

"Keep close to Nature's heart, and break clear away once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean." (John Muir)



Harney Peak was named after General William Selby Harney, in 1855. The Christian Conservation Corps constructed a stone tower in 1938 that served as a fire lookout until 1967. In 1982, the tower, dam, and pump house were placed on the National Register of Historic Places because of their historic significance.



This area has a rich mining history, and you may encounter old cabin remains or mine workings. One gold deposit supported two stamp mills (\$5 million value of gold at today's prices). Never enter an abandoned mine - they are often very unsafe.

The Norbeck Wildlife Preserve was established in 1920 for the protection of game animals and birds and to be a breeding place therefor. Elk, deer, mountain goats, turkeys, and mountain lions make their home amid the rugged granite peaks and small streams.



Nearly everyone has a special place somewhere in the outdoors. Many have found it in the central Black Hills, within the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve and the Black Elk Wilderness.

Harney Peak Trail #9 from Sylvan Lake to looking for solitude, please consider one of our less traveled trails.



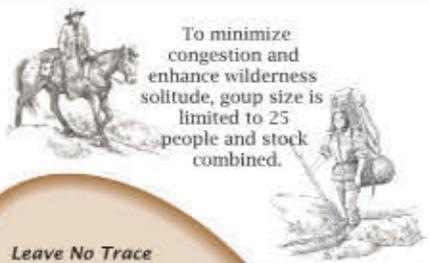
The Black Elk Wilderness lies in the center of the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve, and in the heart of the Black Hills. Named for Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota holy man, the area is characterized by massive granite outcroppings, pungent pine, and scenic vistas across the hills. Originally established by Congress in 1980, it was increased in size to its current 13,426 acres in 2002.

Special Places in the Heart of the Black Hills National Forest

What To Know Before You Go

Only primitive, non-mechanized methods of transportation are allowed in the Black Elk Wilderness. Items such as bicycles, strollers, chainsaws, handcars, and hang gliders are prohibited.

To reduce conflicts with wildlife and other visitors, pets must be leashed or under strict voice control.



To minimize congestion and enhance wilderness solitude, group size is limited to 25 people and stock combined.

Horses must use certified weed and seed-free hay and pellets. Scatter manure before you leave. Use highlines or hobbles to tie up stock, at least 100 feet from water.

Leave No Trace

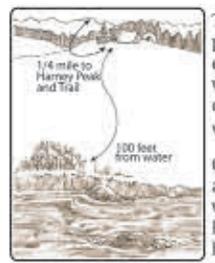
When visitors leave evidence of their journeys, the next visitor loses the sense of solitude and undisturbed wildness. Skilled wilderness users take responsibility for leaving no trace of their visit.

"Walk softly. Earth receives foot and paw, hoof and claw with equal grace. But it is the way of the wild not to overstep the bounds of hospitality. This is a wild place. Follow me; walk softly and leave no trace that rain and snow cannot erase."

-Elise MacIay



Open fires are prohibited. Bring a camp stove.



To keep our water pure, do not camp or dispose of human waste within 100 feet of streams or other water sources. Camping is allowed anywhere EXCEPT within 1/4 mile from the Harney Peak and the Harney Peak Trail #9.

Black Elk Wilderness Self Registration

Visitors to the Black Elk Wilderness must fill out a Use Registration Form, available at any of the major trailhead portals into the Wilderness. The Registration Form provides the Black Hills National Forest with important visitor use information. In addition, the form asks for the visitor's commitment to abide by the wilderness regulations, ensuring that visitors "leave no trace" of their visit.

General Information

Thank you for being a responsible user of your national forest!

- Trail Ethics**
Cutting switchbacks causes erosion. Please stay to the designated trail.
- Extreme Weather**
Clear sunny days can quickly turn into afternoon thunderstorms. Carry extra warm clothes, and be prepared for snow or hail!
- Water**
Streams in the forest may look safe to drink, but usually it is not. Carry at least one quart of water per hiker.
- Fires**
Open fires are prohibited throughout the forest at all times.
- Bicycles and Motors**
Unless otherwise noted, the trails shown in this brochure are open for hikers and stock users only.

Expect and respect other trail users.

Location Map



MORE INFORMATION

Hell Canyon Ranger District
330 Mt. Rushmore Rd.
Custer, SD 57730
(605) 673-4853

Supervisor's Office
25041 North Highway 16
Custer, SD 57730
(605) 673-9200

www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills

Black Elk Wilderness and Norbeck Wildlife Preserve Trail System



Black Hills National Forest

