



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Badlands National Park

25216 Ben Reifel Road
P.O. Box 6
Interior, SD 57750

(605) 433-5361
www.nps.gov/badl

Badlands News Release

Release Date: July 16, 2014

Contact: Aaron Kaye, 605-433-5243 or Becca Robinson, 605-433-5246

Badlands Astronomy Festival to Be Held July 25-27

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, INTERIOR, S.D. — Badlands National Park has partnered with the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium to host *South Dakota Space Days 2014* during the **Badlands Astronomy Festival, July 25-27**. The festival brings together space science professionals, amateur astronomers, educators, and visitors for a three day celebration.

Novices and experts alike will enjoy the spectacular dark night skies of Badlands National Park at public star parties each evening. During the day, a variety of family-friendly workshops and special events will provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the night sky, the sun, and space exploration. This year additional telescopes will be provided by Celestron for day and night observations.

Events will include nightly special guest speakers, public stargazing activities, solar observing opportunities, planetarium shows, several workshops, as well as equipment demonstrations. The Badlands Natural History Association (BNHA) will offer night sky-themed merchandise for sale in the bookstore at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

This event is made possible through funding and support from the Badlands Natural History Association, South Dakota Space Grant Consortium, Black Hills Astronomical Society, Journey Museum, SD Discovery Center, town of Interior, National Park Foundation, Celestron, NPS Night Skies Program, Bryce Canyon National Park, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, and Badlands National Park.

Schedule of Events:

Public Stargazing

Friday, July 25; Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27

8:30 - 11:30 pm at the Cedar Pass Campground Amphitheater

Keynote presentations by invited guest speakers. Hands-on experience with multiple state-of-the-art telescopes and amateur astronomers providing constellation tours and guiding visitors around the universe. View planets, star clusters, nebulae, and double stars while going down the "scope line."

Friday night keynote speaker: Richard Walker, Black Hills Astronomical Society

Saturday night keynote speaker: Amber Knutson, Graduate Student NPS Volunteer

Sunday night keynote speaker: "Dark Ranger" Kevin Poe, NPS Interpreter

Sun Fun Solar Observing

Friday, July 25; Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27

3:00-5:00 pm at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center

View solar flares and sunspots through our special solar telescopes, 100% safe for eyes. Various other sun based activities will also be offered during this particular event, including solar car racing.

Build Your Own Telescope Workshop

Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
12:00-2:00 pm at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center

Planet Walk

Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
12:00-1:30 pm at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center

Take a hike on a 1:1 billion scale journey through our solar system. The trail will remain marked all day on Saturday and Sunday for self-guided tours, as well as the guided tours Saturday and Sunday at noon.

Model Rocket Building & Launching Workshop

Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
10:00 am - 12:00 noon in Interior, SD
Rocket-building kits will be available for sale.

Planetarium Shows

Friday, July 25; Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
9:00 am – 5:00 pm at the Interior School gymnasium, 2 miles south of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center
The Journey Museum from Rapid City and the SD Discovery Center from Pierre will present planetarium shows using their portable planetariums.

Meet a Missileer

Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
10:00 am - 12:00 noon at the Interior School gymnasium, 2 miles south of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center
Minuteman Missile National Historic Site rangers will host talks and rocket exhibits throughout the festival. Visitors will have the opportunity to meet former missile field personnel who can describe how rockets work and tell personal stories about being a missileer in the United States Air Force. Visitors will also have the opportunity to earn a Minuteman Jr. Ranger badge by participating in Minuteman Missile NHS rocket launching activities.

Celestron Instrumentation Demonstrations

Throughout the day on Friday, July 25; Saturday, July 26; and Sunday, July 27
Join representatives from Celestron as they demonstrate state-of-the-art equipment such as solar and night-sky telescopes.

For more information, see <http://www.nps.gov/badl>
Follow us on Facebook at BadlandsNPS and on Twitter @BadlandsNPS.

-NPS-

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

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