



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



BLACK HILLS
PARKS &
FORESTS
ASSOCIATION

Black Hills National Forest

2024 MOON WALK SCHEDULE

June 22

Please ... Do Not Feed the Wildlife

Ruben Mares / Wildlife Biologist – Black Hills National Forest, Northern Hills Ranger District

Spearfish Canyon Public Parking Area – Mouth of the Canyon

Everyone enjoys a drive through beautiful Spearfish Canyon. And one of the enjoyments of this drive includes possibly seeing a mountain goat standing on a cliff edge or foraging along the byway. Even though these charismatic creatures may seem friendly, they are wild and will protect themselves if they feel threatened. Please join Forest staff for a Moon “Drive” and learn how to safely enjoy these creatures and other wildlife without creating problems for them (or yourself). This Moon Walk consists of a presentation at the “mouth” of the canyon, followed by a drive through the canyon to Spearfish Canyon Lodge.

July 20

Explore the Dark Skies at Jewel Cave

Joey Roberts, Park Guide and Christine Longenecker, NPS Community Volunteer Ambassador

Jewel Cave National Monument – Roof Trail

Jewel Cave National Monument is home to some of the darkest skies in the Black Hills. Although a day-use site with incredible cave tours and interpretive programs, the Monument also provides some evening “scenery” that is not often witnessed by visitors. The Forest Service is teaming up with the National Park Service to host a Moon Walk on a family-friendly trail and explore another vastness feature at one of the longest caves in the world.

August 17

Wild for Prescribed Fire and Smokey Bear!

Chris Stover / Forest Fuels Specialist – Black Hills National Forest - Supervisor’s Office

Mystic Ranger District – Victoria Prescribed Fire

In celebration of Smokey Bear’s 80th Birthday, join Forest staff for a walk at the Victoria Prescribed Fire and discover the benefits of fire on the landscape. Land managers burn to reduce the severity and intensity of wildfires by reducing hazardous fuels that feed wildfires. Burning improves the overall forest health by recycling carbon and nutrients into the soil and controlling forest insects. It also increases forage for wildlife, like grass and shrubs, and improves conditions for better wildlife habitat.

September 14

Are Our Hills “Slip-Sliding Away?”

Karl Emanuel / Geologist - Black Hills National Forest – North Zone

Cook Lake Day-Use Area – Sundance, Wyoming

Cook Lake’s recreational origins stem from when the first dam was constructed in the 1940s, but the site had long ago hosted one of a series of small lakes and ponds that were situated like a string of pearls along the Beaver Creek drainage. The current lake and dam are situated adjacent to one of the most recent and active landslides in the area and one which is being continuously monitored for safety. This guided hike will talk about the area’s special geology, why it is continuously in motion, and how and why the monitoring system was put in place.



Supporting Wonder and Exploration since 1946

The Black Hills Parks and Forests Association (BHPFA) is offering 2024 Moon Walk Collector’s Pins at each event for \$5.00 each. The sale of lapel pins support the interpretive and educational efforts across the Black Hills National Forest. The Moon Walk Programs are supported by BHPFA through financial assistance and staffing; BHPFA is a non-profit partner with the U.S. Forest Service.

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Get Prepared for a Moon Walk



Q; What is a Moon Walk?

A: A Moon Walk is a guided hike that introduces participants to the natural and cultural history of the Black Hills. Different topics allow participants to explore and discover the Forest (and other public land agencies) and offer a series of family-friendly activities during the summer season.

Q: What is the purpose of the Moon Walks?

A: The Black Hills National Forest is home to an array of natural features, as well as holds an abundance of cultural history. Moon Walks are geared toward the public land enthusiast that wants to learn more about western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming and be exposed to the stories behind the scenery.

Q: What do I need to know about attending a Moon Walk?

A: Moon Walks are held on a Saturday night, closest to the full moon in June, July, August, and September. They begin at 7 p.m. and last about two hours. Each event starts with a short introduction to the night's program. Then, participants follow a guided hike into the Forest, with various stops along the route. Perhaps most important, there are no fees for attending a Moon Walk. NOTE: In 2024, the Forest is including a Moon "Drive" along the Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway.

Q: How should I prepare for a Moon Walk?

A: The Moon Walk evening experience starts with simply traveling to the various program sites. Due to summer visitation, road conditions, wildlife, and scenery along the routes, we encourage participants to allow for plenty of travel time to and from the trailheads. Dress in layers for comfort, wear appropriate footwear (no sandals or open-toed shoes), and bring a light jacket for the cool night air. Please be advised that many routes may pose challenges for those with mobility concerns and/or the pathways are not accessible for wheelchairs or strollers.

Q: What about inclement weather? Is it possible for a Moon Walk to be canceled?

A: A Moon Walk may be canceled unexpectedly for unforeseen reasons, such as lightning, high fire danger, severe weather, and other sporadic reasons beyond our control. The program will not be canceled due to rain unless lightning is spotted.

If a Moon Walk is canceled in advance due to severe weather forecasted, the notice of cancelation will be placed on the Black Hills National Forest Facebook page, Twitter account, and Forest website. If there is uncertain weather, the public is encouraged to check online before heading out to the event.

Q: Where can I find more information on programs and activities?

A: We encourage everyone to follow the Forest on social media, as well as bookmark the Forest website for future programs, happenings, and information. For additional program information and other visitor services, please visit our partners online – the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department and Black Hills Parks and Forest Association.



For More Information

Forest Headquarters

Custer, SD (605) 673-9200

Hell Canyon Ranger District

Custer, SD (605) 673-9292
Newcastle, WY (307) 746-2782

Mystic Ranger District

Rapid City, SD (605) 343-1567

Northern Hills Ranger District

Spearfish, SD (605) 642-4622

Bearlodge Ranger District

Sundance, WY (307) 283-1361

Forest Website

www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills