



# CUSTER COUNTY LIVING

Prepared and Distributed by  
Custer Conservation District  
& Custer County Weed & Pest





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# Custer Conservation District & Custer County Weed & Pest

## 605-673-5680

Emergency ..... 911

### Custer County Offices

Sheriff ..... 605-673-8146  
Sheriff (Hermosa Office) ..... 605-255-4814  
or 605-255-4815  
Communication/Dispatch ..... 605-673-8176  
Emergency Management..... 605-673-8128  
Auditor ..... 605-673-8073  
Airport ..... 605-673-3874  
Clerk of Courts ..... 605-673-4816  
Conservation District..... 605-673-5680  
Custer County Maintenance ..... 605-673-8650  
Director of Equalization..... 605-673-8170  
Extension Service..... 605-673-4971  
GIS ..... 605-673-8141  
Health Nurse ..... 605-673-2847  
Highway Department..... 605-673-5678  
Library ..... 605-673-3358  
Planning..... 605-673-8174  
Register of Deeds ..... 605-673-8171  
SDSU Extension Service ..... 605-673-2347  
States Attorney..... 605-673-8175  
Treasurer ..... 605-673-8172  
Weed & Pest ..... 605-673-5680

### United States Agencies

Farm Service Agency-Fall River.. 605-745-5716  
NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service)  
Fall River Office ..... 605-745-5162  
US Forest Service (Supervisor) ..... 605-673-9200  
DENR (Dept. of Environmental Natural Resources)  
..... 605-394-2229

National Grasslands ..... 605-745-4107

### State Agencies

SD Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks 605-673-5508  
SD Dept. of Social Services ..... 605-673-4347  
SD Dept. of Agriculture ..... 605-745-5820  
Division of Criminal Investigation  
..... 605-673-2451  
Consumer Protection Office ...1-800-300-1986  
Driver's License Examiner .....1-800-952-3696  
One Stop Career Center Hot Springs Office  
..... 605-745-5101  
Custer Office ..... 605-673-4488  
Transportation/Highway Dept..... 605-673-4948

### Other

Fire Department..... 605-673-4080  
Custer Community Hospital ..... 605-673-2229  
Chamber of Commerce ..... 605-673-2244  
1881 Museum ..... 605-673-5266  
Custer City Offices..... 605-673-4824  
YMCA..... 605-673-5134  
Underground Utility Cable Locating Service  
..... 1-800-781-7474  
SD Highway Patrol ..... 605-673-5677  
Road Report ..... 511  
Nation Wide Runaway Hotline  
..... 1-800-621-4000  
National Child Abuse Hotline  
..... 1-800-422-4453  
National Domestic Violence Hotline  
..... 1-800-799-7233  
Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
..... 1-800-843-5678  
National Poison Control Center  
..... 1-800-222-1222  
National Substance Abuse Helpline  
..... 1-800-662-4357

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**Custer County's residents have a great sense of humor!!!**





# Introduction

## *What information will I find in the Custer County Living?*

The publication is intended to be utilized as a tool for new and current residents of Custer County South Dakota. We would like to provide information and resources to orientate potential residents, (and established residents), to life and living in Custer County. As a resource tool this publication will assist in decision making when considering our unique lifestyles in Custer County. Locating or living in a predominantly rural county presents a different set of challenges and issues that include: getting along with neighbors, (both private and public), community assimilation, land purchases, waste removal, noxious weeds and pests, taxing, water availability, fencing, expected services, wildlife, wildfire, well purity and septic systems, irrigation, range management, just to mention a few. This publication is intended to provide general information and does not claim to be all inclusive. The resource directory provided in this publication should provide additional information needed to pursue more specific details for decision making.



Custer County is a beautiful, unique and friendly place to live. Residents and newcomers represent a cross section of lifestyles including educators, professionals, laypersons, ranchers, farmers, retailers, tourism entrepreneurs, and managers of state and federal lands. As in most rural counties residents are open and willing to communicate and

assist if given the opportunity. Working together is a way of life, as it has been for hundreds of years. It is not uncommon for residents to bring welcoming gifts to newcomers, or for neighbors to assist in times of trouble and have an attitude of a collective community. Current

residents and new arrivals all have ideas and opinions that should be respected. Custer County has visitors travel from all over the world to visit and enjoy our beautiful environment.

*It is our hope this publication can provide guidance for potential and established residents of Custer County.*

# Natural Resources and Our Changing Land Use

For the majority of Custer County's existence the main staple or foundation for its economy came from its diverse natural resources: operations in timber, livestock, cultivated crops, mining...brought wealth to the area. Most of this production developed into an industry with a premise of sustainability. Early in this agricultural history, partly triggered by the Great Depression and dust bowl era, the theme of conservation began to grow in strength. This led to the birth of our Conservation District in 1940. Like an awakening concern for the future, the realization that we couldn't/shouldn't cut all the trees, plow all the soil, continuously graze all the grass, became an interest not just for future generations but for those operating in the present. It was the fledgling Conservation District that worked to promote voluntary programs and spread conservation ideas and practices. It became the flexible arm between government and individual farms and ranches.

For decades we have experienced an economic shift from this agricultural base—this direct connection with, and stewardship of, our natural resources. There has been a shift toward tourism and “bedroom” communities, with a climbing value for scenery and uncluttered open space: vast acres of public land considered primarily for recreation, with less and less awareness concerning renewable products of food and fiber.

This shift has been very gradual until recent years. Now, in the 21st century, many of us feel as though we are on the edge of a floodwater of change, an unprecedented threshold. As one of the fastest growing counties in the state, we have created a focus on land development and an economy of services. Much of agriculture and its relationship with natural resources has fallen into the shadows.

For a segment of our community—this era of rapid growth is a deliberate objective, the preferred choice.



What makes Custer County so attractive? Why is it such a desirable place to live: the rural atmosphere, the open space and wildlife, the nearness to public lands and recreation, nature's beauty intermixed with the very agricultural vistas that are disappearing,...or is this growth boom itself now an attractant, offering opportunities for profit in so many directions?

These questions set aside, accelerated land development is known to have adverse effects on natural resources (even complete ecosystems). Our water, our soil, our air are at risk.

Family agriculture is not a faultless industry, but it has certainly been the main player to implement conservation practices on private lands. Farmers and ranchers have successfully improved grazing land



health and productivity, they have stabilized unstable soil, they have created new water sources and dispersed its availability, they have planted windbreaks and shelter belts, and they have thinned private forests. These are just a few examples. All these efforts have improved long term profitability, and greatly improved wildlife habitat; much of our agricultural land now supports more wildlife than ever before in South Dakota's history.



It is the responsibility of the Conservation District to spread awareness and understanding, and stimulate action to help curb or even prevent resource damage—such as groundwater contamination, soil erosion, or the spread of invasive plants. It is a definite concern that we are losing so many of our agricultural producers. We need to be better informed as to what is causing this heritage of

land management to exit our county. We have an explosion in real estate values, but are other pressures becoming an issue? The severity and duration of our current drought is certainly a factor. At the same time, there is an increasing burden to pay for services required by a growing population. Wildlife pressures are on the rise, (exacerbated by drought), concentrated populations of elk, deer, and antelope surpass all previous levels, an ongoing stress for the shrinking quality of acres crucial to producers. Is there a vague but general inconsideration coming from governmental and private forces, a growing view that agriculture is unimportant, dispensable?

Though it may seem distant from community interest, we need to understand the predicament of these family operations and appreciate how they have carried the responsibility of resource health for so long. They are an example of great importance. We should also face the reality of their diminishing numbers. Awareness of conservation and physical involvement must spread to new participants, new entities: owners of smaller acreages, subdivision associations, municipalities, planning departments.....government offices need to place holistic resource health as a higher priority. Without the recruitment of fresh and sincere partners, our legacy of a beautiful landscape will fall into sharp decline. We might well become a service-oriented culture—outsourcing most all of what we consume—but we can still choose to be connected, understanding of the natural resources that provide so much, or we can choose to narrow that connection down...into history books and confined displays on museum room walls.

**A healthy natural world reaches far into the future. This is one of the greatest gifts for us to pass on.**

*Jim Hughes*

Chairman, Custer Conservation District

# A History of Custer County

*As Written in 1939*

The early history of Custer County forms the story of the discovery of gold in the Black Hills and the subsequent development of that area. In July 1874, Gen. George A. Custer led his famous expedition of 1,000 men, including a military band, 2,000 animals, and 110 wagons in to the Black Hills to investigate the rumors of gold ore there. While camping on French Creek near the present town of Custer City, the prospector of the expedition, Horatio N. Ross, found gold in the creek. General Custer spread the magic word – Gold! – and the rush was on. The Gordon party, 26 men, a woman and a boy from Sioux City arrived in December to seek the gold, despite the efforts of the Federal Government to keep white people out of the Indian owned country. In 1875 Custer City was staked out and several thousand people arrived within a few weeks to pan gold. The town was enjoying a boom when, in the spring of 1876, a rich strike was made in Deadwood Gulch, and within a week's time Custer City was almost depopulated.

The county, created in 1875, was organized at the first meeting of the county commissioners in Custer City, April 1877. One commissioner was from Custer City, one from Yankton, and another from Hayward, a nearby mining town and chief rival to Custer City. The latter two sought to locate the county seat at Hayward and by electing the unsuspecting Custer City representative chairman, the two successfully moved that the government be established at Hayward and won their point on a two to one vote. An election failed to settle the county seat fight, so Custer City residents used a guile of their own. One night a group of Custer City men enacted the first dramatic performance in the Hills, a region which has since become famous for dramatic enterprises. During the night, half of the group pitched a bloodless, but blood-curling, sham battle at the outskirts of Hayward, and while the inhabitants rushed to the edge of town to see the massacre, the rest of the Custer City men quietly appropriated the records and scurried home with the county government under their arms.

Of the notorious “bad men” that have brought legend to the Black Hills, Custer County had only two—Fly Speck Billy, who was lynched by a mob in 1881, and Lame Johnny, a stagecoach bandit.

The coming of the Burlington Railroad in 1890 opened the county to further development, as did the establishment of the Harney National Forest Headquarters in Custer in 1898, and the beginning of Custer State Park in 1913.

Buffalo Gap, founded in 1885, is the center of a ranching and irrigation area, the town having a population of 150. Hermosa was founded in 1886 and has a population of 108. The fame was gained when President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge attended church there during the summer. Pringle, first known as Point of Rocks, has a population of 250, and is busily engaged in mining, farming and ranching activities.

The county with an area of 1,573 square miles comprises much of the southern Black Hills. Over a third of the county is in the Harney National Forest, and Wind Cave National Park, Custer State Park and Jewel Cave National Monument are all within its borders. Harney Peak, highest point in the state with an altitude of 7,242 feet, beautiful Sylvan Lake Hotel, and many other points of interest attract thousands of tourist vacationers each year. Since 1933, several Civilian Conservation Corps camps have been located in the county, clearing the forests, building roads, forming lakes, and making campgrounds.

The city of Custer, with a population of 1239, is a little over a mile high. It has shown remarkable progress the past six years. (\*Keep in mind the date this was written-1939). Among its industries are a large feldspar mill, kilns, art crafts, stone quarries, and numerous tourist accommodations. A new hotel, school building, and post office have been built recently. The present (1939) population of the county is 5,658.

# Custer County

Custer County has a unique diversity in the terrain, varying from beautiful rock outcroppings and forests in the west to expansive ranch and farm land in the east. Custer County encompasses approximately 989,257 acres or 1591 squares miles. The City of Custer is the County seat and the oldest city in the Black Hills. Within Custer County's boundaries are private, public, state and federal parks, recreational areas and lands.

## Weather/Climate:

- Average Temperature: High: 57.8F Low: 28.9F
- Average summer temperature: 63.1F
- Average winter temperature: 29.0F
- Average Coldest Month: High: 36.2F Low: 9.9F - January
- Average Warmest month: High: 81.6F Low: 50.6F - July
- Average precipitation: 20.27 inches
- Average Growing Season: May through September

## Population:

- Custer County has a population of 8,676 and is growing and developing.
- Median Age is 42
- Income \$31,739

## Leading Employers:

1. Black Hills National Forest	350
2. Custer School District	165
3. South Dakota Star Academy	136
4. Custer County	90
5. Crazy Horse Memorial	84
6. Custer Regional Hospital	80
7. Custer Regional Senior Care	80
8. Lynn's Dakota Mart	33
9. Custer State Park	31

Agriculture, Real Estate and Tourism related activities represent the biggest economic resource in Custer County. Unemployment rate is 4.8% of a labor force of 4,110.

## Housing:

- Average monthly rent for two bedroom house: \$450.00 - \$650.00
- Average monthly rent for two bedroom apartment: \$450.00 per month
- Average cost of homes, (purchase price): \$110,000.00



# Custer County

## Taxation:

- **Sales Tax** • **State** = 4% • **Local** = 2% • **Bed and Breakfast** = 1%
- **City Mill Levy Tax** : Owner occupied 20,395 per 1000
- **% of Full Value Assessed** 85%
- **Effective Tax Rate** 2.6%

## Government:

- County Commissioners – elected – terms – five members
- Sheriff Department
- Fire Departments Volunteer – Communities/County
- Custer County Ambulance Service
- County Departments listed in Publication

## Education:

- Custer School District
- Pupil: Teacher Ratio 12:1
- Elementary School: 1 School in City of Custer enrollment = 299
- One Middle School in City of Custer enrollment = 153
- One High School in City of Custer enrollment = 283
- City of Hermosa one school – up to eight grade enrollment = 163
- Rural schools include Elk Mountain, Spring Creek and Fairburn.

## Interesting Facts: Custer County

- *State gemstone is the Fairburn Agate found in the eastern part of Custer County.*
- *Wildlife living in Custer County include, white-tailed deer, mule deer, turkeys, ruffed grouse, elk, red squirrels, flying squirrels, antelope, buffalo, prairie dogs, sharp-tailed grouse, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, red and gray fox, bobcats, cougars, golden eagles, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, beaver, muskrats, mink, rainbow trout, geese, partridge, dove, brown trout, Northern, bass, walleye, crappie to name a few.*
- *Custer County is 125 miles long and 70 miles wide.*
- *There are 1,300 miles of streams and more than 350 miles of trails.*
- *A section of land is one mile square containing 640 acres. A Township contains 36 sections.*
- *Custer County has 11 reservoirs and lakes.*
- *There are 408 miles of mostly graveled roads maintained by Custer County.*

# Country Living Awareness

Agriculture is a leading industry in Custer County. Being a resident in a rural county presents the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of an agriculture lifestyle. There are many farms and ranches in the county that are interdependent with the urban areas and residents. Some things to consider include:

- Research whether you have enough land for the livestock you plan to graze. Overgrazing damages the environment and is a major cause of noxious weed infestations and erosion.
- If you are an out of state landowner take care of your land. Respect the laws and other landowners that promote good land management techniques.
- Check local zoning ordinances, easements, setbacks, covenants, floodplain restrictions and any permit requirements.
- Know your branding laws—contact the South Dakota State Brand Board. (605-773-3324)
- Seek information on best practices for land management including soils, nutrients, grazing, forage, water, and plant growth.
- Respect the job that farmers and ranchers do. They work long hours and have a tough job. Be aware of slow moving vehicles and follow signing. Farms and ranches sometimes produce dust, noise, odors, smoke. Chemical drift is rare but can be part of a lifestyle in a rural community.
- Prescribed burning is a way of clearing brush in the right of way and reducing fuel for wildfires. Smoke is a common occurrence and a nuisance. (Make sure you have the required burning permits.)
- Beware of boundaries; there are public lands, State Parks, National Parks, private, School and Public lands, city, township and county owned lands within Custer County.
- Check for needed services: fire, emergency, law enforcement, ambulance. Call 911 for emergencies, 511 for road conditions.
- Check your rural mail delivery system. It is good to know the “who, how and where” of your mail services.
- Check services for recycling, solid waste and hazardous waste disposal. Illegal dumping is a major problem for the environment. Programs are available to assist with disposal of chemicals and containers through the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Report illegal dumping to local law enforcement. Make sure you consider ground water contamination through septic systems, chemical dumping, and solid waste dumping. Most rural areas have wells utilized for drinking and personal care. Abandoned wells need to be plugged. Always consider runoff and contamination of local aquifers when working on your land.
- Check local, state and federal water rights laws prior to usage or drilling. Check with your local irrigation organization for information on wells, ditches and ordinances.
- Check on rural utilities such as electric, phone, cell phone coverage, DSL, cable, propane, natural gas. Many rural areas may have only a few available services such as no natural gas pipeline, no rural water lines, and no cell coverage. \*(Call South Dakota One Call prior to digging to prevent damage to cables and pipelines.) For school bus route information call the school administration office, (605-673-3154).
- Know the state, federal and local feed and hay restrictions as some areas require certified weed free statements. Infestations of new noxious weeds and pests are often brought into Custer County through hay, feed, firewood and vehicles.
- Check information on “open range”, animal feeding operations, woodland management, grazing, “livestock district”, “estrays” and “class of livestock”

There are many choices and decisions to make when living in a rural county. It is always prudent to check before proceeding. There are numerous entities to assist with gathering information so take advantage of the resources.

# Small Acreages

## *LOOK AT YOUR LAND...MAKE A PLAN*

*What are your property goals?*

*What do you want?*

*What can your land support?*

*Livestock grazing? How many animals and what kind?*

*Wildlife habitat?*

*Good water quality?*

*Healthy forest?*

*Native plants?*

*Other projects?*

**Some of your goals may not be realistic for your property. As you can see there's a lot to know about owning and managing land, and you will need to know even more if you plan to raise livestock too.**

**Let's look at what you have... Any landowner needs a management plan. Before developing a plan look around and take a few notes about your property.**

### **Take note of:**

- Property boundaries
- Fences and corrals
- Wells (human or livestock)
- Septic system
- Weeds, lawn, pasture, or cropland
- Soil type (refer to the county soil survey available from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service)
- Depth to groundwater (check with a well driller)
- Trees or shrubs
- Buildings
- Streams, ponds
- Bare ground
- Neighboring land uses

Make a plan for your land. Once you have looked at your property and identified your goals, you need to develop a management plan for reaching your goals. Remember, we are all part of a neighborhood and our actions affect others. Know fencing requirements, regardless of whether or not you plan to have livestock.

### **TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL GRAZING PROGRAM:**

- Try to Eliminate continuous season-long grazing
- Subdivide large pastures into small pastures and develop a pasture rotation grazing system - this will promote a healthier grazing program



- Corral livestock and feed hay until your pasture grasses have sufficient growth
- During winter months, continue your rotation to distribute manure and feed wastes evenly across your pastures or hold animals in a corral.
- Allow long rest periods or use a high-intensity, short duration grazing system to rejuvenate poor condition pasture.
- Provide a water source for each pasture
- Horses do not need 24-hour access to feed or forage. Their nutrition needs can be met with only a few hours of grazing on good pasture each day. Corral animals for the remainder of the day to prevent overgrazing of plants and extend the forage available in your pastures.
- On a limited acreage, you may have only enough pasture to exercise your animals and will need to feed year around.
- Clean, fresh water is essential for good animal health. Options include a permanent or portable stock tank or pond (consider how you will keep the water from freezing in the winter). Choose the right fence.

**Consider:**

- 1) Purpose & type of animal you are keeping in (or out)
- 2) Type of soil (rocky or loam)
- 3) Terrain
- 4) Material and labor cost
- 5) Availability of power
- 6) Maintenance
- 7) Weather
- 8) Visual impact
- 9) 4-Strand barbed wire is good control for cattle but may be dangerous for horses. Big game may damage fences and fences will then require maintenance. Woven wire has good control for sheep, but labor and materials are high. 4-10 strand smooth wire is good for horses and exotic animals, but once again labor and materials are costly and maintenance will be needed. Electric fencing is good for pasture rotation on small acreages, but weathers poorly and requires regular maintenance and needs an electrical source.



**If you are interested in a small acreage workshop, contact the Conservation District at 673-5680.**



# Working Together

Custer is a predominately rural county with a low density per acre population. Residents, landowners and neighbors must work together as a team to address the many issues unique to our county. New and existing residents must understand the complex nature of relations in a rural county. Respect for each others needs and concerns are important in providing services and solving problems. By understanding others concerns and suggestions conflicts are minimized.

## *Suggestions on working together:*

**1) Respect others privacy and space.** Prevent noxious weeds and pests on your property. Landowners can spend thousands of dollars to manage noxious weed and pests but if others fail to manage their property re-infestation can occur. Learn about your county. Seek out information and get to know your laws, services, agencies... Historically rural areas welcome newcomers with open arms—give newcomers a chance as they will certainly return the favor. Understand land use. Conflicts arise when new/established landowners fail to respect land management issues such as: noxious weed and pest management, erosion or siltation control, fencing requirements, etc. We all need to be aware of the many activities which relate to forestry, range management, dry land and irrigated farming.

**2) Get to know state, local, federal, municipal, county and private agencies serving Custer County.** We have a variety of Federal Parks, State Parks, historical sites, recreational areas, private tourism sites... which provide information and resources.

**3) Learn the statutes/laws including septic systems, water systems, waste disposal, noxious weeds, fencing, animal control, licensing, taxation, fire safety, permits... ask if unsure.** Information and resources for these concerns are listed in this publication. Residents and staff of Custer County are willing to assist.

**4) If you are new/current resident of Custer County respect the way things are done and work to achieve change as a neighbor.** Many times conflicts arise with the comment, “ Well in California, Wisconsin... we did it this way” or “In Custer County this is the way things are done so get used to it.” Putting people on the defensive makes change difficult. Threats, name calling, rumors, gossip are non-productive, give your neighbors a chance, get to know them.

**5) Get involved with groups, volunteer to assist others in the county.** There are numerous organizations: churches, senior citizens, WEAVE, schools, food pantry, housing, business, historical.... Being part of the county assimilates newcomers and current residents.



# Living in Harmony with Custer County Wildlife

*One of the major benefits of living in Custer County is the diversity of our wildlife, geography, plants and animals. We share this environment; you are responsible for your safety and the safety of wildlife. Encounters happen frequently and may pose a threat to both wildlife and humans. While most encounters are enjoyable there are a few tips to remember when enjoying the area:*

- Do not approach and feed wildlife. Food may be harmful to their digestive tract and animals fed by humans may become aggressive.
- Give wildlife space and do not touch. Any wild animal can become dangerous including buffalo, elk and deer.
- Animals frequent gardens, trash piles, and garbage and water areas. Animals will forage on trees and ornamentals as well in your gardens. Keep areas covered or fenced.
- Respect the newborns. They are cute but do not touch or take out of their habitat. Parents are very protective, including animals, so keep a safe distance and do not disturb. Enjoy the plants and animals with your eyes, smell and hearing, not your touch.
- Maintain a safe distance. View with scopes and telephoto lenses. Do not restrict movement or trails.
- Do not disturb plants as some are very rare and native to the area. Others may be poisonous.
- Be careful and observant while driving, especially during night/dusk/dawn. Deer in the area include whitetail and mule deer. They pose a risk to your landscaping and it is advised to protect your plants. Commercial and folk remedies have limited results. (The City of Custer is currently assessing a control program for the deer population.)
- Do not taunt. Some animals are very aggressive during mating season, feeding and parenting.
- Report suspicious behavior such as frequenting your homestead, stalking, aggression, (which may indicate health problems), or any abnormal behavior of the wildlife.
- We do have predators so be watchful of livestock and pets. Some animals such as squirrels, moles and skunks may be harmful to structures and wiring so always be observant to their activities.

*Remember we live in a beautiful area with a variety of wildlife and landscape diversity so respect it! Co-existence can be fun and informative. Historically there have been very few incidents of harm to humans. If you enjoy our wildlife there are a few tips to improve wildlife habitat and thus increase frequency of contact.*

- **Water on or near your property such as streams, ponds and developed stock water.**
- **Planting native species including berries, flowers, trees, shrubs and fruits.**
- **Down and dying vegetation/trees provide habitat and nutrients for a variety of wildlife.**



**MOUNTAIN LION:** Also known as Cougar, Panther or Puma is widely distributed in the Americas. There have been sightings in Custer County. The mountain lions live a solitary life and will avoid contact with humans within their territory. The cat is not spotted but is tawny/buff colored with a black tipped tail. Males can grow to be 8 feet long and weigh up to 150 lbs. Mountain Lions are opportunistic and can prey on deer, rodents, birds, porcupines, fish, raccoons as well as livestock and smaller domestic animals.



**SAFETY TIPS INCLUDE:**

- 1) Predatory behavior is similar to the domestic cat: it will conceal itself and stalk, ears upright, crouched and tail twitching. It may snarl and lay its ears back prior to attacking.
- 2) Avoid hiking alone and make plenty of noise. Be very observant especially during dusk and dawn and perhaps restrict hiking. Keep children close as mountain lions are drawn to children. Hike with a good walking stick to ward off the lion.
- 3) Avoid approaching at any time, particularly during feeding or when the lion is with their off- spring. Do not run and remain calm. Try to appear larger by holding up your arms but give them an escape route. Pick up children so they don't run and you will also appear larger.
- 4) As a last resort fight back. The lion will try to bite the head or neck and will avoid a direct confrontation. Fight back with anything handy; rocks, sticks, hands.

**BOBCAT:** The Bobcat also known as the Bay Lynx has gray to brown coat, whiskered face and black tufted ears. It has distinctive black bars on its forelegs and a black tipped stubby tail. The bobcat is adaptable and inhabits wooded areas, urban edge and swampland in Custer County. The bobcat will hunt anything from insects and small rodents to deer and pronghorn antelope, preferring rabbits and hares. It is not considered a danger to humans but will occasionally hunt small domestic animals. The bobcat keeps on the move from three hours before sunset until about mid-night, and then again from before dawn until three hours after sunrise. Bobcats have numerous places of shelter; usually a main den and several auxiliary shelters, usually the outer extent to its range includes hollow logs, brush piles, thickets or under rock ledges.



**BALD EAGLE:** By 1978 the bald eagle was listed as endangered in 43 of the lower 48 states and threatened in the other five. Today there are an estimated 12,000 eagles, and more than 2000 nesting pairs in the lower 48 states. The recovery of the species has been successful and in 1995 the government lowered the eagle from endangered to threatened.



**GOLDEN EAGLE:** Golden Eagles are one of the largest birds of prey. The females are larger than the males. Eagles usually mate for life. They will build several eyries within their territory and alternate the use of them. Golden eagles are brown with a golden sheen on the head. They are one of the few species that have feathers all the way to their toes.

# Custer County Soils

*Soils develop over a long period of time. It is estimated that it may take 500 years to develop one inch of top soil. Many factors contribute to this development including climate, vegetation, water and parent material such as rock formations.*

Soils have different textures including silts, sands and clays. Not all soils are equally suited for plant growth. There are seven major soil areas and over 500 different soils identified in South Dakota. The Black Hills are unique because the soils have developed in a warm and very dry climate and have the least organic and nitrogen matter. These soils tend to be lightest in color and are browner. All of the soils in Custer County are plant productive with favorable moisture and conditions.

**All soil areas are susceptible to erosion, water/wind due to the silty/clay properties they contain. Soil is the lifeblood of agriculture and private gardeners in Custer County. Without healthy topsoil plant productivity is reduced. Some tips to follow for erosion management include:**

- Keep all soils well covered with vegetation. Plant grasses and other plants that have root systems to hold the top soil in place. Choose the plants that provide good ground cover.
- Make sure you are using the correct amounts of fertilizers and herbicides to protect native species and grasses.
- Get your soil tested to assist in developing your plan for landscaping and gardening.
- Reseed bare ground/disturbed areas immediately as noxious weeds will root and erosion will occur.
- Plan buildings, roads, and planting areas to direct water runoff into safe outlets and prevent standing pools.

*For more information on soils, testing and erosion management contact the local SDSU Extension Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service or the Custer Conservation District. The phone numbers for these offices are located in the directory of this publication.*



*More detailed information about the soils in Custer County can be obtained by visiting the Web Soil Survey website at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> or contact your local USDA – NRCS office at 605-745-5716 ext. 3.*

# Custer Master Gardeners



The Master Gardener program is an offering of the Cooperative Extension Service of Land Grant Universities nationwide. The program originated in Washington State in 1971. When the need for gardening information exceeded the ability of the Extension Agents to disseminate that information, volunteers were trained as Master Gardeners to help out. South Dakota's Master Gardener program was established in 1986.

South Dakota Master Gardeners initially take 70 hours of training on a wide variety of gardening subjects, with the agreement to volunteer 50 hours back to the program within 2 years. After that internship is up, most Master Gardeners continue to give many more hours to their communities. They also attend continuing education seminars and hold an annual statewide conference.

The Custer County Master Gardener group consists of 11 members. A few of the services they provide are: Helping the public with gardening problems or questions; a spring display on gardening subjects at the Custer library; maintaining the flower beds at the Courthouse Museum; and an annual plant swap at Custer County Fair. The Master Gardeners also assist other local organizations with garden-related projects including Boy Scout merit badges and Habitat for Humanity.



**For more information on the Master Gardener program in Custer County or for help with gardening questions contact the local Extension office at (605) 673-4971.**

## Gardening in the Foothills and Higher Elevations of the Black Hills

*Tips from the Masters*

*Written by:*

**Helen McGranahan** Custer

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**Gardening in Custer County can truly be a challenge for many reasons that include short growing seasons, plant predation by deer, often- limited water supplies, and a wide variability of growing conditions from location to location, and also year to year.**



The Black Hills and surrounding area are part of the Northern Plains, which has an ecological classification of arid, short grass prairie. The average annual precipitation ranges from 13 to 17 inches. This precipitation can fall as snow during the winter or spring months and thunderstorms during the summer and fall or sometimes hail. Spring storms that dump two feet of snow in April and summer thunderstorms dropping over three inches of rain per hour are somewhat common occurrences here. Prolonged dry spells are also common in the local area. Experienced, local gardeners consider the gardening season to be from early-to-mid June to the end of September, yet are always mindful that a killing frost can occur during any month of the year. Taking into account the local conditions and selecting hardy plants that fit these conditions must be foremost in a gardener's mind.

*In order to successfully garden in Custer County, it is essential to have a good, solid plan so you don't waste time and resources.* There are a number of resources available to help you get started with your gardening adventure in Custer County including SDSU Extension Service, Custer Master Gardeners, Mile High Garden Club, and local nurseries. Generally, it is best to stick with a USDA hardiness zone rating of 3 or 4 when selecting plants for your garden. Beware of buying plants at the "big box stores" as they don't always carry species that are appropriate for the local conditions, thus reading labels and only buying plants that are "drought tolerant" and "cold hardy" is a must. You will have better luck shopping at the local greenhouses because they know what grows here. SDSU Extension also has some good publications about locally adapted trees, shrubs, and flowers. During the planning process, make sure you have your soil tested by sending it to the SDSU lab in Brookings. Materials and information on soil testing are available at the local Extension office. Black Hills soils are often heavy with clay and require amendment with organic material such as manure, compost, grass clippings, etc. to lighten them up. Some local gardeners spread the organic material over the soil as mulch and don't work it in, but instead let the worms and bacteria in the soil do the work of breaking it down. By doing this, you also improve the water retention by having the absorbent layer of organic material on top of the soil. Mulching needs to be a yearly task because the soil can only take in so much new organic material per year. Yearly application is also necessary in order to continue building and replenishing the soil with nutrients that are lost to growing plants.

*Vegetable gardening in the Hills is tricky business.* You can attain success in the outdoor garden by planting the hardier crops such as green beans, peas, lettuce, scallions, parsnips, zucchini, parsnips, and beets. However, with many of the more delicate crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers, local





gardeners have had better luck with container gardening, cold frames, or greenhouses. The portability of the containers make it easier to protect the plants from frost, hail, and deer. Again, choose plants for their short number of days to maturity and high elevation qualities. Some local gardeners who are brave enough to plant their tomatoes in the outdoor garden don't plan on picking any that are ripe, instead, prior to the first frost they either pull the whole plant or pick the fruit and let it ripen indoors. Others use "wall-of-water" mini hothouses or row covers for frost protection with varying amounts of success.

*Another challenge of gardening in Custer County is the abundant and hungry deer population.*

There are many plant varieties labeled "deer resistant" but none "deer proof." Late in the season when herbage in the woods has dried up, the deer around here will eat just about any yard plant including those that are supposed to be somewhat toxic, like foxglove (*Digitalis* species) and rhubarb. There are really only two efficient ways to deal with this problem, which are spraying deer repellent or fencing. Deer repellent mixes are available as commercial products or there are quite a few recipes for home concoctions. The key to both is to start using them early before the deer acquire a taste for your plants. Commercial mixes tend to be more expensive, more potent, and longer lasting, but there is also a loyal local following of this "home brew" recipe. The idea is to train the deer that your garden is a repulsive and smelly place. The odor from this brew dissipates to human senses within 24 to 36 hours.



### **Liquid Deer Repellent**

- 1) *Mix together: ½ cup milk, ¼ cup salad oil, 1 egg, and 1 tablespoon liquid detergent.*
- 2) *Keep the mixture in a closed container in a warm place for 2 weeks or until putrefied.*
- 3) *Add to 1 gallon of water and mix well.*
- 4) *Liberally sprinkle with a watering can on and around plants you want to protect. Allow enough time to dry before rain or other watering.*
- 5) *Repeat the application in 1 week, and repeat every 2 weeks during the growing season. You might want to mix a double or triple batch at one time.*

*\*Even though fencing is visually intrusive, a properly constructed deer fence is a surefire way to protect your garden. The key is to make it tall enough (at least 6 feet) and to anchor the bottom so the deer can't get under it.*

**Welcome to the challenges of gardening in the Black Hills and may you have success!**

# Living Firewise in Custer County



Jasper Fire - 2000

As homes continue to sprout up in the “Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)” of Custer County, it best be kept in mind that we face risk of losing everything to wildfire. Forested and wildland areas are highly desirable places to live, but what makes them attractive also makes them hazardous. While vegetation is an amenity for residents, it is a source of fuel for fire. Custer County is located in a fire-prone environment where fire has occurred in the past, and will occur again in the future. Residents are encouraged to adopt a “Firewise” lifestyle before the fire. If you wait until the fire is coming over the hill to take protectionary measures, you’ve waited too long!

**The one hundred to two hundred foot “Home Ignition Zone” around a structure is the critical area the homeowner needs to consider when mitigating for wildfire. The “Home Ignition Zone” consists of the following:**

**Zone 1** – This well irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 feet on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. If irrigated lawn is not desirable to the homeowner, the area can also be graveled or cleaned of pine needles, sticks or other potential fuels to mineral soil. Plants should be limited to carefully spaced fire resistant trees and shrub species.

**Zone 2** – Fire resistant plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low growing, and the irrigation system should extend into this section.

**Zone 3** – Place low growing plants and widely spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the level of vegetation (fuel) low.

**Zone 4** – This furthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Thin selectively here and remove highly flammable vegetation.

In order to burn, a fire needs to have a heat source, oxygen and fuel. Dry weather, lightening storms and wind commonly occur in Custer County. Since we can’t do anything about the weather, the only one of these factors that humans have any control over is the fuel load. Landowners can immensely improve the odds of their homes surviving wildfire by simply doing some fuels reduction through thinning trees, removing fine fuels (tall dry grass, pine needles, etc.) and creating a defensible space. A common misconception is that a firewise landscape needs to be barren and lack aesthetic value. Flowers planted next to the foundation are fine, as long as the selected plants are fire resistant, properly spaced, and well maintained. Proper maintenance and careful construction methods are the homeowner’s #1 defense against wildfire.

Nationally, there was realization about the threat of fire WUI areas in 1986 and the Firewise program was established. In 2001/2002, the Firewise Communities USA program was developed to assist and showcase communities who have realized the problem and are working toward dealing with it. There are three nationally recognized Firewise Communities in the Black Hills and all of South Dakota. One of them, Silver Star

Subdivision, is right here in Custer County. For more information, check out the Firewise website at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) or contact the South Dakota State Firewise Liaison at (605)394-2584.

### **CONSIDERATIONS OF A FIREWISE STRUCTURE:**

- ◆ If a structure is located on, or near, a steeper slope (20+ percent) the home ignition zone and clearing should be increased up to threefold, depending on the how steep the slope is.
- ◆ Careful consideration should be made when selecting building materials. Concrete siding and metal or composite roofing are the most fire resistant. However, other types of building materials, including wood, can survive wildfire if careful planning is done in the rest of the HIZ.
- ◆ Roads and driveways to and from properties should be sufficiently wide for emergency vehicles to enter and turn around.
- ◆ Location of utilities (propane tanks, etc.) should be carefully considered to reduce risk during fire situations.
- ◆ Make sure your landscaping is of a fire-resistant nature.
- ◆ Things that are attached to the house should be considered part of the house including decks, porches, wooden fences, wooden walks, etc.
- ◆ Eaves and overhangs such as room push-outs, bay windows, and extensions over slopes are very vulnerable to ignition. Fuels should be eliminated in the area of these vulnerabilities.
- ◆ Anywhere that snow, leaves, needles, or debris can blow in and accumulate (such as under porches or decks) is also a prime spot for firebrands or embers to gather during a fire.
- ◆ All vents or other “cracks and crannies” that lead to the interior of the house should be screened to prevent embers from getting inside and igniting the structure during a wildfire.

### **MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST:**

- 1) Provide plants with enough water and nutrients to keep them healthy and green.
- 2) Keep dry and dead plant material cleaned up.
- 3) If you can't keep the grass green, at least keep it mowed within 30 feet of the structure.
- 4) Make sure the gutters and roof are clear of pine needles and litter.
- 5) Trees in the home ignition zone should be limbed to at least 6 feet above the ground level.
- 6) Keep areas under decks and porches free of litter and needles.
- 7) Do you have your woodpile stored on the porch? This is not a good idea. Wood storage should be fully enclosed or well away from the structure.
- 8) What about that propane grill on the deck? This is not really a problem as long as there is a plan to get the propane tank away from the structure in the event of fire.

**Custer County, SD News Release:** On Thursday, **August 24, 2000** events transpired that would change the face of the landscape for years to come. A local woman pulled off the highway onto a forest service road that leads to Jasper Cave. She lit a cigarette, dropped the burning match to the ground, watched the fire start and drove away. The fire spread rapidly due to the hot and dry conditions. It was reported to law enforcement officials at 2:17 PM. The fire was roaring over the top of Hell Canyon by 4:30 PM. It was beautiful, amazing and terrifying all at the same time. Saturday the fire exploded; it consumed approximately 48,000 acres. That is the equivalent of about seven football fields a minute.

**Approximately 84,500 acres burned in this fire before it was contained.**



## Firewise: A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

**Tract 23, Silver Star Subdivision, January 2002:** This picture was taken prior to development of the property. The tract is located on the west edge of the subdivision adjacent to National Forest lands. Note the large amounts of fuel on the property that make not only this property but also neighboring ones, vulnerable to wildfire.



**The same location, December 2004:** After the above picture was taken, the property was developed and thinned. Thinning started in early 2002, with storm and insect damaged trees removed first. Approximately 70 piles of slash and pine needles were removed and burned and many cords of firewood given away, but there are still a lot of trees remaining. The meadow in the foreground is in what is now the “Home Ignition Zone” and was grazed by horses. At the advent of grazing, the property owners implemented a summer rotational grazing system in an attempt to maintain desirable native grasses and forbs in the forage base, while reducing the fine fuels within the home ignition zone.

### ANOTHER CONCERN BEFORE YOU BUILD

“Residents of Ferguson Subdivision in Hermosa were cleaning up over the weekend from a devastating flood that hit the community shortly after 6:00 P.M. Friday, **August 17, 2007**. Fortunately no deaths or serious injuries were reported. After 5-6 inches of rain fell in about an hour and a half Friday evening, a DM&E railroad bridge on the west side of the subdivision filled with floating logs and other debris, causing rushing water to bore a hole through the railroad bed. A length of track about 200 yards long was uprooted. All 33 homes in the 4-year old subdivision were damaged with floodwater and mud. One was knocked off its foundation by two other homes and was carried away and deposited in a field about a mile to the east.”



From the *Custer County Chronicle*



# Predators & Pests in Custer County



**TICKS:** There are 17 tick species found in South Dakota. The most common is the deer tick which is the chief carrier of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Ticks carry a number of viral and bacterial forms. Safety tips include:

- Avoid tall grasses or shrubby areas - ticks wait on surfaces until a host brushes against them. Ticks do not jump onto the host.
- Wear long-sleeved clothing and tuck in pants, shirts and socks.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat.
- Wear clothing that highlights the dark color of ticks so it is easier to conduct a visual inspection upon leaving an area.
- Use a repellent containing DEET and follow recommendations for pet repellents including collars.
- Ticks climb upwards and most often attach to the scalp and neck so check frequently.



## IF A TICK IS ATTACHED FOLLOWING THE DIRECTIONS BELOW MAY LESSEN THE CHANCE FOR DISEASE.

If attached remove as soon as possible so the tick cannot bury its mouthparts deeper in the skin.

Using tweezers place the tips as close to the skin as possible and remove the tick with a slow but steady pull to allow the tick to back out and avoid breaking off the head. If you feel the head had remained in the skin see a doctor.

Be careful not to puncture, twist or crush the tick during removal as the tick may release the contents of its stomach if traumatized thus increasing the chance of infection. Do not use folk methods such as using a match as this will cause traumatization of the tick.

Disinfect the area and wash thoroughly using rubbing alcohol or sanitizing soap. Keep the tick in alcohol in a bag, store for later identification if infection occurs.

**Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever** or **Tick Borne Typhus Fever** is a potentially serious bacterial infection transmitted to humans by ticks. It is not transmitted from human to human but rather ticks to human. It can also be spread by not washing and disinfecting hands after touching ticks. Symptoms are usually mild but can become very serious in some people.

**SYMPTOMS OCCUR TWO TO FIFTEEN DAYS AFTER INFECTION AND CAN INCLUDE:**

High fever  
Chills  
Severe headache  
Widespread aches and pain  
Restlessness  
Nausea and vomiting  
Loss of appetite  
Fatigue  
A rash of red spots or blotches

**If treated early the infections can be successfully treated. If untreated serious complications can occur including:**

Heart, lung and kidney failure  
Infection of the fluids surrounding the brain and spinal cord  
Brain damage  
Problems with blood clotting  
Shock  
Death in a small number of cases

**Early treatment with anti-biotic is important but diagnosis is difficult. See your doctor if you become sick or develop a rash after being bitten by a tick.**

## **EDGAR FAMILY'S MOUNTAIN LION**

Don Edgar, a local Custer County landowner lost some of his prized geese to a mountain lion in March of 2005. Game, Fish & Parks officials trapped the lion, collared it, and moved it to western Pennington County, approximately 25 miles away. 30 days later the lion was back, but this time the landowner was waiting for him. He had fashioned a live trap and using another goose for bait, caught the lion. He then called Game, Fish & Park officials. It was confirmed this was in fact the same lion they had previously captured and collared and moved some 25 miles away.

*Excerpts taken from the Rapid City Journal and the Custer Chronicle.*

*Photos by Don Edgar*



***MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE:* The mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) is the most destructive beetle in the West. This small insect can kill single trees or large tracts of trees.**



### QUICK FACTS...

Mountain pine beetles (MPB) are the most important insect pest of South Dakota's pine forests. MPB often kill large numbers of trees annually during outbreaks.

Trees that are not growing vigorously due to old age, crowding, poor growing conditions, drought, fire or mechanical damage, root disease and other causes are most likely to be attacked.

For a long-term remedy, thin susceptible stands. Leave well-spaced, healthy trees.

For short-term controls, spray, cover, burn or peel attacked trees to kill the beetles. Preventive sprays can protect green, unattacked trees.



Adult *Dendroctonus* versus *Ips*. Note gradually curved wing of *Dendroctonus*. Actual size of *Dendroctonus* from 1/8 to 1/3 inch, *Ips* 1/3 to 1/4 inch.

Mountain pine beetle (MPB), *Dendroctonus ponderosae*, is native to the forests of western North America. Periodic outbreaks of the insect, previously called the Black Hills beetle or Rocky Mountain pine beetle, can result in losses of millions of trees. Outbreaks develop irrespective of property lines, being equally evident in wilderness areas, mountain subdivisions and back yards. Even windbreak or landscape pines many miles from the mountains can succumb to beetles imported in infested firewood.

Mountain pine beetles develop in pines, particularly ponderosa, lodgepole, Scotch and limber pine. Bristlecone and pinyon pine are less commonly attacked. During early stages of an outbreak, attacks are limited largely



to trees under stress from injury, poor site conditions, fire damage, overcrowding, root disease or old age. However, as beetle populations increase, MPB attacks may involve most large trees in the outbreak area.

Mountain pine beetles and related bark beetles in the genus *Dendroctonus* can be distinguished from other large bark beetles in pines by the shape of the hind wing cover. In side view, it is gradually curved. The wing cover of Ips or engraver beetles, another common group of bark beetles attacking conifers, is sharply spined.

### Signs and Symptoms of MPB Attack:



- Popcorn-shaped masses of resin, called "pitch tubes," on the trunk where beetle tunneling begins. Pitch tubes may be brown, pink or white.
- Boring dust in bark crevices and on the ground immediately adjacent to the tree base.
- Evidence of woodpecker feeding on trunk. Patches of bark are removed and bark flakes lie on the ground or snow below tree.
- Foliage turning yellowish to reddish throughout the entire tree crown. This usually occurs eight to 10 months after a successful MPB attack.

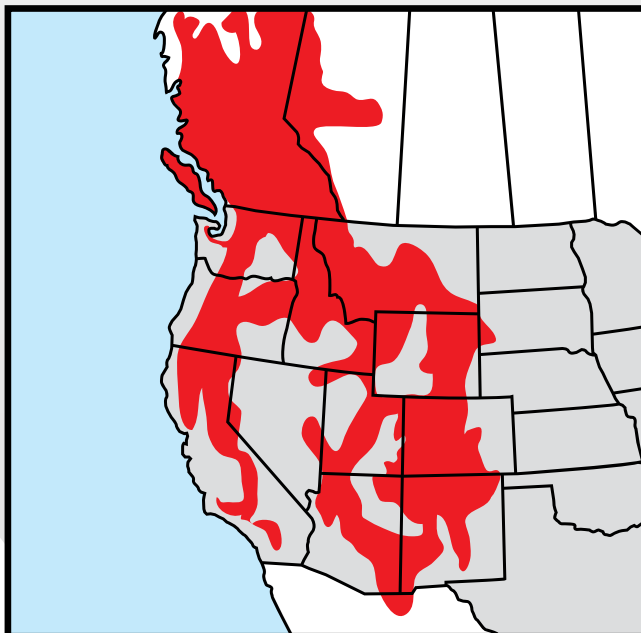
- Presence of live MPB (eggs, larvae, pupae and/or adults) as well as galleries under bark. This is the most certain indicator of infestation. A hatchet for removal of bark is needed to check trees correctly.

- Blue stained sapwood. Check at more than one point around the tree's circumference.

*\*Excerpts taken from the Colorado State University website*



## Mountain Pine Beetle Investation



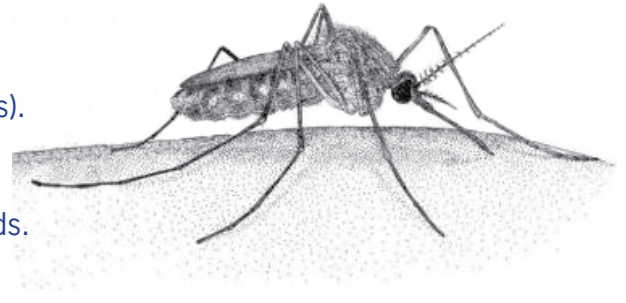
**The western portion of the United States and Canada is heavily infested with the Mountain Pine Beetle as noted to the left.**

**For more information or identification contact your local Forest Service Office or Extension Service.**

**MOSQUITOES & WEST NILE:** There are 43 different species of mosquitoes identified in South Dakota. Only 9 of those carry the West Nile Virus. Cases of West Nile occur primarily in late summer or early fall. A small number of mosquitoes carry the virus and less than 1% of those bitten become infected and get severely ill. There have been a number of reported cases in the eastern area of Custer County. Twenty percent of those infected will develop mild symptoms including fever, headache and body aches, occasionally skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph nodes. Severe infection symptoms include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. The time from infection to onset is usually 3 to 14 days. At risk include pregnant women, elderly and individuals with weakened immune systems. Blood donations are screened and there is no vaccine. Birds are indicators, carriers of and susceptible to the virus and any freshly dead birds should be tested by the State Public Health Laboratory.

**SAFETY TIPS INCLUDE:**

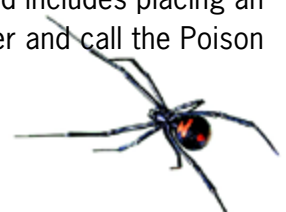
- Use insect repellent containing DEET, (follow label instructions).
- Stay inside or limit activity at dawn, dusk and nighttime.
- Wear long-sleeve clothing during high mosquito activity periods.
- Windows and doors should have bug tight screens.
- Avoid areas with water shed, ponds, stagnant pools and areas of dense vegetation.
- Keep areas mowed.
- Reduce standing water and stagnant pools on your property.
- Minimize lighting.
- Livestock owners may consider vaccinating their animals.



**BLACK WIDOWS & BROWN RECLUSE SPIDERS:** Custer County has a variety of beneficial insects including some that are venomous. Along with the Black Widow Spider and Brown Recluse we have insects that bite/sting such as wasps, bedbugs, fleas and bees.



**BLACK WIDOW SPIDER:** The Black Widow female is the most venomous spider in North America. They are not usually deadly as a very small amount of venom is delivered per bite. She is shiny black, usually with a reddish hourglass shape on the underside of her abdomen. The female Black Widow rarely leaves her web and is not considered aggressive unless the web is disturbed or she is accidentally trapped in clothing. They live on the underside of ledges, rocks, plants and debris, wherever a web can be strung. Cold weather and drought may drive them into buildings. The bite is often not painful. Symptoms include abdominal pain similar to appendicitis as well as pain to muscles or the soles of the feet. Other symptoms include dry mouth alternating with salivation, paralysis of the diaphragm, profuse sweating and swollen eye lids. Consult a physician if symptoms occur. Recovery is from two to five days. First aid includes placing an ice pack over the bite and elevate the affected limb above the heart. Collect the spider and call the Poison Control Center.





**BROWN RECLUSE SPIDER:** The most recognized feature of the Brown Recluse spider is the violin pattern on the top side of the spider near the head. The Recluse also has six eyes instead of eight which is common on most other spiders. It is also called the Fiddleback spider due to the violin marking. The Brown Recluse is solitary and can live in isolated areas such as wood piles, cellars and old plumbing. Bites usually occur when clothing is left lying on the floor, not being observant when picking up items and when working in isolated areas. About 50% of bites are 'dry' meaning that no venom is injected and nothing happens to the victim. Often times

the victim does not realize they have been bitten. Typically when venom is injected the victim will experience an immediate redness around the bite which will begin to disappear within a few hours, and for the first twenty-four hours the bite appears to be no more than a mosquito bite. Then the bite will begin to blister in the center and will eventually open with an oozing ulceration. The ulceration will scab over. If injected into fatty tissue healing could be slow, as much as two to three years with scarring, lesions and infections. Symptoms include severe headache, nausea, vomiting, soreness and flu like symptoms. In severe cases where the bite is not taken care of early skin grafts, amputation and the possibility of bone marrow failure may occur. Consult a physician immediately if bitten.

**MOLES:** The common mole is an insectivore not a rodent. It generally inhabits woodland areas but will quickly move into residential areas if not properly controlled. Its diet consists mainly of ants, grubs, earthworms and millipedes. Home remedies have little effect on controlling moles. Trapping is the only effective method of control. Moles move from lawn to lawn and do not have a set pattern for movement. Keep your grass mowed and well manicured. To spot new activity walk the lawn after mowing, (with the sun in your face), mole tunnels will usually cast a distinct shadow.

**POCKET GOPHERS:** Mounds of dirt on your property is a pretty good indication that you have pocket gophers. To reach its food supply pocket gophers dig runways about 10 inches beneath the surface. Pocket gopher's runways consist of a main tunnel which may be several hundred feet long with shorter runways coming out from the main tunnel. Food storage runways are deeper. The pocket gopher will seal its hole after each excavation. It is estimated that a pocket gopher in one year will transport 2.5 tons of soil to the surface. The pocket gopher spends most of its time underground eating roots and plant crowns. Effective control methods include trapping, poisons and fumigation.



**PRAIRIE DOGS:** The Black-tailed prairie dog lives in ground burrows in concentrations called 'towns'. Prairie dogs are usually active during daylight hours but do occasionally move at night. They feed on grasses, shrubs, seeds, insects and forbs. Prairie dogs favor disturbed sites such as plowed, frequently mowed or heavily grazed

areas. Prairie dogs once established are able to expand their habitat and migrate miles away from the main towns. Control methods include poison, shooting, trapping. Recent efforts include introduction of the Black Footed Ferret into target areas in South Dakota. One consideration in controlling prairie dogs is they may carry the sylvatic plague and can infect your household pets.







**RATTLESNAKE:** The Prairie Rattlesnake or Western Rattlesnake is the only venomous snake native to South Dakota. It can be found in Western South Dakota primarily in open prairie, hay lands and croplands, any area with an abundance of food. The color of the Prairie Rattlesnake varies from light brown to green, with a yellowish belly. The rattles and their distinct rattling sound are the most recognizable feature

of this snake although do not depend on the rattling sound as some snakes strike without rattling if frightened or endangered. The normal striking distance is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the snake's body length. The snake can strike in any direction. Rattlesnakes are normally found on hillsides, bluffs, rocky outcrops, underground openings, holes, crevices and burrow systems such as prairie dog towns. The Prairie Rattlesnake feeds on mice, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, cotton tail rabbits, other snakes, lizards, birds and insects.

### **SOME SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED WHEN IN SNAKE COUNTRY:**

Do not disturb, attempt to handle, or kill any snake. Leave them alone and they will likely do the same. Most snakes are timid and secretive and will try to escape if given an opportunity but they will strike if cornered or endangered.

Be careful where you sit or put your hands. Don't put your hands in burrows or holes. Don't jump over logs, rocks or plant material. Never turn over logs, rocks, or other large objects, as snakes tend to conceal themselves in these areas when resting or looking for food.

When hiking be observant and watch where you step. Avoid tall grasses and heavy underbrush. If you come across a snake keep your distance, one body length at least, be prepared to retreat if necessary.

Wear appropriate clothing including, loose fitting clothing and leather boots. Rattle snake fangs can penetrate clothing. Wear shoes that cover the ankle, especially at night.

All rattlesnakes are venomous. Baby rattlesnake's venom may be three times as strong as adults. One percent of those bitten die from the bite: you are more likely to be struck by lightning.

Do not kill or disturb any snake unless absolutely necessary; they are all beneficial and some are endangered.

If bitten by a venomous snake, try to remain calm and seek medical attention immediately. Reduce physical activity and exertion. Time is critical; you will usually know how serious the bite is within 30 minutes. Remove restrictive clothing. Cutting, suction, ice, stun guns, tourniquets are not recommended. The best treatment devices are car keys, cell phone and a vehicle to get to a medical provider. Wash the bitten area with soap and water, immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen and don't drink alcohol. An Ace elastic band-aid placed about 1-2 inches above the bite, between the bite and heart will impede the spread of venom. Wrap about as tight as you would an ankle sprain.

**Custer County is rich in history with many abandoned sites, caves and mines. Be very careful as there is danger of falling, being trapped, disturbing animal and plant life, injury and death. Visitors occasionally use these sites for dumping trash which is harmful to the environment and ground water.**

**Remember common sense is your best weapon. We live in a beautiful area with a variety of plants, animals and geography. Respect your environment!**

# Potential Pests

**EMERALD ASH BORER:** is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan in the summer of 2002. The adult beetles nibble on ash foliage but cause little damage. The larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Emerald ash borers probably arrived in the states on solid wood packing material carried in cargo ships or airplanes originating in its native Asia.



## What to know about EAB:

- It attacks only ash trees
- Adult beetles are metallic green and about ½ inch long
- Adults leave a D-shaped exit hole in the bark when they emerge in spring
- Woodpeckers like the larvae; heavy woodpecker damage on ash trees may be a sign of infestation



**Gypsy Moth:** The gypsy moth has been an important pest of hardwoods since its introduction in 1869. Oaks are the preferred host species for feeding caterpillars. Older larvae will also feed on a number of conifers such as hemlock, pines, spruces and southern white cedar. This pest spreads about 13 miles per year without intervention. Insects hitchhike on items that are moved long distances such as nursery stock, vehicles, forest products, and other outdoor household articles such as deck furniture.

## Preventative Weed Management Techniques

*Preventing weeds/pests from getting started is the most cost effective form of noxious weed and pest control. If you can stop the infestation and spread of weeds/pests you will not have to deal with costly control methods later. Be pro-active, not reactive! Be a proactive steward of the land!*

### Some tips to remember in being proactive are:

Know your weeds/contact your local entities to help with identification.

Educate your neighbors and work together. Communication and education are powerful tools.

Be aware of modes of transportation—topsoil, gravel, equipment, irrigation water, wind drainage, animals, can all transport unwanted seeds to your property.

Re-vegetate with native species of grasses to bare ground such as disturbed soil, slash pile burns, prescribed burns, new building sites, etc.

Use certified weed free products such as hay, straw, seeds.....

Clean clothing and equipment before moving to different areas. This will eliminate the transporting of unwanted seeds.

Screen irrigation water.

Dispose of weeds with seeds/plants by burning or placing them in a black bag and leave it in the sun for three weeks.

Be careful of water disposal that may have invasive species such as aquariums, live wells.....

Cover trailers when transporting biological materials.

Recreational users should check their boats, trailers and equipment. Clean them thoroughly before going to another location. Sweep your tent: leave weed seeds and plants in the area you are at or dispose of them before leaving the campsite. Don't bring firewood from outside the area. Pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer are spreading through this outlet.

Gardeners should be aware of where and what is in your seed packets. Numerous invasive species are spread through ornamental plantings. Try to plant only native species when landscaping. You may be surprised to find what is in those wild flower packets you purchase! Salt Cedar was originally a popular ornamental for landscaping.

**LANDOWNERS:**

*Thoroughly clean equipment and use certified weed free forage and seed. If you are using non-certified feed, use containment areas where you feed livestock. You should plant vegetation along property boundaries to reduce seed migration to adjacent land, bushes/trees. Quarantine any new stock in yards for at least 48 hours prior to release on your property. Moving the stock into feeding pens after they have grazed in weedy areas will reduce the risk of feces spreading seeds to other grazing areas. Use integrated weed management techniques, herbicide, bio-control, mowing, and other preventative techniques. A "wash down" area near your property entrance would be a great way to prevent transportation of unwanted seeds/weeds. Keep any access roads, easements and yards free of weeds. There are many organizations in this publication that are willing to assist you with your weed problems.*

**Seek help! The loss of productive acres to weeds and pests is becoming a critical issue in Custer County.**

# Custer County Weed & Pest

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**Did you know?** A pure stand of Leafy Spurge can produce 200 pounds of seed per acre which is equivalent to approximately 25 million seeds. One Leafy Spurge seed will produce a 24 foot patch in 4 years. Not all seeds in the soil will germinate at the same time even when conditions are favorable, some weed seeds can remain in the soil for decades, 70-80% of mullein seeds have been noted to germinate after 80 years! Canada thistle seed can remain viable for 4 years or more! A fully grown Salt Cedar plant can transpire up to 200 gallons of water per day. Fallen Salt Cedar leaves exude salt that accumulates in the soil, over time the soil becomes saline for other plants to grow.

**What is a weed or pest?** Generally a weed or pest is any organism that is growing in an area where it is not wanted. These organisms are hard to control and a problem in fields, lawns, pastures, wetlands, agriculture, right of ways and forests. Some plants were brought into the country as ornamentals, others are toxic to animals and humans.

## Definition of a noxious weed:

*A plant that interferes with management objectives for a given area of land at a given point in time. -J. M. Torrel*

## SOUTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE NOXIOUS WEEDS



**HOARY CRESS:** Stems are 1 to 2 feet tall, erect, sparsely hairy, and branched at top. Leaves are alternate, oblong with a slender base. Upper leaves clasp around stem. Leaf margins wavy and shallowly toothed. Flowers are small, white, 4 petals, in the shape of a cross, and appear April - August. Plant origin is Eurasia, is very persistent, and requires early spring treatment.

**RUSSIAN KNAPWEED:** Stems are hairy, tough, branched, and 2 to 3 feet tall. Leaves are grayish with knap-like hairs. Lower leaves are deeply lobed while upper leaves are short, not lobed, and slender. Flowers are white or pink to purplish and appear from June - September. Plant origin Eurasia (Europe and Asia) probably introduced into North America as a crop seed contaminant.







**PERENNIAL SOW THISTLE:** Stems 3 to 7 feet tall, smooth, with milky juice throughout the plant. Leaves similar to dandelion, irregularly lobed, alternate, 4 to 8 inches long, with spine tipped edges. Flowers are in branched clusters, bright yellow-orange color, about 1 ½ inches long. It is important to distinguish Perennial sow thistle from annual sow thistle and prickly lettuce. Prickly lettuce has smaller flowers with a pale yellow color and leaves are spiny on the midrib beneath. Annual sow thistle does not have underground creeping rootstocks.

**PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE:** Stems 8 feet tall, 4 to 6 sided, older plants highly branched. Leaves opposite, linear, smooth margins, no leaf petiole. Flowers rose-purple, 5 to 6 petals, arranged in long spikes, appears July - September. This plant grows in wet areas and along waterways. Origin is Eurasia and Africa.



**CANADA THISTLE:** Stems 2 to 3 feet tall, grooved, hollow, branched at top. Leaves hairless, spiny, crinkled margins, smaller leaf than biennial thistle. Flowers numerous on branched heads, about ¾ inch, lavender, pink, rarely white, appear June - August. Origin is Eurasia and North Africa.

**LEAFY SPURGE:** Stems are 2 to 3 feet tall, erect branched at top, smooth, and contain a milky sap. Toxic to cattle but not sheep or goats, sap causes dermatitis in humans. Leaves alternate, hairless, long, narrow, lower leaves drooping. Flowers are small and green but surrounded by larger, heart-shaped, greenish-yellow bracts, appear May -September. Seed that explodes from three seeded capsules may remain viable for 5 to 8 years. Origin Eurasia, probably introduced as a ballast contaminant to coastal New England and as a seed contaminant to coastal New England and as a seed contaminant to western North America.



**SALT CEDAR:** Stems to 25 feet tall, woody dark-brown to reddish-brown. Leaves alternate, cedar-like on slender, branched stems. Flowers white to deep pink, 5 pedaled, formed in finger-like clusters. Origin is Eurasia, introduced as an ornamental and for bank stabilization. Very invasive, especially along riparian areas.

## CUSTER COUNTY LOCALLY LISTED NOXIOUS WEEDS

**SPOTTED KNAPWEED:** **Weed:** Local noxious. Biennial or short-lived perennial. **Leaves:** Alternate, deeply divided into narrow segments. Much smaller near top. **Stems:** 1 to 3 feet tall, hairy branched. **Flowers:** About ¾ inch across, pink to purple, dark spots on flower bracts. **Roots:** Biennial taproot. Forms rosette first season. **Sites:** Pastures, range, and roadsides. **Notes:** Diffuse knapweed similar, but lacks dark spots on flower bracts.



**ST. JOHNSWORT:** **Weed:** Local noxious. Perennial. **Leaves:** Opposite, oblong, black dots along margin. **Stems:** 1 to 3 feet tall. Smooth, branched, erect, somewhat two-edged. **Flowers:** Bright yellow, five-petaled. Black dots along margin. **Sites:** Rangeland in Black Hills area, roadsides, forests, and non-crop sites.

**Notes:** Considered a poisonous plant-acts as a photo sensitizer to livestock.

## PESTICIDE APPLICATOR LICENSING

*The state of South Dakota requires that anyone who uses any pesticide to control any pest other than in the home or garden to have a Pesticide Applicator license.*

There are two classes of Applicator certifications, Private and Commercial. A Private applicator is a person who uses any pesticide...for purposes of producing any agricultural commodity amounting to greater than \$1,000 gross sales potential per year (this includes grass, hay and/or livestock) on property owned or rented by him or his employer. Private applicator certification also includes applications on another's property if done in exchange for services, **not for hire**. The person who actually does the application is the one who must be certified. Applicators may initially certify by either attending private applicator certification training or by completing a **take home open book** exam.

Any applicator who applies any pesticide for hire, who applies any restricted use pesticide as part of their job responsibility but not for hire (i.e. an elevator employee fumigating grain), or a governmental employee who applies any pesticide as part of their job responsibility (i.e. a school janitor treating dandelions) must be certified as a Commercial applicator. Uncertified applicators may no longer work under **the direct supervision** of certified applicators. The person making the actual application must be certified and licensed. Applicators must be initially certified by passing the general exam and the category exams in the specific areas in which they make applications. These tests are taken at your local Extension office.

**Pesticides are classified into two main categories, general use and Restricted use. General use products are available for anyone to purchase. Products such as Roundup and 2-4D are general use. You must have a valid applicator license to purchase and use a Restricted use product.**

*Noxious weeds and pests infest millions of acres in the U.S. causing damage to crops; \$80 million annually. Invasive weeds cost the U.S. \$123 billion yearly. Custer County is estimated to have approximately 8% of 989,257 acres infested with noxious weed and pests.*

**Prevention:** Weed control is nearly always designed to prevent or suppress a weed infestation including:

**Biological weed control**—usually involves the use of insects and disease-causing agents that attack certain weed species. An example would be using the flea beetle to control Leafy Spurge.

**Cultural controls**—involve several kinds of practices that can be used in cultivated plants to make it more difficult for weeds to survive including: tillage, mowing, time of planting, nurse crops, burning, mulching, mowing, flooding and shading. Some weed problems can best be controlled with use of herbicide. New products are becoming more environmentally compatible and there are also organic chemicals on the market.

**Chemical Control**—Some weed problems can best be controlled with the use of herbicides. A Tordon and 2-4D mix can take care of most weeds such as Canada Thistle and Leafy Spurge, (in open areas), Plateau if around trees, and Milestone if around water areas. Other plants and areas may require other chemicals and strategies. You will need to have a pesticide applicator's license to purchase some chemicals-check with the Extension Service (673-4971) or the Weed & Pest office (673-5680).

## STATE WEED & PEST LISTS

*Article 12:62:03:01.06 declares the following weeds as Statewide Noxious:*

- 1) Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- 2) Hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*)
- 3) Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- 4) Perennial sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
- 5) Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- 6) Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*)
- 7) Saltcedar (*Tamarix aphylla*, *T. chinensis*, *T. gallica*, *T. parviflora* and *T. ramosissima*)

*Article 12:62:03:07 declares the following weeds and pests as Locally Noxious:*

- 1) Absinth wormwood (*Artemesia absinthium*)
- 2) Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
- 3) Chickory (*Cichorium intybus*)
- 4) Common burdock (*Arctium minus*)
- 5) Common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)
- 6) Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)
- 7) Dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*)
- 8) Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)
- 9) Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
- 10) Giant knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*)
- 11) Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)
- 12) Musk and Plumeless thistles (*Carduus nutans* and *C. acanthoides*)
- 13) Poison hemlock (*Conium maculate*)
- 14) Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*)
- 15) Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*)
- 16) Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*)
- 17) St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- 18) Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgare*)
- 19) Mountain Pine Beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*)

**Control of a statewide Noxious weed is required regardless of where the weed occurs in South Dakota. Control of a Locally Noxious weed is encouraged across the state and is required in those counties which have designated the weed as Locally Noxious. A county board may select weeds or pests from the Locally Noxious list or may request the declaration of other weeds that meet the requirements of §§ 12:62:07:01 and 12:62:07:02.**



*the following is the legal notice of landowners/occupants responsibilities:*

## **NOTICE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL NOXIOUS WEEDS AND DECLARED PESTS**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** pursuant to [SDCL 38-22](#) as amended to all landowner, occupants, agents and public officials in charge of lands in Custer County South Dakota, that they are responsible for the suppression, control, and eradication of noxious weeds and declared pests infestations that may exist on such lands.

Chemical, biological, and/or cultural control methods used for the suppression, control and eradication of noxious weed and declared pest infestations shall be those approved for such purposes by the Custer County Weed & Pest Supervisor, county Agricultural Extension Agent or the South Dakota State University Experiment Station.

Upon failure to observe this notice the County Weed and Pest Board is required to proceed pursuant to the law and have the noxious weeds or declared pests destroyed by such methods as they may find necessary, the expense of which shall constitute a lien and be entered as a tax against the land, and be collected as other real estate taxes are collected, or by other means as provided by law.

Plant and animals designated as being noxious weeds and declared pests in the State of South Dakota are Leafy Spurge, Salt Cedar, Perennial Sow Thistle, Russian Knapweed, Hoary Cress, Canada Thistle, Purple Loosestrife, and Gypsy Moth.

In addition [St. Johnswort](#), [Spotted Knapweed](#), [Salt Cedar](#) have been approved by the State Weed and Pest Control Commission as locally declared noxious weeds, (indicated noxious weed or declared pest) are subject to the same suppression, control and eradication requirements as the before mentioned plants and animals.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that upon establishing probable cause to believe a noxious weed or declared pest infestation exists upon any property in Custer County, a representative of the Custer County Weed and Pest Control Board will enter upon said property for the purpose of inspection and confirmation that such infestation actually exists.

**Pursuant to Statutes:** [38-22-12](#). Administration of state weed and pest program. The state weed and pest coordinator shall administer the state weed and pest program formulated by the South Dakota Weed and Pest Control Commission.

**Source:** [SL 1945, ch 349, § 5](#); [SDC Supp 1960, § 62.0305](#); [SL 1983, ch 282, § 14](#).

[38-22-16](#). Infested land declared public nuisance—Protective operations by secretary. If any owner of weed or pest infested land fails to rid the land of such infestation and the secretary of agriculture finds that such infestation is a menace to neighboring lands or to the state or its people he may declare such infested land to constitute a public nuisance and may enter such infested areas and perform such protective operations as may be necessary.

**Source:** [SL 1945, ch 349, § 8](#), [SL 1949, ch 437, SDC Supp 1960, § 62.0308](#); [SL 1970 ch 225, § 5](#); [SL 1983, ch 282, § 16](#).

[38-22-16.1](#). Weeds or pest in any amount considered infestation. The existence of weeds or pest in any amount or quantity upon land is sufficient to determine that such land is infested.

**Source:** [SL 1970, ch 225, § 2](#); [SL 1983, ch 282, § 17](#).

**38-22-16.2.** Property owner who allows spread of infestation of noxious weeds or mountain pine beetle responsible for remedy. If an infestation of noxious weeds or an infestation of mountain pine beetle spreads to adjacent private or public land, the person or entity owning the property from which the infestation spread is responsible for remedying the problems caused by the infestation, to the extent that the person or entity is responsible for allowing the infestation to spread to the adjacent private or public land.

**38-22-16.3 Source:** SL 2000, ch 202, § 1.

**38-22-17.** Notice to owner of infested land—Service—Contents. No operations to rid lands of infestation may be undertaken pursuant to § 38-22-16 until notice of the declaration that such infested land constitutes a nuisance has been given to the owner. Notice shall be given by personal service upon the owner, if a resident of this state, a copy of the declaration filed in the office of the county auditor, in the manner that summons in civil actions are served, or by personal service upon the person in actual possession of the premises, together with a copy of the declaration provided for in § 38-22-16, that unless the owner complies with the orders of the secretary of agriculture within such time as the declaration states, which may be not less than three days nor more than fifteen days from the date of service, as specified in the notice, that protective operations shall be performed by the secretary and, if the owner does not pay the costs of such operations prior to the first day of November in the year in which the operations are performed, the cost shall become a lien against the lands of the owner.

**Source:** SL 1945, ch 349, § 8; SL 1949, ch 437; SDC Supp 1960, § 62.0308; SL 1983, ch 282 § 18.

**38-22-17.1.** Noncompliance with orders as misdemeanor. It is a Class 2 misdemeanor for any owner, occupant, or other person who maintains or exercises control or management over land to fail to comply with any order of the secretary of agriculture or the South Dakota Weed and Pest Control Commission to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

**Source:** SL 1970, ch 225, § 3; SL 1977, ch 190, § 333; SL 1983, ch 282, § 19.

**38-22-18.** Service of notice on nonresident owner of infested land. If the owner of infested land is not a resident of South Dakota, service of notice may be made by posting such notice at the courthouse in the county in which the land is situated, and by mailing to the last known address of the owner. Service is deemed complete five days after the date of the posting and mailing of the notices, which shall be evidenced by the affidavit of a person qualified to serve civil process in this state to be filed with the county auditor. However personal service upon the owner outside of this state is sufficient.

**Source:** SL 1949, ch 437; SDC Supp 1960, § 62.0308; SL 1983, ch 282, § 20.

**38-22-21.** Certification to county auditor of cost of protective operations on infested land—Collection as taxes. Upon completion of protective operations, the secretary of agriculture shall certify to the county auditor the expenses for the performance of the protective operations, and the county auditor shall issue a warrant to the party entitled to payment of the costs of such protective operations from funds appropriated for that purpose. The owner of such infested land is indebted to the county for such expense actually incurred, and if not paid on or before the first day of November following such operations, such county auditor shall extend the amount of such indebtedness on the tax list against the infested land and all land owned by such owner contiguous thereto, in a separate column headed “weed and pest control” and the amount shall be collected as other taxes are collected.

**Source:** SL 1890, ch 116, § 4; RPoIC 1903, § 3179; SL 1913, ch 282, § 4; SL 1917, ch 319, § 4; RC 1919, § 10408; SDC 1939, § 62.0304; SL 1945, ch 349, § 8; SL 1949, ch 437; SDC Supp 1960, § 62.0308; SL 1974, ch 256; SL 1983, ch 282, § 23.

38-22-22.1. Responsibility for weed and pest control. All provisions, requirements, and responsibility for weed and pest control included in this chapter apply to all state government agencies and subdivisions on lands, highways, and roads owned, managed, maintained, or supervised by the government entity.

**Source:** SL 1998, ch 248, § 1.

38-22-23.12. Investigation of suspected land—Notice required for entry. If a county weed and pest board has probable cause to believe there is land upon which exist weeds or pests that may spread or contribute to the injury or detriment of others, it shall investigate the suspected premises. The designated representative of the board, after giving the landowner written notice, may go upon the premises without interference or obstruction for purposes of making a reasonable investigation of the infested area. Such notice is considered given if it is given to the landowner or operator personally at least one day before entry or if it is mailed, by certified mail, addressed to the last known address of the landowner at least five days before entry. A board may serve notice of intent to inspect on all landowners by publishing a legal notice of such intent at least thirty days before entry in the county's official newspaper.

**Source:** SL 1983, ch 282, § 37; SL 1984, ch 266, § 5.

38-22-23.13. Resolution of board confirming infestation and stating remedial requirements—Service on owner—Termination of resolution. If the suspected area is found to contain weeds or pest, the county weed and pest board, by resolution adopted by a majority of its members, shall confirm such fact and set forth minimum remedial requirements for control of the area. The board shall mail, by certified mail, to the address of the landowner, a copy of the resolution, a statement of the approximate cost of fulfilling the requirements, and a request that the requirements contained in the resolution be carried out at the owner's expense within a designated period of time. When the board is satisfied that the requirements have been met, the board shall terminate the resolution and file a copy of the termination with the register of deeds.

**Source:** SL 1983, ch 282, § 38; SL 2005, ch 213, § 1.

38-22-23.14. Remedial action by board on owner's failure—Certification of expenses—Collection. If the landowner fails or refuses to perform as required within the time designated, the county weed and pest board may proceed to perform the requirements. The board shall certify its expenses to the county auditor, and the auditor shall bill the landowner for the amount of the expenses, plus an administrative fee of fifty dollars or ten percent of the cost of control, whichever is greater. If the landowner has not paid the bill by November first of the calendar year in which the expenses were incurred, the amount of the bill shall be further increased by ten percent, and the adjusted amount shall be charged as taxes against each tract of land on which the expenses were incurred. The adjusted amount shall be collected as other taxes and credited to the general fund.

**Source:** SL 1983, ch 282, § 39; SL 1996, ch 247; SL 2001, ch 217, § 2.

38-22-23.16. Penalty for failure to reimburse board for requested operations. If the county weed and pest board is requested by an individual to perform weed and pest control operations on the individual's property and the individual fails to reimburse the county by November first in the year in which the operations are performed, the cost of the control, plus an administrative fee of fifty dollars or ten percent of the cost of control, whichever is greater, shall be charged as taxes against each tract of land on which the expenses were incurred pursuant to § 38-22-23.14.

**Source:** SL 2001, ch 217, § 1.

38-22-23.17. Civil penalty for continued failure to perform minimum remedial requirements. Any owner, occupant, or other person who maintains or exercises control or management over land who is issued a resolution by the county weed and pest board pursuant to § 38-22-23.13 for three consecutive years and fails to perform the minimum



remedial requirements for control is subject to a civil penalty of up to five hundred dollars. Any owner, occupant, or other person who maintains or exercises control or management over land on which the county weed and pest board has performed remedial requirements pursuant to § 38-22-23.14 for three consecutive years is subject to a civil penalty of up to five hundred dollars.

**Source:** SL 2001, ch 217, § 3.

*To control weeds that are growing, be sure that the plants are susceptible to the weed control method you choose. In some situations a combination of methods is advisable. For example: biological in combination with herbicides, i.e. integrated control, is used to control the perimeter of the infestation.*

*Be a good neighbor and control your noxious weeds and pests in Custer County. Thousands of dollars are spent each year by landowners to control noxious weeds and pests on their property. If you fail to treat them on your property, they may re-infest your neighbor's treated area. State statutes require landowners to control infestations of noxious weeds and pests. In some cases landowners may be liable in a civil suit. (Legal descriptions are printed in the local newspaper in April of each year.)*

*The Custer County Weed & Pest Board/Department/County Commissioners appreciate the continued cooperation of landowners, both private and public, in the management of weeds and pests in Custer County. Management is an ongoing process sometimes requiring treatments lasting over many years. We continue to monitor for best practices/methods and are available to provide information and spraying services to any entity requiring assistance. (There is financial assistance available through grant funds, so please inquire and apply.)*

*If you have any questions about enforcement procedures, state/local listed noxious weeds, identification, treatment options, protocol, statutes, functions and services please call, stop at our office, e-mail or mail your request. Internet information is also available, we can provide sites if requested. Thank you for your cooperation and we invite you to stop in and meet the department staff.*



**Custer Conservation District**  
**25365 U.S. Highway 385**  
**Custer, SD 57730**



**T 605-673-5680**

**F 605-673-3028**

sandra.walker@sd.nacdn.net

**Mission:** The mission of the Custer Conservation District is to provide leadership and administer programs to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment.

**Department Function:** The function of the Conservation District is to take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so they meet the needs of the local land users.

Conservation is everyone's business! It means the protection of our natural resources. We cannot control the supply of air we breathe or the sunshine that warms the earth. But we can influence the supplies of our other natural resources—soil, water, grass lands, forests, minerals and wildlife. Conservation means managing these resources so they may be used wisely by the greatest number of people over the longest period of time; for the renewable resources, it means being able to use them into perpetuity.

In discussing the conservation district "standard act", Secretary Henry Wallace wrote in 1936, "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself. The soil is indispensable. Heedless wastage of the wealth which nature has stored in the soil cannot long continue without the effects being felt by every member of the society". He continued, "Wind and water are seldom harmful when the natural environment is undisturbed. But when soil resources are used unwisely, wind and water write a tragic story in dust storms and in muddy rivers that carry the good soil into the ocean". These thoughts are as applicable today as in 1936.

While progress in conservation has been made since their words were written, much remains to be done. New technologies introduce new problems and a new generation of Americans must be educated. The supervisors of conservation districts carry a heavy responsibility in the stewardship of the natural resources of this State and Nation.

Conservation Districts are democracy in action. The Districts are legal subdivisions of State Government, organized under the South Dakota Conservation Districts Law. They are organized by a vote of the people within the District and are managed by a board of supervisors, all elected by the people. Meetings are held the first Monday of every month at the Custer County Highway Department conference room at 25365 U.S. Highway 385, 1 mile south of Custer. The meetings begin at 8 A.M. and are always open to the public.



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CUSTER COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NO. 13

*(Published in 1969)*

The area of the district includes the entire county except those areas within the Harney National Forest, Custer State Park, and Wind Cave Park, and covers approximately 500,000 acres.

The topography of the land within the district varies from rough forested areas along the west side to the badland breaks of the Cheyenne River on the eastern boundary. In between these two extremes, the area is divided between four main drainage ways. The valleys along these drainages are level to gently sloping. Between the valleys, the topography varies from level plateau to steep rolling hills. And the western part of the district is primarily mountainous with timbered areas interspersed with open valleys and "parks". Most of the open areas are agricultural lands included in farms and ranches. The additional land in farms and ranches includes timbered range land.

The drainage of the area is to the east into the Cheyenne River through several creeks; the chief ones are Spring Creek, Battle Creek, and French Creek, which along with their tributaries and main springs provide a good source of water.

The district is in a low rainfall area with an average of about 18 inches per year, with most of it coming during the growing season.

The soils are extremely variable. In the more level areas of the Hills, the soils are composed of alluvial deposits of a silty nature and very susceptible to water erosion. Along the foothills, much of the area is rough and stony and very erodible. The soils of the remainder of the district are Pierre clays and Pierre loams on the uplands and more silty loams in the valleys. The clays have slow water penetration and are, therefore, quite subject to water erosion. However, all of the soils are very productive with favorable moisture conditions.

The original vegetative cover consisted of good perennial sod-forming grasses, such as buffalo grass, grama grasses, western wheat grass, needle grasses, and some sedges. There were also annuals and perennials of lesser values, together with wild legumes and a few shrubs. And in the hills are the pines, spruce, aspens, and many kinds of browse.

The agriculture is primarily livestock and livestock feed production over the entire area. Some cash grain and some feed grain is grown, but not extensively. Also, considerable alfalfa is grown. There were about 500 operators in the county with units ranging from a few acres to 6,000 acres.

The operators were looking for some way to stabilize their operations. In the past they were too much at the mercy of the elements—they could not depend on a profitable operation. If they could only utilize more of the water and could keep the land from washing and blowing, that would alleviate some of their problems. And so a group got together and decided that if they had a Soil Conservation District, they might find a solution to some of their problems.

The Land Use Planning Committee passed a resolution proposing that a Soil Conservation District be formed in the county, and pledged their support.

A temporary committee of twelve members was set up on July 16, 1940, to start the movement rolling. They circulated petitions asking for a hearing. A hearing was held August 27, 1940, with favorable reaction. The referendum was held November 2 with a very favorable vote.

Then on November 29, 1946, the remainder of the county was added to the Custer County Soil Conservation District.



**The problems as set forth in the program of work for the district were:**

- Soil highly eroded in valleys where good land is limited
- Feed and water in short supply
- Cover destroyed by drought and hoppers
- Water erosion and gulleys
- Too much water runs away
- Need more livestock water facilities
- Ranges and pastures overgrazed

**The supervisors propose to solve these problems by means of the following practices:**

- Improving and modernizing the irrigation systems
- Save and use more of the water through diversions and water spreading systems
- Make use of technical help available
- Use contours and terraces on cropland and some grazing lands
- Regrassing of some cropland
- Dams for livestock water
- Dams for water spreading systems
- Better distribution of grazing on range land
- Build water spreading systems through the use of dams, dikes, terraces and spreader ditches

*Taken from History of South Dakota Conservation Districts published in 1969.*



Photos by South Dakota Tourism

# Black Hills National Forest

## Your Home in the Woods

### **THE NATIONAL FOREST AS A NEIGHBOR**

Many acres of private land are interspersed within the Black Hills National Forest. If you own one of these parcels or are considering buying one, this article is designed to let you know what you can expect as a neighbor to a National Forest and when you may need to contact your local Forest Service office for more information.

National Forests are lands open to the public. These lands are, by law, managed by the Forest Service to provide a continuing flow of goods and services, including recreational opportunities, minerals, grazing, timber and wildlife habitat. Those who own property adjacent to the Forest can expect to witness management activities and public uses that reflect this multiple use mandate.

**The information contained here addresses the most commonly asked questions concerning private land within the Black Hills National Forest.**

### **PROPERTY BOUNDARIES**

The most valuable advice we can give you is to have a property line survey conducted by an accredited surveyor. The fence you think is on the property line may not be. The site where you'd most like to build your dream home may be partially on the forest. If existing improvements are found to be on the forest, or if you inadvertently construct new ones that encroach onto the National Forest, they will have to be removed. Avoid costly mistakes by knowing exactly where your property lines are — don't rely on existing fences or a non-accredited description of your property lines.

### **ACCESS TO YOUR PROPERTY**

If it is possible to reach your property by crossing neighboring private land, you will need to pursue such access. If your land is completely surrounded by National Forest, you will need a special use permit to authorize you to construct or use an access road, and the Forest Service is required by law to charge a fee for such road usage. Land developers generally need to provide access to the land they subdivide, and in all cases, access possibilities across private land must be exhausted before we can consider access across the Forest. If in doubt, contact your local District Ranger for specific advice on your situation.

### **WHO MAINTAINS THE ROAD?**

Road maintenance may be of great concern to you. Because maintenance standards and responsibilities differ throughout the forest, you need to be aware of what these are in your area. Some roads are maintained



by road maintenance associations (groups of landowners who tax themselves or pay a yearly fee), and some roads are maintained by the Forest Service or by the county. The Forest Service maintains roads for multiple use purposes, not for access to private property. We do not plow snow and we might not maintain the roads in your area to a standard that meets your needs. If you need a higher standard road or wish to plow or maintain the road, please contact your local Forest Service office to see what options may be available to you.

### **WHAT ABOUT FIRE PROTECTION?**

Wildfires have damaged property, destroyed homes and taken human life in the Black Hills! You are responsible for reducing fire risk on your property and protecting your home and investment. Use fire resistant building materials, clear vegetation and other fuel away from structures, thin your trees, and provide proper access so fire trucks can reach your property. Complete information is available through [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) or by contacting the **South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire Suppression** at **(605) 393-8011**, or the **Wyoming State Forestry Division** at **(307)746-4261**.

### **WHO PROVIDES LAW ENFORCEMENT?**

The County Sheriff is responsible for protecting residents and personal property in your area. Any illegal activity on your property should be reported to the County Sheriff's Department. Laws involving wildlife and fish resources are enforced by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The Forest Service is responsible for enforcing laws regarding forest resource protections and violations should be reported to your local Forest Service office. Regardless of the agency, officers are responsible for large areas of land and their response time may not be as quick as you would prefer. Please work with them and be patient – they're doing the best they can with limited resources.

### **GETTING UTILITIES TO YOUR PROPERTY**

You may be thinking of building a new home, or updating the services at an existing home. There are some things you need to be aware of about getting utility lines, such as power, telephone, internet, and gas to your property. Access possibilities across adjacent private lands must be exhausted before we will consider access across the Forest. If your land is completely surrounded by National Forest, the affected utility company will need a special use permit to authorize installation of utilities lines to your property. If in doubt, contact your local Forest Service office for specific advice on your situation.

### **YOUR USE OF ADJACENT NATIONAL FOREST LANDS**

Your right to use National Forest lands adjacent to your property is the same as any other citizen – you





may use and enjoy the Forest subject to a few restrictions designed to protect the area. You can hike, mountain bike or ride horseback almost anywhere on the Forest but you can't construct roads, trails or gates. Motorized use must not result in resource damage. Some roads and trails are only open seasonally. Maps are available at each Forest Service office showing when roads and trails are open. You can hunt and fish according to regulations set by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks. You can cut firewood after first obtaining a permit and you can remove other Forest products subject to the same permitting procedures applicable to all citizens. Cultural resources, such as Indian artifacts, old cabins, and old dump sites are protected by law. We suggest that you contact the local Forest Service office to discuss your opportunities and obligations.

### **MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ADJACENT TO YOUR PROPERTY**

National Forests are managed for a multitude of uses. Some activities that may occur adjacent to your property include: timber harvest, control of insects and weeds, prescribed burning, mineral extraction, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat management and various recreational activities. Disposal of small tracts of National Forest land, while not common, may occur. It is possible that exchanges or sales of such land could happen adjacent to your property. Your local Forest Service office can give you an idea on what activities to expect in your area.

### **WHO MAINTAINS THE FENCE?**

Livestock grazing is authorized on most of the Black Hills National Forest and may occur adjacent to your property. Grazing permittees are not required under federal regulations to build and/or maintain fence to keep permitted livestock off private land. You may, at your own expense and on your own land, create barriers or build fence to keep livestock off your private land. If you intend to graze your own livestock on your property, you are responsible to ensure your animals do not cross onto National Forest land.

### **HAZARDS NEAR YOUR PROPERTY**

There is always the potential for branches or even entire trees to fall over from time to time. The Forest Service does not manage individual trees that may pose as a hazard to your private property. If you are concerned about individual trees, or any other hazards on Forest land adjacent to your property, please contact your local Forest Service office to discuss how these can be addressed.

### **TREATING NOXIOUS WEEDS**

The Forest Service has an active Noxious Weed Treatment Program. While we coordinate with local counties, we do not treat noxious weeds on private land. Landowners are responsible for the prevention and treatment of noxious weeds on their property. Many counties have resources to assist landowners in identifying, preventing and treating noxious weeds.

## MANAGING YOUR FOREST LAND

Professional assistance in managing your private forest land is available from Wyoming State Forestry Division at **(307) 746-4261**, or South Dakota Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry at **(605) 394-2395**.

## OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- You will be responsible for costs associated with your access or utility requests and permitting.
- Management of the National Forest is dynamic. Please contact your local Forest Service office to verify the information in this publication.

## BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST

### Supervisor's Office

1019 N. 5th St.

Custer, SD 57730

(605) 673-9200

TTY (605) 673-9227

### Bearlodge Ranger District

121 S. 21st St., Box 680

Sundance, WY 82729

(307) 283-1361

### Hell Canyon District

330 Mt. Rushmore Road

Custer, SD 57730

(605) 673-4853

### In Newcastle, WY please contact

Custer, SD office:

### Mystic Ranger District

8221 S. Highway 16

Rapid City, SD 57702

(605) 343-1567

### Northern Hills Ranger District

2014 N. Main St.

Spearfish, SD 57783

(605) 642-4622

*\*Editor's Note: Before you burn on your property you must have a permit. A burning permit can be obtained at the local Forest Service office.*



# City of Custer

622 Crook Street  
Custer, SD 57730

**Auditor (Finance) Office—605-673-4824**

**Drivers License Examiner—(Toll Free)1-800-952-3696**

**Mayor's Office—605-673-4824**

**Municipal Water Dept.—605-673-4824**

**Waste Water Treatment Plant—605-673-2638**

**Custer City Swimming Pool—605-673-3935**

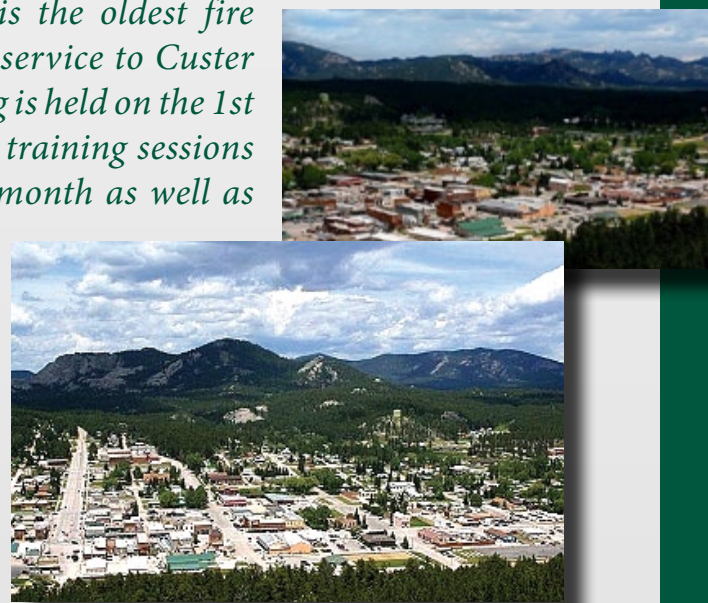
**Animal Control Officer—605-673-5555**

There was no town of Custer until **August 10, 1875**. Gen. George Cook persuaded the miners who were illegally in the area to leave until the Black Hills became opened to white settlement. Cook allowed the assembled miners to lay out and name a town and allowed seven men to remain in the area to protect their mining claims. The town was laid out one mile square with a picket rope and pocket compass. Lots were numbered and the miners present drew for the lot they could claim when the area would be opened for settlement. When it came to naming the town, veterans of the Civil War who had served in the Union Army suggested the name of Custer to honor the general who had made a reputation for himself.

The City of Custer provides water, sewer and garbage service to the residential customers. The commercial customers are provided with only water and sewer. Commercial customers are required to get their own garbage service while the City hires a contractor for the residential garbage. Anyone requesting utility services from the City of Custer is required to make a deposit. For utility rates and garbage pickup locations, please call the office. Water meter readings may be submitted online as a convenience to the customers.

## Custer Volunteer Fire Department

*Established in 1879 the Custer Fire Department is the oldest fire department in the state. 2004 marked 125 years of service to Custer City and the surrounding areas. The business meeting is held on the 1st Tuesday of every month at the fire station. Regular training sessions are scheduled on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month as well as special sessions held on other day. The department responds to an average of 150 emergencies per year, with the year of 2002 reaching 200 incident responses. These range from actual fires in both structural and wild land settings to hazardous materials spills to assisting the Custer Ambulance Service. Anyone wishing to join the Custer Fire Department may speak to any one of the City of Custer offices to receive the necessary information.*





# OTHER CUSTER COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## **HERMOSA, SOUTH DAKOTA**

*Custer County, South Dakota*

**Hermosa, Town of—605-255-4291**

**Hermosa Fire Department—605-255-4747 or 911 for Emergencies**

**Hermosa County Shop—605-255-4119**

Hermosa, located east of the city of Custer, is an incorporated town with elected officials. The elevation is 3,327 feet and the population is 315.

## **BUFFALO GAP, SOUTH DAKOTA**

*Custer County, South Dakota*

**Buffalo Gap, Town of—605-833-2481**

**Buffalo Gap County Shop—605-833-2220**

Buffalo Gap is located in the southeastern part of Custer County. Buffalo Gap's elevation is 3,261 feet and the population was 164 in the 2000 census.

## **FAIRBURN, SOUTH DAKOTA**

*Custer County, South Dakota*

**Fairburn Post Office—605-255-4349**

**Fairburn Community School District—605-255-4349**

The town of Fairburn is located in eastern Custer County. Fairburn has an elevation of 3,301 feet and the population was 80 in the 2000 census.

## **PRINGLE, SOUTH DAKOTA**

*Custer County, South Dakota*

Pringle is located south of the city of Custer and has an elevation of 4,882 feet. The population was 125 in the 2000 census.

## **DEWEY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

A small community located in the southwestern corner of Custer County. The elevation at Dewey is 3,714 feet.

# CUSTER COUNTY INFORMATION AND OFFICES

**Planning & Economic Development**  
**420 Mount Rushmore Road**  
**Custer, SD 57730**  
**T 605-673-8174**  
**F 605-673-8150**

## **Mission:**

**Planning:** Assist landowners and developers to improve their property in a manner that complies with state statutes and county ordinances. **Economic Development:** Facilitate activities to improve the Custer County economy.

## **Department Description and Function:**

The Planning Department provides information and education to the public concerning development of property in Custer County. The Department regulates the subdivision and use of land, issues building permits, and inspects roads and septic systems.

County governments are not able to provide the same level of service that city governments provide. The following information is provided to help you make an educated and informed decision when purchasing rural land.

## **ACCESS**

Emergency response times cannot be guaranteed. Under some extreme conditions, you may find that emergency response is extremely slow and expensive.

There can be problems with the legal aspects of access, especially if you gain access across property owned by others. It is wise to obtain legal advice to understand easements that may be necessary when these questions arise.

Maintenance and maintenance costs can create problems. Make sure you know what type of maintenance to expect and who will provide the maintenance.

Potential landowners should determine if the roads for the property were properly engineered and constructed.

A potential building site must have an adequate roadway for access by construction vehicles.

School buses travel only maintained county roads designated by the school district as school bus routes. It may be necessary to drive the student to the nearest county road to meet a school bus.

Subdivision roads are the responsibility of the landowners. The county maintains only county roads.

Check with the County Highway Department when the seller indicates the road will soon be paved.

If property is associated with a road district, obtain a copy of the by-laws for the district.

Check with the postmaster to see if mail delivery is available. Also, check for newspaper delivery.

## **UTILITY SERVICES**

Check with the local phone company to see what services they provide to the location.

The property may offer sewer service, check on the expense. A sewer system can be expensive and depends on the type of soil, proper area for a leach field, etc. Call the County Planning office for assistance.

What is the source of water for the property? Drilling a well can be costly. Water is not available in some areas except by hauling and storage in a cistern. Research the water supply issue extensively.

Electrical service and telephone service is not available to every area. These services need to be researched.

Also consider power outages and if you will need a backup power source. Easements for utility lines may be necessary for many of the needed services.

Trash removal is more expensive in a rural setting. Again, do the research.

## **THE PROPERTY**

Not all property will support an affordable building site. Check with The Planning Department to find what restrictions may apply to the parcel.

Easements may require you to allow construction of roads and utility lines to cross the property. Check with the Custer County Planning for easement information.

Property lines may be inaccurate unless surveyed by a licensed surveyor. A surveyor can confirm the exact location for a fence.

Mineral rights and water rights on available property need to be researched.

Many subdivisions have covenants that will restrict the use of the property. Obtain a copy of the covenants to make certain you can live within the rules. A lack of covenants can lead to conflicts in the neighborhood. The same is true of homeowners associations; obtain a copy of the by-laws.

Be aware the view from your property can change; check with the Planning Department to find if there are developments planned in that area.

Will the water rights purchased with the land provide for your needs?

Water flowing across your property does not necessarily mean you can use it-you must also research the water rights. Consider the possible danger to your family if you decide to locate your home near flowing water.

## **MOTHER NATURE**

Physical characteristics and possible negatives are: Trees/Fire, Water/Flood, Severe Weather/Landslides & Rockslides, and Soils/Heaving Basements & Septic System Problems.

Rural development encroaches on the habitat of wildlife. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance.

*For information call the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks at (605-673-5508)*



# Custer County Highway Department

## 25365 U.S. Highway 385

### Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-5678

F 605-673-8166

Monday-Thursday 6 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

*There are a variety of road authorities in Custer County. It is important to understand who is responsible for which road. The State of South Dakota maintains most of the asphalt roads in our area. When you see a road sign in Custer County it will have the symbol of the responsible road authority next to the road name. South Dakota's Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for roads with the SD State logo or US Government shield next to the road name. The SD DOT Custer Area Engineer is Rich Zacher and the office number is 605-673-4948.*

*Custer County maintains approximately 408 miles of mostly gravel roads. Any road name sign with our blue shield with yellow numbers within the shield signifies a road maintained by our department. Not all gravel roads are maintained by Custer County. There are many miles of US Forest Service, Custer State Park and US Department of Interior roads maintained by those agencies. Their symbols are US Forest Service shield, Dept. of Interior arrowhead, and Custer State Park buffalo.*



*There are many miles of public roads that are maintained by road districts or the folks who live along them, or some that are not maintained at all. Please be sure to check who maintains the roads if you find property you are interested in purchasing. We regularly hear of folks being told that some public agency maintains a road when, in fact that is not the case. Be aware that in the winter months you could get on a road that has no snow removal, an error that could cost you your life.*



## GRAVEL MAINTENANCE

We ask that you drive our roads with caution-many of our roads are very narrow and in need of widening and resurfacing. Obey posted speed limits. Overdriving the conditions and poor visibility from dust is the main cause of most accidents. Our snow removal policy states we will plow when we receive 4" or more of snow - less is difficult to remove and will take a lot of gravel with the snow. With the variation of the terrain and elevation weather can differ from one side of the county to the other. Please do not hesitate to call if you feel a road needs special attention.

## BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

In choosing your building site please be cognizant of the dust from a gravel road and choose a site as far back on the property as possible. Consider that our prevailing winds are from the northwest when locating your home near the gravel road. The Highway Department typically applies magnesium chloride or "mag water" to any road which the Highway Dept. feels requires treatment to minimize maintenance costs. You may request an application of magnesium chloride on a county road by your residence. If the road does not meet the maintenance costs standard we will share the cost with you. In **2007** the cost was **\$.50** per lineal foot of road. We also provide mag water to road districts at our cost of **\$1.00 per lineal foot**. If the area receives a lot of moisture on a previously "magged" road it will be slippery especially if we have prepared the gravel in anticipation of the moisture needed to properly smooth it.

## CONCLUSION

Dust will continue to be a problem-our calls for dust control exceed our snow calls by a huge factor. Dry conditions are normal and we are experiencing our 8th year of a drought. Maintenance will cause more dust and the problem will not abate until we get moisture. Call us with your concerns but please try to understand the issues we face each day. Please be assured we try to balance everyone's interests for the general good.

**Department of Equalization**  
**420 Mount Rushmore Road**  
**Custer, SD 57730**

**T 605-673-8170**

**F 605-673-8148**

The Director of Equalization Office locates, identifies and appraises all taxable property, in accordance with the state laws, while maintaining current information on the ownership and characteristics of property; and to prepare, defend and certify the overall and individual property assessments. Property assessments are based on fair market value of the property and are determined by the sales comparison method of value. In South Dakota, any appraiser that values property for assessment purposes must be certified by the Department of Revenue.

The Director of Equalization Office is transforming its operation and responsibilities to take full advantage of the forthcoming Geographic Information System (GIS) and the new Computer Aided Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system.

## Auditors Office 420 Mt. Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8173  
F 605-673-8150

The Auditor's Office provides a number of services to the citizens of the County. The primary responsibility of the Auditor is the auditing of all financial records of the County. The office is also responsible for the apportioning of taxes collected by the Treasurer to be disbursed to the schools, cities, and other special assessment entities. The office is in charge of Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Payroll, Beer and Liquor Licensing, Budgets, Tax Levy, and Official Recorder of minutes for the Board of County Commissioners. The office maintains all voter records and administers all elections at the county level or above.

### VOTING LOCATIONS FOR CUSTER COUNTY RESIDENTS:

<i>Precinct</i>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Hermosa</b>	United Church of Christ
<b>Fairburn</b>	Community & Historical Center (old school building)
<b>Buffalo Gap</b>	Town Hall (old bank building)
<b>Pringle</b>	Civic Center
<b>Sentinel Hill</b>	Custer County Annex Building
<b>Custer City #6</b>	Custer County Annex Building
<b>Custer City #7</b>	Custer County Annex Building
<b>Custer City #8</b>	Custer County Annex Building
<b>Bear Rock</b>	County Highway Department Building
<b>Elk Mountain</b>	Elk Mountain School

## Register of Deeds 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8171  
F 605-673-8148

**Mission:** Register of Deeds Office is responsible for filing and safeguarding all official documents for the county. Land documents and vitals are currently same day return.

**Department Description and Function:** The Register of Deeds office keeps all records of land transactions, copies of **DD-214**'s and various instruments authorized by law to be certified and available to the public. We also process passport applications for appropriate fees, issue marriage licenses for \$40.00 and issue certified copies of birth, death and marriage certificates for a fee of \$10.00.

# Treasurer's Office

## 420 Mount Rushmore Road

### Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8172

The Treasurer's office provides taxpayers the best possible services to meet the continual needs of Custer County. Custer County 2006 population was approximately 7950 which was an 89.2% increase from the 2000 U.S. Census figures.

The Treasurer's office is best known by the public for collecting property taxes. Property taxes account for the majority of revenue in the county budget. The Treasurer is not only responsible for collecting taxes for the county, but the city and school districts as well. **Real estate taxes are paid one year in arrears. First half of property taxes are due by April 30th, second half are due by October 31st.** Special assessments are due by April 30th also. Please bring your tax payment coupons with you or include them if you mail payments to the above address to ensure proper credit. Tax payments MUST be postmarked by April 30th and October 31st, respectively, or interest is automatically applied. Please notify our office of any changes to your mailing address.

For Citizens or Disabled Person tax assessment freeze, or further information regarding your real estate or mobile home taxes, please call the office.

Motor vehicle fees are also collected at the Treasurer's office. These include fees for vehicles, boats, snowmobiles, motorcycles, trailers, ATV's and 3% excise tax on new purchases.

South Dakota staggers registration renewals throughout the year depending on the first letter of the last name. Licenses are renewable up to 90 days prior to your expiration date. Please bring registrations or license plate numbers of each vehicle for renewal. When registering recently purchased vehicles, provide the SD drivers license or Social Security numbers of all individuals named on the title. Titles with open liens cannot be transferred. Liens are indicated on the front lower portion of the title, and are released at this office with a proper lien release from the lien holder. Our office also completes handicap vehicle permits, duplicate title applications, temporary and 30 day commercial permits.

#### VEHICLE LICENSING MONTH NAMES STARTING WITH:

MONTH	NAMES STARTING WITH:
• January	A,B
• February	C,D,E
• March	F,G,J
• May	H,I,O
• June	K,L
• July	M,N
• August	P,Q,R
• September	S
• November	T,U,V,W,X,Y,Z
• December	For all commercial plates



## Veterans Services

### 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8123

F 605-673-8150

**Mission:** To provide benefits and services to the veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to the Nation.

**Department Description and Function:** Administers the federal veteran's benefits programs through the Custer County Veterans Office, the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Benefits Administration, the National Cemetery System, and the Veterans Health Administration.

## Emergency Services

### 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

Director

T 605-673-8128

Communication Center

T 605-673-8176

F 605-673-3765

**Mission:** To lessen the impact of any natural or technological occurrence within Custer County and maximize life safety for its residents.

**Department Description and Function:**

*Emergency Management:* Dealing with the phases of planning, training, response, and recovery as they relate to exigent circumstance, emergency, and disaster. This includes the integration of all Homeland Security and grant funding inclusive in the process.

*Communications:* To provide 911 service and emergency communications to Custer County and surrounding areas.

## Clerk Of Courts

### 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-4816

# IST/GIS

## 420 Mount Rushmore Road

### Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8141

F 605-673-8150

**Mission:** Develop a database management system (DBMS) utilizing geographical information systems (GIX). The DBMS information will be made available at a future date.

**9-1-1-Addressing:** To create and maintain a comprehensive county-wide addressing system that meets state and federal statutory requirements, to support the efficient and timely provision of emergency service.

9-1-1 addressing has implemented a county-wide addressing system. The department issues new road names and addresses. The department also supports municipal, county, state, and federal emergency response and recovery services by maintaining an automated dispatch mapping system, by installing and maintaining street name signs, and producing emergency evacuation maps during fires and floods.

**Department Description and Function:** The office is organized to support management goals by analyzing data and information as related to parcels, points of interest, and roads within Custer County. The results are geographically mapped for presentation, visual organization and interpretation.

The E-9-1-1 system identifies addresses and locations to aid the Custer County Dispatchers in delivering emergency services to those in need. This is an automated system monitored 24/7. The system program funding is in part financed by the 75 cent fee charged to each telephone in service to the public. Addresses for the E-9-1-1 system are issued by this office when a grading permit is issued to a land owner by the County/City/Town as appropriate or when a tenant is identified by the telephone company and forwarded to this office. The numerical portion of the address is assigned by a formula and not subject to arbitration. The address is assigned after the location or point, determined by using a GPS unit, is identified. Road and driveway information is collected during this procedure. This allows easier identification of the location of an emergency and helps emergency responders to evaluate the need for resources to fit the reported emergency and route accordingly.

The Office of Information Systems & Technology has developed a base parcel layer that covers the whole county with polygons that are drawn around each parcel. The parcels are identified by legal descriptions and each have a unique number called a "record number or parcel identification number (PIN)". All of the information about each parcel is attached to the PIN. The information is selected individually or in groups. The system can be used to assess agricultural land by using the soil survey to identify the soils in a parcel. This method measures the ability of land to produce a crop or grass. Further, we can make maps for many uses: emergency, parcel location/ownership map, road/driveway access to a parcel from a location in the county, signing roads and mapping new plats. The ability to search is only limited by the data available.

**People can make an important contribution to the emergency and general system updates by informing this office of any changes, or lack thereof that would improve the accuracy of the data.**

**Telephone: 605-673-8141 or Email: [cuscogis@gwtc.net](mailto:cuscogis@gwtc.net) with the information.**

## Building & Grounds Maintenance 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8117  
F 605-673-8150

**Mission:** Our mission is to maintain and clean County property at the highest level possible with the time allowed.

**Department Description and Function:** The Custer County Building and Ground Maintenance Departments purpose is to provide cleaning and maintenance of the Custer County Courthouse, Custer County Courthouse Annex, Custer County Highway Shop, and the Custer County Sheriff's office. We are also responsible for the grounds maintenance at the above locations, and the Hermosa buildings and Buffalo Gap shops.

## Custer County States Attorney Office 420 Mount Rushmore Road Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-4816

## South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service-Custer County Office 447 Crook Street, Suite 1 Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-4971  
F 605-673-2385

**Mission:** To serve the people through an educational process that helps them improve their lives by applying unbiased, scientific knowledge focused on needs and issues.

**Department Description and Function:** Custer County Extension is a field office for South Dakota State University (SDSU) Cooperative Extension Services. We provide information, programming and community educational resources and leadership in Youth Development, Family & Consumer Science, Horticulture and Agriculture.





## Health Department 447 Crook Street, Suite 2 Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-2847

**Department Description:** The Community Health Services of Custer County provides a variety of services.

**WIC** is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and offers nutrition education and gives food checks to take to the grocery store for food like: milk, eggs, cheese, juice and cereal. The WIC program is a supplemental nutrition program provided for women who are or have been pregnant in the last six months or are breastfeeding a baby under the age of one, infants up to age one and children age one to five. Applicant must be a South Dakota resident and have a nutritional/medical risk. The applicant must qualify on income base. Income qualified mothers, infants and children who meet the criteria and are on Medicaid, Tanf, or food stamps automatically meet income guidelines.

**The Baby Care Program** which is an educational program for pregnant women to assist them in having a healthy pregnancy, labor and delivery.

**The Family Planning Program** provides education, counseling, nursing, medical and birth control services and is also an income based service.

**The Immunization Program** offers immunizations to all children 18 years of age and under.

General Health Services offer education on disease processes, blood pressure checks, tetanus vaccines, influenza vaccines.

## Sheriff's Department 31 South 5th Street Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-8146

The Custer County Sheriff's office was first established in April of 1877. The office today is comprised of the sheriff, 9 deputies and 2 reserve deputies who volunteer their services at a minimum of 8 hours each month. The community of Hermosa is served by a town marshal in addition to the services provided by the Sheriff's department.

The Custer area has undergone many changes since the frontier days of the 1870's. Today with a population of about 7275 people in the county, the population grows to over a million visitors during the summer tourist season. The fall season attracts elk hunters, deer hunters, and the first mountain lion season began in 2005. What used to be an area mainly comprised of loggers, miners, and ranchers has become largely a visitor attraction year around. There are still a number of loggers, miners and ranchers who still work very hard to make a living for their families.

The Custer County Sheriff's office is dedicated to protecting lives and property in our communities, preserving the peace, along with preventing crime and disorder. The men and women of the Sheriff's office strive to maintain the highest professional standards while delivering quality service to the citizens we serve.

# Custer County Library

## 447 Crook Street

### Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-3358

F 605-673-4803

**Mission:** The mission of the Custer County Library is to feature classic and current, high-demand materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages and abilities; to support individuals pursuing a sustained program of independent learning; and to encourage children to develop an interest in reading.

**Statement of Purpose:** The Custer County Library shall exist to provide citizens of Custer County with information and knowledge by selecting, purchasing, organizing and maintaining books, periodicals, and any other materials deemed usable for this purpose.

The library also encourages students continued reading during the months by providing a summer reading program as incentive. During the school year, a story hour for three to five year olds will be held to foster preschoolers' first love of reading.

Library cards are free of charge to county residents. We need one type of proof of county residence such as a cancelled utility bill, rental agreement, post office box receipt, or top of a check blank.



The library also proctors college tests for those seeking higher education and coordinates tutors for students requiring additional help. We also assist with basic education and a GED program.

**NOTE:** To better serve the eastern side of Custer County, a second library was opened in Hermosa in 2005. The library is open 20 hours a week and has over 3600 books, 2 high speed computers, wireless capability, audio books, CD's and videos. The library is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12:30 until 6:30 P.M. and is located at 234 Main Street.

**"Knowledge is free at the library. Just bring your own container."**

## Airport

### 12220 Aviation Way

### Custer, SD 57730

T 605-673-3874

**Mission:** The Custer County Airport provides air transportation services in support of economic development in the Custer, SD area.

**Department Description and Function:** Custer County Airport is a mountain airport sitting at 5600 feet above sea level. Density altitude is a concern on warm days. Call ahead for rental car services. 100LL and Jet A fuel is available by credit card 24 hours a day.



# Custer County's Landmarks and Points of Interest

## *Buffalo Gap National Grasslands*

Prior to the 1800's, the Grasslands were home to many American Indian tribes. Grass would have seemed limitless; rich, with a myriad of wildlife and birds. The Homestead Act of 1862 brought nearly six million settlers to or through the Great Plains. These homesteaders tried to replace native grass with crops. At the same time, domestic livestock was quickly replacing the vast bison herds once common to the Grasslands.

By the early 1930's the Great Plains, from North Dakota to Texas, were in trouble. Lands, that should not have been plowed or consistently grazed, yielded topsoil to the ever present dry winds of the prairie. Dust clouds rose over 20,000 feet and fine soil particles drifted like snow in a blizzard, burying fences, roads, livestock and homes. Due to the drought and the dire economic conditions of the time, many of the homesteaders could not stay on the land nor could they afford to move off of it. In an effort to help the people, the Federal government bought back the land from the homesteaders. The National Grasslands were born from those dark days.

The Buffalo Gap National Grassland is only one of twenty National Grasslands spread over 12 states comprising over 4 million acres. National Grasslands were designated by the Secretary of Agriculture and are permanently held and managed by the Forest Service for the Department of Agriculture. These are essentially identical to National Forests, except that grasslands are areas primarily consisting of prairie. Like National Forests, National Grasslands may be open for hunting, grazing, mineral extraction, recreation and other uses. The Buffalo Gap sustains livestock grazing for approximately 300 ranchers who graze approximately 25000 cattle.

The Buffalo Gap National Grassland comprises an area of 590,000 acres located in Custer, Fall River, Jackson, and Pennington Counties. It is named for the only break in a ring of foothills that surround the Black Hills. Bison traveled through this gap in their frequent migrations between the hills and the prairie. It is characterized

by gently rolling hills, but is perhaps best known for its badland topographic features and stringers of woodland draws.

Recreationists come here from all over the nation to hunt the Fairburn agates. The grasslands have been known by birders as an excellent place for bird watching opportunities, and the Buffalo Gap is no exception. Over two hundred species of birds are known to use or travel through the Buffalo Gap National Grassland in any given year.

For the sportsman, mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope and turkey are found on the area. Some limited upland gamebird opportunities exist, but this is seasonally dependant on the moisture received in any particular year. Several dozen stock dams also provide largemouth bass fishing opportunities.

There is one campground, the French Creek Campground, located approximately 10 miles east of the town of Fairburn. This primitive campground (no water), is adjacent to the Fairburn agate rock bed and the proposed Red Shirt Wilderness area. There are two proposed wilderness areas located within the Buffalo Gap; Red Shirt and Indian Creek

**For additional information about the Buffalo Gap National Grassland you may contact the following:**

**Fall River Ranger District  
National Grasslands Visitor Center  
P.O. Box 732  
1801 Hwy 18 Truck Bypass  
Hot Springs**

**National Grassland Visitor Center  
Wall Ranger District  
708 Main Street, P.O. Box 425  
Wall, SD 57790  
T 605-279-2125**



# Custer State Park

Custer State Park provides an array of scenic beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities for visitors since the early 1900's. Furthermore, the park has been home to a diverse cultural heritage for thousands of years. In essence, the park is a treasured resource that provides a richness of flora and fauna, which is complemented by an intriguing historical past. Many visitors find the park a virtual paradise for wildlife. Whether witnessing a bison herd on the open grassland or searching for an elusive bull elk at dusk, each visitor comes to the park for a unique experience. Others drive the scenic byways, being awed by the breathtaking vistas that captivate any age. Guided nature hikes will expose you to the complexities of our local habitats.

**Forestry Preserves the Landscape:** Forests are treasured resources. They provide habitat for wildlife, recreation for outdoor enthusiasts, and wood products for homes and businesses. Without proper management the forest can become unhealthy, an unhealthy forest tends to be stagnant and lacks diversity. Forestry is the practice of caring for the land by managing forest resources. Within Custer State Park the ultimate goal is to preserve the forest and promote the vitality of the entire ecosystem.

**Forestry is a part of the history of Custer State Park:** Forestry is not something new within Custer State Park. The area was first named Custer State Forest in 1912, and the first timber contract was awarded in 1916. Over the years, the park's forest resources have been managed using a variety of hands-on techniques.

**Healthy Forests are the Best Defense:** A managed forest is a healthy forest. A healthy forest is the best defense against insects, disease and wildland fires. If a forest overcrowded, the trees become stressed. This condition makes the forest more susceptible to insect or disease attack. A managed forest considers many values. Some trees are retained for their uniqueness for wildlife habitat.

*Taken from Tatanka, the Custer State Park Publication*

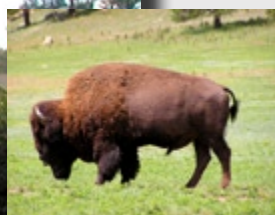


Photo by South Dakota Tourism

# Custer County 1881 Courthouse Museum

411 Mt. Rushmore Road  
Custer, SD 57730

9-8 Weekdays 1-8 Sunday  
(Reduced Hours in May & September)

info@1881courthousemuseum  
www.1881courthousemuseum.com

## EVENTS:

July—Old Time Country Fair

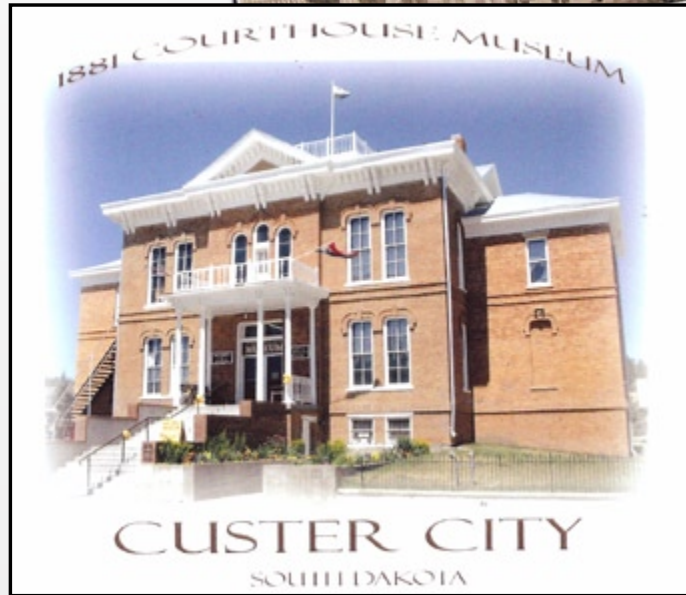
September—Fall Tour of Homes

October—The Haunting & Carnival

December—Christmas Festival

The Custer County 1881 Courthouse Museum features Black Hills historical exhibits and showcases local authors, local history and regional interests.

**Volunteers Are Welcome!**



# Crazy Horse Memorial

12151 Avenue of the Chiefs  
Crazy Horse, SD 57730

T 605-673-4681

F 605-673-2185

E-mail: [memorial@crazyhorse.org](mailto:memorial@crazyhorse.org)





# Wind Cave National Park

American Indians have known about Wind Cave's Natural Entrance for thousands of years, and it is considered sacred by many tribes. The small opening wasn't noticed by European settlers until 1881, when brothers Tom and Jesse Bingham heard the sound of wind and saw grass blowing next to a rock outcropping on an otherwise calm day. As the story goes, when the brothers went to investigate, the wind was blowing through the entrance so hard it blew Tom's hat off of his head! Today, we understand that the direction and force of the wind is related to differences in atmospheric pressure between the cave and the surface. Scientists still study the wind blowing through the cave's entrance; their studies indicate that many miles of Wind Cave remain to be discovered.

Wind Cave National Park is home to one of the world's longest and most complex caves and preserves 28,295 acres of mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine forest, and associated wildlife. Wind Cave has more than 125 miles of mapped passages, and is well known for outstanding display of boxwork, an unusual cave formation composed of thin calcite fins resembling honeycombs. The Park's mixed-grass prairie is one of the few remaining and is home to hundreds of native plant species, as well as native wildlife such as bison, elk, pronghorn, mule deer, coyotes, prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets. The Park is open year-round (closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day), and provides guided tours of the cave daily. Guided walks and evening campfire programs are provided during the summer months. For more information, call **605-745-4600** or visit **[www.nps.gov/wica](http://www.nps.gov/wica)**.



Wind Cave "Boxwork"



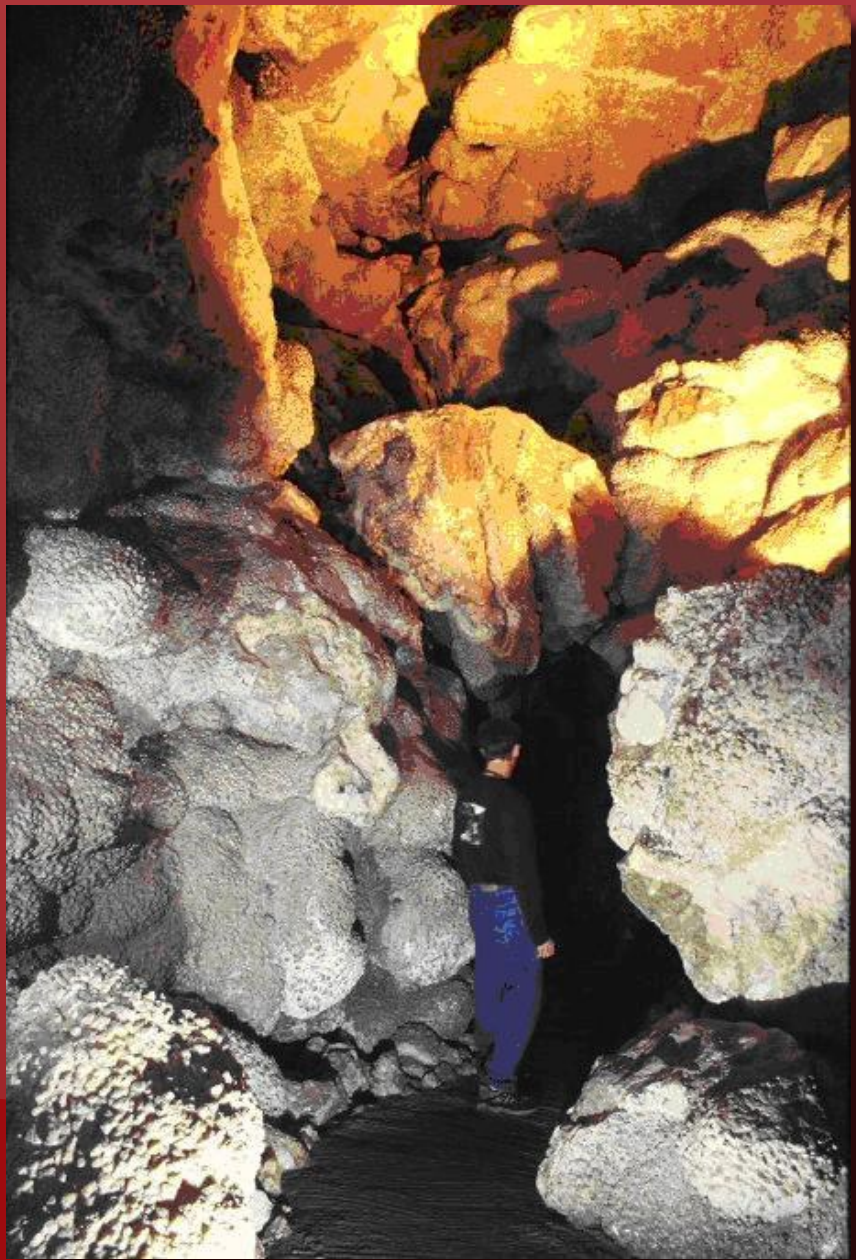
Photo by South Dakota Tourism



# *Jewel Cave National Monument*

The earliest written account of Jewel Cave is a mining claim filed by Frank and Albert Michaud in 1900. The brothers described the entrance as a hole too small for human entry, with a blast of cold air coming out. After subsequent enlargement with dynamite, they entered the cave discovering crawlways and low-ceilinged rooms coated with beautiful calcite crystals that sparkled like “jewels” in their lantern light. They then filed the “Jewel Tunnel Lode” mining claim in Custer on October of 1900. Although calcite crystals had little commercial value, it is apparent that they intended to develop this natural wonder into a tourist attraction. The following decade they made many improvements and even organized a dance club to attract tourists, but due to the sparse population and difficulty of travel at that time the venture was anything but a financial success.

A local movement to set Jewel Cave aside for preservation culminated in the proclamation of the cave as a National Monument by President Theodore Roosevelt of February 7, 1908. The Michaud brothers eventually moved away and their family sold the claim to the government for about \$750. The National Park Service began administering the monument in 1933.



Ongoing exploration has since revealed that Jewel is the second longest cave in the world, with over 140 miles of interconnected passages. The cave is well known for a variety of unusual speleothems (cave formations), and gets its name from the coating of calcite spar crystals lining its walls. The monument is open year-round (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day), and provides a variety of interpretive tours of the cave. On the surface, two hiking trails offer visitors opportunities to see the monument’s diverse plant and animal communities and the effects of the 2000 Jasper fire.

For more information, call **(605) 673-2288** or visit [www.nps.gov/jeca](http://www.nps.gov/jeca).

# Contributors and Resources

## Custer County Living Handbook

The development and research of this publication required input from numerous team members, contributors and informational documents. Every attempt has been made to give credit to those who have provided facts, reports, funding and input. We have tried to correctly paraphrase and/or quote laws, codes, and regulations, if any discrepancy between this handbook and the official wording should arise, the official wording should prevail.

### **Funding Sources:**

- **Custer County Weed & Pest – Grant Funds from South Dakota Department of Agriculture and South Dakota Weed & Pest Commission**
- **Custer Conservation District grant awarded from USDA Forest Service – RAC Grant**

*Thank you to the Custer County Commissioners, the Custer County Weed & Pest Board and the Custer Conservation District Board for approval of the grant funds to be used for this publication.*

### **Team Members, Contributors and Resources:**

- Custer County Weed & Pest Board
- Custer Conservation District Board
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture
- South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks
- United States Department of Agriculture-ADC
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Cooperative Extension Service
- South Dakota State University
- United States Department of Agriculture – SCS
- Custer County Extension Service
- Custer County Commissioners
- Custer County Departments
- Natural Resource and Conservation Service - USDA
- South Dakota Weed & Pest Commission
- United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service-National Forests

- Buffalo Gap National Grasslands – Bob Novotny
- South Dakota Department of Transportation
- South Dakota Office of Schools and Public Lands
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- ClimateSource
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts
- South Dakota Association of RC&D Councils
- Custer State Park
- Jewel Cave National Park
- Wind Cave National Park
- Custer Area Chamber of Commerce
- Custer County 1881 Museum
- Jackson County Soil & Water Conservation District – Rural Living Handbook – Jackson County Oregon
- South Dakota Department of Health
- USDA Rural Living Handbook
- United States Geological Service
- Custer Master Gardeners—Helen McGranahan
- Firewise—Helen McGranahan
- Wikipedia
- Custer City
- USDA Forest Service – Black Hills National Forest
- DesertUSA
- Mountain Lion Foundation
- Themoleman
- W. Alan Wentz – Extension Wildlife Specialist
- Colorado Department of Agriculture



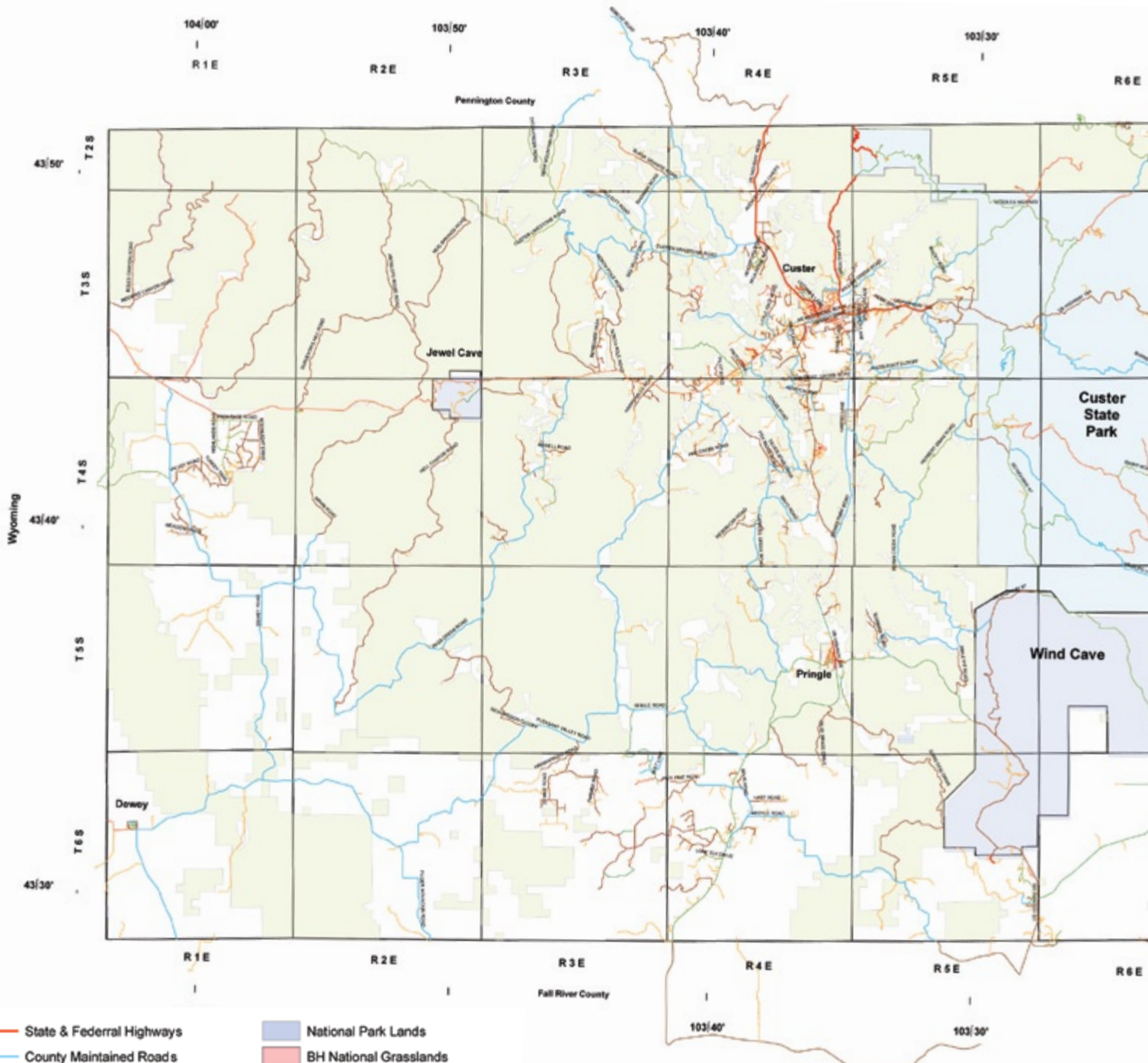


# Internet and Website Resources

**South Dakota Department of Transportation** – <http://www.sddot.com/>  
**South Dakota Highway Patrol** – [www.hp.state.us/back/082303.htm](http://www.hp.state.us/back/082303.htm)  
**South Dakota Career Center – Labor Department** – [www.sdjobs.org](http://www.sdjobs.org)  
**Custer County Chronicle -newspaper** – [www.custercountynews.com](http://www.custercountynews.com)  
**Career Learning Center** – [www.careerlearningcenter-blackhills.org](http://www.careerlearningcenter-blackhills.org)  
**Custer School District** – [www.csd.k12.sd.us](http://www.csd.k12.sd.us)  
**Custer Senior Center** – <http://www.custersencntr.org/>  
**Custer Regional Hospital** – 1 [www.sdnafvsa.com](http://www.sdnafvsa.com)  
**Custer Regional Medical Clinic** – 1 [www.regionalmedicalclinic.com](http://www.regionalmedicalclinic.com)  
**Custer County Sheriff Department** – [www.custercountysd.com/Sheriff](http://www.custercountysd.com/Sheriff)  
**Custer County Emergency Management** – same as Sheriff Dept.  
**SDSU Extension Service Custer Office** – [custer@ces.sdstate.edu](mailto:custer@ces.sdstate.edu)  
**Custer City Hall** – [www.custer.govoffice.com](http://www.custer.govoffice.com)  
**Custer County Government/Dept.** – [www.custercountysd.com](http://www.custercountysd.com)  
**Custer Area Chamber of Commerce** – [www.custersd.com](http://www.custersd.com)  
**Poison Control Center** - [www.aapcc.org/states/sd.htm](http://www.aapcc.org/states/sd.htm)  
**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** -<http://www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov>  
**USDA Farm Service Agency** – <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sd/>  
**United States Geological Survey** – <http://www.usgs.gov/>  
**Conservation Districts** – <http://www.sdccconservation.org>  
**South Dakota Game Fish & Parks** – <http://www.state.sd.us/gfp/>  
**South Dakota State Brand Board** – <http://www.sdbrandboard.com>  
**South Dakota Agriculture in the Classroom** – <http://www.sdagclassroom.org>.  
**Construction Activities and Storm Water Program - South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources** – <http://www.state.sd.us/denr/DES>  
**South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems** – <http://www.sdarws.com/>  
**ClimateSource** – <http://www.climatesource.com>  
**United States Army Corps of Engineers** – <http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/>  
**United States Environmental Protection Agency** – <http://www.epa.gov/>  
**State of South Dakota** – <http://www.state.sd.us/>  
**South Dakota Department of Agriculture** – <http://www.state.sd.us/doa/doa.html>  
**South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources** – <http://www.denr.state.sd.us>  
**South Dakota Rural Electric Association** – <http://www.sdrea.com>  
**Winter Weather Information** - [www.safetravelusa.com/sd/camera\\_images.html](http://www.safetravelusa.com/sd/camera_images.html)

# Custer County

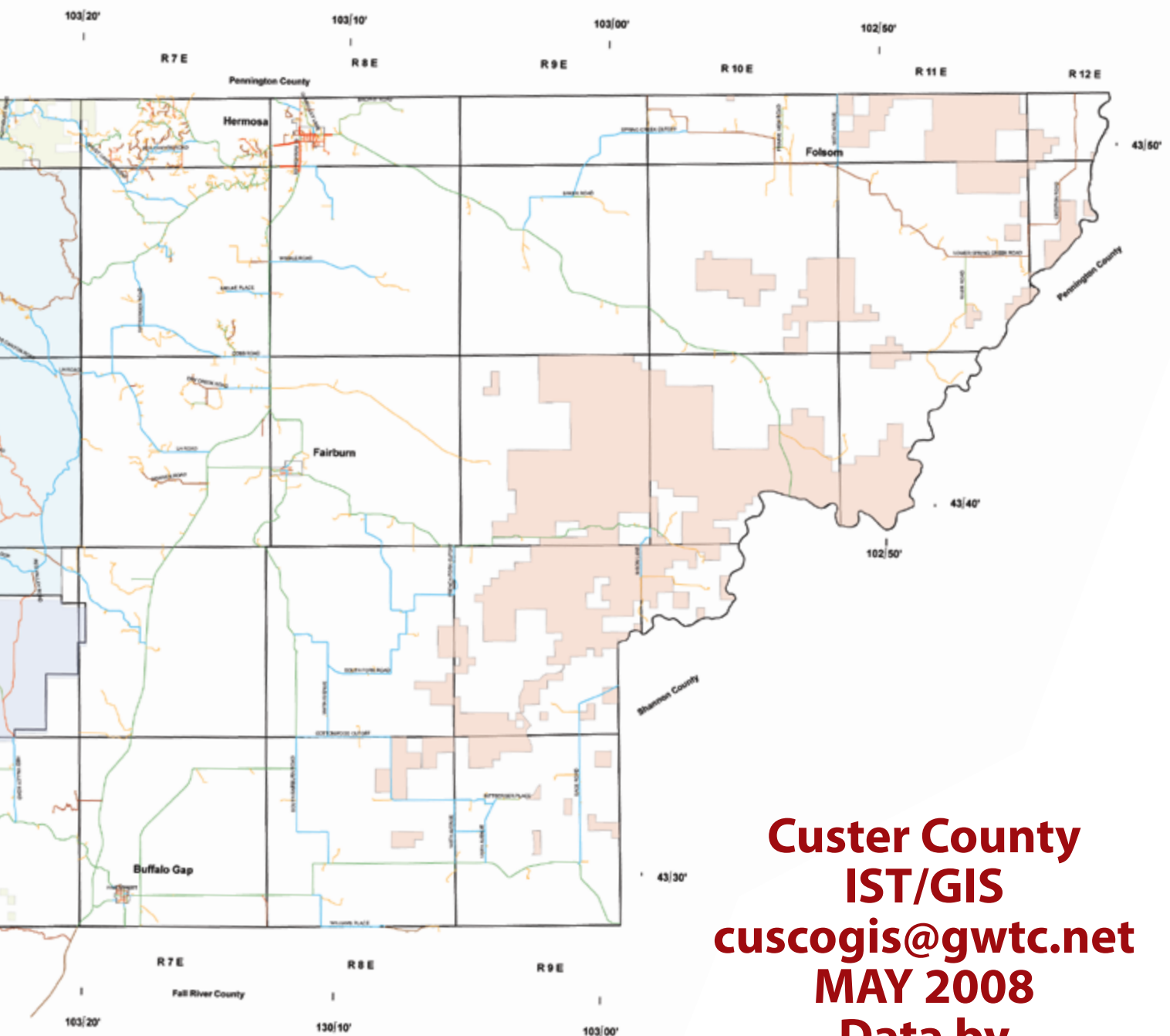
SOUTH DAKOTA



- State & Federal Highways
- County Maintained Roads
- Town & City Streets
- Subdivisions & Section Line Roads
- Park & Boot Camp Roads
- Driveways
- Out of County Roads\_RC\_6
- Out of County Subd & Sect Line Roads
- roadmstr
- National Park Lands
- BH National Grasslands
- BH National Forest
- Custer State Park
- Boundary
- Townships
- National Parks
- Wind Cave Boundary

# Custer County

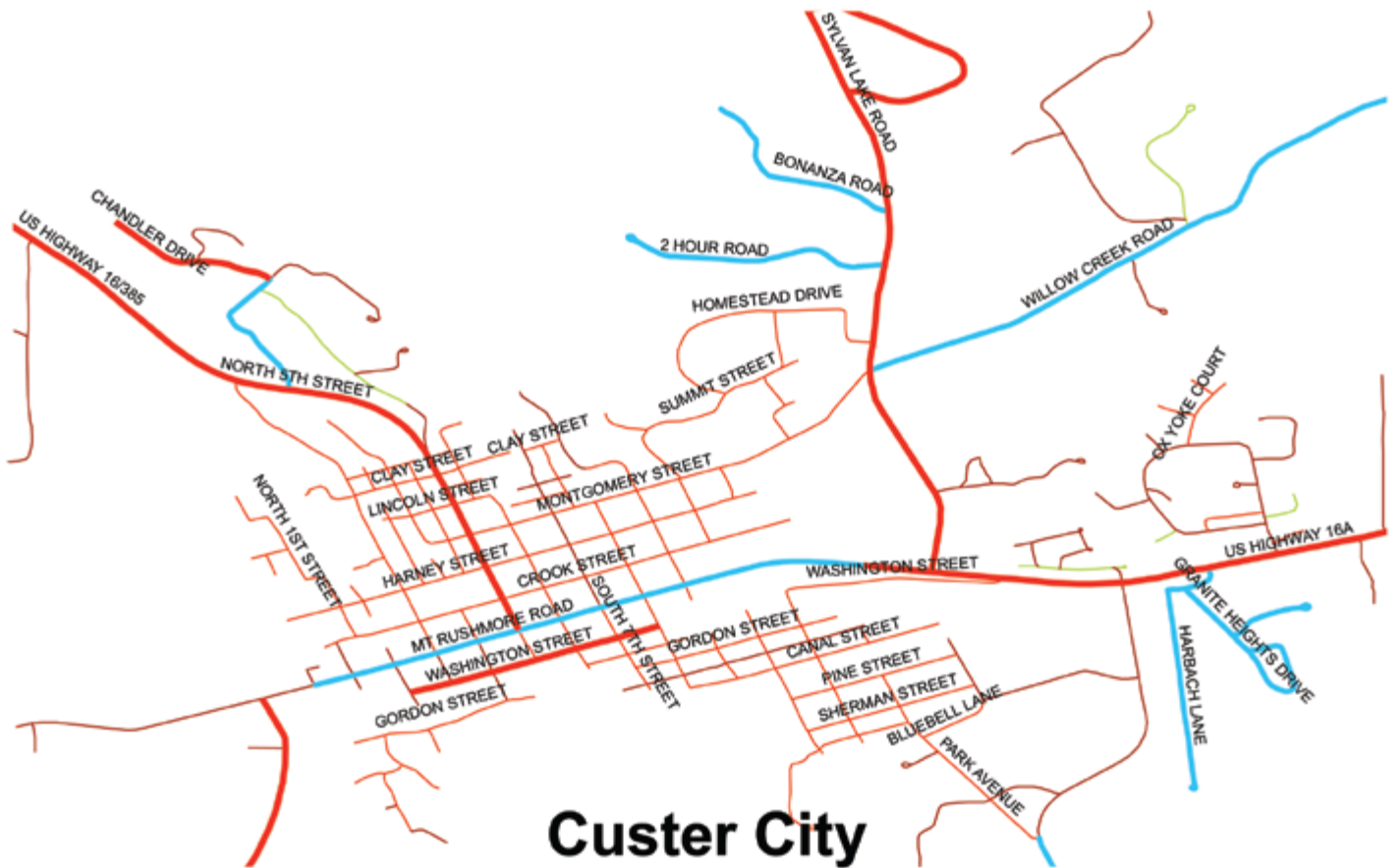
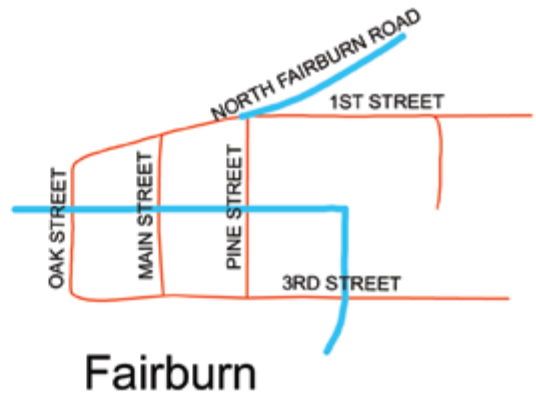
SOUTH DAKOTA

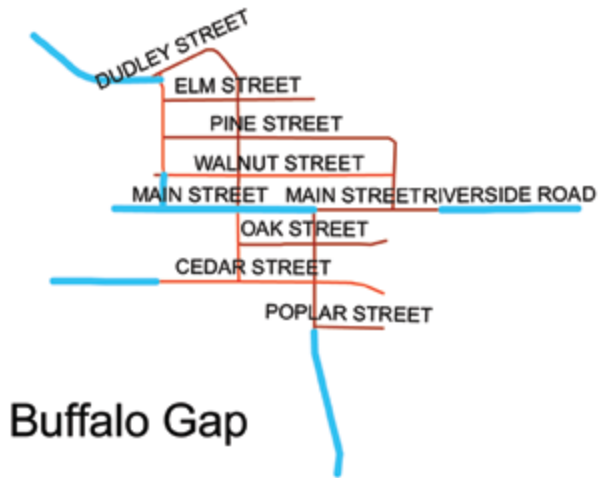


**Custer County  
IST/GIS  
cuscogis@gwtc.net  
MAY 2008  
Data by  
Custer County Planning  
USFS, & BLM  
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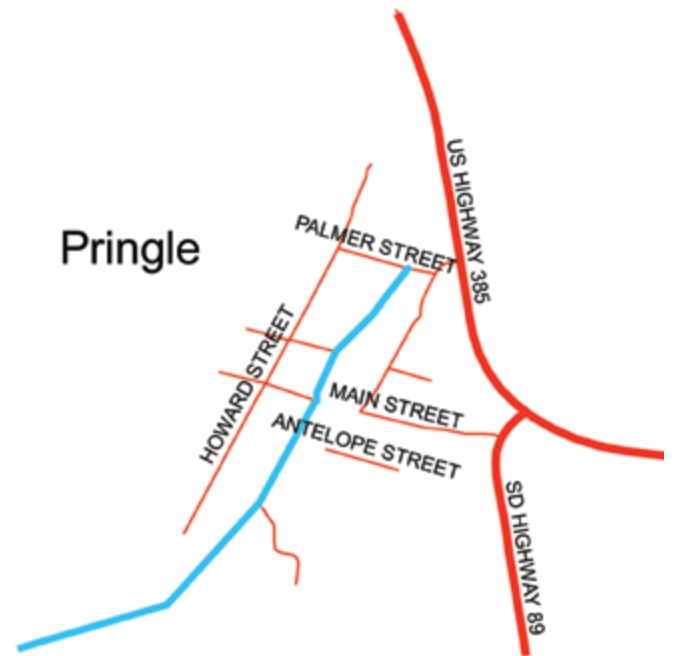


# Custer County Street Maps





Buffalo Gap



Pringle



Custer Highlands



Hermosa

# DISCLAIMERS

- While every attempt has been made to correctly paraphrase and/or quote laws, codes, and regulations, if any discrepancy between this handbook and the official wording should arise the official wording should prevail.
- Custer County prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Custer County is an equal opportunity employer.
- This publication is intended to be a starting point for Custer County residents and potential newcomers. Information is not all inclusive, specific information should be explored by accessing the resource pages.
- Any questions or comments related to the publication should be directed to the Custer Conservation Office or the Custer County Weed & Pest Department. This is a reference publication for everyone so please share the information or make referral.
- Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!
- The purpose of this document is to provide residents with guidance on ways to access information and contains suggestions and recommendations based on professional judgment, experience, and research. It is intended to serve as a guide only. The authors, contributors, and publishers disclaim all warranties and guarantees with respect to the information in the document and assume no liability or responsibility with respect to the information.
- In any emergency contact the appropriate agency, 911, Fire Department, Sheriff Department, Emergency Management, etc.







Circa 1890 Reder Sawmill southeast of Custer-written on the back of the photo is "Uncle Udo in Wagon"  
*from the Custer County 1881 Museum Archives*