



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Badlands National Park

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Badlands National Park News Release

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Badlands Astronomy Festival to Be Held July 5th-7th, 2024

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, INTERIOR, S.D. — Badlands National Park has partnered with the NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium to co-sponsor the **2024 Badlands Astronomy Festival, July 5th-7th**. 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 afternoon each day, a variety of family-friendly activities will provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the night sky, the sun, and space exploration. Telescopes will be provided by astronomers from the Black Hills Astronomical Society, Badlands National Park, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours and the University of Utah for day and night observations.

The schedule of events includes daily planet walks, solar observing opportunities, activities, special guest speakers, Webb Space Telescope first images, public stargazing activities, static displays, as well as equipment demonstrations by professional and amateur astronomers.

This free event is made possible through funding and support from the Badlands Natural History Association, NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours, Black Hills Astronomical Society, International Dark Sky Association, University of Utah, Badlands National Park Conservancy, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, and Badlands National Park.

Schedule of Events:

Planet Walk

Friday, July 5; Saturday, July 6; and Sunday, July 7

10:00 am and 1:00 pm at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center

Meet in front of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for a short walk through our solar system.

Sun Fun Solar Observing

Friday, July 5; Saturday, July 6; and Sunday, July 7

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.

Guest Speakers/Evening Programs/Public Stargazing

Friday, July 5; Saturday, July 6; and Sunday, July 7

9pm - 11:30 pm (Fri, Sat, Sun) 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.”

9:00 p.m. Friday night guest speaker: Eve Woodridge, NASA Aerospace Engineer

9:00 p.m. Saturday night guest speaker: Cate Larsen, Geologist and Science Communicator

9:00 p.m. Sunday night guest speaker: “Dark Ranger” Kevin Poe, Dark Ranger Telescope Tours

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