Black Hills National Forest

2022 Moon Walk Schedule

June 11
Learning and Living with Fire
*Julie Brazell / Conservation Coordinator – The Nature Conservancy*

Hell Canyon Ranger District – Whitney Preserve
For millions of years, fire has shaped the diversity of life on Earth. While enjoying a short evening hike, learn about local fire history and the important role it plays in the health of habitats and the plant and animal species that depend on it. Join The Nature Conservancy and other fire partners as they share the critical nature of fire as a tool and how we can safely live in a fire-adapted landscape. NOTE: The Whitney Preserve is located eight miles south of Hot Springs, South Dakota along Hwy 71.

July 9
What Comes Out After Dark?
*Dr. Jennifer Fowler / Interpretive and Education Volunteer – Black Hills National Forest*

Northern Hills Ranger District – Big Hill Trail (Trail #72)
The Black Hills National Forest is home to an assortment of wildlife species. Some of them only become active when the sun goes down. For those recreating after dark, it may be hard to see what inhabits the forest. However, with keen listening skills and a zest to find tracks, scat, and fur, the darkness creates a classroom of discoveries. Take a guided hike into the pines and hardwoods in the Northern Hills Ranger District and learn more about the critters that prefer the night.

August 13
The CCC Forever Transformed the Black Hills
*Otto Bochman / Director - Civilian Conservation Corps Museum of South Dakota*

Mystic Ranger District – Sheridan Lake South Day-Use Area (Beach Area)
Ranging from roadways to bridges to artistic work inside visitor centers, the Civilian Conservation Corps left a presence in the Black Hills. The Sheridan Lake area displays projects dating back to the 1930s. With a casual walk through the day-use area and nearby campground, participants will gain a better understanding of this important part of American history. Enjoy an evening learning about the relationships between the CCC and Black Hills National Forest.

September 10
BATS Incredible!
*Matt Stefanich / Wildlife Biologist – Black Hills National Forest, Bearlodge Ranger District*

Bearlodge Ranger District – Carson Draw Trail System (Trail #87)
There are more than 40 different species of bats in North America. Eleven unique species inhabit the Black Hills and Bearlodge Mountains of South Dakota and Wyoming. Take part in an early autumn hike through a pine forest and open meadows and learn about bats and their role in the Black Hills National Forest. Discover new information about bat populations and how the Forest continues to manage against White-Nose Syndrome (WNS).

Supporting Wonder and Exploration since 1946
The Black Hills Parks and Forests Association (BHPFA) is offering 2022 Moon Walk Collector’s Pins at each event for $5.00 each. The sale of lapel pins support the interpretive and educational efforts across the Black Hills National Forest. The Moon Walk Programs are supported by BHPFA through financial assistance and staffing; BHPFA is a non-profit partner with the U.S. Forest Service.

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Get Prepared for a Moon Walk

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

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

Q: What do I need to know about attending a Moon Walk?
A: Moon Walks are held on a Saturday night, closest to the full moon in June, July, August, and September. They begin at 7 p.m. and last about two hours. Each event starts with a short introduction to the night’s program. Then, participants follow a guided hike into the Forest, with various stops along the route. Perhaps most important, there are no fees for attending a Moon Walk.

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

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

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

Q: Where can I find more information on programs and activities?
A: We encourage everyone to follow the Forest on social media, as well as bookmark the Forest website for future programs, happenings, and information. For additional program information and other visitor services, please visit our official cooperative partner online – the Black Hills Parks and Forest Association.

For More Information

Forest Headquarters
Custer, SD (605) 673-9200

Hell Canyon Ranger District
Custer, SD (605) 673-9292
Newcastle, WY (307) 746-2782

Mystic Ranger District
Rapid City, SD (605) 343-1567

Northern Hills Ranger District
Spearfish, SD (605) 642-4622

Bearlodge Ranger District
Sundance, WY (307) 283-1361

Forest Website
www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills