

# BADLANDS & BLACK HILLS

September 16 – 23, 2018



The Badlands of South Dakota is an area of rugged beauty and striking geologic deposits. The dry terrain is composed of soft sedimentary rock and clay rich soils which have been extensively eroded by wind and weather to create a natural beauty found nowhere else in the world. The canyons, ravines, gullies, buttes, mesas and hoodoos display a spectacular color range from dark black/blue coal stria to clays of red scoria. Rich fossil beds give evidence of ancient animals such as rhino, horse and saber-toothed cats. The mixed grass prairies support present day animals including big horned sheep, black footed ferrets, marmots and bison.

The Black Hills are an isolated and small mountain range. They get their name from the pine covered slopes which appear dark from a distance. The Black Hills were forever changed when gold was discovered in Deadwood Gulch in 1876. The gold rush drew legendary characters such as Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane to the area.

Join Sarett naturalists as we explore this area seeking its abundant beauty, rich western history, and wildlife. We will visit national parks, national monuments, discover scenic drives and byways, explore backcountry lanes, marvel at wide open meadows and prairies, watch for wildlife, and enjoy traveling with like-minded nature enthusiasts.



## **Itinerary:**

September 16, Sunday, 7:00 am Departure from Sarett Nature Center for our United Flight #4148 out of O'Hare, Chicago to Rapid City, South Dakota. We will arrive in South Dakota at 11:23 am. We'll pick up our rental vans and continue to Badlands National Park. We will have time this afternoon to visit the Visitor Center, stretch our legs on a couple short walks and settle into our rooms at the Cedar Pass Lodge. Dinner will be at the Lodge.

**September 17, Monday.** Breakfast at the Lodge. Today we will be exploring the **Badland's Loop Road** looking for wildlife and enjoying the scenery. There will be a side trip to the famous Wall Drugs for lunch. Then it is back to the Loop Road and **Sage Creek Rim Road** with short stops at overlooks and wildlife sightings. Dinner back at the Cedar Pass Lodge. We will try to venture out on to the Loop Road again in the evening for more wildlife sightings.

September 18, Tuesday. Breakfast at the lodge. We will leave Badlands National Park and make our way to **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**. We will have a couple hours at the park to view the granite likeness of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Some may want to walk .6 mile Presidential Trail, visit the Visitor Center or grab an ice cream cone at the café.

Then it is on to the third largest cave in the world at **Jewel Cave National Monument**. We would like to take the Scenic Tour route which provides an opportunity to visit various cave chambers and passages decorated with calcite crystals and other speleothems. This tour is considered a modern-day walking tour along a paved trail with electric lighting. There is a shorter, gentler Discovery Tour that is available and visits one cave room.

Our last stop of the day will be at the **Crazy Horse Memorial**. A short visit here will acquaint us with the work in progress of this Lakota native.

Lodging tonight will be in Keystone, South Dakota at the K Bar S Lodge.

September 19, Wednesday. After finding breakfast, we'll make our way to **Custer State Park** and **Wind Cave**. Custer State Park, known for its scenery and wildlife, is home to 1500 free roaming bison as well as elk, coyote, mule deer, white tailed deer, mountain goats, prairie dogs, big horn sheep, river otter pronghorn cougars and feral burros. We will drive the famous Needles Highway and the scenic loop watching for bison and prairie dog towns (and burros) and stretch our legs on a few of the easy walks.



**Wind Cave** The different types of features that decorate the cave are collectively called cave formations or speleothems. Most of the speleothems in the cave form by similar processes. The water passes downward through the soil above the limestone, absorbs carbon dioxide, and becomes acidic. As a weak acid, the water is able to dissolve a small amount of the limestone rock as it passes through cracks and pores on its journey down into the cave. As this water drips into the air-filled cave, dissolved carbon dioxide is given off. Because the water has lost carbon dioxide, it cannot hold as much dissolved calcium. The excess calcium is then precipitated on the cave walls and ceilings to make up many of the different kinds of formations. The speleothem that Wind Cave is most famous for is **boxwork**. There are many other formations such as **popcorn**, **frostwork**, **dogtooth spar crystals**, and **flowstone** that may be seen. We are planning on taking the Natural Entrance Tour to enjoy these wonderful underground formations.

Lodging is again at the K Bar S Lodge in Keystone.

September 20, Thursday. We will visit more areas of **Custer State Park** including Sylvan Lake area. Try a couple of the area's trails. We might try hiking on Little Devil's Tower trail. Look for wildlife and enjoy this wonderfully scenic park and area.

Lodging is at the K Bar S Lodge.

September 21, Friday. We have time to finish our exploration of Custer State Park and surrounding area this morning before making our way to **Deadwood**. We'll check out the Deadwood Cemetary where Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane are said to be buried.

Lodging will be at the Comfort Inn in Rapid City.

September 22, Saturday. We'll have an early morning departure to **Devil's Tower National Monument**. The Tower is an astounding geologic feature that protrudes out of the prairie surrounding the Black Hills. It is considered sacred by Northern Plains Indians and indigenous people. We will learn about the geology and take some walks on the many trails. The Tower Trail is 1.3 mile paved walk will give excellent views of the tower.

Making our way back to Rapid City, we will enjoy the scenic drives and waterfalls of the **Spearfish** area.

Lodging is again at the Comfort Inn in Rapid City.

September 23, Sunday. After breakfast, we make our way to the airport for our 11:24 am flight to Chicago on UA 4038. Arrive at O'Hare is scheduled for 2:38 pm where Sarett van's will pick us up and return us to Sarett by approximately 6:00 pm.

**Cost:** \$2200.00/per person based on double occupancy. This includes:

- \*Round Trip transportation in nature center vans to O'Hare
- \*Flights from O'Hare to Rapid City, South Dakota
- \*Seven nights lodging
- \* Five Continental Breakfasts
- \*Park entry fees and park tour fees
- \*Two lunches
- \*Services of Sarett naturalists

**Deposits:** Each person must pay a \$100. Non-refundable deposit to sign up for this trip. This trip is limited to 12 participants. A single supplement is not available.

**Membership:** You must be a current member of Sarett. The cost is \$40 for an individual and \$50 for a family.

**Method of Payment:** We prefer that you pay by check as this saves us money. However, we do accept Visa, Mastercard and Discover credit cards.

**Final Payment:** You must have the final payment to Sarett by August 15, 2018

**Cancellation Policy:** Every attempt will be made to refund any recoverable costs in the event that you must cancel.

**Responsibility:** Sarett Nature Center reserves the right, at their discretion, to make changes in the itinerary should that become necessary. Sarett is not responsible to any person for expenses, loss of time, money or happenings resulting from a change of tour scheduling. Sarett Nature Center reserves the right to accept, decline, or retain any person as a member of the tour, and is not responsible for any losses or damages of personal property, injuries, expenses, or damages incurred or claimed by any tour member.

**What to Bring:** Binoculars (you don't want to miss the wildlife), camera, layers of clothes, rain gear, good walking shoes, walking sticks (if you want), a sense of adventure, cheerful attitude and a willingness to have some fun.