

SAGE CREEK WILDERNESS — BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK
WAYPOINTS FOR A 22-MILE, 3-DAY LOOP

SAG001 (Location: 43.834314, -102.200277)
Park your car at the Conata Picnic Area. The route starts at the backcountry trailhead, which is located at the end of the road.

SAG002 (Location: 43.83472, -102.201573)
Trailhead: Sign in at the register, then hike west. In 100 yards, the route bears south along the base of the formations.
Caution: Watch out for rattlesnakes in the grass.

SAG003 (Location: 43.831408, -102.203364)
The route curves to the southwest. You may spot antelope bones in the grass.

SAG004 (Location: 43.828266, -102.215542)
Bear left, heading west along the base of the formations.

SAG005 (Location: 43.829899, -102.226818)
Pass through a fence that runs to the edge of the formations. Next, head northwest toward the Deer Haven oasis.

SAG006 (Location: 43.839255, -102.234542)
Pass through another fence, then hike northwest.

SAG007 (Location: 43.840354, -102.236216)
The climb to Deer Haven starts here.
Caution: Keep clear of the holes that have started to form in the crumbly mounds.

SAG008 (Location: 43.840478, -102.234875)
Drop your pack and take a break. This overlook showcases views of Deer Haven and the Conata Basin. In 150 feet, crest a grassy ledge and head north.

SAG009 (Location: 43.841399, -102.234178)
Deer Haven: A group of striking pinnacles tower above the juniper-dotted oasis. Spend the night at this grassy perch and savor the five-star views. Next day: Navigate northeast through the junipers. Pick the best route up the formations to reach the ridgetop (and the route's highpoint).

SAG010 (Location: 43.842846, -102.230358)
Crest the ridge and head northwest.

SAG011 (Location: 43.842946, -102.23068)
Descend the backside of the ridge and drop into a sandy wash. Pass intermittent mud puddles and patches of dried, cracked mud. As you follow the serpentine wash to the northwest, you'll pass bison footprints and scat. Keep an eye out for these massive animals as you round the numerous bends in the wash. **Caution: Bison are unpredictable and can charge at up to 30 mph. Adjust your route to avoid coming face-to-face with wandering herds.**

SAG012 (Location: 43.847686, -102.237319)
Turn left at the T-junction. Continue following the wash.

SAG013 (Location: 43.85683, -102.255487)
Pass a wash on the right and continue northwest toward a bend in the wash.

SAG014 (Location: 43.853452, -102.260559)
Pass a lone cottonwood tree, which provides shady respite from the sun.

SAG015 (Location: 43.852417, -102.262738)
Leave the wash and hike northwest into the Sage Creek Basin, a lush grassland veined with a network of washes.

SAG016 (Location: 43.855801, -102.263845)
The route veers to the northwest.

SAG017 (Location: 43.858707, -102.274222)
Hike across a broad wash.

SAG018 (Location: 43.859819, -102.280684)
Cross a wash.

SAG019 (Location: 43.861933, -102.284142)
Stop at this grassy-banked pond and admire the scenery (this is the only water source along the route). Scan the horizon for roaming bison.

SAG020 (Location: 43.871153, -102.311511)
This point marks the northernmost tip of the route. Descend into a wash and weave through a maze of formations, heading west toward Tyree Basin.

SAG021 (Location: 43.868585, -102.330329)
Pick up a horse trail and follow it south into Tyree Basin.

SAG022 (Location: 43.863861, -102.329717)
Set up camp near the base of the formations in Tyree Basin. In the distance, herds of bison and antelope roam the grassy expanse.

SAG023 (Location: 43.858745, -102.322176)
Walk through a prairie dog colony. Look south for views of Sage Creek Pass (a large gap in the formations).

SAG024 (Location: 43.851427, -102.309934)
Head south toward Sage Creek Pass.

SAG025 (Location: 43.847318, -102.310524)
Ascend and descend a series of washes.

SAG026 (Location: 43.82753, -102.310095)
Descend a wash and head south.

SAG027 (Location: 43.820951, -102.305589)
Hike east toward the fence that runs east and west.

SAG028 (Location: 43.820987, -102.298279)
Follow the fenceline east. Private ranchland extends to the south.

SAG029 (Location: 43.820989, -102.276122)
Duck under the fence that runs north and south and blocks the route. Next, descend the formations on a steep slope that drops down to the Conata Basin.

SAG030 (Location: 43.824815, -102.267255)
Descend a wash.

SAG031 (Location: 43.830842, -102.258378)
Duck under a barbed-wire fence that runs the length of the wash.

SAG032 (Location: 43.831717, -102.242106)
Duck under the fence and head east 0.8 mile to reconnect with Waypoint 5; pass through the fence, then retrace your route back to the Conata Picnic Area.