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(Neb.) - Memorial Day weekend brings longer hours and Sandy Swallow-Morgan to Agate Fossil Beds



By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/23/2012 11:06 AM

Harrison, NE – Starting Memorial Day Weekend, May 26 – 28, longer hours

of operation for the visitor center at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument are 8 a.m. until 6

p.m. daily and the trails are open from dawn till dusk. Sandy Swallow-Morgan will be the first

Traditional Cultural Demonstrator for the 2012 season. She will be available to the public from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. during the weekend.

Internationally-renowned Sandy Swallow-Morgan's artistic passion began in mid-life, as she experimented with oils and watercolors while living on a ranch in South Dakota. Virtually self-taught, Swallow-Morgan longed to create art capturing her spiritual connection to nature, home, and family. She discovered the painstaking medium of hand-pulled block printmaking, providing her with the ability to create dramatic pieces saturated with deep earth and pastel colors which evoke traditional Native American symbols and images from the natural world. Many of her prints depict images of home, as with tipis, which symbolize family, security, and love.

An enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux tribe, Swallow-Morgan's fascinating life history enriches her artistic vision. Her parents, Woody and Ethel Mills Swallow, resided on the Pine Ridge Oglala Sioux Reservation when she was born. Swallow-Morgan has always felt an intense spiritual connection to the Black Hills. She delights in her family history; both her great-grandfathers were present at the historic signing of the 1868 Treaty at Fort Laramie. Chief Red Cloud was a close friend and associate of her great-grandfather Ben Mills, an Englishman who married a full-blood Lakota woman with whom he had several children. Another great-grandfather, Eli Swallow, joined the confederate army as a "galvanized" soldier and was ordered west to Fort Laramie, where he met Sandy's great-grandmother, Lizzie Iote, a Rosebud Sioux. Sandy's father, Woody Swallow, served in the U.S. Navy and survived the bombing at Pearl Harbor. Intensely proud of her rich cultural heritage, her life history reinforces her identity, lends purpose to her life, and inspires her art.

Sandy Swallow-Morgan currently resides in Spearfish, South Dakota, where, with the support of her family, she pursues art full time. She operates her business, "Sandy Swallow Gallery,"

in Hill City, South Dakota through which she markets her original art, block prints, and handcrafted items as well as items made by other artists in the area. Her website is <http://sandyswallowgallery.com>

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is located just 22 miles south of Harrison, Nebraska or 34 miles north of Mitchell, Nebraska on State Highway 29, then east on River Road for three miles to the visitor center. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is a free park.