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(S.D.) - Badlands and Minuteman Missile Celebrate National Park Week

By: John Thayer Posted at: 04/21/2012 07:12 AM

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK / MINUTEMAN MISSILE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, S.D. —

On Saturday, April 21, 2012, Badlands National Park and Minuteman Missile National Historic Site will kick off National Park Week and celebrate the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day. Badlands, a fee park, will join other national park fee locations and offer a fee-free week from April 21-29.

Come visit us at our Badlands Ben Reifel Visitor Center, open from 8:00 – 5:00 daily, and at Minuteman Missile's Visitor Center, open 8:00 – 4:30, Monday – Friday, and 9:00 – 4:00 Saturday and Sunday. Enjoy the vastness of the southwestern South Dakota scenery - soaring spires and pinnacles amidst the pristine beauty of the prairie. A visit to both the North and South Units of the Badlands can inspire a greater appreciation of this unique landscape. Next door, explore the stories of American security and peace
at the Minuteman Missile sites and round out a day spent in this beautiful part of the country.

Enjoy some of the outdoor features at Badlands in your own celebration of Earth Day. The Castle Trail, ten-miles round trip offers expansive views, and a relatively level walk. Cliff Shelf Trail is a moderately strenuous loop that follows boardwalks and climbs stairs through a juniper forest perched along the Badlands Wall. The Window Trail is a 0.25 mile trail leading to a natural window in the Badlands Wall with a view of an intricately eroded canyon. There is truly a walking route for everyone at Badlands, so get out there and take a hike!

Minuteman Missile will offer tours of its Delta-1 Launch Control Center daily at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Missile silo Delta-9 (I-90, Exit 116) is also open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tour tickets are given out on a first come, first served basis by coming to the Visitor Center, located in Cactus Flat, off I-90 at Exit 13, adjacent to the Conoco gas station.

Badlands is currently hosting two Artists-in-Residence, Stephen Donley and Jessica Bryant. Ms. Bryant has been working with local Interior School students on watercolors, and the role art has played in the history and development of our National Parks. The park will feature these watercolors and the works of other artists in the Visitor Center starting National Park Week. To view these works on-line, please visit our Flickr page at: www.flickr.com/photos/badlandsnationalpark

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Badlands National Park will also be featured in an original video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u23eEYoBFVs&list=PL704A09B9F5B3605D&index=4&feature=plpp_video%20

This video celebrates the park and the Service, and also National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis' initiative "A Call to Action", which is the NPS vision for the next 100 years (http://www.nps.gov/calltoaction/).
"Picture Yourself in a National Park" videos will focus on the Arts Afire and Next Generation Stewards Initiatives, aimed at creating future supporters of, and users in our national park sites nationwide.

Visitors to the parks during Earth Day weekend are encouraged to visit the Cedar Pass Lodge restaurant, featuring local and sustainable ingredients. For more information on lodging in the park go to http://cedarpasslodge.com/. Hikers expecting to be out longer than 30 minutes should pack water. Be prepared for extreme changes in weather, including sudden wind storms, rain or lightning. Hike safely and enjoy your parks.

For more information see www.nps.gov/badl, www.nps.gov/mimi, or follow us on Twitter @BadlandsEdu, and @Badlands_Ranger, or on Facebook at MinutemanMissileNHS.

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