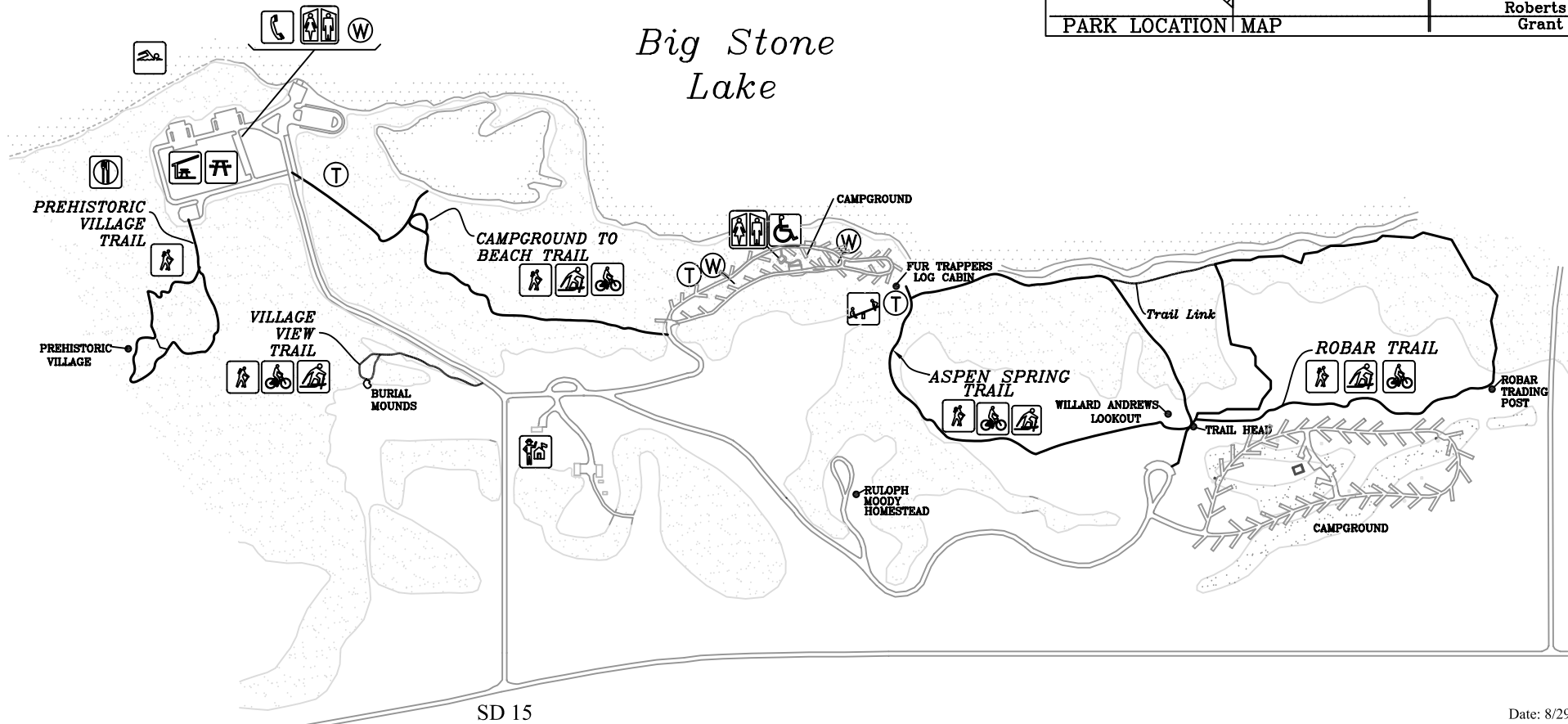
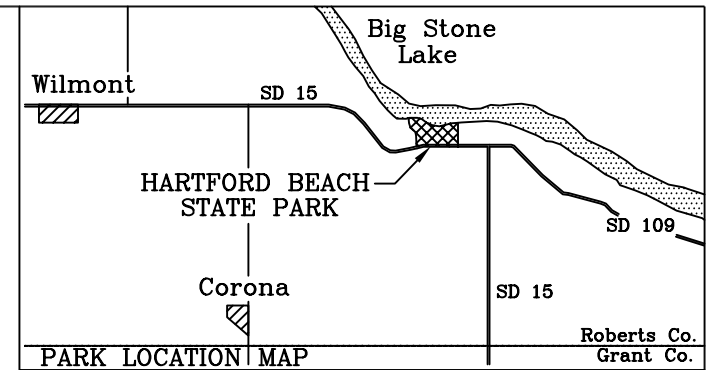


Hartford Beach State Park Trail System



Date: 8/29/11

Map Symbols

ENTRANCE STATION	HIKING TRAIL	CONCESSIONAIRE	BEACH	TOILET	 NORTH SCALE IN FEET 0 400 800
BIKE TRAIL	SKI TRAIL	ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES	PLAYGROUND	DRINKING WATER	
PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	TELEPHONE	COMFORT STATION	TREES	

Hartford Beach State Park

Robar Trail

Type of trail: Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, interpretive/viewing nature and interpretive history

Trail surface: Dirt and mowed grass

Rated: Somewhat difficult, strenuous in some areas

Fee required: Park Entrance License

Location of the trailhead: .5 mile east of entrance booth (observation area on park map)

Length of trail: .75 mile

Facilities at or near the trailhead: Parking

Facilities along the trail: None

Will there be interpretive information available: Yes

What lodging opportunities are provided IN the park: Tent camping, electrical and non-electrical campsites, wheelchair accessible campsite, camping cabin

Does this trail connect with any other trails: Yes, Aspen Springs Trail

Nearest facilities for purchasing snacks, sunscreen etc.:
Hartford Beach Resort adjacent to park

Nearest motels/restaurants OUTSIDE the park: Resort adjacent to park

Nearest Chambers of Commerce:

Milbank Chamber, 401 S. Main, Milbank, SD 57252, (605) 432-6656

Ortonville Chamber, 41 NW 2nd St., Ortonville, MN 56278, (320) 839-3284

Emergency phone numbers:

Ambulance-911

Sheriff-911

Fire Department-911

Do most cell phones work on this trail: Cell phones will work on hill tops only.

Hartford Beach

Robar Trail

The Robar Trail is named for Solomon Robar who established a trading post with his partner Moses Mireau about one-fourth mile east of this site. The trailhead is reached by going past the campground entrance and on to the end of the road. After parking, walk to the top of the hill next to the big rock. Take the trail to the right of the rock and walk across the open prairie, going in an easterly direction. The stone at the trailhead marks the graves of at least five bodies. They are visible as depressions near its base. All are graves of pioneers from the late 1800's.

There are many different prairie grasses along the first part of this hike, including western wheatgrass, blue grama, buffalograss and bluestem. All are native to the area.

A small warning: This part of the hike tends to be hot and humid mid-summer. Protect yourself against the heat.

At the eastern end of the trail is the Robar log cabin trading post. It operated from 1863-73. As you approach the building, note the variety of wild flowers in bloom. The common evening primrose, the yellow coneflower, and sagewort are among the showier of these plants. The primrose are the tall, slender plants with yellow blossoms.

Halfway down the hill from the trading post, you will find a side trail to the right. It leads to the foundation, all that remains of the cabin of Moses Mireau, who was Robar's trading partner. It is about a ten-minute walk round trip from the main trail.

From this junction the trail continues downhill toward the lake. At the bottom, turn west and walk into a myriad of tree varieties, including ash, burr oak, basswood, boxelder and American elm. The bright red-leafed (in the fall) shrub is sumac.

Station six, just past the trees, was designed as a rest stop. It is a nice spot to sit on the grass and enjoy the natural sights and sounds. Cottonwood trees are abundant here. If you're hiking in the spring, the fragrant smell is from the basswood trees. These trees attract honeybees and often are called "bee trees."

For camera buffs, station seven has a magnificent view. From this point, the well-marked trail leads down a small hill and crosses a bridge. The hillsides here are full of small natural springs. At the sign, the left trail leads uphill to the big rock, which ends the trail. The right trail joins the Aspen Trail. Hiking time for the Robar Trail is about one hour.

Hartford Beach State Park

Village View Trail

Type of trail: Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, interpretive/viewing nature and interpretive history

Trail surface: Dirt and mowed grass

Rated: Easy, appropriate for all ages

Fee required: Park Entrance License

Location of the trailhead: NW of entrance booth 30 yards

Length of trail in miles: One-eighth mile

Facilities at or near the trailhead: Parking

Facilities along the trail: None

Will there be interpretive information available: Yes

What lodging opportunities are provided IN the park: Tent camping, electrical and non-electrical campsites, wheelchair accessible campsite, camping cabin

Does this trail connect with any other trails: No

Nearest facilities for purchasing snacks, sunscreen etc.: Hartford Beach Resort adjacent to park

Nearest motels/restaurants OUTSIDE the park: Hartford Beach Resort adjacent to park

Nearest Chambers of Commerce:

Milbank Chamber, 401 S. Main, Milbank, SD 57252, (605) 432-6656

Ortonville Chamber, 41 NW 2nd St., Ortonville, MN 56278, (320) 839-3284

Emergency phone numbers:

Ambulance - 911

Sheriff - 911

Fire Department - 911

Do most cell phones work on this trail: Cell phones will work on hill tops only

Hartford Beach State Park

Village View Trail

The American Indian mounds found in Hartford Beach State Park are typical of numerous such mounds in eastern South Dakota. They cover a time span from approximately 300 A.D. to possibly 1600 A.D.

The mound before you was excavated in 1922 by the late Dr. W.H. Over, then Director of the University of South Dakota Museum. Let's have his field notes tell the story.

"The mound we excavated... is one of a string of mounds on the brow of this high terrace overlooking the west shore of Big Stone Lake. The mound is 54 feet in diameter, 6 feet high and the largest one so far investigated. The contents of Hartford Beach mound could perhaps be taken as an example of what could be found in any large mound in the eastern part of South Dakota."

"In all, 14 skeletons of the early mound builders had been buried here and later the mound erected. Those found here in a sitting posture were complete and had been deposited at the time of death. We think we may assume that all of these belong to the higher class or Chief's family while those skeletons that are incomplete and lying prostrate belonged to the lower class and had at time of death been placed on a scaffold or up in trees and some of the bones afterwards deposited here."

Of this vicinity Dr. Over wrote, *"There is no question but that this old field with its strategic location and the natural protection afforded it by the deep ravine of Spring Creek has from the earliest times been a camping grounds for the Indians. The Woodland Indians, Omaha and Sioux Indians have all lived on this level bit of tableland. At that time, there were no groves to obstruct the view and the sentinel could see for miles over the prairies. The settlers report that for years many relics have been picked up in this field."*

It is believed that the mounds were built by individuals who carried baskets of earth and then dumped the dirt to form mounds over their dead.