

CUSTER STATE PARK

# TATANKA

2021



# WELCOME TO CUSTER STATE PARK



Thank you for choosing to visit Custer State Park. As I reflect on 2020, I know many are glad to see it behind us due to the uncertainty of COVID-19. We may not realize the true impact COVID-19 has on the world for some time, but I can tell you the impact it had on Custer State Park. It created a new level of team atmosphere. It pulled all the staff from diverse backgrounds together to work as one.

There are no passengers when it comes to operating Custer State Park, everyone is part of the crew.

Outside the view of the typical user, there is a small army of dedicated permanent, seasonal, and volunteer staff that day in and day out rise to the challenge of enhancing the visitor's experience. They are a mixture of front-line ambassadors, as well as many behind-the-scenes ambassadors who all work diligently to make Custer State Park a great place to visit. When we were given the green light to open with reduced staff, everyone pulled together to make sure the tasks were completed. This meant many staff found themselves doing jobs that fall into the category of, "other duties as assigned." It was anything but a normal operating season. The goal of providing the best possible experience for our visitors stayed front and center as staff embraced the new normal and the unexpected twists and turns of the summer season.

Custer State Park was definitely the benefactor of so many Americans renewing the tradition of family vacations and experiencing, "The Great American Road Trip." I contribute our success back to the dedication of the staff who through their hard work have made this place what it is today. They are the backbone of Custer State Park. They make my job easy. As I have stated several times when receiving compliments, I am nothing but a symphony director standing in front waving my arms around and letting the staff create the beautiful music that lead to precious memories.

*Matt Snyder, Custer State Park Superintendent*

The *Tatanka* is published by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.

**KRISTI NOEM** | Governor of South Dakota

**KEVIN ROBLING** | Interim Secretary, SD Game, Fish and Parks

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**MATTHEW SNYDER** | Superintendent, Custer State Park

**BROOKE SMITH** | *Tatanka* Editor

*Positions current at time of publication.*





**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.**

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## TATANKA | VOLUME 42 • 2021

*Tatanka is the Lakota word for bison or buffalo.*

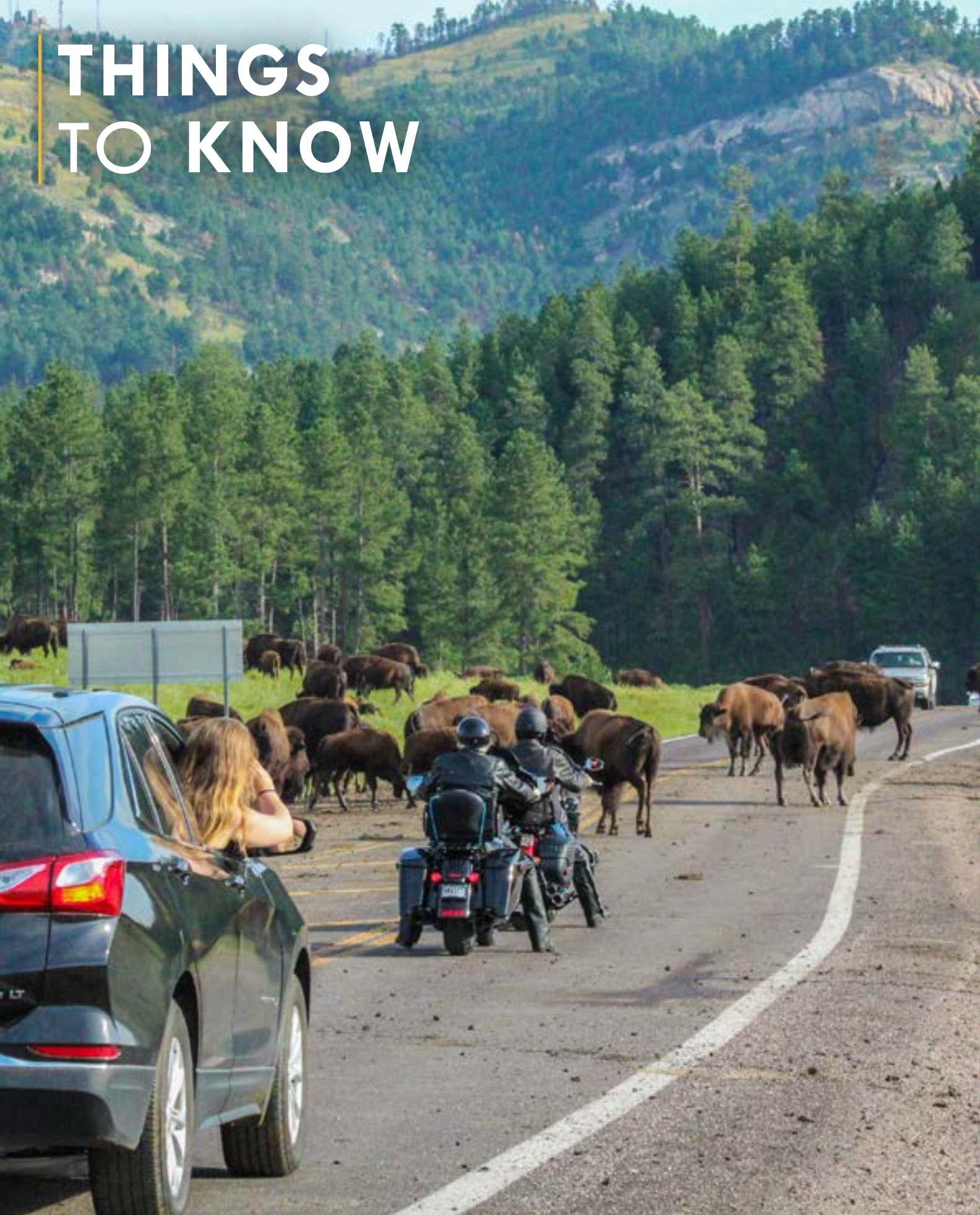
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# THINGS TO KNOW







## 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](http://campsd.com)

### Custer State Park

Park Office | 605.255.4515

[custerstatepark@state.sd.us](mailto:custerstatepark@state.sd.us)

[custerstatepark.com](http://custerstatepark.com)

### Custer State Park Resort

Information | 605.255.4772

Reservations | 1.888.875.0001

[info@custerresorts.com](mailto:info@custerresorts.com)

[custerresorts.com](http://custerresorts.com)

## 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 WITH COUPON

### TRANSFERABLE

#### PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE

\$80

### CAMPING FEES

SEE PAGE 27

### MOTORCOACH LICENSE

\$3/PERSON PER VISIT

(VALID ONLY AT CUSTER STATE PARK.)



# VISITOR CENTERS



## CUSTER STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER

Opened in 2016, the Visitor Center explores an iconic species of the prairie, the bison. Open year-round, the Visitor Center is a great starting point for all of your adventures. Stop in and chat with the knowledgeable staff or take a break in the 100-seat theater and watch the 20-minute movie, "Spirit of Tatanka," narrated by Kevin Costner.



## 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 AND EASTER

CLOSED

## 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

## BADGER HOLE HISTORIC SITE

*Located 1/2 mile south of Highway 16A on Badger Clark Road.*

### MEMORIAL DAY – AUGUST 31

OPEN 10 A.M. TO 5 P.M.

### SEPTEMBER 1 – MEMORIAL DAY

CLOSED



PETER NORBECK OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER



WILDLIFE STATION VISITOR CENTER



BADGER HOLE

# CUSTER STATE PARK BISON CENTER



The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust has awarded a \$4 million grant to the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation (SDPWF) to construct the Custer State Park Bison Center. The Center will focus on the tenured history of the bison herd at Custer State Park. The new bison center will educate visitors through dynamic interpretive displays and tell the origin story of the park's bison, herd management and the annual Buffalo Roundup and Auction.

“Visitors to South Dakota are treated to breathtaking landscapes, and the bison are a crucial part of that,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “Custer State Park has played a key role in bison conservation for over a century. This one-of-a-kind center will allow the park to tell its story and educate future generations on the importance of the bison. I’m grateful to Walter Panzirer and the Helmsley Charitable Trust for their generosity and commitment to this project.”

The free roaming herd of 1,400 bison at Custer State Park is one of the world’s largest publicly owned bison herds.

The grant funds will be put to immediate use extending over a two-year period and puts the SDPWF in a position to leverage an additional \$1 million in private and public donations for the total project budget of \$5 million. The center is set to open in the spring of 2022 and will be located near the Custer State Park corral complex.

“We are excited to lead the funding effort to make the Custer State Park Bison Center possible,” said Walter Panzirer, a Trustee for the Helmsley Charitable Trust. “Custer State Park is known worldwide for its scenery, wildlife, and outdoor recreation. To help ensure the park’s educational opportunities reflect the grandeur of the park, Helmsley has made significant investments, providing funding for the Custer State Park Visitor Center and the Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education



*Artist rendering of the Custer State Park Bison Center. The center will be located near the buffalo corrals on Wildlife Loop Road. It is expected to open in the spring of 2022.*



Center. The opening of the Custer State Park Bison Center will provide visitors a landmark destination to learn about and understand Custer State Park’s role in preserving the North American Bison.”

The Bison Center will attract tour buses, the safari jeep tours and families who travel the Wildlife Loop. There is no better place to tell the story of the park’s bison than at the corrals. The most engaging exhibits, centers, and programs in the park are ones that could not be located anywhere else; they are a mixture of real places, objects, stories and people. The corrals are the very location where our bison story began and continues today. The Bison Center will give the park the ability to tell more of that enriched story of the bison herd and will give visitors the opportunity to dive deeper and learn more about the country’s national mammal. Custer State Park also anticipates that the

Bison Center will attract new visitors to the park, and provide a reason for visitors to stay in the park longer, increasing visitation and ensuring the park remains a prominent vacation destination in western South Dakota.

The Visitor Center will still be the center piece of buildings for visitors to become orientated with Custer State Park, this is not changing. The Visitor Center will remain open year-round showcasing the park through the film, where visitors can see what makes Custer State Park so unique. The addition of the Bison Center will enhance the Visitor Center, allowing more of Custer State Park’s story to be told. The Bison Center will allow the park to branch out regarding bison and what they mean to Custer State Park. This Bison Center is an excellent complimentary building to the Visitor Center. Educating visitors in the southern end of the park solely about

## MAKE A DONATION

The planned Custer State Park Bison Center will educate visitors through dynamic interpretive displays and tell the origin story of the park’s bison, herd management and the annual Buffalo Roundup and auction. Achieving this campaign goal will require support from private and public partners who share the dream and vision of the Bison Center. Your gift now will impact visitors for years to come.

bison will allow the Visitor Center to enhance current displays and develop an overarching theme telling a more complete story of Custer State Park. The park will be updating displays, showcasing more information about outdoor recreation, expanding on the rich history of Custer State Park and show the vast difference of landscapes within the park’s boundary.

## 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.



### 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.



# WILDLIFE





# 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.



## 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 reintroduced to Custer State Park in 1922. Rams have thick, curled horns and ewes have smaller curved horns.



## 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.



## 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.



## 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.

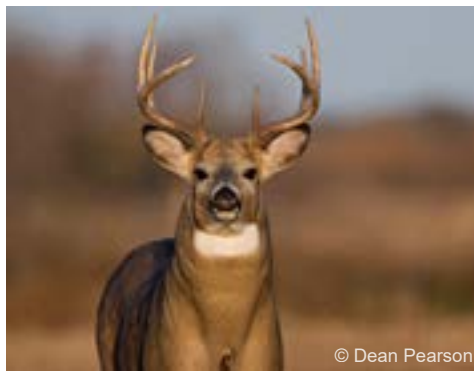
### PLEASE DON'T FEED US!

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.



## 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.

*\*from the Visitor Center to Blue Bell Entrance Station*

## 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
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### Needles Highway — SD 87 N

Needles Eye Tunnel	8' 0" Wide	9' 9" High
Iron Creek	8' 9" Wide	10' 10" High



# 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*



# SPECIAL EVENTS



## JANUARY

January 1 | First Day Hikes

January 9 | Stockade Lake Snowshoe Hike

January 18 | Full Moon Hike Stockade Lake

## FEBRUARY

February 13 | Lovers Leap Snowshoe Hike

February 14 | Barnes Canyon Snowshoe Hike

February 20 | Ice Fishing Demo

February 27 | Needles Hwy Hike

## MARCH

March 13 | Prairie Trail Hike

March 14 | Grace Coolidge Trail Hike

March 20 | St. Patrick's Scavenger Hunt

March 27 | Needles Hwy Hike

## APRIL

April 17 | Bluebird and Kestrel Boxes

April 24 | Prairie Trail Hike

April 25 | Creekside Trail Hike

April 27 | Full moon Hike Peter Norbeck

## MAY

May 21-23 | State Park Open House/Free Fishing Weekend

## STURGIS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

AUGUST 6-15, 2021

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.

**August 5-14, 2022**

**August 4-13, 2023**

**August 2-11, 2024**

## JUNE

June 5 | National Trails Day

## SEPTEMBER

September 23-25 | 28th Annual Governor's Arts Festival

September 24 | 56th Annual Governor's Buffalo Roundup

## OCTOBER

October 23 | Halloween Night Hike

October 23-31 | 2nd Annual Scarecrow Garden

## NOVEMBER

November 6 | 56th Annual Fall Classic Bison Auction

November 26 – January 2 | 5th Annual Festival of Trees

EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO WEATHER. MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE VISITOR CENTERS OR AT [CUSTERSTATEPARK.COM](http://CUSTERSTATEPARK.COM).



# PARK PROGRAMS

## 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.

## 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.

# 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 1,400 buffalo in the herd, and we are looking at slowly increasing the herd over time.”

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.

### ARTS FESTIVAL

#### SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2021

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

### BUFFALO ROUNDUP

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

- » 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.
- » Parking begins at 6:15 a.m., please plan to arrive early.
- » The Buffalo Roundup will begin at 9:30 a.m. Guests must stay in the viewing areas until the herd is safely in the corrals (usually around noon). Testing, branding, and sorting will begin 30 minutes after the Roundup is complete and will go until all animals have been run through the corral system.
- » Reservations are not required.
- » Food concessions available on site.
- » Free park entrance Friday, Sept. 24.





# BUFFALO ROUNDUP





## 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 TRAIL CHALLENGE

Get out and explore Custer State Park in the winter with the Winter Trail Challenge. The challenge will run from Thanksgiving until the spring. At one point along each trail there will be a 2021 Winter Trail Challenge Selfie sign. To complete the Trail Challenge, participants must hike all the listed trails and collect a selfie at each Winter Trail Challenge sign.

Each year the trails and the challenges change, so make sure to stop at the Visitor Center and pick up the official flyer so you know how to complete the Custer State Park Winter Trail Challenge.

### WINTER ROADS

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

# WINTER IN CUSTER STATE PARK









# LAKES AND STREAMS



LEGION LAKE





## 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](http://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. Daily limit is 5. (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 *2021 Fishing Handbook*, available at the visitor centers and the park office. The handbook is also available online at [gfp.sd.gov](http://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.

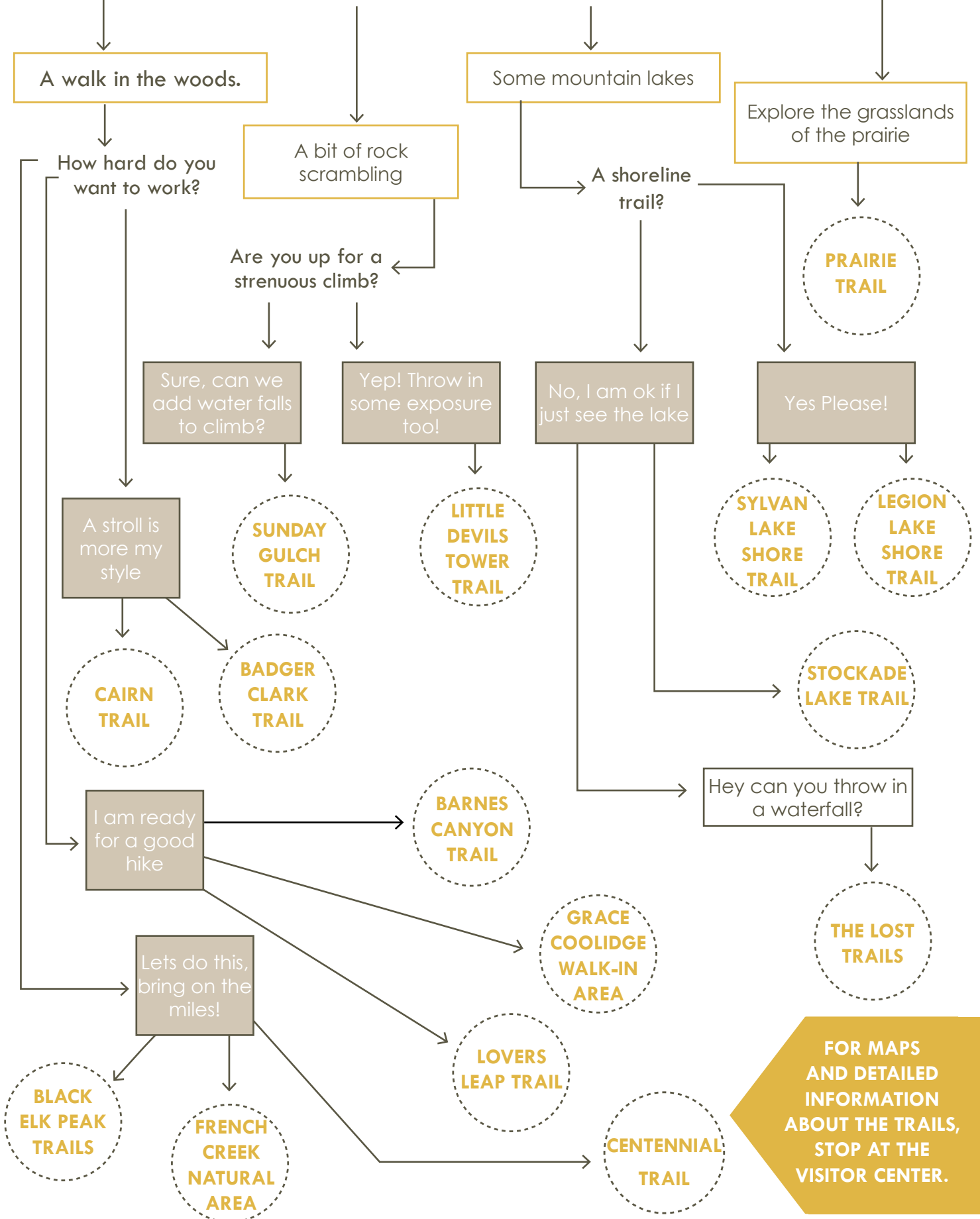
## SYLVAN LAKESHORE TRAIL

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.



## BUFFALO SAFARI TOUR



## SHOPPING | 605.255.4541

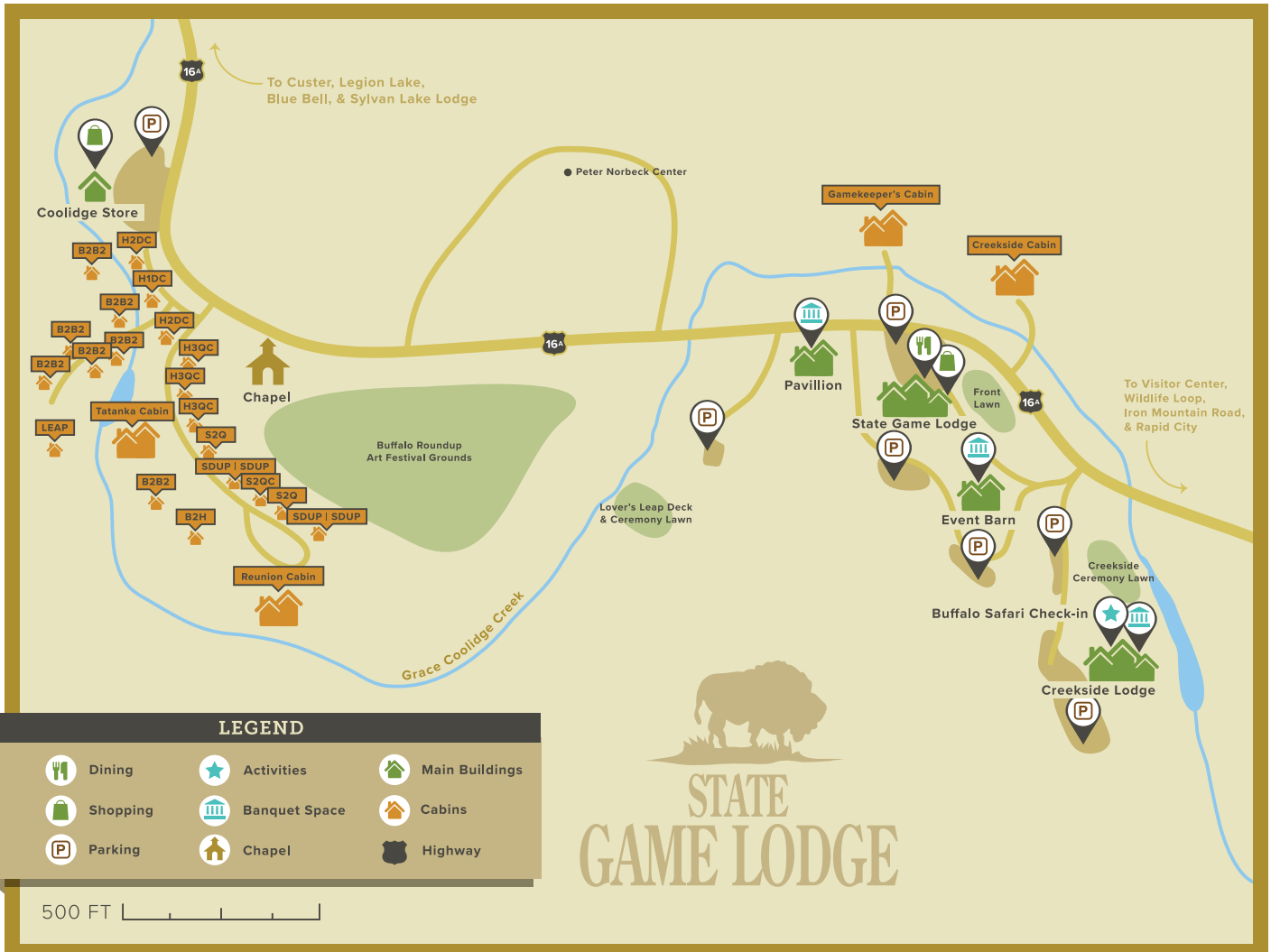
Small Gift Shop in the State Game Lodge with Artist-in-Residence

**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.

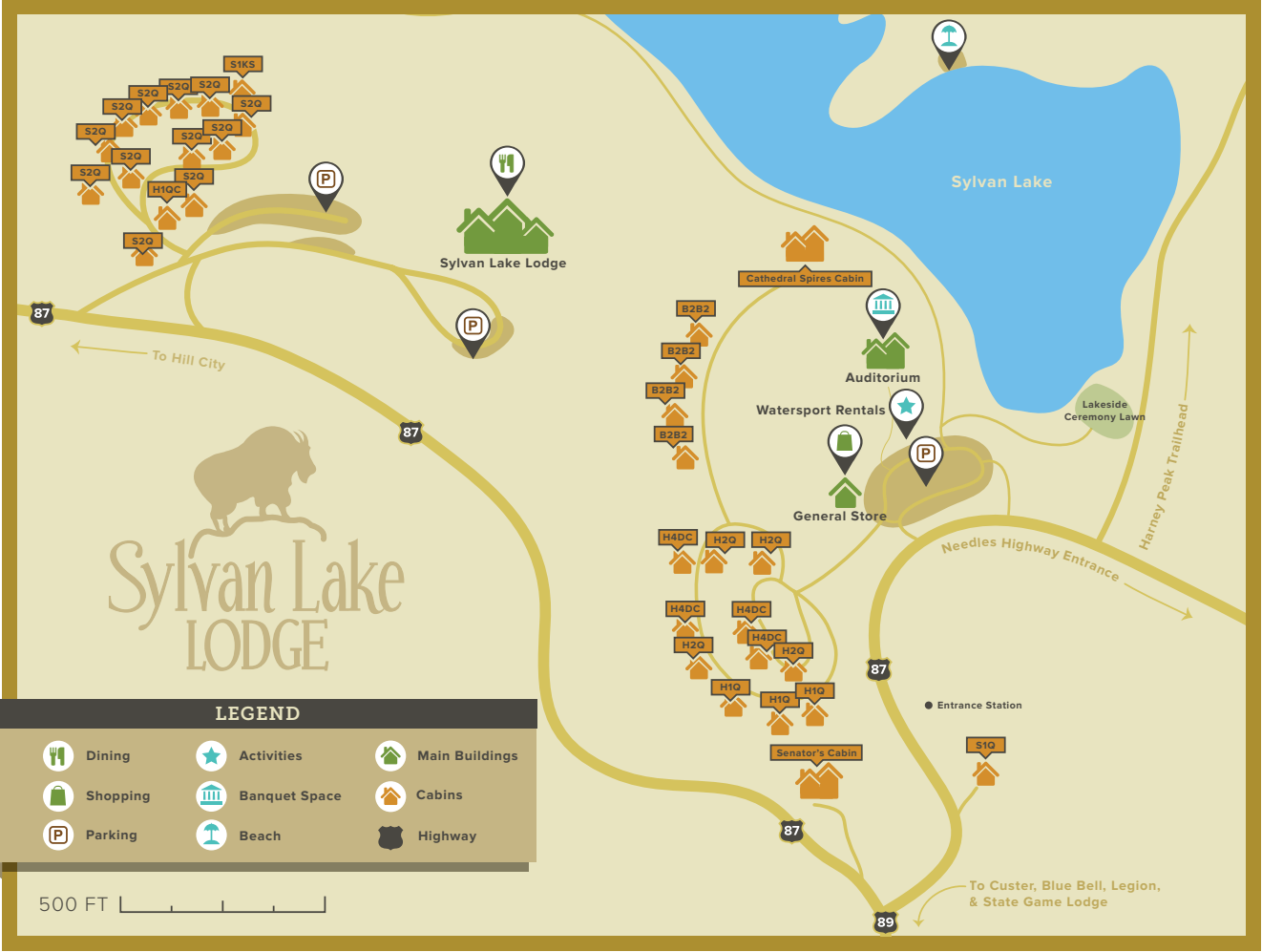
## RESTAURANT, VERANDA AND GREAT ROOM LOUNGE | 605.574.2561

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.





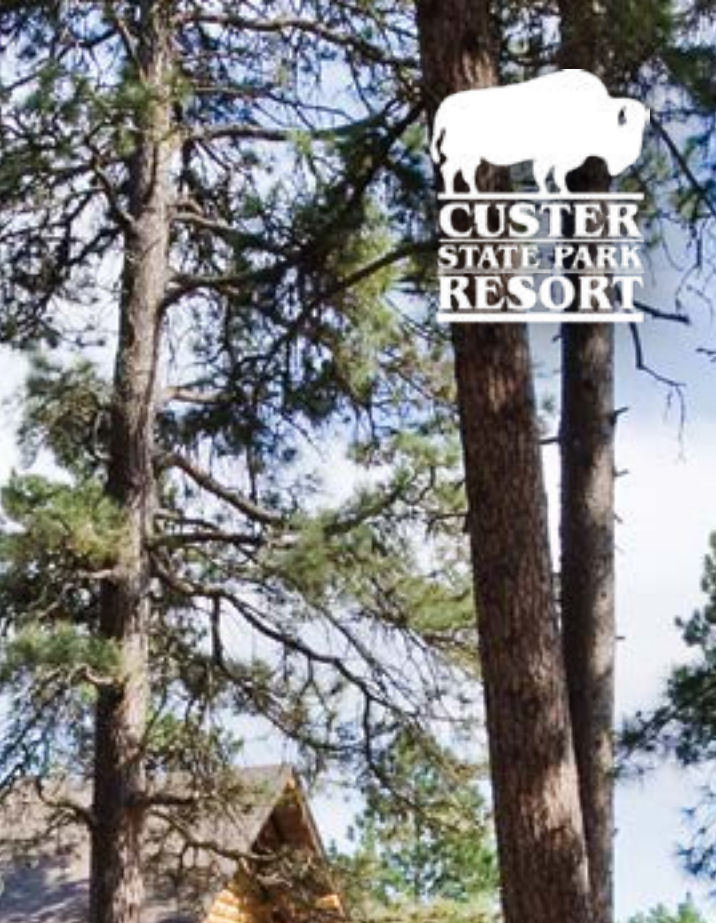
# LODGING, ACTIVITIES AND RESTAURANTS



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.

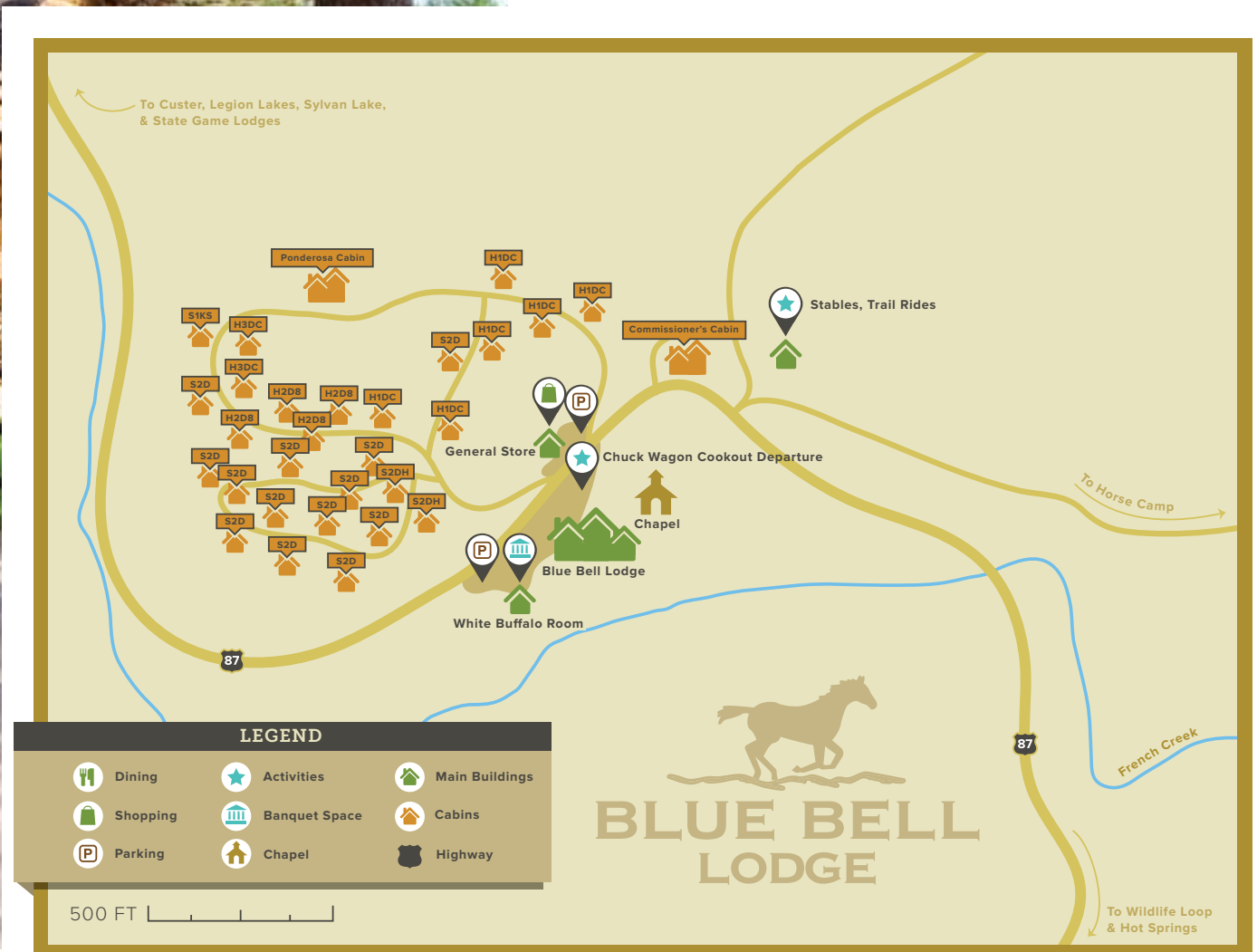
## **SHOPPING | 605.255.5431**

General store with gasoline

## **CHUCKWAGON COOKOUTS | 605.255.4531**

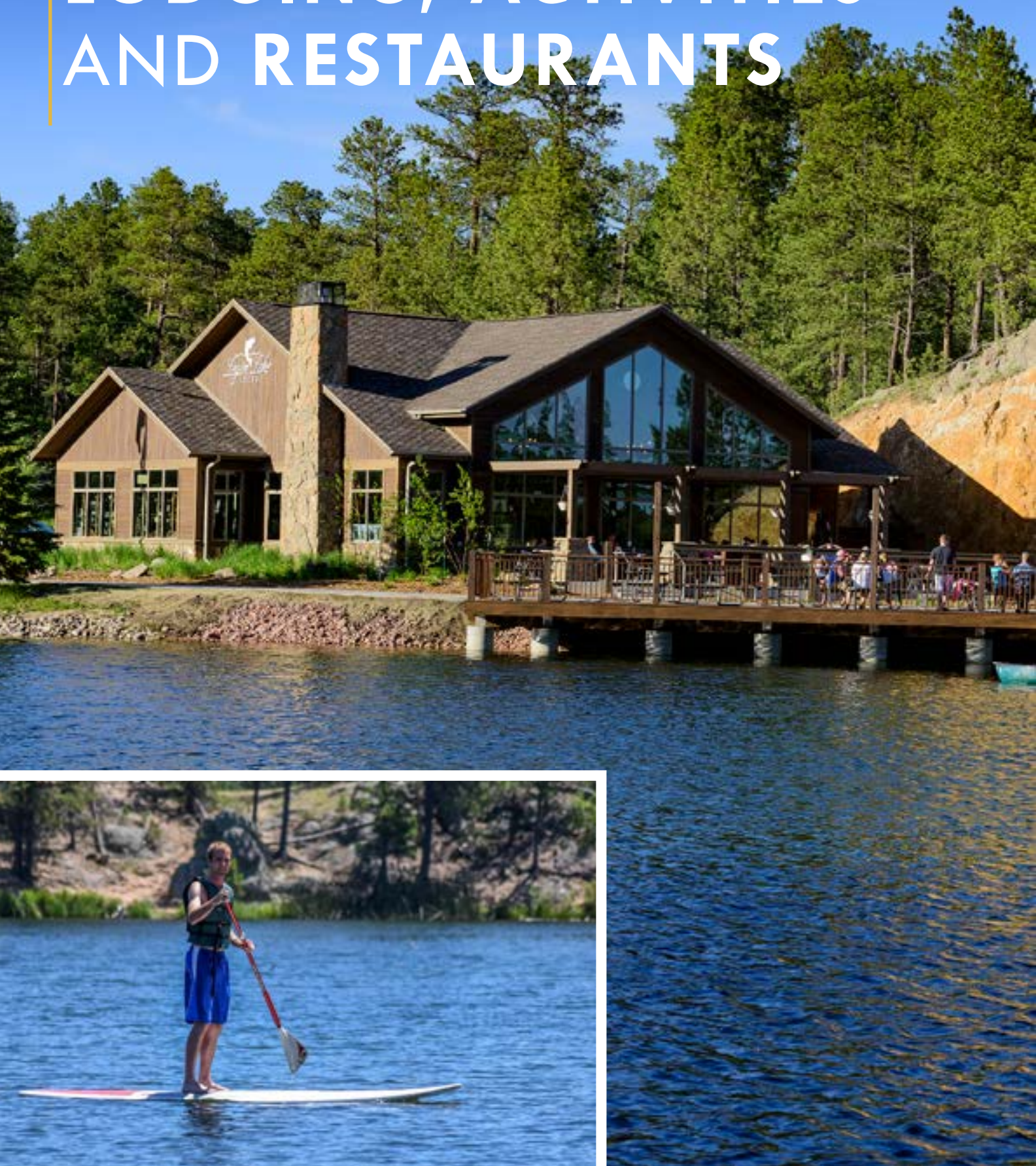
Details on page 36.

## **TRAIL RIDES | 605.255.4700**





# 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 playground. One-mile hike around the lake.

## 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

Depending on COVID-19, performances will be held in the theatre or a new outdoor performance space on the playhouse grounds with socially distanced seating, plenty of fresh air, and shade!



PHOTO © SAGE STUDIOS

**BLACK HILLS  
PLAYHOUSE**

**\$3 OFF**

THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Present this coupon for discount  
or use online with code CSP21.  
Discount offers may not be  
combined.

**2021**

## TICKET PRICES

**ADULTS**

\$35

**SENIOR/MILITARY**

\$33

**STUDENT**

**(COLLEGE AGE)**

\$26

**KIDS**

**(16 AND YOUNGER)**

\$16

## PERFORMANCE TIMES

WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY

7:30 P.M.

TUES, WED, AND 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](http://blackhillsplayhouse.com).

*THE Marvelous  
Wonderettes*

**JUNE 18 – JULY 4**

Features over 30 classic 50s and 60s  
hits in a must-take musical trip down  
memory lane!

*I Love You  
You're Perfect,  
NOW CHANGE*

**JULY 9 – 25**

Crowd-pleasing comedy that takes  
on the truths and myths behind that  
contemporary conundrum known as  
“the relationship.”

**ALTAR  
BOYZ**

**JULY 30 – AUG 15**

Foot-stomping, rafter-raising story about  
a fictitious Christian boy-band on the  
last night of their national “Raise the  
Praise” tour.

*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 Nature 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.

## SPEARFISH CANYON NATURE AREA

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

Spearfish Canyon Nature Area 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.

## 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

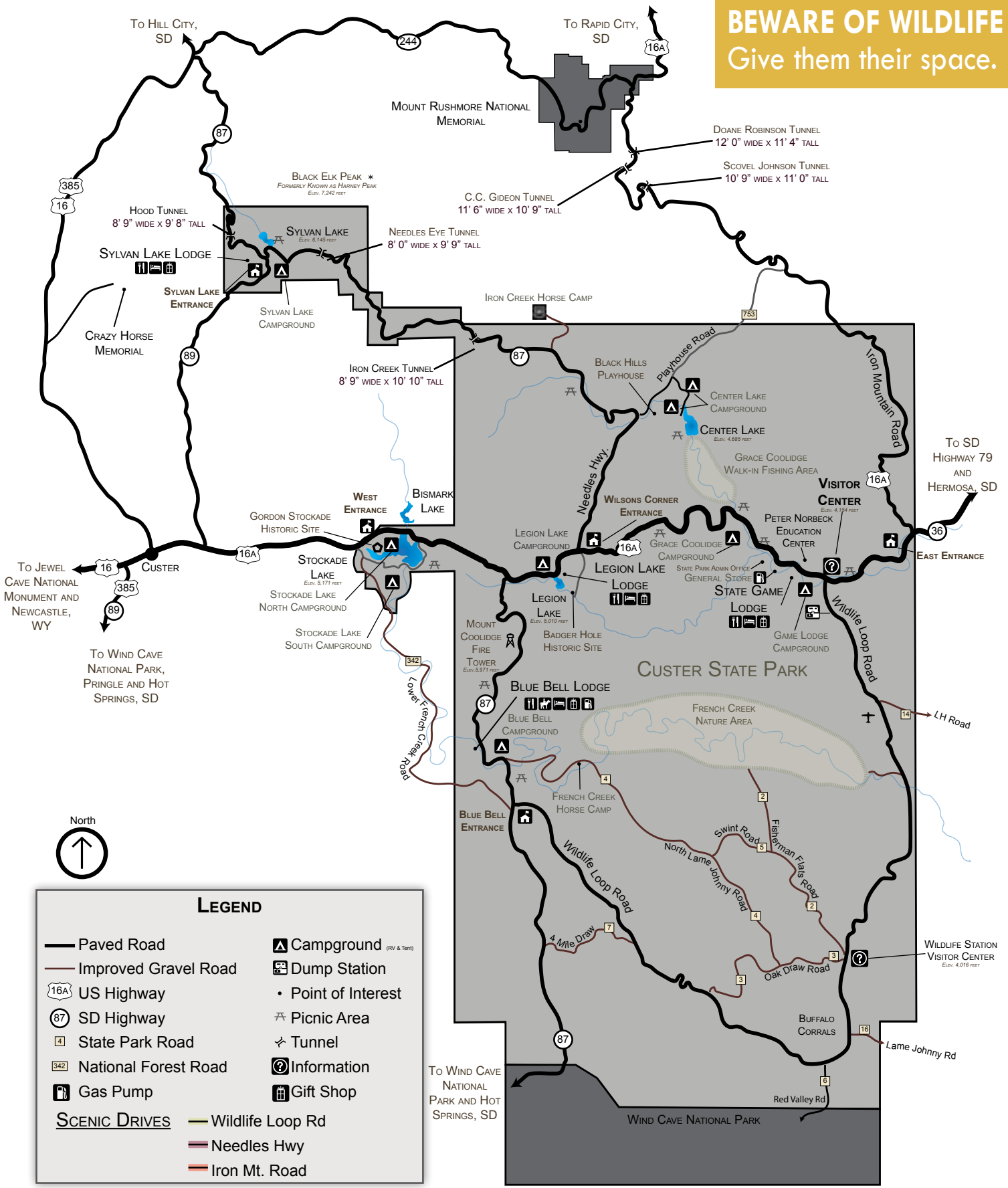
*Located 8 miles east of Belle Fourche off SD 212*  
605.641.0023

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



# 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