



Prairie Preamble

The official newspaper
of Badlands National Park

Summer 2006 Issue



One Fine Day

HERE IN SOUTHWESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA, RUGGED badlands break the landscape, puncturing the prairie like a set of great serrated teeth. It's a bewildering place you've come to, full of contrast and surprise. Flowing grasses run up against the sheer crumble of the Badlands wall. Fossils poke out of the strata; teeth of ancient mammals erode loose under the sudden crash of an evening thunderstorm. As the sunset sharpens and colors the buttes, wildlife begins to move against the shadows. Down every streambed and wash the Badlands hold something unexpected. We invite you to explore - wander up a canyon and perhaps uncover a few secrets. East to west or west to east, the following suggestions are a few steps to creating a perfect day in the Badlands.

The beauty of the Badlands depends on light against their face, and the perfect day begins early in the morning in the east while the day is still cool and the sun rises. The Door Trail provides you with a chance to put the Badlands under your feet. Beginning with a boardwalk, this easy, quarter-mile hike leads to a break in the Badlands Wall where the horizon stretches out in a moonscape jumble of points and spires. Where the boardwalk ends, stairs lead out onto a flat expanse of formations, pocked here and there with small canyons. For a more adventurous hike, move on to the Notch Trail at the other end of the same parking area. A favorite among park staff and visitors, the Notch Trail wanders up a canyon scented with juniper and sage to the base of a ladder climbing the steep cliff face. At the top, as it continues along the canyon, keep your eyes open for cliff swallow nests tucked into crevices and the dusty-colored badlands chipmunk chasing up the rocks, tail held straight in the air. At the trail's end, the "Notch" frames expansive views of the White River Valley. As you hike, remember there's a reason why it's called the Badlands. Be prepared with plenty of water, a hat, sunscreen, and sturdy footwear. Long pants are also recommended.

As the day heats up, be among the first visitors to cool off in the newly renovated Ben Reifel Visitor Center. Completed in December 2005, the visitor center offers all new exhibits, featuring the fossil history of the Badlands, the prairie world, and the rich cultural present and past, as well as information and orientation so you can start your own adventure in the Badlands. Explore the park without leaving the dim cool of the visitor center's auditorium through viewing the park's film *Land of Stone and Light*. New this year, the film highlights the park's human history, the story of the Lakota and sodbusters, fossil hunters working in the park's

scorching heat. The Badlands have often been difficult for humans, but animals have long thrived here. The film introduces you to efforts to restore animals and their native habitat. Start at the visitor center for an orientation to the complex tapestry of human and natural life in the Badlands.

Further down the Loop Road, stop in at the Big Pig Dig where the National Park Service works with paleontologists from the South Dakota School of Mines to reveal the story of a 32 million year old watering hole. Giant pigs, hornless rhinoceros, and tiny horses are among the 13 different kinds of animals coming to light at this site as paleontologists meticulously chip away at the overlying sediments with dental picks, paintbrushes, and trowels. In its 13th summer, the Pig Dig illustrates the main reason Badlands became a national park: its incredibly rich fossil beds laden with the remains of ancient mammals.

No day in the Badlands ignores the prairie. Once called the Great American Desert, we've come to realize this ecosystem centers our country. Originally covering almost the entire middle third of our nation, our prairie has been reduced to precious scraps by the pressures of agriculture and development and the threat of invasive species. Badlands National Park preserves the largest piece of mixed grass prairie in the United States. Meet this land of wind and endless space by hearing the waterfall of a meadowlark's call, investigating one of the Badland's 60+ grasses, or hanging out at Roberts Prairie Dog Town. If you're new to the prairie, try taking a short walk with a park naturalist. Then get out there on your own. You may have to get a little closer to the ground, but the grassland sea ripples with life. To see some of the park's wildlife, take a ride down Sage Creek Rim Road, and you may come face to face with a bighorn sheep or bison (and you'll definitely see a prairie dog or two).

Spend the day. Spend the evening. The perfect visit to Badlands National Park ends at Pinnacles Overlook as the grasses turn to a bright blown ocean rippling against rugged spires and the sun burns down to the west. And still it's not over: the river valley begins to turn blue, and a whole new world opens up of coyotes howling and the cloudy spray of the Milky Way. The Badlands can be an unforgiving land, but if you take the time to know it, you'll find every peak and twist of the road hides a new expanse.

Rebekah Ann Beall served as a volunteer naturalist in the Badlands National Park Internship Program during summer, 2005. A graduate of Albion College in Michigan, Bekah studied creative writing and hopes to earn a graduate degree before setting out on her writing career.

Badlands National Park Mission

Badlands National Park preserves a diversity of significant resources for the education and inspiration of a world audience. These resources are a blending of the best known Oligocene fossil deposits contained within archetypal Big Badlands formations, a rich and varied cultural history spanning from paleo-Indian occupation through the early twentieth century homesteading period, and a fine expanse of a mixed grass prairie ecosystem. Other qualities, most notably the wilderness character, clean air, quiet, solitude, vastness, and natural processes, provide visitors with a setting for exploration and appreciation through such experiences as hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, scenic drives and vistas, research and educational opportunities, and quiet contemplation.

Mission of the National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Emergency? Call 911

Remember These Numbers . . .

7

Number of Days Your Passenger Vehicle Entrance Pass Permits You to Explore the Badlands. Stay a little longer!

45

Maximum Speed Limit on Park Roads. Lower speed limits are posted in heavy traffic areas.

100

Minimum Distance in Yards You Should Keep From Park Wildlife. Any time an animal reacts to your presence means you are too close. Back off!

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Badlands National Park

Badlands National Park protects over 244,000 acres of sculpted Badlands and mixed-grass prairie. The park is home to a variety of plants and animals. The Badlands formations also contain the fossils of creatures that roamed the land millions of years ago.

This seemingly harsh land has been a home for people for thousands of years. Today, the vibrant culture of the Oglala Lakota remains alive on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation which contains the South Unit of Badlands National Park. Ranches dot the countryside outside the park. Some are descendants of original homesteaders who settled here and managed to call this land home.

Highway 240 has been designated a Scenic Byway and is your primary access to the scenery of Badlands National Park.

Mailing Address

Badlands National Park
PO Box 6
Interior, South Dakota 57750

Park Website

www.nps.gov/badl/

Email

badl_information@nps.gov

Fax Number

(605) 433-5404

Park Headquarters

(605) 433-5361

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Visitor Facilities

Ben Reifel Visitor Center

? Located at park headquarters, the Ben Reifel Visitor Center reopened in 2006 with new exhibits, a 95 seat, air conditioned theater, a new park film, *Land of Stone and Light*, and improved classroom and restroom facilities. Badlands Natural History Association sells postcards, books, posters, and other educational materials. Open year round.

Hours of Operation

April 3–June 4	8 a.m.–5 p.m.
June 5–August 20	7 a.m.–7 p.m.
August 21–September 17	8 a.m.–6 p.m.
September 18–October 29	8 a.m.–5 p.m.
October 30–April 2006	9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Badlands National Park is in the Mountain Time Zone

White River Visitor Center

? Located on the Pine Ridge Reservation off Highway 27, this visitor center is operated by the Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority and is staffed by Tribal members. In 2006, new exhibits will be installed by the National Park Service. Contact (605) 455-2878 for more information.

Hours of Operation

June 1 through Sept. 15 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Picnic Areas

A Picnic tables are located at Bigfoot Pass and Conata Picnic Areas in addition to tables at the White River Visitor Center. Bigfoot Pass and Conata Picnic Areas do not have water available. Remember that open campfires are **not** permitted.

Cedar Pass Lodge

🍴 **🛏** Full menu dining, air conditioned cabins, gift shop, restrooms, ATM, bagged ice and recycling are available. In 2006 the lodge is scheduled to open in mid-April and close in mid-October. For reservations and rates:

Cedar Pass Lodge
P.O. Box 5
Interior, South Dakota 57750
Phone: (605) 433-5460

Cedar Pass Campground

🏕 **🚐** Located near the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, Cedar Pass Campground

has 96 sites. Camping fees are \$10 per night per campsite. The campground is operated on a first come, first served basis and has a fourteen day limit. Cold running water, flush toilets, covered picnic tables, and trash containers are available. The campground does not have showers or electrical hookups. A dump station is available with a \$1.00 fee per use. Campground hosts are on duty during the summer to assist in registration and provide information. Look for them in the afternoon and early evenings at the campground entrance booth. Open campfires are **not** permitted.

GROUP CAMPING

Four campsites are available in the Cedar Pass Campground for organized groups with a designated leader. The nightly fee is \$2.50 per person with a minimum fee of \$25.00. Advance reservations are required and can be made by contacting (605) 433-5235 or by writing Group Camping Reservations; Badlands National Park; P.O. Box 6; Interior, South Dakota 57750

Sage Creek Primitive Campground

🏕 Open year round, access to this campground may be limited in winter and during the spring rainy season due to road conditions. The Sage Creek Rim Road is remote and unpaved. It is not recommended for large recreational vehicles. The campground is currently free and offers pit toilets and picnic tables. There is a fourteen day limit. There is no water available. Open campfires are **not** permitted.

Accessibility



- The Ben Reifel Visitor Center and White River Visitor Center are both accessible to wheelchair users. Examples of fossils and rocks provide a tactile experience for all who enjoy handling objects, such as rocks, fossils, and skins, and is appropriate for the visually impaired.
- The Window Trail and the Door Trail are both accessible to wheelchair users.
- The Cedar Pass Campground has two accessible campsites. All campground restrooms are accessible. One group campsite is accessible.
- The Cedar Pass Lodge dining room and gift shop, as well as some cabins, meet accessibility standards.
- Several summer ranger programs, including all talks and portions of the Geology Walk, are accessible to wheelchair users. Others include adaptations for visual or hearing impaired visitors.
- A complete listing of accessible facilities is available from the information desk of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center or online at <http://www.nps.gov/badl/>

Backcountry Use - By Foot or By Horse

Want to walk on the wild side of Badlands National Park? How about a trip into the park's backcountry or designated wilderness areas? While most visitors stick to the roads, overlooks and designated trails, there is more of the park to explore. Over 64,000 acres of the park have been designated by Congress as the Badlands Wilderness Area, a place to remain forever wild. The wilderness is divided into two units. The Sage Creek Unit is the largest. Located in the northwest part of the park, its boundaries follow the park boundaries to the south and west, the Sage Creek Rim Road to the north and the Conata Road to the east. The smaller Conata Unit is located south of the Badlands Loop Road between the Bigfoot Pass Picnic Area and the Conata Road. These areas are shown on the park map you received at the entrance station. A handout of backcountry regulations and safety information is available at the information desk at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. Permits are not currently required for overnight stays in the Badlands backcountry. You should contact a staff member at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center or Pinnacles Ranger Station before setting out on an overnight trip. Backcountry registers are located at the Conata Picnic Area (access to Deer Haven), Sage Creek Basin Overlook, and Sage Creek Campground for the park to maintain use figures. Please take the time to register before entering via these points - whether hiking for a few hours or a few days.

Horseback riding and stock use is allowed throughout the park except on marked trails, roads, or in developed areas. The Badlands Wilderness Area south of Sage Creek Primitive Campground is popular with stock users. Hitching posts are located in the campground. At this time, no guides are licensed to provide trail rides inside the park. Several private operations do provide trail rides on surrounding private land. Inquire at the visitor center for current information on horseback rides. A bulletin on horse use is available from park staff at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center or downloadable at <http://www.nps.gov/badl/>

For information on enjoying and protecting the park, see the **Leave No Trace** information on page 4.



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Keep Yourself Out of a Jam - A Wildlife Jam

Habituated wild animals learn people are not a threat and will tolerate people at close distances. Many animals - including bison, coyotes, bighorn sheep, prairie dogs, chipmunks, and birds - become habituated, especially along park roads. To protect yourself and wildlife, follow these guidelines when viewing or photographing roadside wildlife, whether you are alone or in a group of visitors (known as a *wildlife jam*):

- Park in established turnouts or overlooks ONLY. Make sure your vehicle is completely off the paved roadway.
- Make sure your vehicle has been put into PARK. Engage your parking brake if possible.
- If you exit your vehicle, stay near it so you can get inside if wildlife approaches.
- To avoid being struck by other vehicles, do not stand in the roadway to view or photograph wildlife.
- Never surround, crowd, or follow wildlife.
- Never block an animal's line of travel.
- Do not run or make sudden movements. This may cause animals to feel threatened and create a defensive reaction.
- If other people are putting you in danger, leave the scene and notify a park ranger.
- Do not ever feed any wildlife, including birds.

Specific Wildlife Issues

Bison are unpredictable and dangerous. They weight up to 2000 pounds (900 kg) and sprint up to 30 miles per hour (48 kph). Bison are not larger, hairier cattle. They are wild animals.

Bighorn sheep are, by nature, shy but become accustomed to human presence. The head-butt of a bighorn ram has the impact of a vehicle at 60 miles per hour (96 kph).

Deer are deceptively docile. They can become aggressive if they feel pressured and will strike out with razor-sharp hooves or use their racks for defense.

Prairie dogs, chipmunks, and coyotes quickly learn bad habits from visitor feeding. This sharply increases the risk of these animals being hit by vehicles and creates animals who behave aggressively toward humans.

Birds are frequently not considered wildlife but these air-borne beauties are the most common victims of visitor feeding. Social birds like the black-billed magpie become pests and camp robbers and may damage your vehicle by pecking or scratching when accustomed to human food.

Why Is Feeding Wildlife Illegal?

- Human food contains salt, preservatives, and other chemicals that cause wildlife to dehydrate or suffer from malnutrition or poor health.
- Wildlife may carry diseases that can be transmitted to you or your children. Fed wildlife tend to become aggressive toward humans and are more likely to cause injury or infection.

Your Entrance Fees at Work!

IN 1997, CONGRESS AUTHORIZED NATIONAL PARKS TO RETAIN ENTRANCE FEES COLLECTED TO the growing repair and maintenance backlog, for interpretation, signage, habitat restoration, facility enhancement and resource preservation projects. Prior to 1997, entrance fees were deposited in the national treasury and distributed to other federal agencies. This change in fee collection has enabled Badlands to undertake projects that would not otherwise be funded. Badlands National Park is unique in that under a special agreement, the Oglala Sioux Tribe receives a portion of this park's entrance fees. As a result, 40% of the fees collected stay in this park, rather than 80% as at most parks.

Using your entrance fee dollars, we have funded the following projects in the park:

- Rehabilitation and winterization of campground comfort stations to provide accessibility for mobility impairments and improve campground facilities for winter camping.
- Trail improvements park wide to improve safety and accessibility and to protect fragile resources potentially damaged by off-trail travel.
- Prepare and present programs in area schools under the Badlands In Your Classroom outreach program, which reaches nearly 10,000 students each year.
- Restoration of approximately 50 acres of native prairie, using a combination of prescribed fire, reseeding with native grass, and nonnative plant control. These control measures can effectively eradicate or reduce invasion of nonactive species and preserve one of the largest native prairie ecosystems in North America.
- Installation of restroom facilities at Pinnacles, Door Trail, and Fossil Exhibit Trail.
- Development and installation of new park orientation film, *Land of Stone and Light*
- Preparation and curation of fossils from the Big Pig Dig site.

Congress established the fee structure charged at our national parks. In 2006, the entrance fee for Badlands National Park increased to \$15 per passenger vehicle in an effort to continue to work toward more self-sufficient public lands.



Consumer Reports has listed the U.S. national parks as a family "best buy." Remember your entrance receipt is good for seven days of exploration. We continue to be a bargain for your vacation.



Several park trails such as the Castle Trail will be improved for visitor safety and accessibility.



Bulletin boards constructed with user fee money provide better safety and orientation information

Visitors: Be Alert for Construction!

During summer, 2006, there will be work zones throughout the park for road construction and improvements, fencing projects, and boardwalk or building repairs. As we go to press, the schedule for these activities has not been set. Please check at entrance stations or the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for information on closures or delays. Use caution around heavy equipment. Do not enter areas posted as "closed." Our goal is a safe visit for all!



Park Ranger Holly Johnson leads future Junior Rangers into the Badlands

Become a Junior Ranger!

Are you ready to climb out of that car and have some fun with a ranger? If you are between the ages of 5 and 12, you can become a Badlands National Park Junior Ranger! Junior Rangers are kids like you - national park explorers, fun seekers, and concerned citizens. There are two cool ways to join the Junior Ranger ranks and earn your official Badlands badge.

Join us for the 10:30 a.m. Junior Ranger Program. Meet at the Cedar Pass Campground Amphitheater for 45 minutes of laughs and learning. The program is different every day but here are a few things you might do:

- Go on an unusual nature hike. Can you walk backwards? If you were a rabbit, where would you hide? What smells or sounds drift across the Badlands?
- Play guessing games to learn characteristics of prairie plants and animals, then hunt around the prairie for tracks and signs.
- See Badlands fossils and discover what paleontologists do. Imagine a time so long ago that the animals looked completely different from today and this place could have looked like Africa or Florida - or even been deep underwater!

Some families are on a tight time budget and cannot work their schedule around the 10:30 ranger program. If you have lots of places to go and many people to see, the Junior Ranger Activity Booklet may be for you. Booklets can be purchased for \$1.95 at the bookstore located in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. It will take at least 45 minutes for you to finish the puzzles and activities. Return the booklet to a ranger at the information desk and you will be awarded your badge. You can also do the booklet as your family travels through the park and mail it back to us for review. We will return your booklet signed by a park ranger with your Junior Ranger badge enclosed.

Parents! Junior Ranger Programs are fun for the whole family. Please attend the 10:30 a.m. Junior Ranger Program with your children. You may even receive your very own Junior Ranger badge for participating! Your family can collect

Junior Ranger badges at over 300 national parks. Additionally, you can collect the lifelong experiences of the National Park System at nearly 400 units of this incredible public park system.

Want to continue your visit once you get back home? Send a Badlands e-postcard from the National Park Service Web Ranger Program. The address is www.nps.gov/webangers At Web Rangers, you can complete online activities to learn about National Parks even if you can't visit them all.

Julie Johndreau started her career as a volunteer intern and now serves as Badlands National Park's education specialist. Julie's job includes seeking gateways for education into this special place.



Badlands Junior Ranger Pledge

I promise to take the lessons I learn at Badlands National Park home with me and use them everyday:

- I will take care of what I have
- I will try to make the world around me a better place
- I will remember that National Parks are special places always there for me to come back

Welcome to Indian Country: Exploring the South Unit

In 1976, Badlands National Monument entered into an agreement with the Oglala Lakota Nation to protect 122,000 acres that had been used as an aerial bombing range during World War II. This doubled the size of the Monument and led Congress to redesignate the area as Badlands National Park in 1978. The new Badlands National Park was now subdivided into two units: the North Unit, consisting of park land north of Highway 44, and the South Unit, park land south of Highway 44.

The White River Visitor Center was opened in 1978 and has remained open during the summer months to provide orientation to the South Unit and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Due to the quantity of unexploded ordnance that continues to litter the areas used for bombing practice, a multi-agency task force is working toward clearing the South Unit of these devices. Until the task force is reasonably certain that an area is cleared of detonating devices, we cannot encourage visitors to explore much of the South Unit. Cellular phones can detonate these devices.

The South Unit remains largely undeveloped and lacks access points, such as roads and trails. Exploration can be accomplished only by using 4-wheel-drive vehicles or on foot. The South Unit is a protected natural area and is not managed as a four-wheel-drive recreation area.

Travelers must remain on existing primitive road tracks. Do not leave these tracks to go "four wheeling." Explorers must often cross private land to access the public land. Always obtain permission from landowners for vehicular or foot access before setting out for Cunny Table, Stronghold Table, and Palmer Creek. Be prepared with alternative destinations if land owners do not provide permission to cross their property. Hikers in the South Unit must be experienced map readers. Plan on a minimum of two days to hike in and out of the remote Palmer Creek area.

One of the few designated roads is The Sheep Mountain Road, 7 miles south of the town of

Scenic on Pennington County Road 589. The stunning views from windswept Sheep Mountain Table are accessible under dry conditions by high clearance vehicles. The road is impassable when wet or snow covered. Please use caution along the unstable cliff edges of the table. Sheep Mountain Table is designated a day use area. Overnight camping is not allowed.

The South Unit contains many sites sacred to the Oglala Lakota and other American Indian cultures. Please show respect by not touching or removing objects tied to trees and shrubs. All artifacts must be left in place. Remember to practice **Leave No Trace** principles at all times in the Stronghold District.

Park Regulations Support Leave No Trace

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK IS VISITED BY OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE EACH YEAR. WHILE individually our actions may seem small, collectively, we can have a dramatic impact on this landscape. When traveling in the park please know and follow the park rules and regulations and practice techniques that will *leave no trace* of your passing.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Weather

Badlands weather is unpredictable, at best. Prepare for extreme weather. Heavy rain, hail and extremely high winds occur through the summer. Lightning strikes are common. During a severe electrical storm, stay away from exposed places, ridges, or isolated trees.

Summer temperatures often exceed 100°F. Sunscreen, a hat, and water are essential to avoid sunburn, dehydration, and heat stroke. It is also advisable to wear long pants.

Water

Water found naturally in the Badlands is full of silt and undrinkable. It will quickly clog even the best filter or purifier. Water can be obtained from the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, Cedar Pass Campground, the Pinnacles Ranger Station and the White River Visitor Center. There is no other potable water available in the park. Always carry water with you. You should carry a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day in the Badlands.

Cactus and Other Plants

Statistically, the most dangerous park resident is the prickly pear cactus. It causes the highest percentage of our first aid responses by piercing shoes, socks, and gloves. It occurs throughout the park, is quite low to the ground and often under other plants such as grass. Always wear heavy leather boots and long pants when exploring the prairie. Leather gloves are also helpful.

The park has poison ivy in vegetated areas, such as Cliff Shelf Nature Trail. Remember that poison ivy leaves occur in bunches of three. Examples of poison ivy are found in the herbarium in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

Hiking and Backpacking

Keep in mind that Badlands National Park currently has an open backcountry policy. This means that we have no permit system in place and very few established trails. While this offers a wild hiking experience, it also means that there is no registration process allowing for your whereabouts to be known. You are truly on your own and are responsible for your own safety. The park is also full of prairie dog towns, a critical part of the prairie ecosystem. Use care when exploring them to avoid turned ankles or contact with burrow residents. See [Page 2 for Backcountry Regulations](#) and [Page 5 for Day Hiking Trails](#).

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Seemingly sturdy, the Badlands formations are extremely unstable and unsuitable for any type of rock climbing. Do not attempt technical climbing in the park. Park regulations do permit exploration of the Badlands. However, scrambling up formations and sliding back down creates scars. It also changes the natural erosional patterns, creating human-impacted features. In high-use areas such as the Cliff Shelf and Fossil Exhibit Trails, please stay on the established trails. Serious injuries occur as visitors become disoriented or fearful when attempting to return from off-trail adventures. Be safe. Be low impact. Stay on trails.

Off road travel is **not** allowed for any wheeled vehicles including cars, motorcycles, and bicycles. Travel is limited only to established roads. Bicycles are not allowed on the trails, prairie, or formations.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Please help keep the Badlands clean. Place all garbage in trash containers. If trash cans are not available, please pack out all trash. Recycling bins for metal, glass and plastic are found at the Cedar Pass Campground and other park locations. Restrooms are located at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, White River Visitor Center and Cedar Pass Campground. Pit toilets are available at other locations.

Leave What You Find

All collecting in the park is prohibited. **Removing, defacing, or destroying any plants, animals, minerals, fossils, rocks or cultural objects is illegal.** It also diminishes the park's resources and other visitors' experiences. Taking even the smallest rock or picking flowers is punishable by a fine.



Campfires

Campfires are **not** permitted due to the extreme danger of prairie wild fire. Camp stoves or contained charcoal grills can be used in campgrounds or picnic areas. Backpacking stoves or similar self-contained stoves are preferred and are the only cooking devices permitted in the backcountry. Due to the lack of trees, wood gathering is **not** permitted.

Respect Wildlife

Viewing wildlife is a popular visitor activity in national parks. Please, keep the *wild* in wildlife. If an animal reacts at all to your presence, you are too close. Do not be lured in by "cute" or "tame" behavior. All wildlife – deer, prairie dogs, bison, snakes, and even birds – can cause serious injury.

Many visitors ask about the park's only poisonous snake, the **prairie rattlesnake**. Like all snakes, the prairie rattler cannot control its body temperature internally. To survive, it must seek out resting places where temperatures are between 65° - 85°F. Choice hiding spots include under ledges, rocks and shrubbery or in prairie dog burrows. In the evening, they gravitate toward dark surfaces that retain warmth, such as paved trails, roads, and sidewalks. Prairie rattlers are the least aggressive of the rattlesnake family and attempt to avoid humans. Wear long pants and closed toe shoes, and do not place your hands out of sight, such as reaching over a ledge to pull yourself up. Snakes do not have ears. They sense, rather than "hear," you coming through the vibrations you create on the ground and surrounding vegetation.

Travel at or below the speed limit to protect wildlife. Deer frequently travel in herds of two to ten. If you see one crossing the road, expect more to follow. The most frequent cause of unnatural death to park wildlife is automobiles or recreational vehicles.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Pets are allowed only on paved or gravel roads and in developed areas such as campgrounds and must be kept on a leash at all times. They are not allowed on trails or in public buildings. Leaving an animal unattended and/or tied to an object is prohibited. Due to the extreme summer heat, do not leave your pet in your vehicle without leaving a window cracked or without water.

Respect other visitors and the quality of their experience. Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices or noises.

Leave No Trace is a national education program. We proudly partner with this organization to protect Badlands for everyone. To learn more, visit www.LNT.org

Other Regulations

Seat Belts Each vehicle occupant must have a safety belt or child restraint system fastened when the vehicle is in motion.

Theft Lock your vehicle. Keep all valuables hidden. Label all valuable property with your name, address, or an identification number. Report theft, vandalism, or lost items to a park employee.

Rules of the Road

Motorist Warning: The speed limit in the park is 45 miles per hour unless posted otherwise. Seat belts are required for all passengers at all times.

Drive cautiously and use pull outs to allow others to pass safely or to view wildlife. Do not pull off the road unless there is sufficient pavement for your vehicle to be completely out of the lane of traffic. Do not pull onto grass. The underside of your vehicle can start a prairie fire.

Pedestrians have the right of way. Vehicles must stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. It's the LAW.

Bicyclists

Bicyclist Warning: The Badlands Loop Road is narrow with many curves. Watch out for large RVs with extended mirrors. Bicycles are prohibited on park trails. Bicyclists are permitted on all park paved and unpaved roads and must obey all traffic regulations. Always ride with the flow of the traffic. Several passes make riding the Loop Road challenging.

See and be seen: Wear bright colors and a helmet. A map of suggested routes is available at the information desk of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

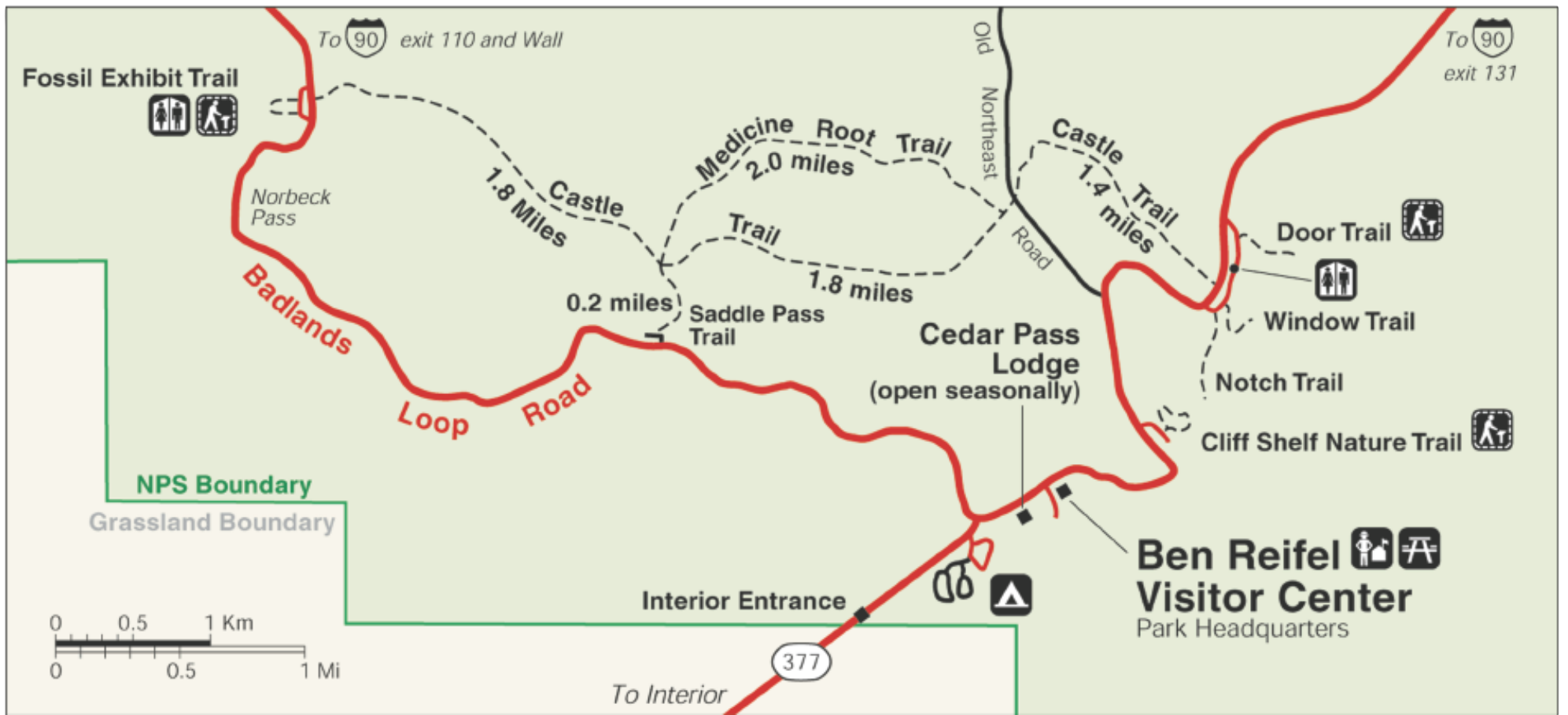
Protect Your Park

- Leave fossils, flowers, rocks and animals where you find them.
- Preserve your heritage. Do not enter, alter or deface archeological sites. Do not collect artifacts.
- All vehicles and bicycles must travel on designated roads.
- Stay on designated trails in high-use areas such as Fossil Exhibit and Cliff Shelf Nature Trails.
- Observe the speed limit and watch out for wildlife crossing the roads.

Protect Yourself

- Drink at least one gallon of water each day.
- During a lightning storm avoid lone trees and high ridges. Return to your vehicle if possible.
- Be careful near cliff edges and on Badlands formations, especially when surfaces are wet.
- Wear clothing and sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun.
- Wear sturdy boots or shoes to protect your feet from cactus spines.

Hiking in the Park



Hiking Trails in the North Unit

FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BADLANDS, CONSIDER TAKING A HIKE. THE ENTIRE PARK IS OPEN TO hiking; however, in high use areas, please stay on the trails. All of the developed trails start from parking areas within five miles of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. **If you are interested in backpacking overnight, see page 2 and ask at the Visitor Center for a backpacking bulletin.**

In planning your hike, consider past, present and forecasted weather. Trails can vary from slick and impassable to dry and dusty or even dry on top and muddy and slick underneath. Always carry water even if you are taking only a short walk. **Remember that collecting is not permitted.** Help to protect your park by leaving rocks, plants, fossils, and artifacts where you find them. If you find something that you think is especially significant, leave it in place and report it at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

Hiking in the South Unit

The South Unit of Badlands National Park is located on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Its 122,000 acres are co-managed by the National Park Service and the Oglala Sioux Tribe and were once used by the U.S. Air Force as an aerial bombing range. Today, the area remains littered with unexploded ordnance. The South Unit is generally roadless. Paths found are likely in poor condition or privately used tracks for managing livestock. You must receive permission to cross private land, even by foot. See article on page 3.

Trail	Round Trip (mi/km)	(avg. time)	Description
Door Trail Accessible to viewpoint	.75/1.2	20 minutes	Easy. An accessible ¼ mile boardwalk leads through a break in the Badlands Wall known as “the Door” and to a view of the Badlands. From there, the maintained trail ends. Travel beyond this point is at your own risk. Watch for drop offs.
Window Trail Accessible	.25/.40	20 minutes	Easy. This short trail leads to a natural window in the Badlands Wall with a view of an intricately eroded canyon. Please stay on trail.
Notch Trail	1.5/2.4	1½ -2 hours	Moderate to Strenuous. After meandering through a canyon, this trail climbs a steep ladder and follows a ledge to “the Notch” for a dramatic view of the White River Valley. Trail begins at the south end of the Door and Window parking area. Watch for drop offs. Not recommended for anyone with a fear of heights. Treacherous during or after heavy rains.
Castle Trail	10/16	5 hours	Moderate. The longest trail in the park begins at the Door and Window Parking area and travels 5 miles one way to the Fossil Exhibit Trail. Relatively level, the path passes along some Badlands formations.
Cliff Shelf Nature Trail	.5/.8	½ hour	Moderate. This loop trail follows boardwalks and climbs stairs through a juniper forest perched along the Badlands Wall. A small pond occasionally exists in the area and draws wildlife such as deer or bighorn sheep. Climbs approximately 200 feet in elevation. Please stay on trail.
Saddle Pass	.25/.40	½ -1 hour	Strenuous. This short trail climbs up the Badlands Wall to a view over the White River Valley. The trail ends where it connects with the Castle and Medicine Root Loop Trails.
Medicine Root Loop	4/6.4	2 hours	Moderate. This gently rolling spur trail connects with the Castle Trail near the Old Northeast Road or at the intersection of the Castle and Saddle Pass Trails. Trail users are provided the opportunity to explore the mixed grass prairie while enjoying views of the Badlands in the distance. Watch for cactus.
Fossil Exhibit Trail Accessible	.25/.40	20 minutes	Easy. This fully accessible trail features fossil replicas and exhibits on rock formations that once roamed the area.

Closed For Renovation Part of Summer

Badlands Weather				
Month	Average High Temperature	Average Low Temperature	Record High/Low	Average Precipitation (inches)
May	72°F	46°F	102°F / 20°F	2.75
June	83°F	56°F	109°F / 34°F	3.12
July	92°F	62°F	111°F / 42°F	1.94
August	91°F	61°F	110°F / 35°F	1.45
September	81°F	51°F	105°F / 25°F	1.23
October	68°F	39°F	97°F / 2°F	0.90



Universal accessibility is a high priority at Badlands National Park. This means we are committed to working toward barrier-free experiences for visitors wherever possible without impacting park resources. An *Accessibility Guide* is available at the information desk of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center and can be downloaded from the park website.

The park's Accessibility Plan and Inventory is available upon request by emailing badl_interpretation@nps.gov or by writing **Accessibility Coordinator; Badlands National Park; P.O. Box 6; Interior, South Dakota 57750**



Weather warnings and forecasts for Badlands National Park and vicinity can be heard on NOAA Weather Radio 162.450 MHz. Forecasts can also be obtained by calling 605-341-7531.

Revealing the Past from the Present

AT FIRST GLANCE THE BADLANDS SEEM LIKE A harsh place. Summer heat reaches over 110°F and winter cold dips to -42°F. Drinkable water is scarce. It seems an inhospitable land, yet throughout time many people have called the Badlands home. Archeological evidence hints at the extent of this human story and provides tangible clues of the area's use. Stone tools, butchered bison bones, fire pits, ceramics and historic homesteads tell us there is a human story that Badlands National Park has only begun to discover.

Finding cultural resources in the park is difficult due to the rapidly eroding landscape and prairie vegetation. This does not mean that archeological research is not done. In 1996-2001 Badlands National Park coordinated the Badlands Archeological Identification Study to help the park better manage its cultural resources. To develop baseline information on cultural resources this project was conducted under a cooperative agreement between Badlands National Park, the Midwest Archaeological Center and Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Prior to this, only 120 cultural sites had been recorded, even though this area of the Great Plains was known to support extensive human activity for the past 10,000 years. Unfortunately, in the archeological record, nomadic peoples often leave little behind physically, thus they are poorly represented. With new information from this project, indications are that widespread and varied prehistoric and historic uses of the area occurred.

PREHISTORY

Prior to recent studies, our archeological record concerning the early inhabitants of the Badlands was limited. Evidence now

indicates that prehistoric people first reached the area sometime around 11,500 BP (before present). Discoveries of large lanceolate points, hearths, roasting pits, and accumulations of large animal bones indicate these prehistoric people were primarily nomadic big game hunters. As the large game of the ice ages began to disappear, hunting practices shifted to bison. These animals were often driven off cliffs in the Badlands (called buffalo jumps) and then butchered, leaving behind scrapers, points, and piles of bones. Evidence indicates it is highly unlikely that permanent homes or villages ever developed in the Badlands. However, due to the availability of water there is indication that hunters often revisited a site in the south unit.

With the introduction of agriculture and ceramics from cultures in southeastern North America, permanent settlements developed along the Missouri River watershed, but groups on the plains remained primarily hunters and gatherers. These early semi-permanent agricultural settlements are the beginnings of American Indian groups that Lewis and Clark would meet on their 1804 journey. To the north, French and English fur traders introduced new technologies, like firearms and metal, which enabled groups like the Lakota (or Sioux) to move into the area and displace other groups by the 1700s. Additionally, the horse was adopted by Plains peoples and rapidly changed these cultures into mounted hunters and warriors.

By the mid-1700s through the mid 1800s fur traders, mountain men and explorers ventured into the area and their accounts provide the first written records of a land that would earn the name "Badlands." In

1823 Jedediah Smith and his fur trapping party traveled along the White River and experienced the challenges of finding water within the unforgiving landscape. During Euro-American expansion into western North America, people passed through the area but did not stay for extended periods. In 1846 the first fossil description from the Badlands was published. Scores of institutions and collectors seeking fossil riches soon arrived. Once gold was identified in the Black Hills, American Indian tribes were moved to reservations and settlement by non-Indians began. The 1862 Homestead Act encouraged settlers to move into this area. However, environmental conditions caused many to leave the area or shift from farming to ranching.

Unrest in the later portion of the 1800s led to the Indian Wars and a cultural movement among the Lakota known as the Ghost Dance religion. Stronghold Table, located in the South Unit of the park was used as a stage for Ghost Dances. The hope promised by the Ghost Dance religion along with the traditional Lakota way of life would soon be changed forever by

the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890.

In the early 1900s developments such as Cedar Pass Lodge with cabins, a gas station and a dancehall sprang up in the Badlands and provided visitors with a place to stay and play. In 1939 efforts by Ben Millard and Peter Norbeck helped establish Badlands National Monument, later expanded to a National Park in 1978. These events and many others have provided historians with an incredible amount of information to sift through.

Often, park staff and visitors report observing artifacts. Remember that cultural resources in the park are protected. If you discover any objects, leave them where found, remember the location and report your discovery to a park ranger. Researching cultural sites gives the park an opportunity to provide better protection for these resources. Knowledge helps park managers understand and tell the story of human cultures in Badlands National Park.

Aaron Kaye, Staff Interpreter at Badlands, holds a degree in anthropology and has a lifelong interest in archaeology. A second generation NPS ranger, Aaron grew up in our national parks.



Plains culture dates back over 12,000 years in the Badlands area and continues today in 21st century South Dakota. Pine Ridge Reservation is home to the Oglala Lakota Nation and neighbors Badlands National Park.

Where's the Wildlife???

SPOTTING WILDLIFE LIKE BISON OR BIGHORN sheep can be thrilling as you travel through Badlands National Park. These favorite animals are charismatic headliners but the mixed-grass prairie ecosystem is the stage that supports them. In fact, watching for wildlife is the #1 visitor objective when visiting large natural areas - like national parks.

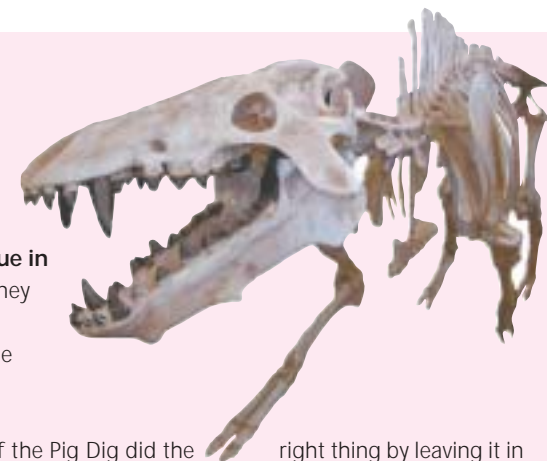
Bison: Also known as buffalo, bison are recognized as the signature animal of the Great Plains. They were reestablished at Badlands National Park in 1963. Today, approximately 800 bison graze within the Badlands Wilderness Area. Take the Sage Creek Rim Road to Roberts Prairie Dog Town and beyond for your chance to see a truly wild herd against a stunning prairie backdrop. Bison are wildlife. Keep your distance from them. They show their displeasure at your presence by pawing the ground and raising their tail.

Bighorn Sheep: In 1964, a small band of bighorns were released here. Although native to the area, they had been absent for 40 years. Today over 100 bighorns make their home in craggy Badlands formations. You are most likely to see bighorns near Cedar Pass or Pinnacles. Bighorn sheep are particularly fragile. Do not approach them. Many bighorns have radio-collars so biologists can track the herd migrations.

Prairie Dogs: With their characteristic *Jump-Yip* behavior, these chubby rodents are a popular yet controversial member of the prairie environment. Living in social communities called "towns," prairie dogs are a symbol of the prairie but considered a pest by ranchers. Roberts Prairie Dog Town is a large complex located adjacent to the Sage Creek Road in the northwest corner of the park. Bison are frequently seen enjoying the dusty mounds scattered across the town. Since 2000, prairie dogs have built a new town right along the Badlands Loop Road at Burns Basin, 12 miles north of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. For your safety, park your vehicle in the Burns Basin Overlook and walk the short distance to the dog town. It extends to both sides of the road so keep track of children as you cross the road into the wild community. **No pets are permitted, even if leashed.**

Deer and Pronghorn: Badlands is truly where the deer and the antelope play. You can see these browsing animals nearly anywhere in the park that has grass and forbs (plants like shrubs and flowers). Badlands is home to both white-tailed and mule deer. Pronghorn, also known as antelope, are extremely quick animals - the fastest land animal in North America - but extremely shy. Pronghorn are not actually antelope but their ancestors - an animal

Visit the Pig Dig!



Excavation at the Pig Dig will continue in 2006 thanks to your entrance fees. Money from the Recreation Fees program (see article page 3) will fund staff to excavate fossils and provide on-site education.

The visitors who found the first bone of the Pig Dig did the right thing by leaving it in place and informing park staff. Since then, the site has provided a wealth of information. The Pig Dig appears to be the site of an ancient watering hole where animals gathered as the environment became drier.

As more discoveries are made at the Pig Dig, scientists are able to develop a clearer picture of the past. The Pig Dig is open daily during the summer from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM beginning on June 3. Visitors will also be able to see a reconstruction of *Archaeotherium* ("the big pig") on display at the site.

called Protoceras - is found in the Badlands' fossil record.

Prairie Rattlesnakes: We suspect you don't really want to see a rattler but they are actually quite beautiful with their brown and gold hues. Keep in mind that Badlands National Park is also home to bullsnakes, which look remarkably like prairie rattlers but are not poisonous. In fact, bullsnakes have a clever adaptation. If one feels threatened by you, it will rear up and shake its "tail," making a "rattling" sound. Most folks don't stick around long enough to notice if the offended snake is a rattler or a bullsnake. See page 4, Respect Wildlife for tips on avoiding a rattlesnake

encounter. Remember - rattlesnakes are a part of the prairie ecosystem. They are protected like every other park resident.

Wolves and Grizzly Bears: It's too late to see these prairie natives. Although both wolves and grizzlies are well described here in Lewis and Clark's journals, they have been absent from their South Dakota range for decades. Prairie wolves were shot or poisoned in droves to reduce predators on livestock. Scientists theorize that prairie may have been the preferred habitat for grizzly bears - plentiful game, easy terrain to travel - but was forced out of its prairie habitat by westward expansion and the hunting hands of soldiers and settlers.

Fossil Finds

FOR OVER 150 YEARS, THE WHITE RIVER BADLANDS has been an important center for paleontological research. In 1939, a portion of the White River Badlands was established as a National Monument to protect the outstanding scenery and vast fossil resources. With so many years of intensive study, one might wonder what questions are left to ask and what is left to study. Surprisingly enough, the Badlands holds many questions that will take several lifetimes to answer.

Visitors often ask why it is important to protect fossil resources and what type of information they provide. Because the Badlands have been studied for so many years they provide a standard to which other fossil localities are compared. The fossils and sediments preserved at Badlands National Park represent what a part of North America was like over 30 million years ago. Geology and paleontology students travel from all over the world to see some of the classic localities that were first discovered and described almost two centuries ago.

To properly manage the fossil resources at Badlands National Park, it is important to actively document new fossil localities and to collect, prepare and curate the fossils found at those sites. Once fossils are exposed at the surface they are at risk to erosion, theft and vandalism. Fossil resources need to be properly managed so they are available to all. At Badlands, park staff work cooperatively with various museums and universities on several such projects. One of these projects includes an

active quarry site where fossils are carefully excavated and later prepared for museum storage or display. The Big Pig Dig is this quarry site open to the public during the months of June through August. Every summer visitors are able to watch researchers carefully excavate fossil mammals that were trapped in a watering hole over 30 million years ago. Park staff are also actively prospecting and documenting new fossil sites throughout the park. It is crucial that park management have a good understanding of the fossil localities found within the park in order to make sound management decisions for the long term.

Park visitors also play an important role in fossil resource protection. If you find a fossil, do not remove or damage the specimen. A fossil removed without proper documentation loses most of its scientific value. Carefully record detailed locality information. If you have a GPS unit, use that to record locality information. If you have a map, record the location of your find on the map. Carefully describe how to find the site in relation to a known trail or road. Report your find to a ranger or at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

Park staff, the research community, and the public all work as partners in the protection of fossil resources. It is only through careful documentation, excavation, and education that this irreplaceable resource will be preserved.

Dr. Rachel Benton, park paleontologist, has worked at Badlands National Park since 1994. Dr. Benton coordinates research activities, such as the Pig Dig.



Badlands Education Intern Kevin Casey (Earlham College) carefully maps the location of various fossils before their excavation from the pig dig site. Important information is lost if fossils are improperly removed.

We're Under Attack!

ONCE COVERING MILLIONS OF ACRES IN THE GREAT PLAINS, NATIVE PRAIRIES LIKE THOSE FOUND in Badlands National Park now cover only 2% of their original extent and are losing ground to non-native plant invaders. Within South Dakota, non-native plant species have increased, creating a much broader management issue and a need for partnerships. Of roughly 460 plant species within the park, a growing list of approximately 100 species are exotic and threaten the native mixed grass prairie ecosystem. While visiting, guess which locations in the park have the highest risk of being introduced to these invaders? Typically, disturbed areas and locations with high human activity have the highest risk for non-natives taking root. Recently the park,



A National Park Service wildland fire fighter uses a drip torch to ignite a prescribed prairie fire in Badlands National Park. This fire was conducted to reduce non-native brome grasses.

state, other federal agencies, and private landowners joined forces to address the issue by establishing the Badlands Weed Management Area and are working in a consolidated effort to control these invasive species through the combined use of sprayed chemicals, prescribed fires, and biocontrol (species specific insects). Within the park, weeds targeted by managers and Exotic Plant Management Teams (EPMT) include Canada thistle, Russian knapweed, and cool season exotic grasses like Kentucky bluegrass, smooth brome, and Japanese brome. Troublesome species often reproduce rapidly, monopolize limited water resources, crowd out native species, and even affect wildlife. In national parks, protecting the native environment while trying to remove an exotic species poses certain challenges and may require different techniques than those employed by private homeowners. For this reason, the park takes an integrated approach to weed management, employing one or more techniques of effective control while insuring minimal damage to the native environment. Since native prairie plants evolved with wildfire, prescribed burning throughout the park on a 5-10 year rotation is an important tool for controlling some species while reducing fuels and limiting the potential for catastrophic fires. Park visitors may see a combination of techniques employed by park staff and specialized crews as the park attempts to “weed out” non-native species. Even so, many non-native plants continue to invade and expand within the park, and beyond, but present and future research continues to aid in combating and providing effective mechanisms for controlling or eliminating these exotics.

Today, and into the future, National Park Service resource managers are challenged by their mission to preserve and protect park resources from outside influences like non-native plants. Exotic plant management requires constant vigilance, good research, repeated effort, and results that may be less than those desired. If you have ever attempted to control noxious weeds, like dandelions, around your own home you probably know what a challenge it is to manage weeds. Considerable time, money, and manpower is required each year to “control” these invaders within our treasured national parks.

Aaron Kaye is a career NPS employee active in the Servicewide fire management program as well as a professional interpreter.

There Goes The Neighborhood?: Air Monitoring

WHAT RESOURCE IS THE MOST UNDER APPRECIATED by the visitor and the hardest to protect as a national park manager? The answer is our air. Unless there is visible degradation, we often take air for granted. Most factors affecting air quality occur outside the park boundaries and out of our control. This is our challenge.

Badlands National Park is fortunate to be located in a sparsely populated area of a sparsely populated state. The closest industrial community of any size is Rapid City, about 80 miles west of the park. When concerned with air quality, however, our community becomes much larger.

For example, just across the street in Nebraska, 200 miles south of park headquar-

ters, are two large coal-fired power plants, the largest US train switching station for diesel engines, and an ethanol producing plant, all within 20 miles of each other. Containing numerous oil wells and strip mines, next door Wyoming (about 150 miles), is home to some of the nation's largest coal-fired power plants and many new coal-bed methane wells. We can't forget another neighbor which is also home to coal-fired power plants, Montana, the closest one is about 200 miles. Plus, we are still not sure as to what seeps into our neighborhood from our large industrial neighbor, Denver, a couple of blocks (about 400 miles) away.

A new kid in town, the DM&E railroad just received permission by the Surface Trans-

portation Board to establish a new rail line for hauling coal out of the Powder River Basin of Wyoming. The proposed route passes within less than one mile of the South Unit and within six miles of our Badlands Wilderness Area. These 64,000 acres of wilderness are why we have Class I status and we are mandated by law to maintain good air quality. How will these diesel engines contribute to air pollution?

As part of a neighborhood watch, Badlands National Park began visibility monitoring in 1988 and continues today. We also joined the state of South Dakota in a cooperative air monitoring program in 2000. Trends indicate that impacted days are showing some decline in air quality. Overall though, visitors to Badlands National Park are still

rewarded with outstanding vistas under near perfect visibility conditions. Even our dirty days are relatively clean when compared to urban settings or even some eastern parks like Great Smoky Mountains.

While enjoying the impressive views of the Badlands, check out the neighborhood. Our air quality is critically important to visitor enjoyment, human health, scenic vistas, and preservation of our natural systems and cultural resources. Please join our neighborhood watch and help the National Park Service in its mission to perpetuate the best possible air quality.

Pat Sampson has managed the park's air quality program for over a decade and is also an area rancher.

For Future Generations

Restoration Update

Many visitors to Badlands are aware of our ongoing efforts to restore native plants and animals to the park. On pages 6 and 7, readers will find information on where to see some of the park's most sought after animals - past and present - and also learn more about the multi-pronged attack on invasive plants. Here is a quick update of the status of specific wildlife reintroduction programs:



Bison: The Badlands bison herd is healthy and thriving. When necessary, the park conducts a round-up to conduct pregnancy and genetics tests. When the number of bison exceeds the established goal for the Badlands Wilderness Area, excess animals are transferred to American Indian groups, including the Oglala Sioux Tribe of Pine Ridge Reservation, for their herds. Because Badlands National Park is surrounded by ranch land, the Wilderness Area is fenced to keep the bison within our boundaries. This results in a semi-free ranging herd that must be managed so the size of the herd does not exceed the available water or grazing acreage. Badlands bison continue to test brucellosis free. Brucellosis is a disease that can be passed between cattle and bison and affects cows and calves.



Bighorn Sheep: Approximately 100 bighorn sheep now scramble their way around the buttes and pinnacles of the park. Once seldom seen, sheep are now commonly seen in the Pinnacles area and, more rarely, in the Door/Window to Fossil Exhibit Trail area. Some of the sheep are more accustomed to human activities and are more likely to stay near people. Do not give in to the temptation to approach these seemingly docile animals. Keep your distance and remain vigilant as you drive the Loop Road to avoid sheep-vehicle collisions.



Black-footed Ferrets: The Conata Basin/Badlands Recovery Area met its goal of a self-sustaining population of this endangered species in 2000. This tiny nocturnal weasel remains in the remote prairie dog towns of the Conata Basin and is more likely living on the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands than within park boundaries. Efforts continue to re-establish populations in other parts of the northern Great Plains. The Conata Basin/Badlands' population is now considered stable enough to be harvested for reintroduction stock for other locations such as Indian Reservations and Forest Service lands.



Swift Fox: About the size of a house cat, the swift fox is the newest restoration effort for the park - and most likely the last. The swift foxes are doing well with consistent litters born and good distribution. However, they are very mobile creatures and are experiencing a relatively high mortality rate due to road kill. The swift fox is our sharpest reminder to visitors that the number #1 cause of unnatural death to park wildlife is your vehicle. Slow down. Be on the look out for these living resources.

Badlands Goes Green: Badlands National Park works with its partners, concessioners, and local communities to improve the environmental quality in the park and the region.

Transportation: As park vehicles are replaced by new transportation, we are making every effort to purchase hybrid vehicles to reduce exhaust emissions and conserve fossil fuels. Only fitting for a park dedicated to preservation of fossil resources. Hybrid vehicles use electricity generated by the gasoline engine and its braking system. They also run more quietly, protecting that frequently forgotten resource - natural quiet. Watch for the Resource Education hybrid vehicle out and about as rangers give programs.

Cleaning: The park uses environment-friendly cleaning and janitorial products.

Water Conservation: Low-flow fixtures are installed in new restroom facilities. Watering of vegetation is limited to specific projects relating to restoration of native vegetation.

Energy Conservation: The renovation of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center included retrofitting for energy efficiency. Lights come on as you enter a space and turn off when no motion is detected. Photovoltaic cells provide night-time lighting around trails and parking areas. Whenever possible, the materials used in the building contain partial or total recycled content.



What You Can Recycle in the Badlands: Glass, cans, plastic bottles. Recycling units are located at Bigfoot Pass Picnic Area, Cedar Pass Campground, Cedar Pass Lodge, and the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

Save 15% in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center bookstore and nearly every other National Park bookstore operated by a non-profit partner! FREE GIFT. Join Badlands Natural History Association at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center and take your place in Badlands history.

Join Badlands Natural History Association

The Badlands Natural History Association, or BNHA, was established in 1959 to work in cooperation with the National Park Service in furthering its scientific, educational, historical and interpretive activities. Since then, BNHA has contributed over \$1 million to the park. Sales of BNHA items in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center results in donations to the park's education and resource management programs.

BNHA is a nonprofit organization that has an active membership program. To become a member of BNHA, complete the membership form and turn in with dues payment at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center or mail to BNHA, P.O. Box 47, Interior, South Dakota 57750. Members receive a 15% discount on all sales of BNHA materials and will often receive a discount at other National Park Service bookstores.

Your membership dues are used directly to enhance the experience of visitors to the area. An investment in the future, your contribution is a perpetuation of the National Park idea.

Your membership dues will be gratefully received, immediately acknowledged and efficiently used. Your membership dues are tax-deductible.



Individual Association Membership \$20 per person per calendar year. Includes membership card allowing you a 15% discount at BNHA stores and discounts with other cooperating associations in the U.S. and special mailings throughout the year.

Lifetime Membership \$250 per person. Includes membership card allowing you a 15% discount at BNHA stores and discounts with other cooperating associations in the U.S. and special mailings.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Local Services

Town of Interior: 2 miles west of park headquarters on Highway 44. Post office, grocery store, gas, churches, convenience items. Campgrounds, showers, and motel also available on a seasonal basis.

Town of Wall: 30 miles northwest of park headquarters using the Badlands Loop Road or exit 110 on Interstate 90. A full service community including banking services, pharmacy, medical clinic.

Cactus Flat: Exit 131 on Interstate 90. Gas, convenience store, motel, restaurant, camping. Headquarters for Minuteman Missile National Historic Site.

Other local communities with services: Kadoka, Philip, Scenic, Wasta, Sharps Corner and Kyle. Rapid City is located 75 miles west of park headquarters.

Badlands National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Edited by Connie Wolf, Administrative Assistant, a life-long resident of Wall, SD.

Visit <http://www.nps.gov/badl> to virtually visit the Badlands 24 hours per day, 365 days a year!