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Chadrad Communications, Inc.
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com

(Neb.) - Night Skies – the Focus of National Park Week



By: John Thayer Posted at: 04/23/2012 08:45 AM

(Harrison, NE:) As part of National Park week (April 21 – 29, 2012), Agate Fossil Beds is co-sponsoring a night sky event on Friday, April 27. There will be a special showing of the award winning documentary, *The City Dark*, at the Midwest Theater in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, followed by an evening of viewing the skies from the top of Scotts Bluff National Monument. This event is free and fees have been waived at all 397 National Park areas during the week.

"*The City Dark*" chronicles the disappearance of darkness. Posing a simple question - "What do we lose, when we lose the night?" - the film leads viewers on a quest to understand how light pollution affects people and the planet. The movie will be shown Friday, April 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the historic Midwest Theatre in downtown Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The second part of the evening will start around 9:15 p.m. at Scotts Bluff National Monument. Visitors will meet at the visitor center parking lot to ride the shuttle bus to the top. Here visitors can reflect on the lights of outer space as well as the city lights, with the evening concluding around 10:30 p.m. Telescopes will be available and participants are encouraged to dress for the weather, and bring binoculars and flashlights, which can be turned into red "night seeing" flashlights. This event is co-sponsored by the Midwest Theatre, Panhandle Astronomy Club, Agate Fossil Beds and Scotts Bluff National Monuments.

Check out the National Park Week website, <http://www.nps.gov/npweek/>, to find out more about activities planned around the country. The younger set and the young at heart are invited to "explore, learn and protect" on Junior Ranger Day, Saturday, April 28. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument will have Agate Fossil Beds Junior Ranger, Junior Paleontologist and Junior Astronomer Activity guides available for young people to work on and to earn their certificates and badges. April 28 is also National Astronomy Day. Books and kits about fossils and night sky are available in the park's bookstore. The trails are always open from dawn till dusk so you can enjoy the out-of-doors at your leisure.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is located 22 miles south of Harrison, Nebraska, or 34 miles north of Mitchell, Nebraska, on State Highway 29. The visitor center/museum is open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. with the trails open from dawn till dusk.

www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 395 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.