



# South Dakota State Park Facts – 2009

Website: [www.sdgifp.info/Parks](http://www.sdgifp.info/Parks)

**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.

## 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 owned by the SD 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 12 state parks, 42 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, 220 public water access areas and maintains 291 boat ramps with a total of 389 launching lanes.

**Number of Visitors:** In 2008, South Dakota hosted **over 7.4 million** park visitors.

**Number of Campers:** The number of camping units at SD state parks in 2008 totaled 233,044.

## Ten Most Visited Parks in 2008:

- |                                  |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Custer – Custer Co.           | 5. Angostura – Fall River Co.    | 8. Cow Creek – Hughes Co.      |
| 2. Lewis and Clark – Yankton Co. | 6. North Point – Charles Mix Co. | 9. Farm Island – Hughes Co.    |
| 3. Oahe Downstream – Stanley Co. | 7. Snake Creek – Charles Mix Co. | 10. Newton Hills – Lincoln Co. |
| 4. Roy Lake – Marshall Co.       |                                  |                                |

**Total State Park System Acres:** 101,803 acres (Custer State Park is largest with 70,781 acres)

**Park Growth:** Since 2002, the state park system added the 318-acre Spirit Mound Historic Prairie, 117 acres at Newton Hills, 12 acres at Sandy Shore, 24 acres at Lake Poinsett, 395 acres at Rocky Point, and 12,375 acres acquired in fee title as part of the transfer of the 13 recreation areas and 22 lakeside use areas along the Missouri River from the US Corps of Engineers. Most recently, Roughlock Falls in Spearfish Canyon was acquired from Barrick Gold Corporation in 2006 and a 5-acre inholding in Palisades State Park was acquired in 2007.

**State Parks Contain:** 3,883 campsites; 186 camping cabins; 10 lodges; 119 comfort stations; 26 fishing docks; 60 playgrounds, 59 beaches; 667 trail miles; 432 vault toilets; and 17 visitor centers.

**First Park Entrance License:** The first park entrance license was issued in 1967.

**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 Activities:** Popular park activities include camping, walking/hiking, boating, swimming, fishing, 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.

**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: Badger Clark Memorial, Visitor Center, Game Lodge, Pigtail Bridge and Bridge 17-289-107. In addition, several National Historic Landmarks, National Natural Landmarks, and National Recreational Trails are located in South Dakota state parks.

**Park Fees in 2009:**

Annual Park Entrance License - \$28.00  
Second Vehicle Annual License - \$14.00  
Transferable License - \$60  
Valid for only one vehicle at a time.

George S. Mickelson Trail Pass - \$3/day or \$15/year  
Daily License - \$4/person (12 and older) or \$6/vehicle  
Seven-Day License at Custer State Park - \$6/person or \$15/vehicle

**Camping Fees in 2009:**

Campsites - \$8 to \$22/night  
Equestrian campsites - \$10 to \$16/night  
Custer State Park equestrian - \$25/night

Camping cabins - \$35 to \$45/night  
Group lodges - \$125 to \$200/night

**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
- **Economy 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