



## Site 7

# Blacktail Trail Lore

THE BLACKTAIL TRAILHEAD OFFERS A SMALL LAKE stocked with bass, with fishing dock, picnic area and a seven-mile walking loop through rugged badlands, gumbo buttes and fascinating rock and gumbo formations. Built in 2004 by the US Forest Service, the trail is for non-motorized use, including biking and horseback riding. Interpretive signs explain topics like waterfowl, plants, wildflowers and the transition of this land from buffalo to cattle. Climbing the adjacent high plateau reveals sweeping badland views in all directions.

The area offers a nice place to consider the complex relationship between the buffalo and the Native people who lived here—from being a source of food to a font of social and cultural inspiration and connection to spiritual life.

Native Americans honor the buffalo as sacred in ceremonies, stories, artwork, song and dance. In traditional Plains belief, buffalo gave themselves up willingly as food for the people and provided many other gifts as

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*Picnic site at trailhead of the 7-mile non-motorized Blacktail Trail. This trail winds through rugged badlands country. Photo by FM Berg.*