



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Badlands National Park

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## Badlands News Release

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### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Badlands Astronomy Festival to Be Held June 23-25, 2017**

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, INTERIOR, S.D. — Badlands National Park has partnered with the NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium to co-sponsor the **2017 Badlands Astronomy Festival, June 23-25**. 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 events will provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the night sky, the sun, and space exploration. Additional telescopes will be provided by astronomers from the Black Hills Astronomical Society and Dark Ranger Telescope Tours for day and night observations.

The schedule of events includes nightly special guest speakers, public stargazing activities, solar observing opportunities, planetarium shows, static displays, as well as equipment demonstrations by professional and amateur astronomers. Badlands Natural History Association (BNHA) will offer night sky-themed merchandise which will be available 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, NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours, town of Interior, Black Hills Astronomical Society, The Journey Museum and Learning Center, Sandford Underground Research Facility, Cedar Pass Lodge, and Badlands National Park.

#### **Schedule of Events:**

##### **Planetarium Shows**

Saturday, June 24; and Sunday, June 25

9:00 am - 2:00 pm at the Interior School Gym, 2 miles south of The Ben Reifel Visitor Center

*The Journey Museum and Learning Center from Rapid City will present planetarium shows using their portable planetarium.*

##### **Sun Fun Solar Observing**

Friday, June 23; Saturday, June 24; and Sunday, June 25

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.*

## **Evening Programs/Public Stargazing**

Friday, June 23; Saturday, June 24; and Sunday, June 25

8/9pm - 11:30 pm at the Cedar Pass Campground Amphitheater

*Nightly evening presentations will be provided by invited guest speakers followed by hands-on experience with multiple state-of-the-art telescopes and amateur astronomers providing constellation tours while guiding visitors around the universe. View planets, star clusters, nebulae, and double stars while going down the “scope line.”*

8pm Friday night guest speaker: Black Hills Raptor Center, Owls

9pm Saturday night guest speaker: Tom Durkin, NASA SD Space Grant Consortium

9pm Sunday night guest speaker: “Dark Ranger” Kevin Poe, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours

For more information, see <http://www.nps.gov/badl>



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