

STATE:
South Dakota

COUNTY:
Meade

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE
JUN 19 1973

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Bear Butte

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Mato Paha (Sioux) Nowawaste (Cheyenne)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
near Sturgis vic.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
2

STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **46** COUNTY: **Meade** CODE: **093**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted, <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted, <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of South Dakota (owner of largest tract)

STREET AND NUMBER:
Department of Game, Fish and Parks

CITY OR TOWN: **Pierre** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **46**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Meade County Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Sturgis** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **46**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
South Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1968** Federal State County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
South Dakota Historic Preservation Program

STREET AND NUMBER:
W. H. Over Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota

CITY OR TOWN: **Vermillion** STATE: **South Dakota**



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STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bear Butte stands near the outer edge of the northern Black Hills of South Dakota. It towers 1200 feet above the surrounding plains, reaching a height of 4,422 feet above sea level. The butte was formed as a result of the deep structural movement which created the Black Hills. While the hills were being formed to the west, rising pressure and consequent high temperatures drove a mass of precambrian material toward the surface. A tough overburden and a slacking off of underground pressure stopped this viscous fluid from breaking through, creating a blister of solid rock. Subsequent erosion has exposed only those metamorphasized sedimentary layers nearest the hot magma. Approached from the east, Bear Butte appears as a towering cone-shaped mountain covered with broken rock and little vegetation. The butte tapers off to the west forming a feature called Cactus Flats, the remains of a geologic dome formed by the rising magma's first attempt to reach the surface.

Bear Butte is presently a state park.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

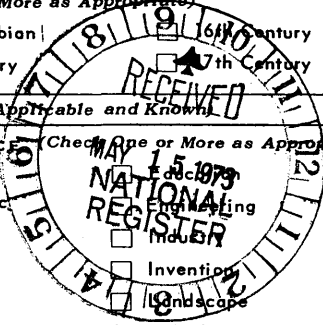
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian
 15th Century
 16th Century
 17th Century
 18th Century
 19th Century
 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Aboriginal
 Prehistoric
 Historic
 Agriculture
 Architecture
 Art
 Commerce
 Communications
 Conservation
 Political
 Religion/Philosophy
 Science
 Sculpture
 Social/Humanitarian
 Theater
 Transportation
 Urban Planning
 Other (Specify) Geology



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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Bear Butte is significant in three distinct areas: geology, Indian spiritual tradition, and white settlement in the Black Hills. Geologically, Bear Butte is an excellent study example of a laccolithic structure because of its relatively small size and tectonically undisturbed surroundings. In comparison to other laccoliths, Bear Butte is young and possesses features usually eroded away on other structures.

From its discovery by the Verendrye Expedition in 1743 through the period of white settlement, Bear Butte remained a landmark for military expeditions, stage routes and wagon trails, as well as a place of strategic military importance. In fact, every expedition through the Black Hills makes mention of its towering, treeless presence. Located on the northwest corner of the hills area, the butte could be seen for miles by prospectors, miners, and army scouts traveling toward the hills from Bismarck, the nearest rail head. Directly at the west of Bear Butte, Whitewood Creek emptied out of the valley leading to Deadwood and Lead, the most important mining towns in the hills. Nearby trails and easy access to militarily sensitive areas in Wyoming and the Dakota reservations made Bear Butte an ideal location for stationing cavalry. Thus, Fort Meade was established near the butte in 1878. During the Sioux wars of 1857 to 1876, Bear Butte was the site of many rendezvous, both white and Indian. One meeting of the Sioux tribes near Mato Paha in 1857 is considered the largest Sioux Council ever held.

Most significantly, Bear Butte plays a large part in the religions of several upper plains Indian tribes. It is, for example, the central feature of the Cheyenne religion. It is both their Mount Siam, on which the Great Spirit gave them their laws, and their Mecca to which the Cheyenne prayed each day no matter how distant. The butte is also a religious place in Siouxian and Mandan tradition. Religious ceremonies are still held on its summit.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hyde, George E., Red Cloud's Folk, University of Oklahoma Press, 1937, pp. 82, 251, 275.
 Odell, Thomas E., Mato Paha, The Story of Bear Butte, published by the author, Edwards Brothers, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1942.
 Schell, Herbert, History of South Dakota, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961, p. 144.
 South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, A Site Report Concerning the Preservation of Fort Meade, 1971, pp. 1-4.

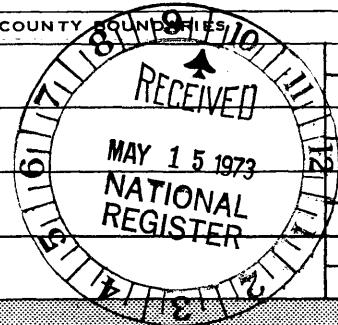
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	44 ° 29 ' 40 "	103 ° 28 ' 32 "				
NE	44 ° 29 ' 40 "	103 ° 22 ' 30 "				
SE	44 ° 27 ' 30 "	103 ° 22 ' 30 "				
SW	44 ° 27 ' 30 "	103 ° 28 ' 32 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **7,916**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



NO
 U
 M
 C

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Paul Putz, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION: **South Dakota Historic Preservation Program** DATE: **4-30-73**

STREET AND NUMBER:
W. H. Over Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota

CITY OR TOWN: **Vermillion** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **46**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *James E. Gillihan*
James E. Gillihan
 State Preservation Officer

Title: _____

Date: **4-30-73**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

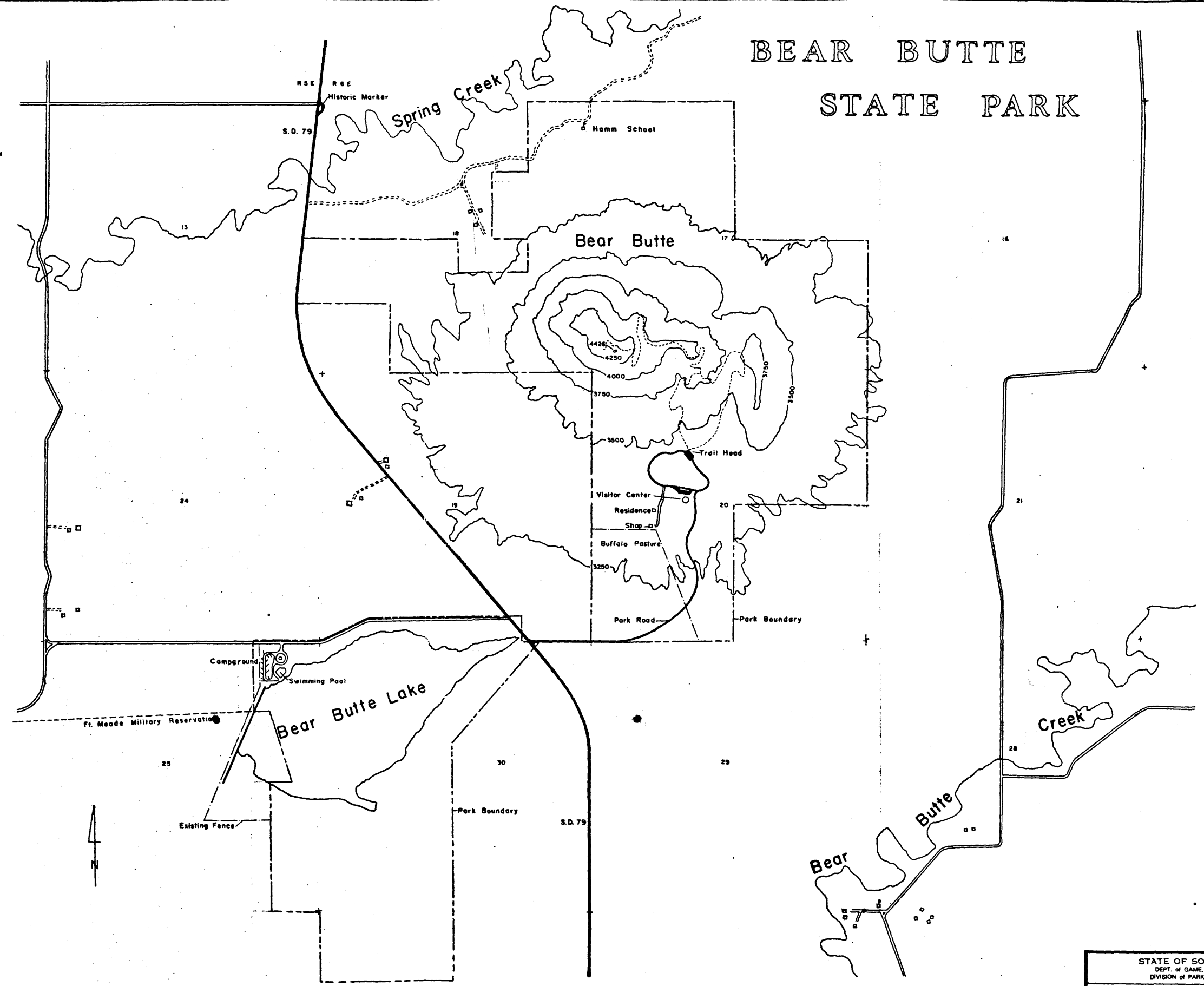
Robert W. Utley
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **6/19/73**

ATTEST: *W. J. ...*
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: **6 14 73**

BEAR BUTTE STATE PARK



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA DEPT. OF GAME, FISH, & PARKS DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION	
Project: BEAR BUTTE STATE PARK BASE MAP	
Date: 1/13/78	Scale: 1" = 1000'
Drawn By: D. Hofer	Designed By:
Revised By:	Approved By: