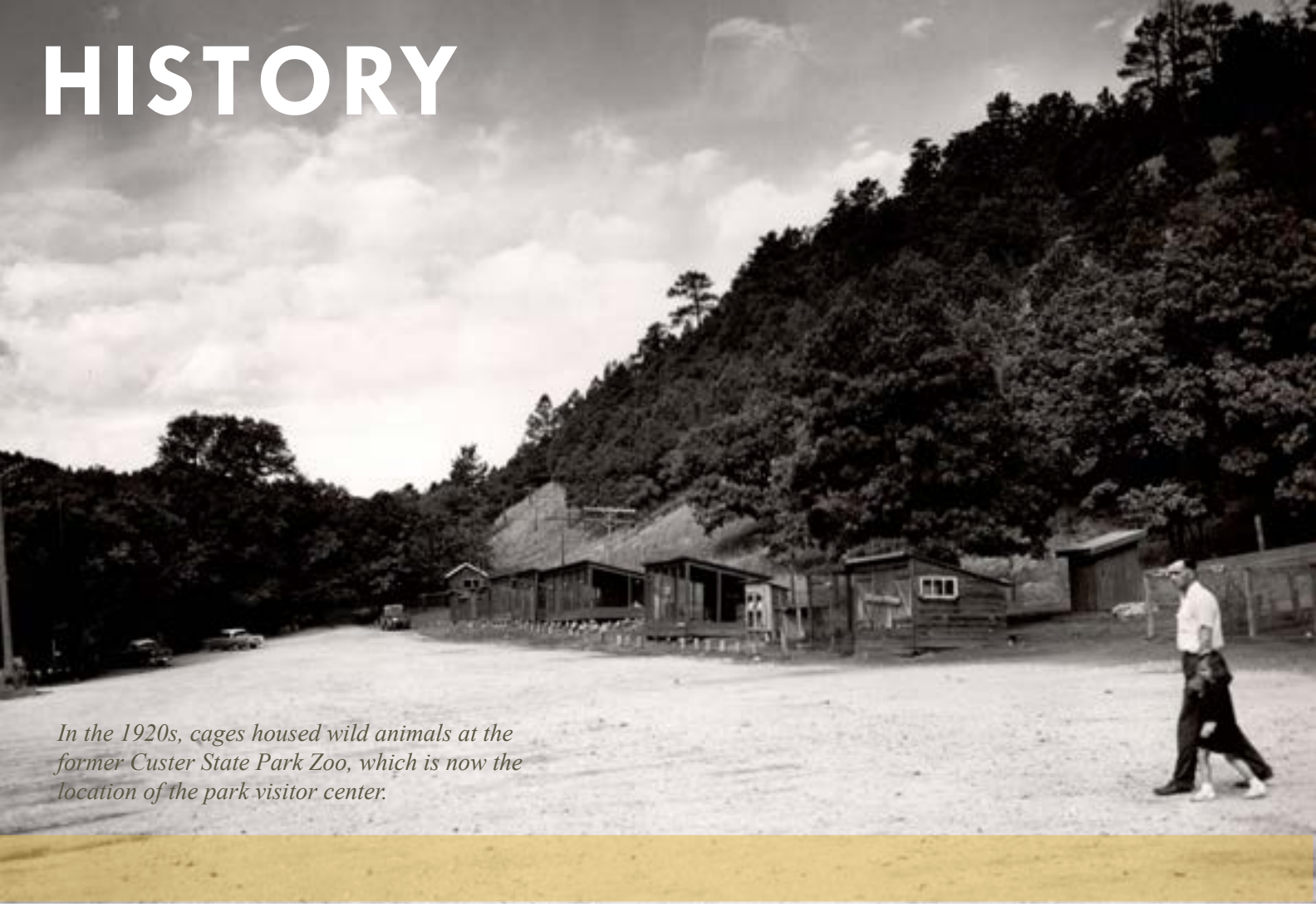
Located on Highway 16 near the State Game Lodge.

Memorial Day – September 30 | Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
October 1 – 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 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
October 1 – Memorial Day | Closed



In the 1920s, cages housed wild animals at the former Custer State Park Zoo, which is now the location of the park visitor center.

THE PARK ZOO

The Custer State Park zoo opened in 1923 as an additional tourist draw for the newly created park. It was located where the current visitor center stands and remnants of the zoo enclosures can still be found in the area today.

Two caves were blasted into the granite and several cages were built by George A. Nicholson and John P. Larsen who worked for Peter Norbeck's company — Norbeck and Nicholson Co. — a deep artesian well contracting company. They left Redfield, S.D. and worked out in Custer State Park for over a month, preparing the zoo's six cages.

Norbeck tasked a man named Doolittle (not the doctor) with management of the day to day operations of the zoo. A position he held on to for over 30 years.

Over its 50 years of existence, the area was home to several Rocky Mountain goats from Banff National

A family walks past the pens of wild animas at the former Custer State Park Zoo. The dens of these bears can still be seen behind the visitor center.

Park in Canada, monkeys, five adult black bears (one with a cub) which came from Washington, a moose from Yellowstone, elk, sitka deer, foxes, badgers, northern otter, coyotes, wolves, an albino beaver, wild boar, porcupines and all types of waterfowl.

It wasn't all easy going in the beginning; Doolittle once wrote Norbeck asking for

Families tour the park zoo, which saw 400,000 visitors annually before it closed in the 1970s.

reinforced cages as one night one of the bears broke into the moose's habitat, mauling and killing it. Norbeck was disappointed to hear of the news, but agreed to reinforce the cages after the incident.

One thing the Black Hills can thank the park zoo for is the mountain goat population, as it is a non-native species. In 1922, park staff coordinated with an inspector in charge of the Canadian National Park in Banff, Alberta. The original deal was to bring 12 goats from Canada to the park, but they could only supply six — two males and four females. The goats were placed on a Montana Bison Range and Mr. Hawley, Custer State Park's Deputy Game Warden, was sent to pick them up and bring them across the border. The goats came at a price however. Banff National Park charged Custer State Park $100 for each sheep, almost $1,500 in today's prices.

The mountain goats arrived in the park in 1923, but didn't stay long, only three days in fact, before escaping their enclosure and heading to the Cathedral Spires. This is where they stayed and planted roots, and now the goat population numbers 150 across the Black Hills.

The zoo rose in popularity over the years and by 1950 visitation reached 400,000 annually. The zoo was maintained in the park until 1970s. At that time, it was closed, and the park began to focus more on the natural wildlife plan of the area.

Some of the animals were released into the park, but many of them were sent to other zoos, as park staff knew they would not survive on their own.

When you see mountain goats and many other wildlife in the area, you are most likely seeing the descendants of their ancestors that started out living at the park zoo.

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 evening hours.

COYOTES

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

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.

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.

BIGHORN SHEEP

A herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep was reintroduced 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 1923, 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

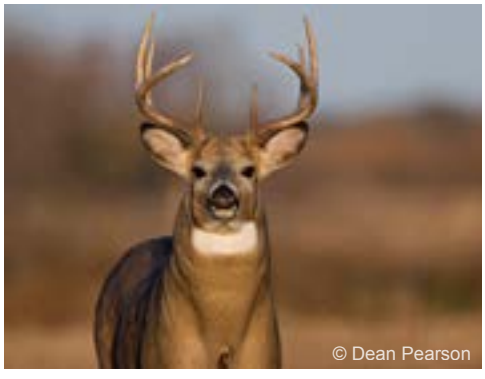
Pronghorns, commonly referred to as antelope due to their similar appearance, live on the open grassland. The name pronghorn comes from the buck's large pronged horns. The horn sheaths are shed each year. The fastest land animal in North America, pronghorns can run 60 mph for great distances.

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

take your time

These winding drives are best 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.

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. *Note: The following tunnel measurements are the most current.*

Iron Mountain Road — US 16A N		
Doane Robinson	12' 0" Wide	11' 4" High
C.C. Gideon	11' 6" Wide	10' 9" High
Scovel Johnson	10' 9" Wide	11' 0" High
Sylvan Lake Road — SD 87/89, North of Sylvan Lake		
Hood Tunnel	8' 9" Wide	9' 8" High
Needles Highway — SD 87 N		
Needles Eye Tunnel	8' 0" Wide	9' 9" High
Iron Creek	8' 9" Wide	10' 10" High

ANNUAL EVENTS

STURGIS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

AUG 7-16, 2020

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. 6-15, 2021

Aug. 5-14, 2022

Aug. 4-13, 2023

JANUARY

First Day Hike
January 1, 1-4 p.m.
Custer State Park Visitor Center

Owl Moon Hike
January 10, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Legion Lake Trailhead

Stockade Lake Snowshoe Hike
January 18, 1 - 3 p.m.
Stockade Lake (meet at swim beach)

Escape to the Park
January 25, 1 - 3 p.m.
Custer State Park Visitor Center

FEBRUARY

Lover's Leap Snowshoe Hike
February 15, 1 - 4 p.m.
Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center

Escape to the Park
February 22, 1 - 3 p.m.
Custer State Park Visitor Center

MARCH

Celebrate World Wildlife Day
March 7, 1 - 4 p.m.
Custer State Park Visitor Center

Moon Hike
March 10, 6 - 8 p.m.
Tatanka Barn - Game Lodge Campground

Escape to the Park
March 28, 1 - 3 p.m.
Custer State Park Visitor Center

MAY

State Park Open House and Free Fishing Weekend
May 15-17
Statewide | Free park entrance

JUNE

National Trails Day - June 6
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.

SEPTEMBER

27th Annual Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival
September 24-26

55th Annual Buffalo Roundup
September 25
Free park entrance

MORE GREAT EVENTS

Every Third Saturday of the June, July, August
Custer State Park host local bands through out the park.

Every Monday in the month of June, July, August
Custer State Park will host a Speaker Series at the Game Lodge Campground.

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE VISITOR CENTERS OR AT *CUSTERSTATEPARK.COM*.

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," says 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.

BUFFALO ROUNDUP

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

- 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 Friday, September 25.

ARTS FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2020

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.

WINTER IN CUSTER STATE

PARK

OPEN YEAR-ROUND

Beat the winter blues and escape to the park! During the months of January, February and March, the park offers a variety of guest speakers at the visitor center. Topics vary from history to wildlife management and even live music.

Winter is a great time to explore the park; the season brings a quiet serenity to the place and there are fewer visitors to share it with. During the months of January, February and March, the park takes guests on a series of guided hikes. If there is enough snow, guests can experience snowshoeing throughout the park free of charge; however a park entrance license is required.

» Snowshoes are available for check out from January to March. Stop by the visitor center to get fitted and learn about which trails are best suited for snowshoe hiking.

During the month of December the visitor center takes on a holiday feel with the Festival of Trees. Local businesses and community partners decorate trees which are on display and visitors can vote for their favorite.

WINTER ROADS

Note some roads may be closed during the winter. Please check SD 511 for the most up-to-date road information.

LAKES AND STREAMS

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 *2020 Fishing Handbook,* available at the visitor centers and the park office. The handbook is also available online at *gfp.sd.gov* and on our mobile app, SDGFP Outdoors.

FISHING LICENSE FEES

LICENSE	RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
One-Day	$8	$16
Three-day	N/A	$37
Annual	$28	$67
Youth Annual	N/A	$25

TRAIL RATINGS

EASY | The trail mainly follows level ground with very little elevation change.

MODERATE | Parts of the trail include more inclines, hills or elevations changes. May have more technical terrain such as rocky or root-covered trail, loose gravel on inclines, or narrow paths.

STRENUOUS | Much of the trail includes very steep slopes and rocky areas. May include; a long, steady climb; many steps or stairs; and roots, slippery rocks or other difficult terrain

HIKING TRAILS

BADGER CLARK TRAIL
1.2 mile loop (1.6 km) | Moderate
Trailhead location: Park at Badger Hole parking lot, trail starts right of the cabin. *Located behind the historic Badger Hole, this trail winds through a mixed pine and hardwood forest and along rocky hillsides.*

BARNES CANYON TRAIL
4.7 miles one way (4.8 km) | Moderate
Trailhead location: Wildlife Loop Road | Turn on the airport road on the north end of the loop road. A second trailhead is located on the Badger Hole Road.

BLACK ELK PEAK TRAIL #4
3.25 miles one way (5.2 km) | Strenuous | More up and down hill than #9
Trailhead location: South of Sylvan Lake on Needles Highway (87), shares Little Devils Tower trailhead.

BLACK ELK PEAK TRAIL #9
3.3 miles one way (4.8 km) | Strenuous
Trailhead location: Park at Sylvan Lake Day Use Area and walk east.

CAIRN TRAIL
0.3 miles one way (1.6 km) | Easy - Moderate
Trailhead location: South end of the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Ed Center parking lot.

CATHEDRAL SPIRES TRAIL
1.5 miles one way (2.4 km) | Moderate to strenuous
Trailhead location: South of Sylvan Lake on Needles Highway (87) along the north side of the road. Can also be accessed by hiking Black Elk Peak Trail #4. There is a sign indicating the branch for Cathedral Spires.

CENTENNIAL TRAIL
Reference trail specific brochure.

CREEKSIDE TRAIL
3 miles on way (4.8 km) | Easy
Trailhead location: Can be accessed at multiple points from visitor center to Grace Coolidge Campground.

FRENCH CREEK NATURAL AREA
12 miles one way (19 km) | Moderate to strenuous | No marked path over 7 miles of the trail, hikers walk around/through brush and cross creek several times.
Trailhead location: East | South of the airport on Wildlife Loop Road.
West | Inside Horse Camp

GRACE COOLIDGE WALK-IN AREA
3 miles one way (4.8 km) | Moderate
Trailhead location: South | At Grace Coolidge Walk-in area across Highway 16A from Grace Coolidge Campground. North | Across from shower house at Center Lake. *Trail has 15 creek crossings with no bridges, which may be difficult. Hikers will get wet. There is poison ivy along the trail. The lowhead dams provide excellent fishing.*

LEGION LAKESHORE TRAIL
Less than 1 mile (1.6 km) | Easy
Trailhead location: At west end of fishing dock parking lot.

LITTLE DEVILS TOWER
1.5 miles one way (2.4 km) | Strenuous
Last half mile is a steep rocky incline with large granite boulders you will need to scramble over.
Trailhead location: Less than one mile south of Sylvan Lake General Store on Needles Highway (87), clearly visible from the road.

LOVERS LEAP TRAIL
4 mile loop (6.4 km) | Moderate to strenuous | Mostly uphill to start with some rocky hills
Trailhead location: Behind School House Facilities building directly across from Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center, next to the resort wedding pavilion.

LOST TRAILS
3.5 miles | Moderate to strenuous
Trailhead location: Two trailheads, one at the south end of the Center Lake beach parking area. The other, at the Center Lake boat dock.

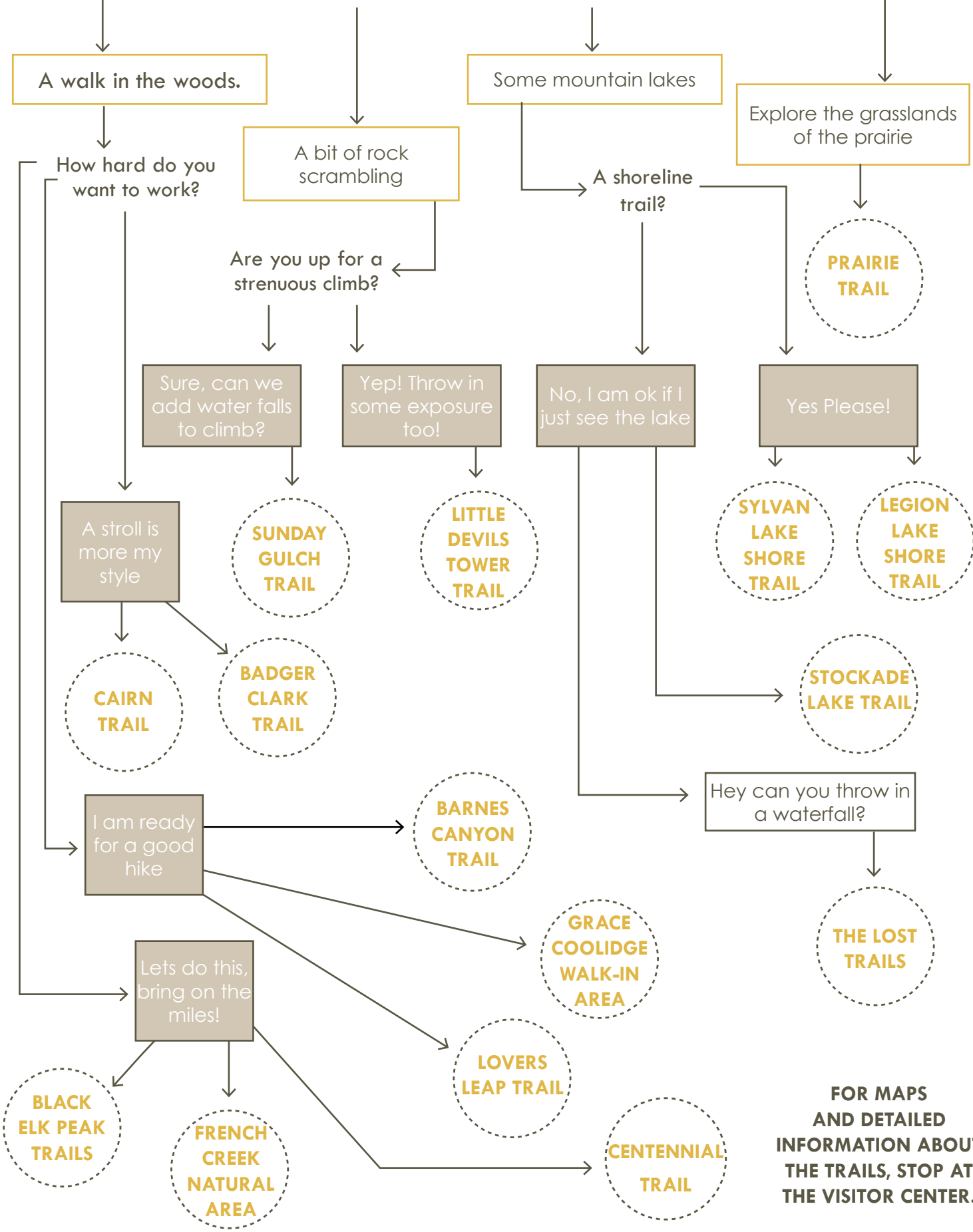
PRAIRIE TRAIL
3 mile loop (4.8 km) | Moderate | One steep hill at halfway point
Trailhead location: On Wildlife Loop Road south of prairie dog towns, toilet at trailhead.

STOCKADE LAKE TRAIL
1.5 mile loop (2.4 km) | Moderate | Includes a short rocky incline for the first half
Trailhead location: Across from swim beach on Stockade Lake Drive.

SUNDAY GULCH
3.2 mile loop (4.8 km) | Strenuous
Trailhead location: Follow Sylvan Lakeshore Trail, trailhead is behind the dam.

SYLVAN LAKESHORE TRAIL
1 mile loop (1.6 km) | Easy to Moderate
Trailhead location: Can be accessed from any portion of Sylvan Lake.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ON YOUR HIKE?



FOR MAPS AND DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRAILS, STOP AT THE VISITOR CENTER.

CAMPING

CAMPING RESERVATIONS | CAMPSD.COM | 1.800.710.2267 | 1.714.602.4453 (international)

CAMPING RESERVATIONS

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	Tent only site, no electricity	Campsite, no electricity	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	Resrvable sites*	Accessible sites
Blue Bell*	31	$15		$30	23	$55	●	●	●		●	●	✓	✓	✓	●					✓		30	1
Center Lake+	71	$15	$19				●		●		●					●	●		●	●	●	●	71	
Game Lodge*	57	$15	$26	$30	11	$55	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓	✓	✓	●	✓			●	●	●	55	2
Grace Coolidge*	27	$15		$30			●	●			●	●	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	●		26	1
Legion Lake*	22			$30			●	●			●	●		✓			●	✓		✓	✓	✓	21	1
Stockade Lake North*	42		$26	$30			●	●	●		●	●				●	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	40	
Stockade Lake South*	25	$15		$30	13	$55	●	●	●			●				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	23	
Sylvan Lake*	39	$15		$30			●	●	●			●	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		36	
French Creek Horse Camp*	29			$40	3	$55	●	●	●	●	●	●					●				●		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, ACTIVITIES AND RESTAURANTS

STATE GAME LODGE

LODGING | 888.875.0001

All resort accommodations feature climate controlled rooms, private bath(s), flat-screen TVs, refrigerator, microwave, coffee pot and hair dryer. Some cabins feature kitchenettes or full kitchens.

- **Historic Lodge Rooms** – The seven (7) original rooms occupied by Presidents Coolidge and Eisenhower and their staff.
- **State Game Lodge Hotel Rooms** - Located steps away from the historic Dining Room. Exterior hallways and large windows for wildlife watching.
- **Creekside Lodge Rooms** - (30) Junior Suites with a private lobby and Front Desk.
- **Cabins** - Single-family cabins, 2-bedroom/2-bath cabins, and group cabins with kitchens.

HISTORIC STATE GAME LODGE DINING ROOM | 605.255.4541

Be part of the grand ambiance that harkens back to the state dinners of the 1927 Summer White House. Enjoy the view from the historic front porch.

Open daily all season long for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Dinner reservations recommended but not required.

BUFFALO SAFARI TOUR | 605.255.4388

Details on page 36.

SHOPPING | 605.255.4541

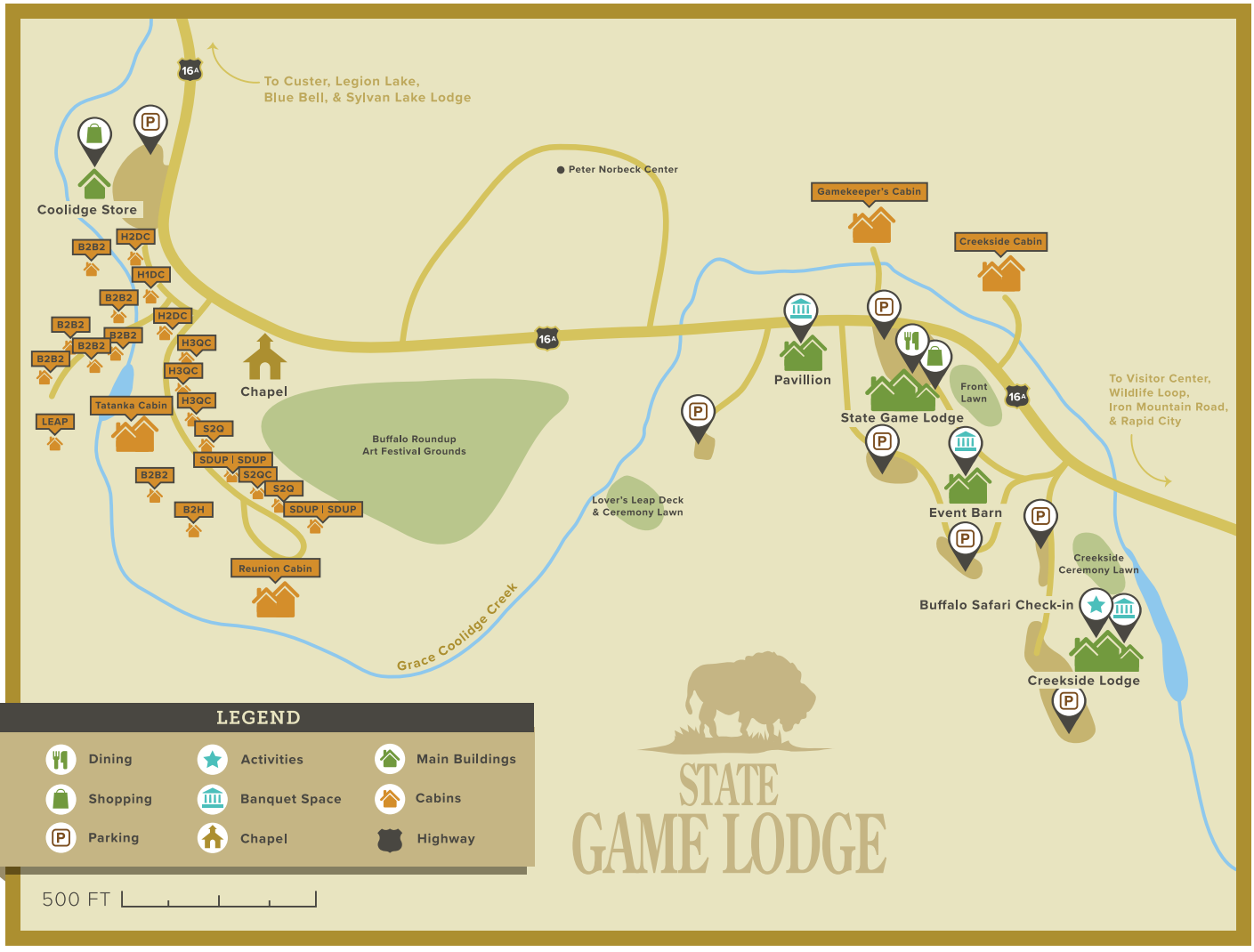
Small Gift Shop in the State Game Lodge with Artist-in-Residence

Coolidge General Store (walking distance) with Artist-in-Residence

Located a half-mile west of the State Game Lodge. Here you can see a buffalo up close and personal but don't worry it's safe—it is stuffed! From convenience items to grab-and-go eats to a wide assortment of gift and souvenirs to take home to remember your visit, you will find it here. Be sure to check out the 2020 Buffalo Roundup collection, offered all season long. And don't forget to get your soft serve ice cream treat to enjoy any time of the day!

Offerings:

- Souvenir and gifts
- Convenience items
- Grab and go sandwiches and pizza
- Soft serve ice cream
- Ice
- Fishing gear: license, bait, tackle
- Firewood



LODGING, ACTIVITIES AND RESTAURANTS

SYLVAN LAKE LODGE

LODGING: 888.875.0001

All resort accommodations feature climate controlled rooms, private bath(s), flat-screen TVs, refrigerator, microwave, coffee pot and hair dryer. Some cabins feature kitchenettes or full kitchens.

» **Sylvan Lodge Hotel Rooms** - Located steps away from the Dining Room and Lounge.
» **Cabins** - Single-family cabins, 2-bedroom/2-bath cabins, and one group cabin.

RESTAURANT, VERANDA AND GREAT ROOM LOUNGE | 605.574.2561

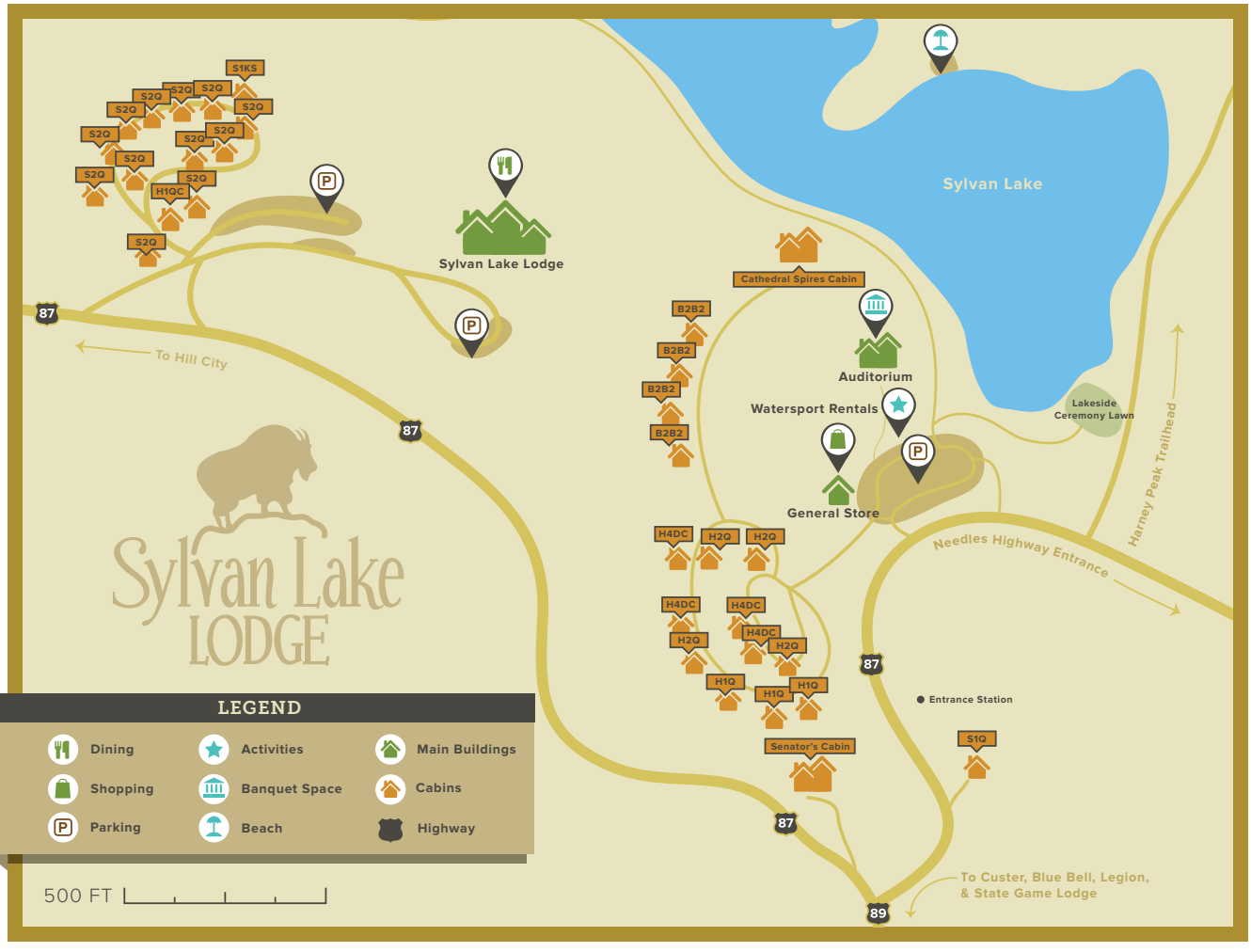
Enjoy meals made from fresh, locally sourced ingredients while surrounded by natural beauty at Sylvan Lake Lodge

Open daily all season long for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

SHOPPING AND WATERCRAFT RENTALS 605.574.2561

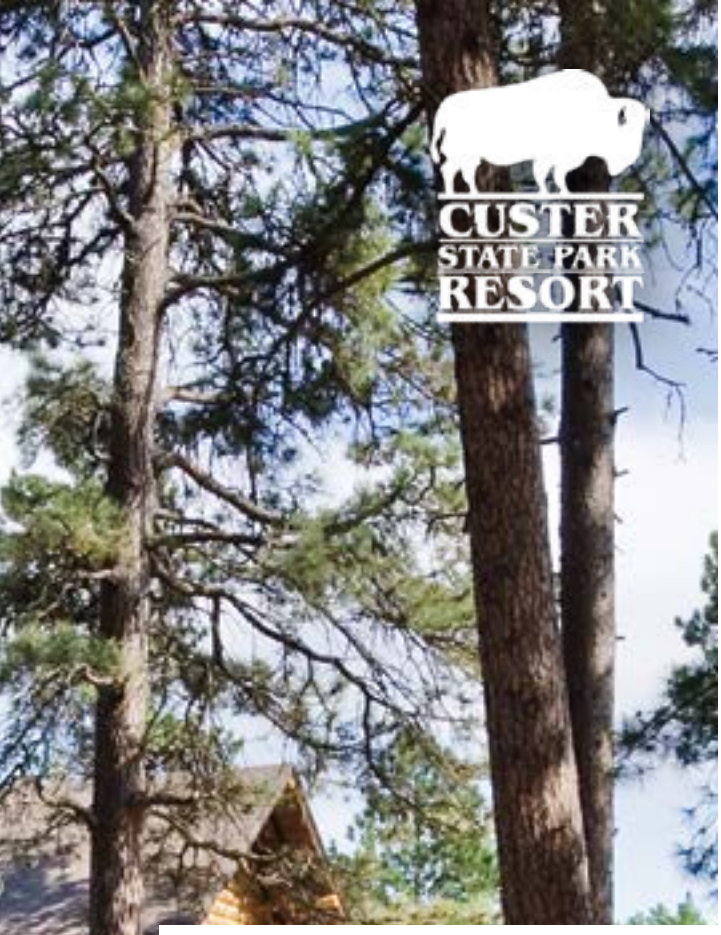
General store and gift shop by the lake; Artist-in-Residence in the lodge

Rental details on page 37.



LODGING, ACTIVITIES AND RESTAURANTS

TRAIL RIDE



BLUE BELL LODGE

LODGING | 888.875.0001

All resort cabins feature climate controlled rooms, private bath(s), flat-screen TVs, refrigerator, microwave, coffee pot and hair dryer. Some cabins feature kitchenettes or full kitchens.

» **Cabins** - Single-family cabins, log cabins with wood-burning fireplaces, and one group cabin.

SALOON-STYLE RESTAURANT, LOUNGE AND PATIO | 605.255.4531

Enjoy saddle stools at the bar! Specialty burgers, South Dakota dip, salads and buffalo.

Open daily all season long for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

SHOPPING | 605.255.5431

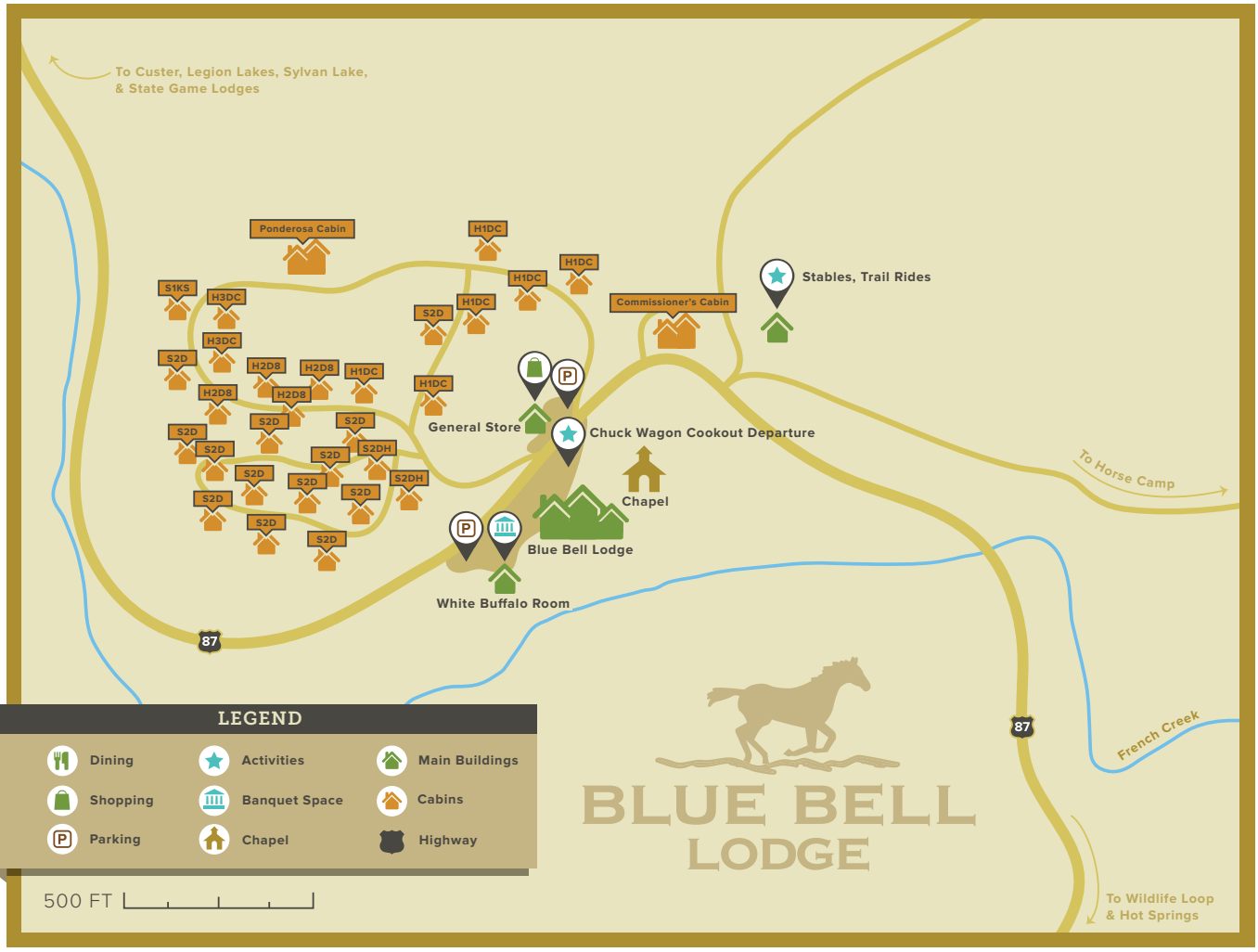
General store with gasoline

CHUCKWAGON COOKOUTS | 605.255.4531

Details on page 36.

TRAIL RIDES | 605.255.4700

Details on page 37.



LODGING, ACTIVITIES AND RESTAURANTS

LEGION LAKE LODGE

LODGING | 888.875.0001

All resort cabins feature climate controlled rooms, private bath(s), flat-screen TVs, refrigerator, microwave, coffee pot and hair dryer. Some cabins feature kitchenettes or full kitchens.

» **Cabins** - Single-family cabins near the swimming beach and two 2-bedroom/2-bath cabins.

DOCKSIDE GRILL | 605.255.4521

Delight in a day at the water's edge. Small plates, salads, sandwiches, and all-day favorites. Tap beer and specialty coffee.

Open daily all season long for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

SHOPPING & WATERCRAFT RENTALS 605.255.4521

Rental details on page 37.

ACTIVITIES

HAYRIDE CHUCK WAGON COOKOUT AND WILDLIFE TOUR

Blue Bell Lodge

» Reservations required by 2 p.m. | 605.255.4531
» Arrive at Blue Bell Lodge by 4:30 p.m.
» Departure at 5 p.m.
» Arrive back around 8 p.m.

A vehicle-drawn hay wagon takes you on a 45-minute tour before stopping in a mountain meadow canyon for a chuck wagon feast. Sing-along 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
» Cornbread
» 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
» 1.5 to 2 Hour Tours
» Departing 6 a.m. thru 6 p.m. from Creekside Lodge

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. | 605.255.4541
» Departs at 4 p.m. each night from Creekside Lodge

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

NEEDLES HIGHWAY SUNRISE JEEP TOUR

State Game Lodge

» Reservations Required | 605.255.4541
» 1.5 to 2 Hour Tours
» Departs at 6 a.m. only

New for 2020! Driver/guide takes you on a peaceful cruise up Needles Highway and back.

Adults | $55

Children (11 & under) | $50

HORSEBACK TRAIL RIDING

Blue Bell Lodge Stables

» Reservations Recommended | 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 | $50

2-hour trail ride
Adults | $90

Half-day ride with lunch
$190 per person

Full-day ride with lunch
$275 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
» 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

Exceptional theatre in Custer State Park

JUNE 12 – 20

Comedy | Rated PG

The Odd Couple tells the story of two mismatched, recently divorced roommates. Felix Ungar, a neurotic, neat freak news writer moves in with Oscar Madison, a slovenly sportswriter. Neither is quite sure why their marriages fell apart and after they move in together to save money, they suddenly discover they're having the same conflicts and fights they had in their marriages. Originally a hit Broadway play, and later the inspiration for a film and TV series, *The Odd Couple* has become a centerpiece of American comedies.

JULY 3 – 19

Musical Comedy | Rated PG-13

With 10 Tony nominations including Best Musical, *Something Rotten!* is a "big, fat hit!" (New York Post). Set in the '90s – the 1590s – this hilarious smash tells the story of Nick and Nigel Bottom, two brothers who are desperate to write their own hit play while the "rock star" Shakespeare keeps getting the limelight. When a local soothsayer foretells that the future of theatre involves singing, dancing and acting at the same time, Nick and Nigel set out to write the world's very first MUSICAL!

JULY 24 – AUG 9

Musical Comedy | Rated PG

When Monty Navarro, the black sheep of the D'Ysquith family, finds out he is ninth in line to inherit a dukedom, he decides to eliminate the other eight heirs standing in his way. Witty and ceaselessly entertaining, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* treats the audience to an Edwardian style, classic farce, and stunning operatic singing. With non-stop laughs, a unique and soaring score, and unforgettable characters, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder has become an instant classic.

AUGUST 14 – 23

Drama | Rated PG 10+

Fifteen-year-old Christopher has an extraordinary mind: He is gifted at mathematics, but ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. He has never ventured alone beyond the end of his road, he detests being touched, and he distrusts strangers. Now it is 7 minutes after midnight and Christopher stands beside his neighbor's dead dog who has been speared with a garden fork. Join Christopher as he embarks on a thrilling journey to solve this mystery that upturns his world.

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Wed - Sat | 7:30 p.m.
Tues, Wed, Sun | 2 p.m. matinee

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

For tickets, call 605.255.4141 or purchase online at *blackhillsplayhouse.com.*

TICKET PRICES

Adults | $35

Senior/Military | $32

Student (college age) | $26

Kids (16 and younger) | $16

BLACK HILLS PLAYHOUSE

$3 OFF

THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Present this coupon for discount or use online with code CSP20. Discount offers may not be combined.

2020

Black Hills Playhouse is located at 24834 S Playhouse Road in Custer State Park. A park entrance license is required.

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

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.

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.

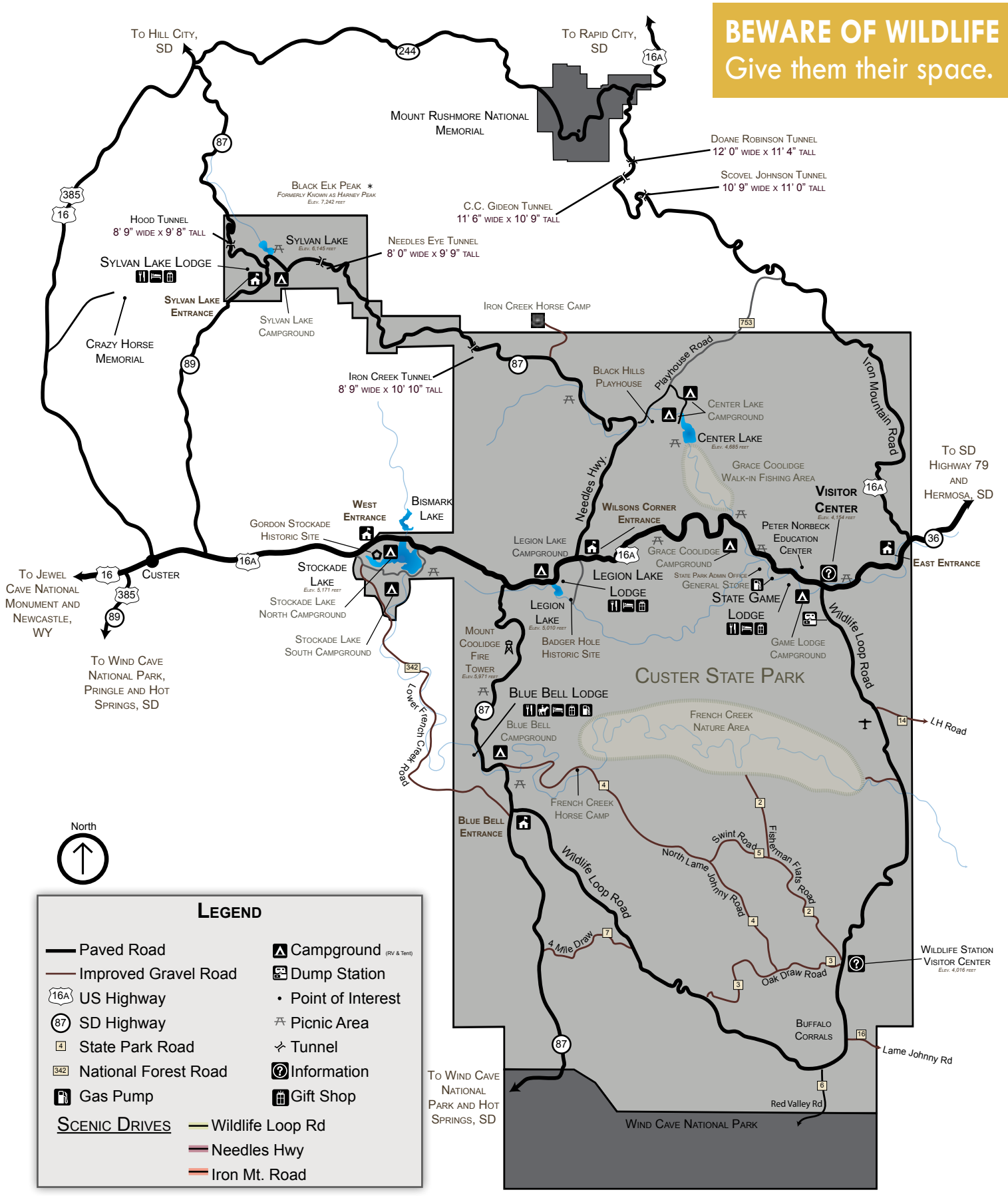
SPEARFISH CANYON TRAILS

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.



Legend

- Paved Road
- Improved Gravel Road
- US Highway
- SD Highway
- State Park Road
- National Forest Road
- Gas Pump
- Campground (RV & Tent)
- Dump Station
- Point of Interest
- Picnic Area
- Tunnel
- Information
- Gift Shop

Scenic Drives
- Wildlife Loop Rd
- Needles Hwy
- Iron Mt. Road

Information: 605.255.4515 | custerstatepark.com