



The Number Four



The cottonwood tree. This sacred tree is used in the Sioux Sun Dance ceremony.

Sioux people grouped everyday activities and prayers/ceremonies by the number four. In doing things in four, respect is given to the four grandfathers (the directions) and the four seasons.

Four elements make up the universe: earth, air, water, fire.

Four virtues men and women should enact are bravery, generosity, truthfulness, and begetting children.

Everything that grows from the ground has four parts; the roots, stems, leaves, and fruit.

Things that breathe also have four groups: those that crawl, those that fly, those that walk on four legs, and those that walk on two legs.

OTHER USES OF THE NUMBER FOUR

The four colors represent the four stages of life, from childhood to old age; the cycle of seasons, from spring to winter; the four races of people; and the four cardinal directions.

The four directions each symbolize a certain power. In the circle, East is knowledge, South is life, West is the power of change, and North is wisdom. The four colors and directions have been interpreted through elders, which differ slightly from tribe to tribe.

Black Elk states, "Black is for the West where the thunder beings live to send us rain; White one for North, whence comes the great cleansing wind; Red one the East, whence springs the light and where the morning star lives to give men wisdom; the Yellow for the South, whence comes the summer and the power to grow."

Pipestone National Monument Purpose

The legislative purpose of the Monument is threefold:

- To administer and protect the pipestone quarries, reserving the quarrying of pipestone for Indians of all tribes.
 - To preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural and natural resources associated with Pipestone National Monument
 - To provide for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.
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National Monument Significance

The following statements identify significant cultural and natural components of Pipestone National Monument's ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant as the only location where Indians have quarried the red pipestone (catlinite) from very early times to the present.

The National Monument is significant as a sacred site associated with American Indian spiritual beliefs and cultural activities.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for its history of American Indian and European-American contact and exploration in the early 1800's, specific quarrying rights, and the Pipestone Indian School (1893-1953).

Pipestone National Monument protects a significant cultural/ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for the landscape it protects, which consists of the tallgrass prairie that developed in association with the site's distinct hydrologic features. These features combine to provide an unusual array of habitats supporting a diverse assortment of prairie plants and animals and rare habitats, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and globally rare remnant plant communities.