



# South Dakota State Park Facts 2015

## Mission Statement

The South Dakota State Park System is committed to providing diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, acting as a catalyst for a growing tourism economy and preserving the resources with which we are entrusted for future generations.

## State Park Benefits

**Visitors** benefit by having opportunities for recreation to: explore | enjoy solitude or quality time with family and friends | learn | be active | experience the natural world | enhance physical health and well-being | relax

**Communities** benefit by: having places they can enjoy at their fingertips | increasing community pride | gaining appreciation for the natural world around them | enhancing quality of life

**Economic** benefits from: visitor spending | employment opportunities | park spending in the community | economic growth generated by the parks

**Environment** benefits by: protecting natural/unique landscapes | helping visitors learn and gain appreciation for nature | having parks model sound environmental practices

## Definitions

**State Parks** | Areas with outstanding natural beauty, containing significant historical, botanical, archeological, ecological or geological values developed to provide compatible resource-oriented recreation.

**Recreation Areas** | Areas which may contain both natural and constructed features developed to maximize outdoor recreational opportunities compatible with the resources.

**Nature Areas** | Undeveloped land having a variety of natural resources which may have facilities and services designed to conduct outdoor educational programs.

**Lakeside Use Areas** | Areas normally smaller and less developed than recreation areas, managed to maximize outdoor recreation especially for boating and shoreline access.

**Public Water Access Areas** | Lands managed by the Division of Wildlife, maintained by the Division of Parks and Recreation to provide access for boating and fishing.

## Number of Parks

The South Dakota State Park system includes 13 state parks, 43 recreation areas, 5 nature areas, 1 historic prairie, 69 lakeside use areas and 10 marina/resorts. In addition, the Division of Parks and Recreation manages the 114-mile Mickelson Trail, South Dakota's Snowmobile Trail Program, and maintains 240 public water access areas.

## Number of Visitors

In 2014, South Dakota hosted over 7.4 million park visitors. The number of overnight camping units at South Dakota state parks in 2014 totaled 290,279. This is a record high for campground use, up 3.8 percent over 2013.

## Ten Most Visited Parks in 2014

- |                                  |  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Custer - Custer Co.           | 4. Cow Creek/Spring Creek - Hughes Co. | 7. Springfield - Bon Homme Co.     |
| 2. Lewis and Clark - Yankton Co. |  | 8. North Point - Charles Mix Co.   |
| 3. Oahe Downstream - Stanley Co. | 5. Farm Island - Hughes Co.            | 9. Snake Creek - Charles Mix Co.   |
|                                  | 6. Angostura - Fall River Co.          | 10. Platte Creek - Charles Mix Co. |



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## Total State Park System Acres

State parks encompass a total 101,987 acres. Custer State Park is largest park with 70,840 acres.

## State Parks Contain

4,190 campsites | 214 camping cabins | 7 lodges | 116 comfort stations | 31 fishing docks | 74 playgrounds | 49 beaches | 337 miles of trails | 1,585 miles of snowmobile trails | 549 vault toilets | 11 welcome centers | 124 picnic shelters | 299 boat ramps | 321.6 miles of roads

## Natural and Cultural Resources

The State Park System actively protects, preserves and restores historic cultural resources and natural areas. Designated National Historic Places include Bear Butte, Spirit Mound, Fort Sisseton, Palisades Bridge, the Herman Luce Cabin at Lake Herman and the following structures at Custer State Park: the Badger Clark Memorial, the Peter Norbeck Visitor Center and the State Game Lodge. In addition, several National Natural Landmarks, National Recreational Trails and National Historic Landmarks, including Blood Run, are located in South Dakota state parks.

## Park Activities

Popular park activities include camping, walking/hiking, boating, swimming, fishing, snowshoeing, attending park programs and picnicking.

## Park Programs

A wide variety of opportunities are available at parks across the state. These include environmental education programs, nature walks, interpretive signs and exhibits, special events, theater productions, guest performers and musicians.

## Recent Expansion Highlights

Good Earth State Park, 2013 - South Dakota's 13th State Park was dedicated in July.

Fisher Grove State Park, 2013 - a new 22-site campground was constructed to replace the existing campground that is no longer accessible due to a closed bridge.

Platte Creek Recreation Area, 2013 - critical new parking and a new fish cleaning station were added.

Sheps Canyon Recreation Area, 2013 - group lodge and 11-site horse camp opened.

Sheps Canyon Recreation Area, 2012 - a 22-site campground added on the west shore of Angostura Reservoir.

## Oldest State Park

The South Dakota State Park System was established in 1919 when Custer State Forest was designated Custer State Park. Until 1945, Custer State Park was the only park managed by the state. In 1945, the legislature established the statewide park system and added Hartford Beach, Lake Herman and Oakwood Lakes State Parks.

## Park Entrance Fees in 2015

Annual Park Entrance License - \$30

Second Vehicle Annual License - \$15

Daily License - \$4/person (12 and older) or \$6/vehicle

Transferable Annual License - \$65

*Valid for only one vehicle at a time.*

George S. Mickelson Trail Pass - \$3/day or \$15/year

Seven-Day License at Custer State Park- \$15/vehicle

## Camping Fees in 2015

Campsites - \$11 to \$25/night

Equestrian campsites - \$13 to \$30/night

Camping cabins - \$40 to \$50/night

Group lodges - \$125 to \$240/night

## First Park Entrance License

The first park entrance license was issued in 1967.