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(Neb.)-Join Ranger Anne for Agate Fossil Beds' Third Annual Star Party



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 09/16/2013 11:08 AM

Photo: Recorded on many American Indian wintercounts was an account of many stars falling. It was also the year of the birth of Oglala Lakota Chief Red Cloud.

(HARRISON)-Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is sponsoring a weekend of night sky enjoyment the last weekend of this month. On Friday, September 27th, activities start in the theater at 7:00 p.m. as Ranger Ann Lundberg presents the program, "Star Hoop: Lakota Patterns in the Sky." Then there will be star viewing with help from local amateur astronomers from 8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. The astronomers will set up their telescopes near the picnic area at Agate Fossil Beds and allow visitors to experience the night sky away from city lights, viewing deep space star clusters, double stars, planets and constellations.

Daytime star programs are offered on Saturday, September 28th as well. At 1:00 p.m., Ranger Ann will again present "Star Hoop: Lakota Patterns in the Sky," and at 2:30 p.m., "The Rescue of Andromeda," a play with Greek mythology characters who make up the Andromeda Constellation. This play requires audience participation and appeals to the young, as well as the young in mind and spirit.

Night viewing is dependent on clear skies; so if clouds or rain occur on Friday, Saturday will be the cloud date. The night programs will only be cancelled if viewing isn't possible. Please bring a flashlight to be turned into a "red" flashlight to enhance your night vision.

Ranger Anne Wilson is the mastermind behind much of the planning for the upcoming stargazing weekend. She has been selected as the "Astronomy From the Ground Up" (AFGU) educator of the month based on her recent stellar accomplishments in promoting local astronomy. Wilson attended Sky Ranger training in Yosemite National Park in the fall of 2010. Since then she has been conducting night sky programs at Agate Fossil Beds and with park partners Fort Robinson State Park, Wildcat Hills, and the Midwest Theatre, along with Scotts Bluff National Monument. She actively participates in a sky forum and in logging her events on AFGU's website at <http://www.afguonline.org/>.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is located 22 miles south of Harrison or 34 miles north of Mitchell, on State

Highway 29, then east on River Road for three miles to the visitor center. The visitor center is normally open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., and two trails are open from dawn till dusk. Agate Fossil Beds is a free park. For more information, visit <http://www.nps.gov/agfo> or visit Agate Fossil Beds on Facebook.

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.

--Agate Fossil Beds National Monument