Part Four

THE BLACK HILLS AS A SANCTUARY AND SACRED LANDSCAPE

...The Indian’s reverence for the Black Hills is very much like the feeling many people on this earth have for the Holy Land, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Mount Calvary...The Lakota loved the Black Hills for reasons vastly different [from the whites]. They held the Hills as a shrine, a sanctuary for both beast and man. It was a winter haven for the beast of the land, a traditional place of procreation, under the protective shelter of the pines and the deep canyons, a place for worship, where the spiritual yearnings of bewildered mankind were calmed (LaPointe 1979:15, 141-142).

...the oral history, legends, and religious practices of the Cheyennes clearly imply that the Black Hills was where the Cheyenne people became a nation, and where they have lived and made pilgrimages for many generations. In many ways, the area is to them what Jerusalem is to the Jews or Ireland to Irish-Americans. It is their homeland, the scene of the most significant events in their tribal life, and the wellspring of their religious life (Moore 1981: 16).

The Black Hills has long been written about as a place of great beauty and striking topography. Some of the earliest European Americans (Hughes, R. 1957:13; Dodge 1965:25, 49, 149-150; McLaird and Turchen 1974c:296-297; Knappen in Kraus and Olson 1974:23) who traveled the area and wrote about it were struck by the contrast the Hills environment made to the dryness and barrenness of the surrounding prairies and sagebrush steppes. The virtues of the Hills were even extolled in a spiritually inspiring language, with expressions like “these sacred fastnesses,” (Dodge 1965:150), “earthly paradise” (Curtis in Krause and Olson 1974:149), or an “Eden in the clouds” (Burrows in Krause and Olson 1974:208). Although many early writers attributed their beauty and magnificence to some divine intervention, few perceived them as a foundation of their own religiosity.

For most early European Americans, it was not the aesthetics of the Hills that made them most appealing but their potential for economic growth in mining, logging, and ranching (Tallent 1899; Hughes 1957; Dodge 1965:150-151; McLaird and Turchen 1974a:33-35; 1974c:313). In time, however, the Hills’ scenic landscapes would support the accumulation of wealth through the aggressive development of the region’s leisure and travel industry (Clark 1952b; Lee 1987). The area of Wind Cave and the neighboring Hot Springs became significant to European American peoples primarily as geologic curiosities, although again religious metaphors were sometimes used to describe them (Long 1992:18-21). Over the past century, most of the public writings about these places, from travel guides to local histories, share a common focus on the uniqueness of their geophysical properties. In the case of Wind Cave, there are also interesting sidebar
accounts of how early settlers located the cave, and how it became a focus of a major land dispute. Nothing took place here of any momentous cultural significance, however. If anything, early European American accounts of this area give the region its cultural flavor through ersatz stories of its original occupation by American Indians (South Dakota Federal Writers Project 1938; Case 1949; Clark 1952b; Rezatto 1989). This is especially true in early accounts (Tallent 1899:644, 695; Brown and Willards 1924:18) of the thermal waters at neighboring Hot Springs, whose cultural meaning was largely inscribed by European American renditions, and in some instances, complete fabrications, of local tribal stories. European American values certainly define the subtext of cultural representations that describe the Black Hills and specific sites within their reaches such as Wind Cave or the Hot Springs. Nevertheless, there is really no special or unique cultural relationship to the local landscape in the traditions of European Americans who settled in this area after 1877 other than its scientific interest and its particular place in the evolution of the region’s recreational and tourist industries. Thus, while scores of travel books, brochures, and pamphlets have been written with a superlative language of the extraordinary to promote the Hills’ majestic beauty, there is no evidence that later generations of European Americans ever regarded them as a consecrated enclosure or a holy place (Federal Writers Project 1938; Case 1949; Clark 1952b). Indeed, Helen Rezatto (1989: 19) asserts: “The whiteman has no ancient legends about the Black Hills, and most of his modern ones are about gold.”

This stands in marked contrast to the region’s American Indian inhabitants. Historically, as we have already seen, the Black Hills had importance for them economically too. The Hills were valued for the richness and diversity of their natural resources. They provided food, medicine, fuel, and materials for manufacturing. Equally important were the spiritual attachments of local tribes to the Hills as a site for the origin of some of their most sacred traditions and religious observances. For some of the tribal nations known to have lived in this area, most notably the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, the Black Hills were the sacred center of their universe. Thus, the taking of the Hills by European Americans was perceived not simply as an economic tragedy, a loss of resources to sustain tribal livelihoods and survival, but a catastrophe of cosmic proportions where the very foundations of tribal identities and relationships to the universe were at stake (New Holy 1997, 1998).

Today, the spiritual attachment of the Lakotas and other tribal nations to the Black Hills has become the subject of considerable controversy, which hinges on the status of the Hills as a sacred site and on the rights of American Indian people to access them under the provisions of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 and other federal laws regarding traditional cultural properties. Many traditionalists within the ranks of the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho nations maintain their long held position that the Black Hills are sacred and have stood as a spiritual center to their peoples for countless generations. A number of historians and anthropologists have challenged the temporal depth of these assertions, arguing that while the adherents may very well be sincere in their beliefs, their ideas about the sacredness of the Black Hills are recent inventions promulgated for political ends. Other scholars, however, have been more supportive of the traditionalists’ claims, marshaling a wide assortment of evidence to demonstrate that many tribal nations have had a long-standing spiritual attachment to the Black Hills. In order to sort out and evaluate the controversy, in which Wind Cave and its environs occupy such a pivotal place, tribal beliefs about the area of Wind Cave need to be situated in a wider cultural and historical context. This section seeks to provide this context in order to give a better understanding of the nature of the sacred landscape on which Wind Cave National Park now sits.
Chapter Twelve

SACRED SITES AND OBSERVANCES

It is worthwhile, at the outset, to come to some understanding of what American Indian people mean when they refer to a place as sacred or talk about its spirituality. Recognizing that these meanings vary from one culture to another, even among the tribal nations who historically occupied the Black Hills, attention will be focused here on the Lakotas and the Cheyennes since these are the two tribal nations whose people have had the strongest and most lasting attachments to the Black Hills and the area of Wind Cave National Park, at least as reported in published sources. Given their close relations with the Lakotas and Cheyennes, the Arapahos probably have ongoing religious connections to this area as well, but none of these have been recorded in the published sources that we reviewed. Some of what constitutes the sacred in relationship to landscapes and observances has already been mentioned in previous discussions of animals, plants, and minerals. This chapter serves as a bridge, carrying forward certain ideas introduced previously and looking at how they are manifested in relation to particular kinds of sacred landforms and spiritual observances. Even though a certain amount of repetition of previously presented material is necessary in order to make this link, the focus and context of its presentation are new.

I. SACRED LANDFORMS AND LANDSCAPES

Much about what is sacred for American Indian people is integrally related to and manifested in geographic landscapes. Rich Two Dogs (in Parlow 1983a:3), a contemporary Lakota spiritual leader, once said: “The religion is rooted to the land. And you can’t have the religion by itself, without the land.” In many American Indian religious traditions, the sacred is present in landforms, sometimes called owanka wakan [holy places] (Howard 1954:73), places that both embody and stand for significant cosmic or spiritual personages, powers, and processes. As Keith Basso (1996), an ethnographer of western Apache culture, describes it, “wisdom sits in places.” Or as the Lakota intellectual Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:119) in the late nineteenth century, spirits belong to “places.” In scores of accounts on the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribal nations, we find examples of how landforms act in mnemonic ways—embodiment, preserving, codifying, and immortalizing basic cosmological precepts (Basso 1996:105-150; Schlesier 1987:4-6; Kelly and Francis 1994:41; Irwin 1994:29).

As is the case with animals, plants, and other natural phenomena in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, landforms are alive. They possess a living presence, a consciousness that humans can approach and come to know especially through dreams and visions (Irwin 1994:31). A landform’s spiritual presence manifests itself in myriad ways, which are best understood and expressed through metaphor (New Holy 1997:79-85). Art, poetry, music, performance, and narrative are the primary mediums through which the meanings behind a landscape and its landforms are experienced and communicated in the tribal cultures of the Great Plains (New Holy 1997:185-186). Landscapes and landforms are comprehended in terms of the totality of their being, their implicit unity and relatedness to one another, and to other natural phenomena that surround them (Irwin 1994:27-29). In Lakota cosmology, as one example, Harney Peak, the Thunders, blacktail deer, swallows, horses, butterflies, cedar, and the West Wind form a synergistic set, a synecdoche, in
which each phenomenon stands and speaks for the other as interchangeable representations of a single spiritual essence or force. Notwithstanding their seemingly distinct physical appearances, they share a common underlying origin and purpose in the cosmic scheme of things. This way of comprehending the world does not rest on a materially based, empirically rationalized approach -- the stuff of scientific discourse. Rather, it involves a figurative, analogical perspective where one form easily enfolds into another, readily expresses another, and finally, can be transformed into the other (Jahner 1989:193-202; Irwin 1994:27; New Holy 1997).

In the ethnogeographies of many American Indian nations, individual landforms are rarely isolated, existing unto themselves and separated from other places in the larger landscapes they occupy. Instead, sites of spiritual significance tend to be interrelated, integrated, and connected to each other through the progression of events in a story cycle or as sites visited in a sequence of activities associated with the performance of ritual observances in a ceremonial cycle (Kelly and Francis 1994:44; Sundstrom, L. 1996). Landscapes in a tribal territory chart or identify the particular locales where certain spiritual figures dwell, where mysterious happenings unfold, where specific knowledge is given, and/or where ceremonial observances are performed (Parks and Wedel 1985). These sometimes take the form of a cosmic map, in which subterranean, earthly, and celestial formations are tied together in a unified vision of the universe and its life-giving processes (Goodman 1992; Carmichael 1994; Theodatus and La Pena 1994:22).

**A. Types of Land Forms**

In their now classic and pioneering work on the historic and sacred geography of the Pawnee, Douglas Parks and Waldo Wedel (1985:167) review some of the sources that report sites of sacred significance to American Indians in the Great Plains. Their review suggests any one of the following landforms as a candidate for a holy place. First, prominent eminences, especially buttes or mountains, are commonly described as sites for ceremonial observances involving fasting and vision seeking. They report that most tribes in the region single out specific mountains or buttes for worship. Sometimes the sacredness of a particular elevated location is unique to a single tribe, but in other cases, the sight has spiritual significance for many tribal nations. Bear Lodge Butte a.k.a. Devil’s Tower, for example, is one of these (Parks and Wedel 1985:169-170). Parks and Wedel (1985:170-171) also note that distinctive bodies of water, certain lakes, river locations, artesian springs and geysers, unusual rock formations, and locations of petroglyphs are considered holy places. To this, caves and other unique underground depressions can be added, as these certainly characterize some of the sites that tribal nations in the region regard as spiritually important. Most of these kinds of landforms are revered by tribal nations from other parts of the United States as well (Carmichael 1994:91-95; Mohs 1994:192-198; Theodatus and La Pena 1994:22-26; Hall 1997).

There are two ways landforms can be discussed. One way is to look at them generically as constituting a topographical class or category, in which all representatives of the type share certain features in common. Another way is to study them concretely as representing specific sites associated with particular cultural representations. Here consideration is given to some of the generic ideas associated with various kinds of landforms; the discussion of particular locales is presented in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen.

**1. Mountains and Buttes**

High elevation locations or prominent eminences are commonly recognized as places where the tribal nations of the Great Plains gained their spiritual gifts and knowledge (Donaldson in
Human beings can plug into the system of cosmic energy at any level, and although there is more energy to be gained by plugging in at higher levels, it is more difficult, and more dangerous. To receive energy directly from the source, one can pray directly to Maheo, or fast on a mountaintop or hilltop, closer to the zenith.

Many high places were used by the Cheyennes to fast, pray, and seek visions because these were connected to powerful bird and insect figures who carried messages between humans and the “Above Persons” in the “World Above,” Heamahestanov, or in the Blue Sky, Otatavoom, the home of Ma’heo, the greatest spiritual presence in the Cheyennes’ universe (Curtis 1907-30:6:123; Powell 1969:2:435, 437; Moore, J. 1986:178-179; Schlesier 1987:4-6). Certain eminences,¹ especially Bear Butte, were the sites where the Cheyennes typically fasted, prayed, and sought spiritual revelations (Odell 1942:17-18; Moore, J. 1996:178-179). Bear Butte was also the mountain where the Cheyennes acquired some of their most sacred knowledge and covenants, including the Sacred Arrows (Schlesier 1987:4-6).

Among the Lakotas, mountains and prominent buttes are also associated with transcendent spaces that exist above and beyond the more ordinary life of the world that stands below them (Forbes-Boyte 1999:28). The tops of high mountains and buttes are the locations where Lakotas typically fast, pray, and seek visions (Fire and Erdoes 1978:1 4-16; Sword in Walker 1980:85; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:105; Thunder Bear in Walker 1980:129, 131, 132; Tyon in Walker 1980:151; Feraca 1998:24; Forbes-Boyte 1996:104-106). Eminences in the Black Hills and its surrounding environs, including Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, Harney Peak, and Mount Coolidge, are among many locations reported in the literature where Lakotas received spiritual guidance (Sage in Hafen and Hafen 1956:268-272; Odell 1942:21-30; Fools Crow in Mails 1972:86-87, 95, 102, 109, 149, 151, 169-171, 181-184; LaPointe 1976:80-84; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:46, 98, 133-135, 141, 230, 253, 258-259; Young Bear and Theisz 1994:19; Forbes-Boyte 1999:28). Each of these places is associated with a spiritual presence, and generally, when guidance is sought from a particular spirit, people go to the places with which it is associated. As with the Cheyennes, high places are preferred by the Lakotas because they bring people into closer contact with Tunkan’sila, [Grandfather] or Taku Skanskan, who is associated with the highest sky spaces and the Four Winds and the different birds and insects that serve as their principal messengers (Walker 1983:321, 327).

In reference to the entire Plains, Lee Irwin (1994:106) writes that certain eminences were widely recognized as especially sacred places because they encompassed different strata of the universe. Among all the high places in their territorial ranges, some of the most significant are the ones that also contained openings to the underworld through caves and springs. The Medicine Wheel Mountain in the Big Horns (Liebman 2002:61-72) conforms to this, and Bear Butte in certainly fits this too. Just as the Lakotas believe that animals and plants crossing different planes of the universe are highly sacred, so they place landforms connecting the sky, earth, and underworld in high regard. In relation to Bear Butte, Kari Forbes-Boyte (1996:104, 1999:28) argues that Bear Butte is revered not only because it contains all of the sacred elements (land air, water, rocks, animals, plants, and fire), but also because it forms an axis mundi that connects earth and sky spaces. Karl Schlesier (1987:4-6) presents a nearly identical case for the sacred

¹ Mountains and hills were known by many different names in the Cheyenne language. Eseom refers to an extended ridge (Petter 1913-15:547), as opposed to a simple elevation of ground which is called epoma. A mountain is known as hohona, or esheoomeno for a range of mountains (Petter 1913-15:722).
importance of Bear Butte to the Cheyennes. Bear Butte and other eminences in and around the Black Hills, are understood not only to be sites of revelation and prophesy but earth centers, places where the forces of the universe coalesce in powerful and energizing ways (Deloria, V. Jr. and Stoffle 1998:12-13).

2. Caves

Throughout Native North America, caves are certainly understood as earth centers, places where the souls of humans and animals undergo a metamorphosis from their immaterial spiritualized selves to their physical forms (Carmichael 1992:92-93; Theodoratus and LaPena 1994:23-24; Hall 1997:99). This is an old idea that is connected, more specifically, with the process in which the soul or spiritual essence of being is attached to a physical form through the creation of “breath” (Hall 1997:99-101).

In the Lakota language, caves are known as mako hloka [a hole in the ground] (Buechel 1970:331) or washun, which refers to a hole but especially the den of an animal (Ibid:553). Among Lakotas, they are often described as birthing chambers or wombs, the places where the spirit forms of animals live and from which they emerge to populate the earth. In the 1870s, James Bourke described a cave near Bear Lodge Butte (a.k.a. Devil’s Tower) from which the Lakotas believed animals emerged (Sundstrom, L. 1997:192), and a half-century later, in 1937, Dick Stone (1982:20) heard about the same cave from his Lakota advisors. In 1874, N. H. Knappen (in Krause and Olson 1974:19), a correspondent for the Bismark Tribune, described Ludlow Cave as “the home of the great spirit,” where animals of all kinds existed “in a translated state.” Ludlow Cave in the Cave Hills of northwestern South Dakota is particularly interesting because many of the ideas associated with Wind Cave also appear here, including the presence of an old man of gigantic stature and stories of animal emergence (Sioux Ranger District 2003:60-73). At Ludlow Cave, a bison cow with her newborn calf is represented in a large bas-relief carving located on the cliffs above the cave entrance (Sundstrom 2002:110).

The Lakotas associate caves with bison. Bison are understood as a gift to the Lakota from Inyan [Stone], whose natural domain is the mountains (Walker 1917:82), and whose home, or tipi, is located in the earth (Little Wound in Walker 1980:124). According to some of the spiritually knowledgeable men that Walker (1980:118) interviewed, Inyan “knows all things of the earth...He can tell where the herds of buffalo are. They have gone back into the earth.” In an account told by Short Bull to Walker (1980:144):

Buffalo were given by the spirit of the earth to the Indians. The spirit of the earth and the buffalo are the same. The Oglalas should venerate the Spirit of the Buffalo. An Indian went into a hole in the ground and found the buffalo. They were given to him for his food. He drove some of them up on the earth. From these came all the buffalo.

At the end of the nineteenth century, George Bushotter (in Dorsey 1894:476-477) elaborated on the notion that bison come from the subterranean world:

The buffalo originated under the earth. It is said that in the olden times, a man who was journeying came to a hill where there were many holes in the ground. He explored them, and when he had gone within one of them, he found plenty of buffalo chips, and buffalo tracks were on all sides; and here and there he found buffalo hair which had come out when the animals rubbed against the walls. These animals were the real buffalo, who dwelt
underground, and some of them came up to this earth and increased here to many herds. These buffalo had many earth lodges, and there they raised their children...²

More recently, a similar account was given to Raymond Bucko (1999:204-205) by one of his Lakota consultants, who said:

The buffalo skull represents all the beings of the earth that are not human, the four-legged. The buffalo skull represents all of life on the earth that passed already. The feather represents all the birds. This is really what the sweat is all about; this is going back to creation, all these animals and birds. A long time ago huká wóglake the ‘old fables’, hukákiya ‘the ancient ancestors’, the people lived in the earth long ago, guided by rock spirits. They had no sight, as it was completely dark. All the animals lived there too. When the people came out of the earth, a scout saw a hole with light coming in. It was too bright for him, but then he got used to the light and around and saw a country, saw the sun and the earth. He wandered the earth for a while and then went back in. It took time to get used to the earth. There were no living things on the earth. The scout told the buffalos and the people about it. The buffalos were greedy, so they went charging out. The scout said to go slow because the light will hurt your eyes. The buffalos came anyway, and that is why the buffalo are blind. When they first came out of the earth, the Great Spirit gave them fire. This was his gift to the people. That’s kind of a creation story.

This represents a modern version of the long-standing belief among the Lakotas that humans and bison share a common origin in the earth, particularly in caves, which are closely connected to the life-giving and regenerative properties of stone and grandmother earth (Melody 1977: 152-164).

Like the Lakotas, the Cheyennes believe that bison originate in the underworld and return to the prairies every spring from their subterranean habitats. In 1883, Lt. Colonel Richard I. Dodge in his book Our Wild Indians, (1959:289) wrote that the Arapahos, Cheyennes, and other Indians held the firm belief “that the buffalo were produced in countless numbers in a country under the ground; that every spring the surplus, swarmed like bees from a hive, out of great cave-like openings to this country.” In Cheyenne traditions, bison and many other mammalian species are believed to originate in subterranean sanctuaries in the depths of the earth (Moore, J. 1974:163, 165; Moore, J. 1984:296, 1996:211). In their cavern homes, mammals exist in a spiritualized form, awaiting their materialization on the earth’s surface (Schlesier 1987:4-5). The Cheyennes believe that animals and humans receive “the immortal gift of breath” from the earth (Schlesier 1987:9). They specifically link the underworld of Bear Butte with the maheonoxsz, the sacred caves and homes of their holiest spirits, the maiyun (Schlesier 1987:4-6). The Maiyun, the messengers of the Ma’heyuno or the Four Directions, have spiritual and material forms (Schlesier 1987:8); they hold positions in the sky, but they also occupy sacred caves on earth where they once imparted their sacred knowledge to the Cheyennes’ two prophets, Sweet Medicine and Stands on the Ground or Erect Horns (Dorsey, G. 1905:48; Grinnell 1926:274). At these locations, they guard and take care of the homes of the animals whose spirits, hematasoomao, dwell in other caverns, known as heszevoxsz, under the earth. Many of these caves are found in the Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:4-7). The Cheyennes also call caves by other names, such as evoxeve [a hole in the ground] (Petter 1913-15:281), or in the modern dialect of the northern

² Without identifying its origin, the same story was rephrased and published by Katherine Judson (1913:53) as follows: “In the days of the grandfathers, buffalo lived under the earth. In the olden times, they say, a man who was journeying came to a hill where there were many holes in the ground. He entered one of them. When he had gone inside he found buffalo chips and buffalo tracks on all sides. He found also buffalo hairs where the buffaloes had rubbed against the walls. These were the real buffaloes and they lived under the ground. Afterwards some of them came to the surface of the earth and lived there. Then the herds on the earth increased.”
Cheyenne, tsevé?evó?too?e, which is the word for an ordinary hole or anything that is concave (English-Cheyenne Dictionary 1976:19).

The idea that caves are the origin homes of bison and other game was also shared by other tribal nations in the northern Plains, including the Arapahos, Arikaras, Hidatsas, Mandans, and Poncas (Dorsey, J. 1890; Kroeber 1902; Dorsey and Kroeber 1903; Bowers 1950, 1963; Parks 1996). Indeed, many Lakota and Cheyenne understandings about caves and their connections to animal homes are very similar, and in some instances nearly identical, to Arapaho, Arikara, Hidatsa, Mandan, and Ponca beliefs.

Since caves are located inside the earth, they are generally associated with a female spiritual presence. The Cheyennes believe that the nadir of the world is the home of a female generative principle He?estosise, the source of the material world (Moore, J. 1996:208-211). Most tribal nations in the Plains feminized the earth and the cavernous underworld homes in which animals originated. The deepest levels of the earth are often addressed as Grandmother Earth, Maka unći in Lakota (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:312), Old Woman Under the Ground, Gadombitsonhit in Kiowa (Mooney 1979:239), or Our Grandmother, Esceheman in Cheyenne (Powell 1969:2:437; Schlesier 1987:5, 8, 82). Among the Cheyennes, Grandmother Earth is one of the four most powerful maiyun or spiritual potencies in their universe; from her subterranean abode, she protects the animals and governs their appearance on earth (Grinnell 1910:567; Schlesier 1987:8).

In Lakota traditions, she is one of the four most powerful Tobtob, and caves are often the sites where encounters with her or other mysterious old women, such as Wakanka, take place (Sage in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272; Erdoes and Ortiz 1984:483-484; Sundstrom, L. 2002:106).

The earth grandmother of the Cheyennes is the progenitor of another female figure, whose home is also a cave under the earth, and her name is Ehyophstah [Yellow Hair on Top Woman] (Schlesier 1987:78). In the stories of many different tribes in the Plains, she appears as a bison woman who becomes the companion of a human man and brings the bison to his people from her subterranean world. There are a number of different versions of these narratives among the Cheyennes (Kroeber 1900:173-196; Grinnell 1907, 1926:244-251; Schlesier 1987:76-79; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-22; Powell 1969:2:472-475) and the Lakotas (Left Heron in Walker 1917:183-190, 212-215, 1983:109-118; Deloria, E. 1978:86-89; LaPointe 1976:79-84). In both tribes, the narratives represent a concatenation of two storytelling traditions, the Buffalo and Corn (or Rush) woman tale and the Buffalo Wife story (Parks 1996: 153-154), variants of which are also found among the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:388-418), the Arikaras (Curtis 1907-30:5:93-100; Dorsey G. 1904:35-37, 124-25; Parks 1996:153-165), the Crows (Lowie 1918:107-119), the Hidatsas (Beckwith 1937:63-76), the Mandans (Libby 1910:694-707; Beckwith, M. 1937:166-170), and the Poncas (Dorsey, J. 1890:1440-1462; Fletcher & LaFlesche 1972:76-78).

The Lakotas also link caves to a male spiritual presence. The home of Waziya or Wazi, the immortal and gigantic old man, is located at the edge of the earth in a cave, which has icicles for poles and snow as its covering (Walker 1917:91, 1983:334). Acccording to James Walker (1983:220-221, 222-223, 225-228, 249), the Lakotas associate caves with ice and believe that their crystalline formations, “white fruits,” are the materials from which Taku Skanskan molded the first man and woman of the Pte Oyate [Buffalo People]. In 1874, when the Black Hills

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3 Many narratives about caves in Lakota traditions are connected to male figures of gigantic stature. Although less common, other stories associate caves with diminutive beings, such as Little People, or speak about animal spirits existing in miniature form before they are transmogrified into their physical appearance on earth. This occurs in a number of stories connected to Wind Cave (see Chapter Fourteen). They Cheyenne also believe in the existence of a mysterious people, the Hoevotto, who live in cavern homes (Moore, J. 1974:165).
Expedition stopped in the Cave Hills in northeastern South Dakota, they were shown, as correspondent William Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:160, 162) puts it, “one of the sacred caves” or “washum” of local tribes. This cave is now known as Ludlow Cave, and according to Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:110, 115, 116, 155), the elder Lakota and Arikara scouts held it in great regard, interpreting the pictographs and petroglyphs on the surrounding rock panels as the work of spirits. A.B. Donaldson (in Krause and Olson 1974:53), another correspondent, recounted what he heard about the cave: that an old bearded man dwelled there. Similar accounts tell of a cavern structure underneath the Black Hills that purportedly extended from one side of the Hills’ center to the other and led to a river and springs that bestowed eternal life. Panthers guarded the entrance to this cave, and it was said that an old bearded medicine man of large stature lived there (Curtis in Krause and Olson 1974:129, 150). This idea extends back even earlier to 1851 in the writings of the trader Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:6). Henry Boller (1972:327) also related a story about a giant located in the Black Hills that he recorded in the 1850s:

The Grindstone, an old Onc-pa-pa Sioux, who with his family resided among the Gros Ventres, frequently talked about a white hermit in the pines among the Black Hills. He had a hut on the summit of some towering rocks. No one had seen him, but they knew him to be a very tall man because they (the Sioux) found a deer, which he had killed and hung up in the top of a lofty pine tree. He is the person, they think, who poisoned all of the creeks and streams, causing such distress among the wild animals. There had been no thunder this spring, and it was currently believed that he had killed the thunder-bird.

Waziya is the grandfather of the Four Winds. The eldest, the North Wind, Waziyata, is named after his grandfather whose home he shares. He is widely associated in Lakota traditions with the emergence, movement, and disappearance of bison (Curtis 1907-30:3:77). As represented in a multitude of different oral traditions and sacred liturgical texts, he and his bison associates, including Tatanka, are identified with winter, rebirth, and health (Curtis 1907-30: 3:68, 111-118; 159; Wissler 1912:6, 19-20; Densmore 1918:196-197, 219, 220-223; Kemnitzer 1970:71; Black Elk in Brown 1971:133; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127; Walker 1980:232; Powers, W. 1986:139; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:163). In a prayer for the Pte San Lowanpi ceremony, Black Elk (in Brown 1971:119-120) gives these words:

O you, giant, Waziah, Power of the north, who guard the health of the people with your winds, and who purify the earth by making it white, you are the one who watches that path upon which our people walk. Help us especially today with your purifying influence, for we are about to make sacred a virgin, White Buffalo Cow Woman Appears, from whom will come the generations of our people. There is a place for you in this pipe...

And in a prayer for the Tapa Wanka Yap [Throwing the Ball Ceremony], he says:

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4 In reference to the Black Hills proper, some writers (Rezatto 1989:18-20) interpret this large bearded man to be a white man or a European American. This interpretation has little to support it. Indeed, if anything, it represents an example of how Europeans twisted so-called American Indian legends to serve their own interests and conquests. In the early twentieth century, elderly Cheyennes also had stories of an old white giant called Hoimaha, who brought the snow, frost, and cold in the winter, and who was identified with the wind and cardinal direction of the North, Notamota (Grinnell 1972:2:338-339; Moore, J. 1996:206-207). No stories were uncovered, however, that associate this figure with a cave. The Cheyennes also talked about a people who had lighter skin than Indian people, called Hoevotto in the Cheyennes’ sacred language. These people lived underground where they forged metals that caused the mountains to smoke (Petter 1913-15:281).

5 It is hard to know, however, whether or not Boller (1972:225) is writing about the Black Hills proper, since elsewhere he uses the term “Black Hills” to describe an area along the Knife River.
O You where the Giant lives, who purifies with Your white breath, and You, winged one who guard this straight path, we are placing You in this pipe, and so help us with Your two sacred red and blue days! (in Brown 1971:132).

In this ceremony, Black Elk (in Brown 1971:133) explains that the young woman who throws the ball stands at the center and on the sacred path, which extends from the south, the direction people face when praying, to the north, “where the giant lives.” At this spot she is able to see the sacred tree and the generations to come. The ball she holds in her hand symbolizes the universe, and when she throws it to the people in each of the four directions, she is recreating the cosmic order established by Tate and his sons, a structure also revealed in the movements and lifecycle of the bison (Ibid:134-135).

Lakotas think of the north as the place of ni [breath] and connect it directly to bison. Francis Densmore (1918:67-68) makes the connection between breath or wind-power, winter, and the buffalo in her analysis of a line from the “Song of the White Buffalo Maiden,” which reads, “Niya’ tan’yan...with visible breath, mawa’niye...I am walking.” According to Densmore (Ibid:68n1), when it is cold during the winter, “the breath of a herd of buffalo, rising in the frosty air, could be plainly seen.” Taking this a step further, William Powers (1977:191-192) writes that the North Wind, Waziyata, epitomizes winter, waniyetu, “the time and place of breath.” In other words, this is the season when breath appears. Certain caves reveal clouds of condensation during the winter months, and thus, they are connected to bison whose presence in the wintertime is also made visible by the frosty emanations of their breath. Importantly, in the Lakota scheme of things, there is a powerful synergistic connection between winter, the North Wind, bison, caves, and breath, which is central to understanding the meaning of Wind Cave. As explained by the Lakota spiritual leader, Pete Catches (in Parlow 1983a:2-3; in Gonzalez 1996:67), Wind Cave is the location of one of the seven spiritual forces emerging at the time of creation and associated with ni, the breath of life.

Caves are also seen as symbolic equivalents of cocoons, insofar as both signify enclosed spaces where life is incubated, awaiting rebirth and regeneration through the materialization of breath. Like the whirlwind and its associates, the dragonfly, butterfly, and spider, humans and bison emerge from a cocoon-like formation that gives birth to the life force (Brown 1970:6-11, 1992:49; Red Shirt 2002:204). One story told by Oscar Howe (in St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:49-50) of a man being gifted by a spider while sleeping inside a cave reveals this connection. Wind Cave is a quintessential representation of this process because of its capacity to release ni or breath, a manifestation of Tate, the Wind’s movement and a basic force in creation.

Lakotas regard the north-south axis as analogous to the nadir and zenith, and they believe that after death, the wanagi travel along the Milky Way to the south, and when they arrive, they return to the north under the earth to be reborn (Powers, W. 1977:192; Powers, M. 1986:69, 191). In some Lakota texts, it is Waziyata, the Old Man, who determines whether people go on to the land of the dead or get sent to the underworld (Tyon in Walker 1980:123). Or he is believed to bring

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6 Stanley Vestal (1932:18) also writes about how Lakotas were able to find a herd in the winter by the “cloud of frozen breath floating above them,” and how bulls moved against the wind even in blizzards.

7 This story is also interesting because the gift the man receives is knowledge of a nearby mountain where flint is located. Battle Mountain, the famous flint quarry, is situated near many of the caves in the southeastern reaches of the Black Hills, including those at Wind Cave National Park. Flint is the stone used in making fire, one of the elemental forces in the creation of life.

8 The Cheyennes have similar beliefs (Moore, J. 1974:145).

9 In some accounts, To Win [Blue Woman] plays this role (Goodman 1992:38-39). Curiously, Red Rabbit (in Walker 1980:126) talks about the tipi of Waziyata being located in the sky. This confirms, once again, the dual placement of many spiritual figures in sky and earth spaces.
messages from people who have died and gone to the spirit land. Red Rabbit told Walker (1980:127) how Waziya is the one who admits people to the spirit world from his sky position:

The manes of the wanagi pass by his tipi when they travel to the spirit world. He talks with them and they tell him what they know. If they are worthy he permits them to pass on. The trail of the tipi of Waziya is high in the sky, and he keeps it covered with ice so that it is hard to travel. When one dies, his shadow must rest and so people must feed it. Beyond the home of Waziya it is never cold and never hot. There is plenty there.

Holes on the earth are often connected to those in the sky and are understood as places where the forces of the universe converge at a single powerful point, creating the dynamics and energy that brings life within the circle or cycle of creation (Goodman 1992:17-19). In Lakota traditions, as previously described, there is a hole in the sky in the center of the Big Dipper where souls pass through and are given direction for their journey south along the path of the Milky Way (Goodman 1992:38). On earth, white buffalo robes, once displayed at spirit keeping ceremonies, were placed in holes or caves to the north, as a gift anticipating the soul’s entrance into a parallel hole in the sky (Curtis 1907-30:3:110). Again, after traveling to the spirit world in the south, the soul eventually makes its way north to the underworld where it is reborn and emerges in a materialized form through caves on the earth’s surface. The Cheyennes are reported to have buried their dead in caves, crevices in rocks, or holes in the ground which they covered with stone (Curtis 1907-30:6:158; Grinnell 1972:2:163). This was also an older practice among the Lakotas as well (Bordeaux 1929:161-162; Hassrick 1964:296-297). Like wanagi, bison returned to and emerged from the north and the subterranean world in order to be reborn. The sun also travels to the underworld. Throughout North America, when night arrives on the earth’s surface the Sun travels to subterranean locations where he visits with his associates, the bison (Little Wound in Walker 1980:67; Hall 1997:133-134).

Since caves are conceptualized as life-force centers where the soul is released to be materialized through the breath of life, it is not surprising that many tribes believe that the first humans emerged from a cave. The Cheyennes attributed their own origins to a cave located in a distant land to the north where the country was barren and provided little more than rabbits for the people’s survival (Grinnell 1972:1:4-5). They also attribute rebirth and regeneration to caves, as revealed in various Sweet Medicine and Stands on the Ground stories, including one located in the southern Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:9, 79-80). This is true for the Lakotas as well, whose own origin story is linked to Wind Cave.

No matter how caves are understood and described in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, they are generally linked to breath, bison, winter, the North Wind and the related themes of immortality, rebirth, and the continuation of life through death. They are also linked to sites where sacred knowledge is revealed in visionary experiences, although typically the cave where this happens is located inside a mountain or hill (Haflin and Haflin 1956;268-272; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:156-157; LaPointe 1976:79-80; Grinnell 1972:1:202, 2:136, 285, 340, 368-369; Bucko 1999:172-173, 184-185). Again, sites of this order represent a powerful meeting place and juxtaposition between earth and sky spaces. These are what Vine Deloria, Jr. and Richard Stoffle

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10 Although there are detailed descriptions of Lakota spirit-keeping ceremonies and other funeral practices, there is little about their specific manner of laying the deceased to rest other than scaffold burials (Densmore 1918:77-84; Curtis 1907-30:399-110; Hassrick 1964:293-298). William Bordeaux (1929:161-162), however, indicates that in earlier times the Lakotas dug a cave in a cliff or bank to bury their dead. He wrote that this kind of burial was called “Maya-Oki-Ti, [living in a cave]. Rich Two Dogs (in Parlow 1983a:6) mentions that his grandfather told him that he had a sister who was buried in the vicinity of Wind Cave.

11 In Cheyenne traditions, the semi-cardinal direction, the Southeast, is widely associated with the Sun.
identify as sacred portals, “where it is possible to pass from one universe to another.” According to them, the Lakotas believe that several of these places exist in the Black Hills.

3. Springs, Rivers, and Lakes

Places of water are commonly identified as sacred locales. In the Black Hills, the lake at Bear Butte is one of these (Grinnell 1926:244-247; McAllister 1965). As described in Chapter Nine, large bodies of water, rivers and lakes, are associated in L/Dakota beliefs with a distinct class of spiritual beings, often envisioned as giant snakes or large lizards with horns (Dorsey, J. 1894: 438-440). In Cheyenne traditions, these water spirits and their underwater “people” are also known to guard the buffalo and to control their appearance and disappearance on earth (Grinnell 1972:2:97). The fossilized remains of various prehistoric animals are widely connected to these water figures in Lakota and Cheyenne thought, and the places where they are found are often revered.

Of greater importance to the area around Wind Cave National Park are springs. Springs are highly regarded by the Cheyennes and Lakotas wherever they are located, not only because they are often sources of fresh water, but also because they are passageways between the underworld and the earth’s surface (Moore, J. 1974:164; Standing Bear 1978:150). In some Cheyenne stories, springs, like caves, were locations where bison and other game came to the earth’s surface from their subterranean homes (Grinnell 1972:2:261). The Lakotas called springs wiwila [little life] (Buechel 1970:591; Standing Bear 1978:150) and mni c’api [water trap] or mniowe [a fountain of water] (Buechel 1970 338), while the Cheyennes knew them as hohame or emeanoexz [referring to the jumping like action of the water] (Petter 1913-15:499, 1004). Pete Catches (in Parlow 1983a:2; in Gonzalez 1996:67) talked about the Hot Springs area as the embodiment of another sacred presence, the spirit of the water, who came to the Hills at the time of creation.

Springs are also linked to diminutive beings that dwell near rocky outcroppings or underneath the ground. Little People are known to harm those who carelessly cross their paths by shooting them with tiny arrows, but they are also known to help people if approached with proper respect (Grinnell 1971:2:126; LaPointe 1976:45-46; Tyon in Walker 1980:170-171). In Lakota beliefs, these diminutive spirits also play a role in the appearance of game animals and in the productivity and potency of plants, and they are commonly associated with the Hot Springs-Wind Cave area (LaPointe 1976:45,84). The connection of Little People to mountains, rocky outcroppings, caves, and springs is also common among other tribes known to have frequented the Black Hills in the early historic period, including the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903: 121-125; Anderson, R. 1956; Anderson, J. 2001:49; the Poncas (Howard 1965a:18), Kiowas (Mooney 1979:239), and the Crows (Grinnell 1922:306; Frey 1987:174; Nabakov and Loendorf 1994:93-95; McCleary 1997: 45-47).

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12 A waterfall was called zeanhono map [Falling water] in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:1097) and Mniwohaha in Lakota (Buechel 1970:339).
13 Pe’wiwila is the word for an infant’s fontanel in Lakota (Buechel 1970:442).
Another spiritual figure associated with springs, caves, and rocky outcroppings in Lakota traditions is the Double-Woman, *Winyan Nupapika* (Sundstrom, L. 2002:110). One Lakota story associates this figure with the Hot Springs region (Herman in One Feather 1974:149). Figures representing her are also found on the walls of the canyon gateways to the Black Hills. Some are also situated near caves, including Ludlow Cave in the Cave Hills of northwestern South Dakota and Medicine Creek Cave on the northwestern side of the Black Hills (Sundstrom, L. 2002:110-111). These may have been sites where Lakota women fasted and sought visions in early historic times (Sundstrom, L. 2002:100-109).

### 4. Canyons, Rock Outcroppings, and Rock Art

Other unusual topographic features, including unique bluffs, boulders, rock outcroppings or rocky overhangs, ledges, and canyons, may also be identified as sacred places. These seem to be associated with any of a variety of figures, and there appears to be no specific cast of spiritual beings that are more or less reported at these places. Canyons, bluffs, or rock outcroppings of special significance include those with petroglyphs and pictographs, ones with distinctive shapes, those which mark dramatic transitional zones between different environments, or passageways associated with the transhumance movement of animals (Sundstrom, L. 1990). Canyons, for example, often evoke a sense of liminality because they are betwixt and between spaces, connecting and simultaneously separating one kind of world from another. Generally, their meaning does not stand alone but is derived from the landscapes they border and connect. Often, they are associated with special places that certain animals and plants frequent (Deloria, V. Jr. and Stoffle 1998:14-15). This is true for a number of places in the Black Hills, notably, the Buffalo Gap, Red and Craven canyons, and French Creek (Sundstrom, L. 1990:287-299). The Buffalo Gap is particularly significant because of its V-shape, and the fact that one of its side canyons contains a natural arch. The depression known as the Race Track (or Red Valley) can also be included here because it is widely recognized as an unusual topographic feature in the Black Hills (see stories in Chapter Fourteen), one that forms a circle or hoop, which is widely regarded as sacred in Lakota and Cheyenne beliefs, and one that is mirrored in a star constellation (Goodman 1992:7).

Red, Craven, and Whoop-Up Canyons are highly significant because of their petroglyphs and pictographs, some of which are believed to convey messages about the future, communications that spirits reveal to those who know how to interpret their symbols (Catches in Parlow 1983a:3; Eagle Hunter in Parlow 1983a:13; Red Owl in Parlow 1983a:21; Sundstrom, L. 1990; Deloria, V. Jr. and Stoffle 1998:16; Good Eagle in Little Eagle 2000:212-213). French Creek also has rock art, some of which has clear connections to the Lakotas in historic and possibly even protohistoric times (Sundstrom, L. 2002). Like the Lakotas, the Cheyennes respect any stone with petroglyphs and pictographs (Moore, J. 1974:171, 175). The culture resource officers we interviewed from both tribes indicated that any rock art found in Wind Cave National Park needs protection (Albers and Kittleson 2002).

### B. The Black Hills and Their Landforms

Although many different landforms have long held sacred value to America’s tribal nations, little was known or written about them in published sources. Considering the plains region as a whole, Douglas Parks and Waldo Wedel (1985:167) write:

> The ethnographic and historical literature of the plains region contains only sporadic, frequently vague, references to geographical sites considered sacred to Indian groups. Whether the lack of specific discussion represents fortuitous omission by recorders of Indian
culture or whether it suggests that for many tribes there simply were few sites that were so perceived is not entirely clear. But the number of references to sacred places scattered throughout the literature is sufficient to attest to their undoubted existence for all tribes and to suggest their fundamental importance as well.

With only a few exceptions, ethnographers paid little attention to the geography of tribal life. This was true not only for places that had religious significance, but also for locations commonly used in the procurement of food and other resources. Even the routes local groups customarily traveled and the sites they typically used to camp were often unmarked. Indeed, a scholarly interest in tribal geography has emerged only within the past few decades, and those who pursue this interest have had to draw on a wide variety of sources from historic documents to contemporary oral traditions to reconstruct and map these landscapes.

In the case of the Black Hills, as noted in previous chapters, historic and ethnographic source materials often lack specificity when it comes to mapping the locations of tribal settlements, sites for subsistence, or routes of travel in and around the Hills. Not surprisingly, and with few exceptions, details are also lacking for places known to have historic and/or contemporary spiritual significance. Nevertheless, a general sense, and in some cases a very specific appreciation, of the area’s importance and the meaning of its various sites can be understood in terms of a generic understanding of the land forms that make up its total landscape.

One can argue that the Black Hills are viewed as spiritually significant to the Lakotas and Cheyennes because they contain land forms that connect all planes of the universe from the lofty heights of their mountain tops to the deepest depths of their immense underground caverns. The Hills contain a multitude of caves, springs, unusual rock outcroppings, and distinctive high elevation prairies and meadows. They are also surrounded by a unique depression, the Red Valley, which nearly encircles the Hills and separates the interior limestone plateau from the outer sandstone Hogback. This formation, also known as the Race Track, is accessed through a number of different and unusual gateways, including the Buffalo Gap and Red Canyon. Finally, the two branches of a major waterway, the Cheyenne River, nearly surround them. Given the special character and diversity of their geophysical forms, many of which conform to tribal ideas about life-force centers, it is easy to imagine how the Black Hills serves as an hierophany, a place that metaphorically represents the entire cosmos. The Hills and their outlier formations not only contain the totality of elements and forces that make up Cheyenne and Lakota universes, but they do so while encompassing all tiers of the cosmos in every direction (Brown Hat in Mallery 1893: 289-290; Catches in Parlow 1983a:82-83; Catches in Gonzalez 1996:67). Like the sacred landscapes of many other tribal nations, which constitute an “integrated system of locations” (Kelly and Francis 1994:96), the Black Hills can be seen as representing for the Lakotas and Cheyennes an ordered and integrated group of landforms that, in part, derive their significance and meaning from their relationship to each other. As will be argued in the following chapters, the Black Hills form a unified landscape whose various sites are linked together in a variety of tribal narratives and ceremonial cycles.

While landforms in the Black Hills are tied to each other, they also express unique identities that reflect the distinctive characteristics of the spiritual potentialities with which they are associated. Different landforms carry different stories of extraordinary happenings that unfolded in myth time and of mysterious experiences that took place within historic memory. Some of these occurrences led to the origin of important forms of knowledge and practice, which not only

14 This idea has already been skillfully developed in Kari Forbes-Boyte’s writings (1996, 1999) on Bear Butte.
explain how the universe came to be, but also how humanity plays a role in its continuance and renewal. Some sacred places in the Black Hills have become the focus of intense ceremonial observance. As Kari Forbes-Boyte (1999:23-24) writes in relation to Bear Butte:

The Lakotas view the entire world as sacred; however, certain locales have become especially holy because of the activities that transpire there. The rituals, to an extent, continue to feed the power of the place. The spirits continue to contact the individual at the site and the Great Spirit continues to respond to prayers offered at Bear Butte.

Others are not associated with an elaborate or recurring pattern of ritual use, however. Only certain people approach them to carry on specific religious functions, or they come when they are spiritually prepared and called upon to do so. The prairie areas of the central Black Hills, which the Lakotas call *Pe Sla*, appear to be of this order. Finally, there are probably many places (not recorded in the literature) that receive little, if any, ceremonial attention and are largely left alone. These sites are avoided not because they are any less holy but out of a deep regard and respect for what spiritually resides there. Not uncommonly, the avoidance rests on the belief that ordinary people neither have the knowledge nor the spiritual qualifications to approach them in a correct manner. The place can be dangerous when people lack an awareness of how to properly conduct themselves in its presence.

It should also be said that places in the Black Hills derive significance not simply from the spiritual manifestations connected with their geophysical forms, but from the other living beings that reside there and make up their landscapes. As mentioned in other contexts, there is a synergistic connection between the spiritual potentialities expressed in landforms and the particular species of animals, varieties of plants, and classes of minerals who dwell in their reaches. In Lakota perspectives, for example, Harney Peak evokes a spiritual persona different from Wind Cave and its environs, which include the Hot Springs, the Race Track, and the Buffalo Gap. Together, all of the sites in and around the Black Hills form a totality: they are the gathering place of people, animals, plants, and minerals from all points of the compass. The incredible diversity of the Hills’ living forms makes it a special place for the Lakotas and Cheyennes, a location where the divine continues to be revealed through all of its myriad and mysterious manifestations.

II. SACRED COMMUNICATION AND OBSERVANCE

In Lakota and Cheyenne cultures, sacred places require an understanding of how to approach them in order that they might reveal and manifest their spiritual presence. Entering into relations with the sacred is created in many different ways, involving personal as well as communal forms of observance. In either case, forming such relations usually takes place in the company of intercessors who possess special knowledge and talents enabling them to bring about the manifestation of the sacred in human contexts. This section gives attention, albeit very briefly, to the language, people, and observances that make up Cheyenne and Lakota religious practice. There is an immense literature on this subject written by ethnographers and scholars in other disciplines that can only be highlighted here.

On the Lakotas, there are the early and important writings of James Walker (1917, 1980, 1983) and Francis Densmore (1918), which include the verbatim texts of their Lakota advisors. Since the 1970s, many writings have summarized this early work and also added new details

In the case of the Cheyennes, George Dorsey (1905) and George Bird Grinnell (1910, 1914, 1919, 1972) wrote some of the major early works on religious practice, and more recently, Robert Anderson, R. (1956), Father Peter Powell (1969), Karl Schlesier (1987), and John Moore (1974, 1996) have written extensively on this subject too. There is also a literature on this topic from a Cheyenne perspective (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967; Ant et al. in Leman 1987; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988; Red Hat in Schukies 1993).

### A. Sacred Language

Making a connection with that which is sacred always demands a basic sense of reverence and respect in order to invoke its powers and participate in some form of life renewal. It requires knowledge of proper forms of communication as expressed in words, music, dance, and art. Only language is described here, but many of the distinctions that apply in this mode communication also cover other forms of expression.

Spirituality, the act or sense of being spiritual, comes closest to the Lakota word *wakan’la*, which means to worship or to reckon something as holy (Buechel 1970:526). Another term, *wicala*, refers to a petition, a consideration, or intention for invoking assistance in regards to spiritual matters (Powers, W. 1986:106-107). In the language and everyday life of the common people, the *ikut*, there are a host of other words that express the awe, respect, and reverence customarily needed when beholding and experiencing *Taku Wakan*, that which is sacred. *Oho’la* and *ok’niha* both signify an act of respect, worship, or honor (Buechel 1970:374, 390). *Ahokipa* is another verb that designates the act of taking care of, valuing, or respecting something (Ibid:62), while *cante-eluyza* expresses esteem, the process of having or holding something in one’s heart (Ibid:134), and *yuo’nihan* entails treating something with special attention (Ibid:646).

In contrast to the language typically used in everyday discourse about spiritual matters, there are two other forms of speech in the Lakota language. According to Charlotte Black Elk (1986b:192) *tobtob* is a formal speech confined to religious settings and certain formal governmental contexts, and *hanbloglaia* is a liturgical and sacred form of communication. The latter is associated with the telling of visions and dreams (Buechel 1970:165). It is the speech that medicine men and women employ in addressing the spirit world; it involves speech modifications of a morphological, lexical, and syntactic nature as well as unique metaphorical allusions that appear only in sacred contexts. As examples, the name of the South Wind, *Wihoyiyanpa* is abbreviated to *Yanpa* in sacred texts, the expression *oyate wakan* [sacred nation] is inverted to *wakan oyate*, or a word is metaphoric as when *cante* [heart] is used to connote a sacred center. It is also associated with unique forms of expression that communicate abstract philosophical ideas about the universe, its creation, its unfolding, and its purpose (Powers, W. 1986:11-41; Amiotte 1989b).

The Cheyennes make similar distinctions, using certain names only to address the *maiyun* in sacred ceremonies (Schlesier 1987:8). Originally, shamans formed an esoteric, closed group, the *Ononeovataneo*, who used language hidden to outsiders (Schlesier 1987:14). The word *ma’heo-
netane describes the distinctive, non-ordinary way of thinking that is associated with the spiritual and the sacred, and one that is connected to the work of shamans and other religionists (Rock-roads in Leman 1987:210-212; Leman 1987:415).

**B. Tribal Religionists**

All Lakota and Cheyenne people can approach the sacred. However, some are more gifted at doing so, either because they experience extraordinary spiritual encounters and/or they learn through apprenticeship the knowledge and practice necessary to enter into relationships with the spirit world. Generally speaking, communication with this world is associated with gifted men and women who are able to properly address spirits through their knowledge of special words, songs, dances, and designs.

Historically, among the Cheyennes, spiritual intercessors served as vehicles or conduits through which sacred information and power flowed for the benefit of humankind (Schlesier 1987:18). The Cheyennes appear to have had three major groups of intercessors. One group, known as naetan or nae, received their spiritually derived talents from animal spirits, and they used these in the practice of doctoring, hunting, and warfare but without the assistance of the Maiyun. Another group, called zemaheonesso [mysterious ones], was granted their power by specific Maiyun (Schlesier 1987:14). These shamanic intercessors were further divided into two categories, according to whether the Maiyun they served were of the sky or the earth. The shamans affiliated with the sky included the Hemanel [half man, half woman] and Hohnuhka, or Contraries, who received their powers from Nonoma, the Thunder (Schlesier 1987:14-15). Those connected to the earth included the shamans who held powers to influence game and to practice certain kinds of healing associated with the earth’s fauna and flora (Anderson, R. 1956; Schlesier 1987:16; Powell 2002a, 2002b). The last group was the Maheonhetaneo, men and women who served the Maiyun and contacted them during the Cheyennes’ major religious observances. These people functioned more as priests or as “theologists” in conducting the tribe’s major ceremonies, the Oxheheom [Sun Dance] and Massuam [Animal Dance], and in caring for the tribe’s two sacred covenants, Mashoet [the Sacred Arrows] and Esevone [the Sacred Hat]. The Maheonhetaneo held a sacred trust that obligated them to make many sacrifices on behalf of the Maheyuno and Maiyun they served and to conduct themselves among the people with the highest degree of circumspection (Moore, J. 1974a:258-260; Schlesier 1987:14-16).

Among the Lakotas, people who are adept at interceding with the spirit world are known as wicasa wakan or winyan wakan [holy men or holy women] (Powers, W. 1986:181; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:126-141; Feraca 1998:45). These people are gifted with special talents, which they receive in dreams or visions and through recurring relations with their spiritual helpers. Most of these men and women do not practice alone; they enter into longtime apprenticeships with experienced holy people to learn the specialized knowledge associated with the spiritual talents they receive. According to William Powers (1986:181, 190), these holy people were historically divided into several different classes, which include wakan kaga [people who imitate something sacred], wapiyupi [people who make something anew], and wicahmunga [wizards] and wimunga [witches] about whom little has been written in the literature (Powers, W. 1986:188; Feraca 1998:47). Those who heal and renew life through the use of plants with or without the intervention of spirit helpers are known as pejuta wicasa or winyan [herb men or women] (Powers 1986:182-183; Lewis T. 1990:111-112, 124-139; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:28, 31-33; Feraca 1998:46, 71-80).

The wakan kaga are differentiated by the nature of their dreams and spiritual partners (Powers, W. 1977:56-67; 1986:180,183-188). The tatanka kaga or tatanka inhanblayaci, for
example, are bison imitators or bison dreamers. They are people who have been given “permission” to imitate the buffalo and conduct performances that, in effect, call forth the bison’s spiritual potentialities. Heyoka kaga are people sought out by the Thunders and inspired to perform on their behalf. Historically, men and women with similar dream experiences, whether of bison, elk, bear, wolves, or badgers, formed loose associations where they enacted their shared spiritual strengths. Depending on the nature of their spiritual prowess, holy people applied their talents in specific ways. Some were able to heal, while others were skilled at hunting and attracting the animals they imitated. Some were endowed with the knowledge to make protective medicines to keep themselves and others from danger and misfortune (Wissler 1912:81-99; Powers, W. 1977:57-59, 1986:182).

People who engage in healing, the wapiyapi, are also distinguished by the source of their spiritual powers. A tatanka wapiye [buffalo healer], for example, is spiritually partnered with bison and able to make medicines associated with this animal (Powers, W. 1986:183; Lewis, T. 1990:93, 96-98, 100-105; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:27-31). Closely related to the wapiye and part of the same class are the Yuwipi wicasa, whose healing roles and performances, according to William Powers (1986:183; Lewis, T. 1990:71-105), best conform with the idea of a shaman. Historically, some of the most revered wapiyapi had multiple spirit partners, and in modern times, many of the most admired Yuwipi serve as a vehicle for many different spirits (Powers, W. 1986:126). Frank Fools Crow (in Mails 1991:30-45) describes Yuwipi like himself as “hollow bones,” people who are able to “channel” or serve as a conduit of power from the spirit world: he emphasizes here that wicasa wakan do not inherently possess power.

Today, many of the specialized forms of spiritual intercession that were once common in Lakota communities have disappeared or have been reworked and combined with the spiritual performances of Yuwipi. Even though these healers were prohibited from practicing their talents by the federal government in the early reservation era (Densmore 1918:245), they are now the most prevalent class of wapiyapi among the Lakotas (Densmore 1918:204-244; Kemnitzer 1970; Powers W. 1982; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990; Lewis, T. 1990:90-93, 108, 183; Feraca 1998:53). Yuwipi wapiyapi not only have partnerships with their original patron, Inyan [Stone], but they also have relations with a host of other spirits whose potentialities, sicun, are embodied in stones and other objects (Densmore 1918:204-273; Kemnitzer 1970, 1976; Powers, W. 1982:11-15; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:96; Feraca 1998:30-44). From Fools Crow’s various discussions (in Mails 1972:49-52, 93-94, 186; Lewis, T. 1990:72-80) on these matters, Lakota Yuwipi appear to differ from other wapiyapi, not so much by the character of their spiritual benefactors but in the ways in which they handle and transmit the ton or power of these spirits. The hallmark of the Yuwipi is their ability to transmute and contain spiritual power through the workings of the sicun (described earlier in Chapter Nine). There is a rich published literature on Yuwipi and the ceremonies they perform. The reader is advised to consult these sources for further details (Densmore 1918:204-244; Kemnitzer 1970; Fools Crow in Mails 1972; Powers W. 1982; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990; Lewis, T. 1990:90-93; Feraca 1998; Holy Bull in Keeney 1999).

Beyond their ability to heal and do other mysterious works, a few of the most talented holy men and women, with a broad and powerful base of knowledge, also perform major ceremonies, such as the Pte San Lowanpi (White Buffalo Cow Sing), Hunkapi (Making Relatives), and the Wiwinyan wacipi (Sun Dance), where the sacred is invoked on behalf of an entire community. Among the Lakotas, there does not appear to be a conventionalized set of distinctions that formally separate the religious intercessors for public observances from other spiritually gifted people.

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15 Other animals, as described in Chapter Nine and Appendix A, are associated with other specialized forms of healing (Powers, W. 1986:180).
as exists among the Cheyennes. The most accomplished intercessors are singled out for their public roles by the nature and degree of their spiritual talents, their knowledge, and the respectful ways they conduct their lives (DeMallie 1984:102n3; Powers, M. 1986:126; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:17-35; Feraca 1998:27).

C. Spiritual Observances

In the Lakota and Cheyenne scheme of things, spirituality is not simply an attitude but a respectful relationship that binds people to the spirit world through complex reciprocal exchanges. The reciprocity that exists between people and the spiritual beings that make up the universe of the Lakota and Cheyenne is often expressed, as described in previous chapters, through the metaphorical use of kinship terminology (Moore, J. 1996:245-249; DeMallie 1984:81-82; 1987:30-31).

Among Cheyennes, power or energy flows from Ma’heo to human beings through several different channels. It first comes through the highest spirits, the mayyun, and from them to lesser spirits who represent different species of natural phenomena. According to John Moore (1996:246), “birds and animals are said to receive their power in the same manner as human beings, through dancing, singing, eating certain herbs, and painting themselves.” Cheyennes mimicked the actions, sounds, and colors of animals in their own ceremonies in order to replicate the spiritual potentialities of different species. For this imitation to work, however, the Cheyennes are expected to gain permission from the animals: this usually takes place through reciprocal partnerships formed in dreams and visions (Schlesier 1987:13,15).

Similarly, Lakota see themselves as vehicles through which powers coming from the spirits can be generated and imitated [kagapi] or transmuted to stones and other objects as in the work of the Yuwipi (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:235-238; Fools Crow in Mails 1991:46-60). These transformative processes take the form of dance, song, prayer, and art based on the inspiration and instructions received from the various spirit potentialities that represent Wakan Tanka (Powers, W. 1977:56-60,1986:183-188; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:232-235, 240, 242-244; DeMallie 1987:34; Lewis, T. 1990:71-150; Fools Crow in Mails 1991:30-168; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:156-167). Beyond their partnerships with particular spirits, the Lakotas sought in all of their rituals to get in touch with fundamental life-processes at the core of creation (Amiotte 1989a). To engage the spiritual and to bring its gifts into the realm of human activity took place in many different ways.

1. Petitioning the Sacred

All religious observances involve, at their heart, prayers and offerings to the sacred. These may be as simple as the placement of tobacco and the recitation of a prayer when a plant is taken for food or medicine. In these simple petitions, offerings of value -- tobacco, stones, coins, or beads -- are not necessarily visible at the locations where they are left. Often, these gifts are placed at a spot discreetly and hidden from view, or like tobacco, they are perishable. Prayers and offerings can be made anywhere and anytime a person deems it appropriate to do so to demonstrate their respect to specific spirits or Ma’heo and Wakan Tanka in general.

Among the Lakotas, some of the more visible offerings, such as cloth banners, waumyapi, or tobacco ties, canli wapahta, small pieces of red cloth containing tobacco and strung together, are associated with certain forms of religious practice (Kemnitzer 1970:68-72; Powers, W. 1982:14; Feraca 1998:15, 36, 53); they are not ubiquitous. They are not commonly used by the Cheyennes,
and even among the Lakotas, they represent only two of the ways in which offerings are made (Feraca 1998:72-75). The absence of cloth banners or tobacco ties does not mean, a priori, that an area is not being used spiritually, as Beverly Chirinos (1992:96-98) assumed in her assessment of Lakota relations to Inyan Kara Mountain. While the use of tobacco ties is very common at Bear Butte and the Medicine Wheel in the Big Horns, it is not always necessary or even appropriate at other locations or under other circumstances. What is offered and how it is offered depends in large part on the spiritual presence associated with a place and also the cultural background of the petitioner. Indeed, according to one of Stephen Feraca’s Oglala consultants, Mrs. Fast Horse, who was a pejuta winyan [a female herbalist], it is a good sign when the offerings are blown away or disappear because it means they’ve been taken by the spirits (Feraca 1998:76-77).

At Wind Cave National Park, the park’s staff has sighted only a few tobacco ties over the past decade (Terry 1999, personal communication). This should not imply that offerings are not placed here with any frequency or regularity; it only suggests that a certain type of offering is not widely seen. Wind Cave is connected to things of the earth, stone, and the underworld. It is the home of the bison, and offerings to their spirits are often perishable, placed on the earth’s surface, and/or buried in the ground. This appears to be the case not only with some of the offerings given to the sacred tree at the Sun Dance, but also with the placement of white buffalo skins at the completion of a Spirit Keeping ceremony (Curtis 1907-30:3:110; Densmore 1918:118; Sword in Deloria 1929:398). Indeed, Wallace Black suggests as much when he writes about how the prayer ties from a Yuwipi are wrapped up and buried. As he writes:

Then you take this bundle up to a mountain or hill. You find a virgin spot where there are no tracks, where there’s a lot of bushes or tall grasses. You tuck it in there or put it in the crouch of a tree or lift a rock and put it underneath.

When these offerings are visible, they need to be left alone. Some of the tribal cultural officers with whom we spoke emphasized the need to advise tourists at the park not to touch and handle these offerings (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Petitions to the spirit world are also an integral part of the elaborate sequence of offerings and prayers that make up major ceremonial observances such as the Lakota’s Hunkapi [Making Relatives] or the Cheyennes’ Massaum [Animal Dance]. Throughout the entire ceremonial realm of the Lakotas and Cheyennes, the making of an altar and ceremonial fire on virgin ground (cleared of all vegetation) and the smoking of a pipe are fundamental features of most prayerful observances (Walker 1917:129-130; New Holy 1997:139-142). The pipe is the vehicle through which tobacco is transformed into the smoke, which carries the prayers of the people to their creator, Wakan Tanka or Ma’heo, and to all of the spirits who signify their presence in the world (Lame Deer and Erdoes 1978:2). Smoking a pipe that is lit from a specially built altar and ceremonial fire is absolutely indispensable in communicating with the spirit world. Pipe offerings may be made on their own, but they are always incorporated into ceremonies where they are a necessary and integral part of all religious observances (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:93; Powell 1969:14, 17, 291, 334, 402-403, 835, 855, 897, 900; Black Elk in Brown 1971:13-14 et seq.; Sword in Walker 1980:75-77; 87-90; Walker 1980:176-177, 219-221, 249-250, 260-261; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:34, 46, 48, 117-118, 223-234, 236-239, 240, 243-244, 334, 372-373; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:49-50; Moore, J. 1996:240, 246; Bucko 1999:204).

2. Preparing for the Sacred
Communicating with the sacred requires a cleansing of the mind and body in order to restore the life force, or "breath," in preparation for receiving spiritual gifts. The purification lodge or sweatlodge is the most common vehicle for achieving this state of renewal. Among the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, these lodges are increasingly practiced as rites unto themselves and with considerable variation (Moore, J. 1996:234-237). Yet, they remain an indispensable part of the preparations behind all other ceremonial observances, including the Sun Dance, vision seeking, and Yuwipi (Grinnell 1919; Powell 1969:1:324, 328, 352, 2:492-493, 609-610, 854-855; Black Elk in Brown 1971:31-42; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:82-84 et seq.; Schlesier 1987:59-66, 79-80; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990:67-86; Catches, Sr. and Catches 1990:77-91; Feraca 1998:32-35; Bucko 1999).

Among the Cheyennes, the sweatlodge is used for purification in many different contexts to prepare people to receive spiritual powers without being harmed (Schlesier 1987:62). Historically, it was part of the ceremonial observances used in "calling" game during communal hunts, in releasing the spirit of the deceased, in purifying a white buffalo skin, in healing of various kinds, in making warriors ready for battle, and in preparing people to participate in all sacred endeavors (Curtis 1907:6:117, 145; Grinnell 1919, 1972:1:272-273; Anderson, R. 1956; Powell 1969:1:324, 328, 352, 2:492-493, 609-610, 854-855; Schlesier 1987:59, 62, 64-66; Moore, J. 1996:234-237). The classic sweatlodges, either the emaom [concealed lodge] or vonhaom [to lose by heat lodge] of the Cheyennes originate with the bison, and both are associated with the accounts of Ehyophstah, the Yellow Haired Woman, Sweet Medicine, and/or Stands on the Ground (Grinnell 1919; Anderson, R. 1956; Schlesier 1987:62, 64-66, 77-79). According to Edward Curtis (1907-30:6:117), the Cheyennes believed that the sweatlodge originated with the bison and that its structure represented the animal’s backbone. Another kind of sweatlodge is linked to conjuring, called nisimatozom or mxeeom in Cheyenne, where spirits are called upon to assist in healing or to advise on weighty issues (Schlesier 1987:58-59). Today, sweatlodges are held for many different purposes from healing the sick to preparing for a convocation where weighty educational and political issues are deliberated. In general, any modern undertaking that requires some form of spiritual assistance, intervention, and renewal is likely to be accompanied by sweatlodge observances (Moore, J. 1996:234-237).

The same is true for the Lakotas. In the Lakota language, the word for a sweatlodge, is initipi [the lodge of breath]; the observance itself is called iniipi or inikagapi, which means respectively "to live again" and "to make breath" (Medicine 1987:167; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1980:61; Bucko 1999:123). The sweatlodge, often described as the ribs or womb of Maka Ina, brings the spiritual and physical together and mimics the process of conception and birth (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:48; Bucko 1999:63, 76, 85, 148-149, 197, 199, 210, 211). One of Raymond Bucko’s Lakota advisors told him:

The rocks go into the lodge, and we enter into ući makhá's belly. In the womb of the mother, you can ask the father for anything. The breath of the rocks allows us to leave in there the old and come out with the new. This is the place of connection between heaven and earth; this connects us to makhá and tobób, the sixteen spirits. We don’t know their names. The lodge is about relationship: commerce and development; our duties as mothers and fathers; relationship to the stars and burial places--you have a place to go when you die. We also need to understand the star formations, so that we know where we need to go. My grandmother says they used to go to the Black Hills to read the prophecy walls, so that we will know what will happen that year (Bucko 1999:199).

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16 This comes closest to the sweatlodges associated with Yuwipi among the Lakotas.
Among the Lakotas, the Inipi is used to strengthen and renew a person in the course of healing or in preparation for ceremonies, communal hunts, and warfare, and its many functions and purposes are described in great detail by Raymond Bucko (1999) and others (Powers, W. 1977:52; Black Elk in Brown 1971:31-43; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:82-84 et seq.; Medicine 1987:16; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990:87-86; Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990:67-86; Catches, Sr. and Catches 1990:77-91; Feraca 1998:32-35; Bucko 1999:123).

Sweatlodges or “sweats,” as they are often referred to in English, are one of the spiritual observances Lakotas have conducted at Wind Cave National Park (Terry 1999, personal communication; Albers and Kittelson 2002). The remains of some of the lodges are still evident on park properties (South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, CU-900). There are a number of different reasons why the park might be chosen to hold sweatlodge observances, and many of these are revealed in more depth through the materials presented in Chapter Fifteen. But a few points can be made here. First, Wind Cave and caves in general are intimately associated with the relationships between bison, the breath of life, renewal, and rebirth (see discussion in Part II of this chapter). The sweatlodge structure, often described as the backbone, ribs, or womb of Maka Ina [Mother Earth], brings the spiritual and physical together and mimics the process which creates the breath of life, widely understood by both the Cheyennes and the Lakotas as originating in caves (Black Elk, W. and Lyon 1990:70; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:48; Bucko 1999:76, 85, 148-149). Wallace Black Elk (and Lyon 1990:70) points out that sweatlodges are “homes to the ‘stone people’ that contain all the elements that form the human structure,” including the spark, which is the little soul or nagila. This connection is also made explicit, according to Raymond Bucko (1999:148-149), in accounts of the birth of the culture hero Blood Clot Boy, who is born in a sweatlodge from a bison cow’s blood clot, which is given life when a badger pours water on the clot, causing steam to rise from the rocks and imparting ni [breath] to the boy, and it is also apparent in various Stone Boy stories (Bucko 1999:150-154).

Like the sweatlodge, Wind Cave and other caves in the Hills are understood to be birthing chambers where animals, particularly bison, undergo the process of materialization that is signified by the presence of ni or breath. The first Lakota man to emerge from Wind Cave, Tokahe, is associated with the introduction of the sweatlodge to humans as a means of treating illnesses caused by small water spirits, called mini watu (Walker 1983:375). The Cheyennes connect an unidentified cave in the southern Hills with the travels of their culture hero, Sweet Medicine, who performed a sweatlodge ceremony at this location and brought humans back to life (Schlesier 1987:79). George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:135-136) gives another account of the origin of a Cheyenne pipe ceremony used in healing that is also associated with a cave, although the specific location of this subterranean locale is unreported. Finally, Wawoslata (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264-269; Buechel and Manhart 1998:452-463) told about a Yuwipi sweatlodge that was held at an unidentified location along the Race Track sometime in the nineteenth century.

3. Beholding the Sacred

The spirit world can reveal its presence to humans in many different ways. It may make its appearance in dreams or unusual events and visitations without being petitioned. Often people who are singled out for special spiritual callings are approached in this way. When someone has been spiritually “called” without solicitation, s/he seeks further encounters to gain the necessary knowledge in order to learn how to use their spiritual gifts. This typically takes place under the supervision of a spiritually experienced intercessor in the context of observances variously called “fasting,” “vision questing,” or “dream seeking.” Whether people have a prior spiritual “awakening” or not, there are conventional steps that need to be followed to reach an awareness of what their spiritual knowledge means for them. There is an extensive literature on this subject for the

The process of seeking spiritual awareness through visions and dreams can take many forms. Typically, it involves seeking an isolated location on some eminence where the landscape is visible in all four directions. Specially built pits or holes are prepared in the earth, often not dissimilar to those constructed for eagle trapping. Here the supplicant fasts, prays, makes offerings, and awaits a spiritual visitation. Once a spirit has made its presence and gifts known, the supplicant shares the experience with a mentor who interprets its meaning and instructs the person on what must be done to “honor” the knowledge. Spiritually gifted people commonly hanbleciya [seek a dream] on a recurring basis to renew old spiritual partnerships or gain new ones (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984; Fools Crow in Mails 1979; Feraca 1998:27).

In contrast to Bear Butte and Harney Peak, widely understood as locations to seek visions, there is little evidence in the published literature, other than a remark by James LaPointe (1976:79-80) that identifies or even suggests that Wind Cave National Park is a place where Lakotas typically go to fast, pray, and seek visions. As mentioned before, there are references to caves being sites for visionary experiences, but it is more typical for Lakotas and Cheyennes to use high elevation, conical shaped buttes or mountain peaks with an unobstructed view in four directions for this purpose. Some of the higher elevation sites in the area that might meet this specification, including Battle Mountain to the south and Mount Coolidge to the north, are outside the boundaries of the park. Inside the park, Rankin Ridge and Elk Mountain may have been used for vision seeking, and both appear to conform to some of the conventional properties of preferred vision seeking sites. Today, however, these locations have undergone extensive development, and they appear to lack the solitude necessary for religious observances of this order. Nonetheless, several cultural preservation officers from different Cheyenne and Lakota tribes identified the general area of the park with prayer and fasting (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Not all vision seekers search out the highest peaks for fasting and prayer, however. After all, Sitting Bull is reported to have had a life-defining vision near a spring now inundated by Sylvan Lake (Vestal 1932:73), and there are many historic and modern examples of visionary dreams taking place inside caves (Parkman in Feltskog 1969:156-157; Bucko 1999:172-173, 184-185). In fact, Wind Cave is located on the side of a mountain (Elk Mountain to be exact) and this is significant because stories of visionary origin among Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos are commonly associated with caves inside mountains or buttes, locations that directly juxtapose earth and sky spaces.

4. Renewing the Sacred
Beyond the fundamental acts of praying, undergoing spiritual cleansing in a sweatlodge, fasting, and seeking dreams, there are many other ways in which the Lakotas and Cheyennes make contact with and renew that which is sacred.

**a. Renewing Life for People**

As described earlier, Lakota and Cheyenne spiritual intercessors enter into relationships with the sacred through their knowledge of symbols capable of evoking a particular spiritual presence. In doing this, they are able to perform different forms of healing (usually specific to the spiritual partners with whom they have a relationship), attract specific kinds of game (again specific to their spiritual partners), confer protection and ward off danger, and/or predict the outcome of future events. Individually and collectively, spiritually gifted men and women are able to advance the well-being of their people through innumerable acts of ritual observance that vary both within and across tribes. Some of this has already been described in the discussion on the characteristics of human encounters with spirit animals, and many of the specific details of these encounters are included in materials presented in Appendix A. A few points, by way of a summary, need to be made here as well.

The imitation of animal partners and their powers was performed in special ceremonial dances organized by the devotees of a particular spirit. Among the Lakotas, *Heyoka* [contrary], *mato* [bear], *tatanka* [bison], *sunkamanitou* [wolf], *hehaka* [elk], and *winyan Nupapika* [double woman] *inhanblapi/kagapi* [dreamers/imitators] formed loosely knit associations and held their own rituals on a recurring basis (Wissler 1912:81-99; Densmore 1918:284-310). Such performances were very common among the Lakotas in historic times, but since the late nineteenth century, these have largely disappeared, even though people still have spiritual partnerships with the Thunders and various animal spirits. These kinds of dreamers apparently formed dance associations among the Cheyennes as well (Hayden 1862:280-282; Anderson, R. 1956:93), but by the early twentieth century, their performances took place primarily within the context of the *Mas-saum* [Animal Dance] (Moore, J. 1996:237-238).

Of particular importance, given the association between bison and caves, are the performances of the *Tatanka Ihanblapi* [Bison Dreamers] in Lakota (Wissler 1912:91) and *Isiwunhetánu* [Buffalo Men] in Cheyenne (Anderson, R. 1956 1956:93). Among the Lakotas, these men often served as “buffalo callers,” and they were the ones who presided over communal bison hunts (Curtis 1907-30:3:63, 139; Densmore 1918:285; Hassrick 1964:144, 187, 239, 253, 310-311; Standing Bear 1978:141-142; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:7, 88-89, 240-241). They were strongly connected to healing and herbal medicine, and they served as spiritual intercessors for a number of major ceremonies. One well-known story entitled *Tatanka kagapi kin* [Making Buffalo] and told in Chapter Fifteen, took place inside the Buffalo Gap at *Tatanka makalhpaya* [The Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull] (Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978: 242-245); it describes a mysterious event associated with the transmogrification of a bison bull into a human. Among other things, this story reveals the seamless and fluid nature of spiritual connections between bison and humans, but it also demonstrates the power of certain animals and humans to reveal themselves in other forms.

Similarly, the Cheyennes depended upon Buffalo Men in “calling” the bison and in healing (Grinnell 1919; Anderson, R. 1956 1956:100-101; Powell 1969:1:324-327, 341, 343, 344, 388, 408; Grinnell 1972:1:196, 151; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:34; Schlesier 1987:15-16, 52-58). Many stories in Cheyenne traditions tell of the emergence of bison from springs and caves in association with their culture heroes, *Motseyoef* [Sweet Medicine] and *Tomasivsi* [Erect Horn/Stands on the Ground]. Most of the stories associated with Sweet Medicine are linked to a
springs and a cave at Bear Butte (Kroeber 1900:179-181; Dorsey, G. 1905:41-45; Grinnell 1908:170-178, 1926:244-252, 263-280; Stands in Timber 1967:27-41; Powell 1969:2:460-466; Moore, J. 1987:103-105), while those connected with Stands on the Ground are associated with a cave and spring at the Sutaio’s sacred place, the “Black Mountain”17 (Kroeber 1900:163; Dorsey, G. 1905:39-41, 46-59; Grinnell 1908:179-194, 1926:257-262; Powell 1969:2:467-471, 871-872). Both of these culture heroes are linked to the introduction of sweatlodge ceremonies among the Cheyennes, but Stands on the Ground and the Sutaio division of the tribe are explicitly connected to the Buffalo Men and their lodge or ceremony (Grinnell 1919; Anderson, R. 1956 1956), which in turn is connected to the Buffalo Gap, the Great Race, and the first Sun Dance (Powell 1969:2:472-478). In the Buffalo Lodge, a man would dedicate a ceremony on behalf of a sick child or relative. Under the direction of an intercessor, he took the role of a bull; his wife, a cow; and his child, a yellow calf (Grinnell 1919:361). Much of the ritual associated with this paralleled sweatlodge practices in ceremonies linked to the Sacred Hat and the Massaum (Anderson, R. 1956:95, 98). In the original rite, a tipi was set up in the midst of a bison herd. A young virgin sat inside wrapped in a bison robe, and an intercessor walked towards the bison with a pipe singing a song that called the bison to him. When the buffalo approached, the hunters ran around the herd and drove them to a spot where they were killed. From the first animal killed, a piece of fat was extracted and given to the virgin who covered it with her robe (Ibid:100).

b. Renewing Relationships

Many of the ritual observances that spiritually gifted people led were held to renew different kinds of relationships either among the membership of a single tribe or across tribal boundaries. The Lakota Pte San Lowanpi18 and Tapa Wanka Yap [Throwing of the Ball], for example, can both be seen as ceremonies that promote the fertility and fecundity of women, thereby renewing relations across generations (Walker 1917:141-151; Densmore 1918:63-67; Black Elk in Brown 1971:116-138; Powers, W. 1977:101-103; Powers, M. 1986:66-72). One story of the origin of this ceremony takes place in a cave (No Flesh in Walker 1980:193-194). The Hunkapi [Making Relatives] is an adoption ceremony, which takes place to cement ties between families, including those of different tribes (Walker 1917:122-140; Densmore 1918:68-76; Black Elk in Brown 1971:101-116; Powers, W. 1977:100-101; Thunder Tail in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:222-234 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:384-403]). One story about its origin is also associated with a cave (Little Wound in Walker 1980:196) The Wanagi Yuhapi [Spirit Keeping Ceremony] serves to renew the cycle of life by embracing, then breaking, ties with the deceased to permit their safe passage to the spirit world (Densmore 1919:77-83; Black Elk in Brown 1971:10-30; Powers, W. 1977:93-95). As discussed previously, Lakotas were reported to bury the white buffalo skins used

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17 There are various interpretations of where the Black Mountain is located (Powell 1969:2:469n4). In some stories, it appears to designate the Black Hills not only because many of the stories connected with Tomosivsi end up being related to the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and the Sun Dance but also because the narrative of Is'siwin (The Sacred Hat) explicitly refers to “the beautiful river,” an expression often reserved for the Cheyenne River. Reverend Peter Powell (1969:2:469n4) indicates that some Cheyennes claim that the Sutaio’s Black Mountain refers to the Timber Mountains north of the Pipestone Quarry in Minnesota. The only possible Hills that meet this description are near present day Milbank, South Dakota. If the story was transported and replanted in the Black Hills, as many narratives seem to have been, then these might refer to the Sutaio’s “Black Mountain” as well. As Powell (1969:2:870-871) argues, there are significant differences between the Northern and Southern Cheyennes in the ways the stories of Erect Horns are told and the locations where they are purported to have taken place. Some of the stories appear to be located in different sorts of environments, suggesting that they were adapted to new landscapes as the Cheyennes migrated from areas east of the Missouri River to the Black Hills.

18 This ceremony goes by several different names including Tatanka Lowanpi [Bison Bull Sing], Tona Ta Aswi Cha Lowanpi [They Sing Over Her Seclusion], and Isnati Lowanpi [Seclusion Sing]. Isnati refers to the ritual practice where women were secluded during their menstruation to protect themselves and others from the ton or powerful spiritual essence associated with this event.
in these ceremonies in caves (Curtis 1907-30:3:110; Densmore 1918:118). Many of the renewal ceremonies, which marked important life cycle transitions, were particularly important to the Lakotas, as they were the gift of *Pte San Winyan*, the White Buffalo Calf Woman (Black Elk in Brown 1971:3-9; Powers, M. 1986:42-52). Although many of these were no longer practiced by the middle of the twentieth century, they are now undergoing a revitalization and are conducted, albeit with some modification, by many contemporary Lakotas. While the Cheyennes also mark some of these transitions in ritual ways, they have not been emphasized and elaborated upon in the same way or to the same degree as they have been among the Lakotas (Moore, J. 1996:238-240).

In historic times, what both tribes shared were a series of ceremonial observances performed by men who were members of various soldier societies and who shared dreams of the animals that served as the guardians of these organizations (Wissler 1912:13-62; Densmore 1918:311-378; Grinnell 1972:2:48-86). Military sodalities built a sense of camaraderie and solidarity between men who fought together in battle, and many of the traditional ones fell into disuse in the early reservation era. Some, like *Tokalas* of the Lakotas, are now being revived. The origin site for this group is linked to the Black Hills, although not to the area around Wind Cave (Wissler 1912:72; Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290; La Pointe 1976:54-55). The Plains Apaches also believe one of their military societies, the *Manatidae*, originated in the Black Hills, but the precise whereabouts is not documented in published sources (Schweinfurth 2002:60-66, 90, 150).

Women who belonged to war and/or quilling societies also performed shared rituals that renewed their ties in common endeavors (Wissler 1912:76, 79-80; Hasrick 1964:42-45; Grinnell 1972:1:159-167, 2:385-391; Powers, M. 1986:25-26, 73-74, 86-87, 137-139). As previously reported, the Cheyenne women’s quilling society is associated with the story of the Buffalo Wife that some Cheyenne connect to the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap (Grinnell 1972:2:385-391; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:2:472-478).

c. Renewing the Nation

Highly important to the Cheyennes were ceremonies that renewed their sacred tribal covenants, *Mashoet* [the Sacred Arrows] and *Isuwan or Esevone* [the Sacred Hat]. The Sacred Arrows, which stand for the well-being of the whole Cheyenne nation, is associated today with the Southern Cheyennes, while the Sacred Hat is connected to the Sutaio-Omis divisions that make up the Northern Cheyennes. Elaborate rites of renewal are associated with these tribal covenants. The Sacred Arrow Ceremony was given to the Cheyenne people by the *Maiyun* through their prophet *Motseyoef* [Sweet Medicine] in a cave at Bear Butte (Dorsey, G. 1905:41-45; Powell 1969:2:43-46, 73-75, 89-90, 399-400). This ceremony, which serves to reunite and renew the Cheyennes as a people, takes place periodically in early summer, at which time the bundle containing the sacred arrows and other objects is opened and its contents displayed and propitiated while the story of Sweet Medicine is retold (Dorsey, G. 1905:1-12; Grinnell 1910; Powell 1969:2:481-610, 875-895; Moore, J. 1996:214-218). The Sacred Hat was brought to the tribe by *Tomosivsi* [Erect Horn/Stands on the Ground] from a spring or cave, depending on the particular story, at a place called Black Mountain, and it plays a significant role in various ceremonies connected with the bison, including the Sun Dance (Dorsey 1905:39-40, 46-49; Powell 1969:1:55-56, 283-285, 2:467-471, 807-808; Grinnell 1972:2:192, 197, 231,285, 377, 344). The Sacred Hat is also propitiated and renewed in an elaborate ceremony, in which the story of Stands on the Ground is retold (Powell 1969:1:99-100, 105-107, 326-327; Grinnell 1972:2:344-345, 368-372, 380-381). The Lakotas’ sacred covenant is the White Buffalo Calf Pipe, which is periodically displayed and renewed for the well-being of the Lakota people (Densmore 1918:63-67; Black Elk in Brown 1971:3-9; Looking Horse 1987). The Pipe is
supposed to have been given to the Lakota people by Pte San Winyan (White Buffalo Calf Woman) at Bear Lodge Butte, commonly known as Devil’s Tower. Similarly, the Arapahos’ sacred Pipe continues to be displayed and renewed on set ceremonial occasions (Anderson, J. 2001).

d. Renewing the Universe

The Cheyennes had two ceremonies, the Massaum [Animal Dance] and the Oxheheom [literally translated as “New Life lodge,” or “Life Generator Lodge” but commonly called a “Sun Dance”], that functioned as world renewal observances. The Massaum was held in the Black Hills until the early twentieth century (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:12, 69) but is no longer performed today. Its primary purpose was to recreate the evolution of the cosmos and thereby, replenish the game animals and plants on whose lives the Cheyennes depended (Schlesier 1987, see also discussions in Chapter Nine and in Appendix A). The Oxheheom is still practiced today among the Cheyennes in their reservation communities in Montana and Oklahoma, but it was originally performed near Sundance Mountain in Wyoming on the northwestern edge of the Black Hills (Powell 1969:2: 477). There are two early descriptions of this ceremony by George Dorsey (1905:57-177) and George Bird Grinnell (Grinnell 1972:2:211-284) and a number of accounts of more recent dances by John Stands in Timber (and Liberty 1967:99-100), Father Peter Powell (1969: 2:611-858), and John Moore (1996:219-228). Like the Massaum, the purpose of the Oxheheom is to regenerate and replenish the universe and its myriad species of plants and animals. Today it is a “celebration of cultural continuity,” according to John Moore (1996:219), and also “an attempt to bring health, well-being, and harmony to the people by tapping into the energy network of Maheo as transported through the Maiyun who are represented in the dance” (Ibid: 221).

The Oxheheom begins in what is known as the ‘Lone Tipi,’ which is situated outside the dance lodge and erected before the lodge is constructed. Here, the priests, the pledger, and his wife, the “sacred woman,” conduct various observances, not only to cleanse, paint, and otherwise prepare the dancers and the objects used in the dance, but also to insure the success of the ceremony (Dorsey, G. 1905:91, 97, 100; Hoebel 1960:13; Powell 1969:2:614-645; Moore, J. 1996: 221). When the observances in the Lone Tipi are completed, the ritual of securing and implanting the center pole takes place. The forks of the tree, which serve as the center pole, hold the “thunderbird’s nest;” it contains a wide variety of different plants and animal parts that symbolize the natural world (Moore, J. 1996:222). After the tree is implanted, the structure of the lodge is constructed with four posts representing the cardinal directions (Moore, J. 1996:222; Powell 1969:2:646-684). The altar is then built to recreate the Cheyennes’ image of a prosperous universe with abundant buffalo and plants, the presence of sunshine, rainbows and good spirits, and a people with good health and the ability to vanquish their enemies (Hoebel 1960:14; Powell 1969:2:646-684). During the construction of the lodge, families pray, smoke, and make offerings to Ma‘heo and the various maiyun whose presence is called forth in the lodge when the dance begins (Moore, J. 1996:223).

Once the lodge is completed, the dances and sacrifices commence on the last day. The dancers are men who have made a pledge to dance, and each must have a qualified instructor to assist them (Moore, J. 1996:221). Each dancer bears objects that represent the four souls of the

19 The tipi is said to stand for Bear Butte (1969:2:616n2), while the lodge itself (as described in Chapter Fifteen) stands for the Black Hills. Helen Rezatto (1989:27) also writes that Bear Butte is often described as a miniature replica of the Black Hills.
body, the four directions, and their corresponding whirlwinds and animals. Each dancer makes sacrifices to seek the spiritual benevolence of Ma’heo and his maiyun in order to renew the world and the lives of the people (Dorsey, G. 1905:176; Powell 1969:2:841-852; Grinnell 1972:2:211, 224). During the dance itself, the Cheyennes engage in acts of suffering and self-sacrifice, which include inserting skewers into the back and shoulders, to which rawhide ropes are tied and buffalo skulls hung. Men either drag these skulls around the dance area or dance with them in place on their backs (Dorsey 1905:176; Grinnell 1972:2:211). This and other acts of offering are intended to seek the spiritual benevolence necessary to renew the world and the lives of the people. The dance ends with a race to the four directions and the homes or pillars of the four sacred Ma’he-yuno (Powell 1969:2:841-852).

Although the Oxheheom contains a rich symbolism linked to bison and female generative powers, it is dedicated to Ma’heo who represents the supreme male spiritual figure in Cheyenne cosmology. John Moore (1996:225-226) depicts the ceremony as the recreation of an “enormous fertility structure” embodied in the life-giving forces of spring thunderstorms that cross the plains in spring and summer. Yet, he also argues it contains many different symbols that reveal other life-giving forces, including the earth represented by the buffalo skull at the altar and the rainbow signified by four arched sticks in front of the skull (Ibid: 227-228). When the dance is completed, the earth is regenerated, the harmony of the universe restored, and the people’s health and well-being renewed (Ibid:228).

For the Lakotas, the Winwanyan wacipi [Sun Gazing Dance] is also their holiest religious observance for renewing the universe and their relationship to Wakan Tanka (Amiotte 1989c:245). Many early and modern accounts (Dorsey, J. 1894:459-467; Walker 1917:60-121; Densmore 1918:84-151; Sword in Deloria 1929; Black Elk in Brown 1971:101-116; Mails 1978; Amiotte 1989a; Feraca 1998:8-22) have described it in great detail, and again, aspects of it only need to be summarized here. It should be noted, however, that there are important differences in the performance of the dance between the southern Lakotas, about whom most of the literature on this subject has been written, and the northern Lakotas as described by Densmore (1918:84-151). Additionally, there have been significant changes in the dance over time (Feraca 1998:8-22).

In many basic ways the Lakotas’ observance of the Sun Dance is very similar to the Cheyennes’ from whom some scholars believe they learned it. Indeed, historical evidence and the traditions of both tribes identify Sundance Mountain in Wyoming as the location for their earliest Sun Dances (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:366; Sundstrom, L. 1997:186, 193). Today, the Sun Dance remains the Lakotas’ most significant communal ceremonial observance. Its observance includes the participation of friends from other tribes, especially Arapahos and Cheyennes. Likewise, Lakotas dance in Sun Dances held by these two tribes (Feraca 1998:12-13).

The Lakota Sun Dance takes place in the full moon of midsummer, usually in June or July. The month before the dance, those who conduct the ceremony begin making prayers and offerings to prepare for the ceremony, and those who pledge to dance work to fulfill their vows. Historically, the leaders of the tribe’s military societies met to select the Kuwa’ Kiya’pi (intercessors), the Itan’can (dance leader), the four male “hunters” or “scouts” who located the tree for the center pole, the four virgins who cut it down, the “digger” who prepared the hole in which the tree rested, and many others who played special roles in the ceremony (Walker 1917:95-98; Densmore 1918:98-103). In the four days preceding the ceremony, the dancers selected the mentors who painted them,20 feasts were held by the military societies, and the

20 Francis Densmore’s Sun Dance material was based on information she learned from northern Lakota consultants. Among the southern divisions, the Oglalas and Sicangus, the selection of a mentor appears to have taken place many
virginal female relatives of the dancers underwent the test of biting the snake or knife\(^{21}\) (Walker 1917:98-101; Densmore 1918:104-105). While the southern Lakotas used one lodge to prepare all their dancers, the northern Lakotas had a sweatlodge for each of the participating bands (Densmore 1918:98; Mails 1978:85-96).\(^{22}\)

On the first day of the ceremony, the grounds where the dance is held are located, staked, and sanctified, and the Sun Trail (or Sun Path) surrounding the dance area marked off (Walker 1917:100-101). This is followed by the preparation of the Sun Dance altar, owanka wakan, where the vegetation is removed and the ground finely pulverized. Lines are traced around the altar and then two intersecting lines are made to create a cross. These are filled with tobacco, red paint, and gypsum, and eagle down is placed where the lines end and intersect. A bed of sage is laid down to the west of this altar where the bison skull rests (Densmore 1918:122; Powers, W. 1977:96; Amiotte 1989a:250-251). The digger also prepares the hole on this day for the placement of the center pole or sacred tree, where offerings of water, bison blood, tobacco, and wasna are placed (Catches, Sr. and Catches 1990:112). Once the altar is completed, the lodge maker and his assistants construct the arbor or shade, [iyohanziglepi] around the outer edge of the dance circle (Walker 1917:102; Densmore 1918:118-123; Powers, W. 1977:96).

On the second day, the sacred tree is located by the scouts and felled by four virgins, mimicking an attack on an enemy. It is carefully peeled and trimmed, leaving the top forked branches in place, and then it is carried back to camp by a procession of twenty men singing victory songs. Upon returning to the camp, the men race against each other to the center hole to win the honor of carrying a special banner into the circle when the pole is raised (Walker 1917:100-105; Densmore 1918:111-116; Sword in Deloria 1929: 394-398; Powers, W. 1977:97).

On the third day, the tree is brought into the center of the dance circle where it is painted by the intercessor and a bundle of offerings are hung on a cottonwood crossbar placed in the tree’s fork. As with the Cheyennes, this bundle represents the thunderbird’s nest (Feraca 1998:17). The tree is then planted in its hole in the ground and earth is packed around it to keep it in place. While the tree is raised, the story of creation is retold, how the four winds came to be, how humans emerged from the underworld, and how the sacred pipe was brought to the people (Amiotte 1989a:249-252). It is during this part of the ceremony that families are told to bring their offerings into the enclosure. Following the tree raising, the men dance towards the tree and shoot at the effigies of a bison and an enemy hung on its branches. This is followed by parades and celebration (Walker 1917:106-111; Densmore 1918:117-122; Powers, W. 1977:98).

The pledgers who participate in the dance do so in different ways, although all are required to fast. There are dancers who simply dance, the ones who lacerate the flesh in small ways, and those who have skewers put through their skin, either by piercing the chest and being suspended by ropes hung to the center pole or by fastening buffalo skulls to ropes which are tied to skewers inserted into their back and arms. There are also other and more severe variations of piercing (Walker 1917:61-62; Densmore 1918:131-135; Powers, W. 1977:98-99). Women who participate also fast, dance, and sometimes have small pieces of flesh cut from their upper arms (Dens-

\(^{21}\) In order for a woman to give support to her relative by dancing with him in the sacred enclosure, she had to make a public declaration of her chastity by biting a knife or a snakeskin.

\(^{22}\) Thomas Mails (1978:95) suggests that the differences in the number of sweatlodges may be a function of the number of dancers who participate in a ceremony.
more 1918:132,135). During the dance, children’s ears are pierced too (Walker 1917:115-116; Densmore 1918:137-138).

In the first morning of the dance, the dancers eat a morning meal and enter their respective sweatlodges where they are dressed and their bodies painted by the men who have been chosen to be their mentors (Densmore 1918:123-126). This is considered a joyful day as the people prepare themselves to appear before the Sun (Walker 1917:111). When the ceremony is about to begin, the Crier goes around the camp to summon the dancers and their mentors, who follow the Intercessors into the camp circle. The Dance Leader walks into the circle next to the Intercessors, carrying the buffalo skull. As the skull is placed on its bed of sage, the Intercessor burns sweet grass and lights the pipe praying to the sky, the earth, and the four directions (Ibid:126-127). The opening dance is accompanied by gift giving among the people assembled, with many showing “respect” in this way to the dancers’ families (Ibid:129).

Once the ceremony begins, the participants dance continuously with brief intervals for rest, and each takes a turn undergoing the form of piercing h/she has pledged. According to James Walker (1917:114-115), two kinds of dances, the Buffalo and Sun-Gaze, are performed during the ceremony. In the Buffalo dance, dancers who are hunters/warriors capture the dancers playing the role of bison/enemies. The hunter/warriors then pierce the captives according to the particular vows they made prior to the ceremony. After the capture and piercing, the Sun-Gaze dance begins and continues while the captives attempt to break their skin loose from the ropes suspended to the center pole or fastened to bison skulls. The captive dancers are freed when they break their bonds (Walker 1917:116-118; Powers, W. 1977:99-100). Once they are released, the Scalp-Staff Dance is performed with the participation of the women. After its completion, the ceremony is concluded (Walker 1917:119-120).

The Lakota Sun Dance also contains an elaborate symbolism. Much of it is linked to male generative power, as embodied in the figures of Tatanka [Bison Bull] and Wi [Sun], but Pte San Winyan [White Buffalo Calf Woman] also occupies an honored position in this observance. In many ways, Lakota Sun Dance observances recreate the lifecycle of the bison and the movements these animals once followed in their yearly migrations along the sun’s path or trail (Looking Horse in Parlow 1983a:42-43). Here the bison serves as an overarching metaphor of life and its continuity, and the symbol through which humans are able to renew the world and their own humble place within it (Amiotte 1987:78).

The Lakotas do not appear to have had a ceremony equivalent to the Cheyennes’ Massaum, although their recently described religious pilgrimage into the central regions of the Black Hills to perform a spring renewal ceremony, called Okisatatya wowahwala, appears to have objectives that parallel the Massaum (Goodman 1992:8, 13,16). The Lakotas also continue to hold pipe ceremonies at the Buffalo Gap and the general region of Wind Cave National Park to celebrate the arrival of the vernal equinox and the beginnings of a new cycle of rebirth, and they observe another ceremony near Harney Peak to mark the arrival of the Thunders later in the spring (Black Elk, C. in Goodman 1992:50; Albers and Kittelson Interviews 2002). Historically at least, all of these ceremonies were held in preparation for the observance of the Sun Dance after the summer solstice (Black Elk, C.: ibid).

III. WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK AS A SACRED PLACE

The original Sun Dance, as first performed by the bison before they turned it over to humans, is explicitly associated in some Cheyenne traditions with the Buffalo Gap. Some Cheyennes also
believe that many aspects of their Sun Dance recreate the story of the Great Race, which took place in the Red Valley or Race Track of the Black Hills (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:23; Powell 1969:2:472-478; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:72). The Sun Dance is held within a circular enclosure, which like the Race Track’s opening at the Buffalo Gap, faces east. Ralph White Tail told Father Peter Powell (1969:2:475n5) that the red and black painted rafters in the Cheyenne Sun Dance lodge represent the painted sticks the racers carried when they ran around the Hills. Powell (Ibid:2:476n6) reports that during the final dance of the ceremony, the instructor pushes the pledger against the cottonwood brush surrounding the altar, reenacting the efforts of the buffalo to drive the human runner over a cliff along the Race Track, and he also notes, probably not coincidentally, that at the end of the ceremony the dancers imitate the “Great Race,” by circling the center pole several times (Ibid:852). Powell (Ibid:473n2) further mentions that the arrow pierced through the meat and placed as an offering in the nest of the Thunderbird signifies the injury endured by the Buffalo Woman who brought a human man to her people, the buffalo, who then challenged him to race against them. In addition, he notes that the Lone Tipi, where the initial preparations for the Sun Dance take place, stands simultaneously for Bear Butte and also the lone lodge in which the Buffalo wife lived in the Great Race Story (Ibid:616n2). Finally, John Stands in Timber (and Liberty 1967:24) points out that the clay figurines of animals that children once placed around the center pole represent the animals that competed in the Great Race.

There are other possible metaphoric allusions to the Great Race story not mentioned by Powell or Stands in Timber. Some of the painted dancers in the Sun Dance, notably the Swift Hawk and Deer, are singled out as major racers in various Cheyenne versions of the story (Powell 1969:2:612, 806, 832, 838, 848-849, 851). One could also argue that when the dancers drag the skulls of the buffalo on their back, pierce their chests and suspend themselves from the sacred tree, they are sacrificing themselves and shedding their blood, both literally and figuratively, as the buffalo and other animals did when they careened around the Black Hills forming the Red Valley with its blood-soaked soil so that humans became the predators and the bison their prey.

In one Cheyenne story of the Race Track, the gypsum formations commonly found along its reaches are described as the remains of the froth issuing from the lead bison’s mouth as she raced (Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:30-31). In their Sun Dance, the Cheyenne marked their altar and painted many of its sacred objects with burnt gypsum (Grinnell 1972:1:163, 192, 2, pp. 202, 242, 262; Schlesier 1987:93; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:54). Another Cheyenne name for gypsum is “Sun Arrow” (Grinnell 1926:179). The connection with gypsum also appears in Densmore’s description (1918:122) of the Lakota Sun Dance, in which the line around their altar is filled with tobacco (bearberry), red paint, and then gypsum. The placement of the gypsum on red paint mirrors the way this mineral is embedded in the limestone and red clay beds that make up the Race Track (Newton and Jenney 1880:134-135), and bearberry is a plant that is found in the Black Hills but not in the surrounding grasslands.

The Lakotas and Cheyennes both have a thunderbird’s nest in their Sun Dance that sits atop the sacred tree, surrounded by a larger sacred circle within which the dancers dance, a relation mirroring the geographic position of Harney Peak, widely associated with the nest of Thunderbirds and eagles, in relation to the surrounding Race Track (Hinman 1874:95; Curtis in

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23 This mimics the coloration of the rock formations straddling the Red Valley, the purple colored limestones towards the center of the Hills and the red hued formations along the Hogback (see Newton and Jenney 1880:132).
24 George Dorsey (1905:49) reports the presence of these figurines too but argues that they represent the animals that Sweet Medicine and Stands on the Ground brought out of a spring.
25 She uses the term “mica” here but she is probably talking about gypsum. Lakotas and Cheyennes loosely refer to gypsum as “mica” (Moore, J. 1996:67).

Indeed, the association of the Hills’ high elevation interiors with the thunders recalls John Moore’s apt description (1996:225-226) of the Cheyenne Sun Dance as a recreation of an “enormous fertility structure” that makes up a spring thunderstorm on the plains. The base of the tree is placed in a ritually prepared hole that is fed with buffalo fat and other offerings. The tree, as an *axis mundi*, ties the two together in a manner not dissimilar to the way these tribes understand the relationship between the high reaches and underground recesses of the Black Hills. The tree channels the thunders’ powers to the hole (cave) in the earth where life is regenerated.

There is yet another connection to this region. Joseph Eppes Brown (1992:102-103) writes that, among the Lakotas, men’s robes were typically fabricated from the hides of bulls and embellished with quilled “sun-burst” designs, signifying sunflowers, which symbolized male fertility. When Sun Dancers followed the sun in their movements, they were imitating the way the sunflower turns towards the sun (Standing Bear 1975:120). In Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, porcupine quills, like the tail feathers of eagles, are believed to hold the *ton* of the sun, and among the Cheyennes, the founding of their quillworkers guild, *Me e no’ist st*, is connected to some of the stories of the Great Race and the Buffalo Gap (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:2:472-477; Grinnell 1972:1:163-164, 2:385-391). The yellow hair of newly born bison also contains the sun’s essence, and along with porcupine quills and the tailfeathers of eagles, they symbolize the “breath of life” (Moore, J. 1974:163).

In Lakota traditions, the sun is a special friend of the bison whose annual movements follow the sun’s path, and this trail is believed to encircle the Hills and mirror a celestial star circle (Looking Horse in Parlow 1983:42-43). Historically, the Lakotas held certain ceremonies in different parts of the Hills to mark the sun’s movements from the time of the vernal equinox until after the summer solstice, and today, many of these observances are being reinstituted. In many Cheyenne and Lakota traditions, the Buffalo Gap is where the Great Race is believed to have started, and it is here that Lakotas hold pipe ceremonies to light the sacred fire that renews, as the sun does, a new cycle of birth and growth. When the sun begins to rise higher in the sky, triggering regeneration through the heat of its rays, the Lakotas respectfully celebrate this event by lighting their own sacred fires. Importantly, this event is tied to the season when bison are born and given the breath of life through the interactions of the sun, stone, and water.

It is also not coincidental that the Race Track story is sometimes preceded by a story involving a marriage between a human man and a subterranean buffalo woman. In Cheyenne and Lakota stories relating to the area, it is her people, the buffalo, who turn the Sun Dance over to humans (Walker 1917:212-215; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:2:472-478). Indeed, in one Lakota story of the Sun Dance’s origin, the buffalo woman and her people inhabit a cave (Left Heron in Walker 1917:212-215). Although many of the most famous stories about the early performances of the Sun Dance take place at sites on the northern end of the Hills, notably near Sundance Mountain, the fact remains that several traditions point to the Buffalo Gap/Wind Cave area as the setting for the Sundance’s origins among the bison and the site of its original transfer to humans. In fact, Olivia Pourier (in Neihardt and Utecht 2000:135) recalled her grandfather, Nicholas Black Elk, telling of Sun Dances held in the southeastern Hills near Smithwick, South Dakota, a town not far from the Buffalo Gap.

At different times in the past twenty-five years, Lakotas have held Sun Dances at Wind Cave National Park (Terry 1999, Personal Communication; Albers & Kittelson 2002). Nothing about the Sun Dances held here has appeared in the published literature, nor has anything been written.
about what motivated some Lakotas to choose this site for their most sacred ceremonial observance. It may have been based on traditions that this is the area where the bison performed the dance and turned its teachings over to humans, or it may have originated in a recent vision that instructed a Sun Dance leader to hold one at this location. Whether the inspiration is old or new, the decision is certainly in keeping with Lakota and Cheyenne understandings of the area and the workings of that which is sacred. Given its long association with the Race Track and bison/human relations, Wind Cave National Park encompasses an area that is sacred in the eyes of contemporary Lakotas, Cheyennes, and perhaps other tribal nations as well (see Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen for a fuller discussion of this). Indeed, several Lakota and Cheyenne cultural resource officers singled out the Race Track as a significant sacred site. The cultural officer of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe noted that everything that is close to it is sacred and requires some sort of protection (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Besides the Sun Dance, there are other religious observances that have ties to this area as well. Most of these associations, however, are more abstract and generic. The most important one is the link between what happens in caves and what takes place in Lakota and Cheyenne sweatlodges. Caves and sweatlodges are sacred because both embody processes that revivify the breath of life. The Cheyennes believe that caves throughout the Black Hills are the spiritual homes of the animals, the places where they undergo materialization before appearing on the earth’s surface. One cave in the southern Black Hills, whose identity is not specified, is the location where their culture hero, Sweet Medicine brought people back to life in a sweatlodge ceremony. The Lakota culture hero, Tokahe, who led people to the earth’s surface through the opening at Wind Cave, is also associated with the introduction of sweatlodges for healing. Many stories of the journeys of earlier culture heroes, Fallen Star and Stone Boy, are implicitly or explicitly tied to this area and/or the nearby Buffalo Gap. Some of these narratives also speak to the origins of the sweatlodge, and a few tell of the beginnings of bison pounds (a structure of which is mirrored in Animal and Sun Dance lodges and also in the circular configuration of the Black Hills (Sundstrom, L. 2000). These stories, together with those about miraculous happenings that took place on the “Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull,” which represents the entire area near the Buffalo Gap, link park lands to any of a variety of religious observances that relate to healing and renewal, but especially to those associated with bison (see Section Four for details). Contemporary requests to hold sweatlodges and pipe ceremonies on park lands are certainly consistent with wider Lakota and Cheyenne understandings of the area, and indeed, a few tribal cultural resource officers from Lakota tribes specifically connect this area to these observances (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

There are also other religious observances whose origins are connected to visionary experiences that take place in caves. Many of these are no longer practiced, nor are they specifically identified with the Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap region of the Black Hills. One religious observance that has continued into modern times, the vision quest, typically occurs on high mountains and buttes with unobstructed vistas in all directions. Except for Elk Mountain and sections of Rankin Ridge, there appear to be no other locations on park properties that conform to typical vision questing sites. Although these sites may have been used in the past for seeking visions, there is nothing in the published record that suggests that these are, or were, preferred places to seek spiritual partnerships in visions or dreams. Even if they had been used for these purposes in the past, they may no longer be desirable for this purpose because of the developments surrounding them, including communication towers, roads, and campsites. In relation to

26 For reasons elaborated upon elsewhere in this report, the absence of references in the published literature neither confirms nor disconfirms the sacredness of a site or the performance of religious observances at a particular locale. Sacred locations are often kept secret not only out of respect for the spiritual character of a place, but also out of fear that its “discovery” by outsiders will compromise, and even destroy, the site.
other sites in the Black Hills, notably Harney Peak and Bear Butte, which are widely recognized as major vision seeking locales, Lakotas and Cheyennes have expressed deep concerns about how the development of these areas has interfered with their ability to conduct their religious observances (Schlesier 1974; Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999). Indeed, some Lakotas have even suggested that these sites are losing their spiritual power because the spirits are abandoning them behind all the tourist traffic (Eagle Elk in Erdoes 1976:33-36; Forbes-Boyte 1996:112). Vision seeking and many other religious performances require places of solitude, not only because these are necessary to the conduct of a particular observance but also because the spirits dislike unnecessary and disrespectful activity taking place at the sites they frequent. Nevertheless, several Cheyenne and Lakota cultural resource officers specifically identified the general park area as a place for prayer and fasting (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Historically, vision seeking appears to have taken place inside certain caves, or, at the very least, people were transported to caves in their visions. Often, these caves are located inside mountains because of the powerful effects created at these locations through the juxtaposition of earth and sky spaces. There are no reports of other ceremonial observances being conducted inside caves, but there is a great deal of evidence of ceremonies being practiced in areas where caves are located. The Standing Rock Sioux culture resource officer indicated that areas on the mountain above Wind Cave have been used in modern times for ceremonial observances. Informally, some of us have been told by Lakotas that people frequently see spirits or hear them talking when they tour Wind Cave, and this was also reported by some of the cultural resource officers we interviewed (Albers and Kittelson 2002). Subterranean locations, including the interiors of caves, are sometimes avoided because they are understood as places where spirits dwell. Entering them unnecessarily and without invitation constitutes a form of trespass that may have dire consequences (Albers 1966-1976). Catherine Stabler’s remarks (in Bohi 1962:301) about Lakotas refusing to enter Wind Cave in the 1890s and “singing” when they did so reveals the respect they held for this place.

Today, Wind Cave National Park remains a location for the conduct of traditional religious observances and a site associated with many sacred stories and the origins of important ceremonies. Although many tribal observances are no longer undertaken at the places where they are believed to have originated in the Hills, these locations are still considered highly sacred in the minds of the Cheyennes and Lakotas because they are the sites where important spiritual figures dwell, where humans received sacred knowledge, and where other mysterious occurrences took place. The area around Wind Cave and the Buffalo Gap, as argued in Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen, is associated with a set of narratives that both distinguish and connect this area to stories of other highly revered landscapes in the Black Hills, notably, Harney Peak, Reynolds Prairie, Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, Inyan Kara Mountain, and Castle Rock. Together, these places constitute a single overriding unity, that is the Black Hills, the center of the Lakota and Cheyenne universe.
Chapter Thirteen

THE BLACK HILLS AS SACRED GROUND:
THE CHRONOLOGY AND CONTROVERSY

There is a continuous record of evidence from prehistoric times to the present of the Black Hills’ spiritual significance to the various indigenous peoples who once lived or still live in their vicinity. The Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Mandans, Poncas, and Plains Apaches are among the tribal nations who retained stories in their oral traditions of the Black Hills and/or specific sites in their reaches. The Cheyennes and Lakotas, however, are the two populations who not only hold the richest body of published cultural narratives relating to the Black Hills, but who also maintained an active and continuing spiritual relationship to many sites within their range.

This chapter reviews much of the evidence on sites in and around the Black Hills that many tribal nations consider sacred, and it also discusses the controversy that surrounds at least one tribe’s spiritual relationship to the region, the Lakotas’. In doing so, it sets the stage for a more exhaustive and in-depth coverage of materials on Wind Cave National Park and its environs.

I. THE CHRONOLOGY

Two comprehensive articles by Linea Sundstrom one entitled “Mirror of Heaven: Cross-Cultural Transference of the Sacred Geography of the Black Hills” (1996) and another “The Sacred Black Hills: An Ethnohistorical Review” (1997) offer exhaustive summaries of much of the existing ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature on the sacredness of the Black Hills. In order to place the information on the area in which Wind Cave National Park is located in some perspective, much of the territory that Sundstrom traveled so thoroughly must be covered here. This chapter contextualizes the evidence on sacred sites in relation to the time periods in which it emerged in order to document the overarching integrity and continuity of the sacred stories, ideas, and practices that Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribal nations associate with the Black Hills.

A. The Prehistoric and Early Historic Record, Pre-1877

There is a wide range of evidence in the form of rock art, cairns, and medicine wheels to suggest that various locations in and around the Black Hills had spiritual meanings and ritual uses. Some of the richest archaeological remains revealing a sacred connection to the area are exhibited in the region’s rock art, and some of the largest concentrations of rock art panels, dating back over a period of 5000 years, are found in the Hogback canyons of the southern Black Hills (Bad Horse 1979; Sundstrom, L. 1984, 1989, 1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001; Sundstrom and Keiser 1998). Certain panels contain motifs that bear striking resemblance to the sacred iconography of tribal nations known to have used the region in the protohistoric and historic eras, including the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Sundstrom, L. 1990, 2001; Sundstrom and Keiser 1998). The archaeological record reveals, as Linea Sundstrom (1997:208) puts it, that the Black Hills area had “considerable, religious significance for much, if not all, of its human habitation.”
The spiritual importance of the Black Hills is also revealed in the writings of early European Americans who traveled in the northcentral Plains before 1877, when the United States extinguished tribal title to the area. Of those who wrote about the Hills and their inhabitants, only a few made any comment about their possible spiritual meaning or the sacredness of any of the sites associated with them. One of the earliest accounts is contained in the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Moulton 1987:3:179), where William Clark relates a conversation he had on October 1, 1804 with an Arikara chief, who told him that the Black Hills were the winter home of the animals. Although there is no suggestion that this association is sacred, it is entirely consistent with spiritual meanings attached to the Black Hills as a place of emergence and gathering for animals (see earlier discussions in Chapters Nine, Ten, and Twelve).

Also persistent over time is the observation that booming noises emanated from the Hills, a subject Clark reported in his journal entry for 1804, based on information he received from the fur trader, Jon Vallé. When the expedition stopped again at the Arikara villages on their return trip in 1806, Clark was told that local tribes believed the Black Hills made a great noise, which he compared with the Hidatsas’ descriptions of the loud sounds originating in the Rocky Mountains (Moulton 1983-87:4:374-375). Again, nothing about the meanings of these sounds to local tribes was recorded, but fifty years later, another trader on the upper Missouri, Edwin Denig would offer further explanation.

Denig is generally credited with offering the first specific account of the Hills’ sacredness to the Lakotas. In 1851, he wrote:

Much superstition is attached to the Black Hills by the Indians. The principal peak, called the Hill of Thunder, is volcanic, and in 1833 was in almost constant action. In almost any clear day large volumes of smoke could be seen, which the Indians took to be the breathing of the Big White Man buried beneath. Unnatural noises are said to be heard, which, whether originating in their fancy or caused by wild beasts, are thought to be moans of the Great White Giant, when pressed upon by rocks as a punishment for being the first aggressor in their territory. They say that he issues forth on occasions and his tracks seen in the snow are twenty feet in length. He is condemned to perpetual incarceration under the mountains as an example to all whites to leave the Indians in quiet possession of their hunting grounds (in Ewers 1961:6).

It is difficult to make sense of what was meant by the “volumes of smoke” issuing from the peak, since the area was not volcanically active at this point in history (Sundstrom, L. 1997:186). It is true, however, that the Lakotas did associate the Hills’ highest mountain, Harney Peak, with the Wakinyan or Thunders. Other than the echo of thunder, neither Denig nor earlier William Clark, were able to account for these sounds.27

Twenty-five years later, in 1875, while traveling in the vicinity of Harney Peak, Professors Henry Newton and Walter Jenney (1880:311), both geologists, would write,

...the Indians are said to desert the Hills in the summer on account of the lightening, and I can easily understand that a band of superstitious Indians, after experiencing such a storm, especially if any of their number were injured by lightening, would forever forsake the locality.

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27 Eight years later, Ferdinand von Hayden (1862:365-366) reiterated nearly word for word what Denig had written about Lakota beliefs surrounding the Black Hills.
In view of this, it is quite possible that the heavy plumes of smoke Denig wrote about were the result of an explosive wildfire caused by lightening, not a volcanic eruption (see also Case 1952a:39; Parker, W. 1985:590).

Denig’s story about a white giant, on the other hand is remotely related to one of the Lakotas’ spiritual figures, Waziya, commonly depicted as a giant and the harbinger of winter. Henry Boller (1972:327), a contemporary of Denig, described this figure based on information he learned from a Hunkpapa Lakota named Grindstone and also associated it with the Black Hills.28 The idea that, in Denig’s words, “superstition” surrounded the area only confirms what would be described in today’s less off-putting terminology as its spiritual significance (Sundstrom, L. 1997:86-187). Notwithstanding some of the problematic aspects of Denig’s representation, it does establish several things: one, the importance of this area as a hunting ground; two, its mysterious or wakan character; and three, its association with the Thunders [Wakinyan] and the Winter Man [Waziya].

Although Denig wrote explicitly about the “supernatural” character of the Hills in relation to the Lakotas, there were other writers before him who wrote about spiritual connections to the region and its surroundings. Washington Irving’s account (1897:1:344), first published in 1836, of the 1811 Astoria Expedition describes the Black Hills as:

…the abode of the geneii or thunder spirits, who fabricate storms and tempests. On entering their defiles, therefore, they often hang offerings on trees, or place them on rocks, to propitiate the invisible ‘lords of the mountains,’ and procure good weather and successful hunting; and they attach unusual significance to the echoes which haunt the precipices.

Francis Parkman’s record (in Feltskog 1969:156-157, 572-573 n21) of his travels along the Oregon Trail in 1846 contains references about Lakota spiritual associations to the Black Hills. He writes of a Lakota man named La Borgne or One Eye,29 who fasted in a cave somewhere in the Hills during the early nineteenth century. While traveling in the Hills,30 Parkman (in Feltskog 1969:286-287) himself encountered an elderly man engaged in solitary worship on a pine-laden precipice. Another early report, introduced previously, comes from E. De Giradin’s journal (1936:63), which records his travels in the Badlands during 1849 and includes references to the use of the Black Hills as a place the Lakotas collected kinnikinick [bearberry], a sacred plant used in tobacco mixtures. In the same decade, Rufus Sage (in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272) recorded a story of how Lakotas warriors encountered an old spirit woman living in a cave on a butte west of the Black Hills, known as Old Woman’s Butte. In the narrative, the old woman fore-tells the successful outcome of their raiding party against the Shoshones. When the warriors re-turn to the butte to leave an offering to the old woman, the cave has disappeared, and in its place, they find a small springs and a stream.

Some of the same spiritual themes found in Denig, Boller, Irving, Parkman, De Giradin, and Sage’s accounts also appear in the writings of journalists who accompanied the Black Hills Expe-
dition in 1874, and many of these are reprinted in Herbert Krause and Gary Olson’s work *Prelude to Glory* (1974). N.H. Knappen (in Krause and Olson 1974:28), writing for the *Bismark Tribune*, reported that the Hills “has been held as a sacred spot to them as the Hunting Ground of the Great Spirit,” while A. B. Donaldson (in Krause and Olson 1974:41), special correspondent to the *St. Paul Pioneer*, stated: “It is the famed stronghold and a favorite hunting ground of the red man...To the simple faith of the Indian, it is the most sacred spot of earth to him the ‘holy of holies.’” William E. Curtis of the *New York World* and the *Chicago Inter Ocean* conveyed a similar picture and said: the “Black Hills are holy ground of the very holiest sort” (in Krause and Olson 1974:150). He depicted them as a “Mecca,” a place the Lakotas jealously guarded because of their faunal riches (Krause and Olson 1974:149-150).

Beyond their special place as a spiritually protected game preserve, Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:150) argued that the Hills were a location for the Lakotas’ “grand councils” and their most “solemn festivities,” including the Sun Dance. He further described them as “the very antechamber of Manitou,” containing the “springs of immortality.” In a story he heard from the guide Bear’s Ears, an Arikara who once lived among the Lakotas, he wrote that a cave ran underneath the Hills leading to a “living river.” Magical deer and panthers were said to block the cave’s entrance (Krause and Olson 1974:129,150). Individuals who were able to find it and cross to the other side were able to gain a “new lease on life till the eagles, whose eyrie was on the summit of the hill, entered another century of their eternal existence” (Ibid:150). The cave was the home of a very tall medicine man with a long white beard, who used the river and its springs to advance his death-defying schemes, but he was eventually engulfed by the Hills and never to be seen again (Ibid:129). Curtis (Ibid:129) further writes: “The same as to the eagles, but the thunder remained as a perpetual sentinel to guard their nest. A compensatory fountain poured out from the hill which still confers upon those who bathe in it the gift of invulnerability -- it is a Dakotan Lethe.” From Bear’s Ears, Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:192) of the *New York Tribune* also learned of a great nest located in the center of the Hills, a place “even the Indians themselves do not visit because of fear.” Allowing for some misunderstandings and mistranslations of the Arikara and Lakota scouts’ stories, the journalists recorded many ideas that continue to hold currency in modern tribal understandings of the Hills’ sacredness. As Linea Sundstrom (1997:208) astutely notes: “The reporters, who reflected the prevailing sentiments of the day, had no motive for exaggerating the Indians’ beliefs about the sacredness of the Black Hills.”

Richard I. Dodge, another of the earliest European Americans to explore the interiors of the Black Hills, also described their spiritual associations. Following Castle Creek near Reynolds Prairie on June 11, 1875, Dodge (in Kime 1998:79) reported that the party arrived at a spring where they found the remains of a large camp ground where lodge poles had recently been cut and trimmed. The area was also used, according to Dodge, for “making medicine” because of the presence of a “Medicine Lodge.” It is impossible, however, to determine whether this was a sweatlodge, which seems the most likely given its location, or as Sundstrom (1997:188) suggests, a Sun Dance structure. A couple of weeks later, while traveling near Rapid Creek, Dodge heard a story from one of his guides, California Joe, about a Lakota named Robe Raiser who is reputed to have said that his people rarely entered the Hills, and when they did so, it was to hunt and cut tipi poles. In the book *The Black Hills* (1965:138), the account Dodge himself published, he claimed the Hills were avoided because, among their other liabilities, they were “‘bad medicine’ and the abode of spirits.” It is interesting to note, however, that Dodge did not include this as one of the liabilities he actually recorded in his original field journal based on the information that California Joe received from Robe Raiser (in Kime 1998:139). We can only speculate what motivated him to add this spiritual dimension to his published account, but as already indicated in Chapter Five, there are many reasons to be leery of his work, not the least of which was his...
staunch support for opening the Hills to white settlement. As Edward Lazarus (1991:72) writes in reference to the remarks of people like Dodge:

Those who wanted to dispossess the natives of their land seized with particular vigor upon the legends that related the Indians’ fear of the Hills; but whatever beliefs the Indians cherished about the land were based on veneration not terror. The Indians did not value gold; the Hills themselves were their treasure and they guarded them vigilantly. At the Great Council held in their midst during the summer of 1857, the Sioux resolved to execute any tribesman who revealed the existence of gold in the Hills to the whites. And they took their vow seriously; even alcohol, one frontiersman lamented, could not loosen Sioux tongues about the Hills.

There are also a variety of more specific references in the early literature regarding the Hills’ sacredness. Journals, expeditionary reports, and newspaper accounts from Harney’s exploration of the Hills in 1857, Raynold’s in 1859, Custer’s in 1874, and Jenney’s in 1875 not only contain Lakota names for places now widely regarded as sacred, but some of them also include specific references to the spiritual activity connected with these places. Some of the richest material comes from John Gregory Bourke’s military diaries, written from 1872 to 1896, which contain rich accounts of the spiritual significance of various sites in and around the Black Hills (see, Sundstrom 1997:189, 192, 194, 200). Bear Lodge Butte a.k.a. Devil’s Tower, for example, was described as a location where the Lakotas believed the Great Spirit placed the game animals to provide them with food (Ibid:192), and Bear Butte was characterized as a ‘mecca’ for the Cheyennes (Ibid::200). William Ludlow (1875:15), Chief Engineer of the Black Hills Expedition, described a location in the western Hills where there were enormous quantities of gypsum. As he wrote:

One of the guides took me off to the right to see a huge mass of it, crystallized and shining beautifully in the sun. The Indians, for generations, have, in passing, split off pieces for ornaments, and by degrees cut a shoulder several feet deep on it at the level of the ground. Inyan Kara was in sight all day to the southward.

Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:208) of the New York Tribune wrote about Heeng-ya-kara (sic Inyan Kara) on August 24, 1874:

The knob is composed of metamorphic sedimentary rock, granitoid in appearance, but difficult to characterize accurately. The strata dip toward the east and west at an angle of 40 degrees. On top of the ridge, small pieces of white quartz were found. As they had no geological business to be there, they were no doubt left there by the Indians, who are fond of making offerings to their gods from these lofty altars...

Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:87-88) also wrote about a stream in the Floral Valley that was believed to have its origin in an underground cave that supplied all the “luxuries of life.” Near Reynolds Prairie, various members of the Black Hills Expedition reported the presence of a large pile of antlers (Ludlow 1875:17; Knappen in Krause and Olson 1974:28; Donaldson in Krause and Olson 1974:61; Grant in Krause and Olson 1974:250), a practice with known religious significance among the Arapahos and the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:2:276). Finally, William Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:150,192) related Bear’s Ears and Goose’s accounts of an area near Harney Peak where the Thunders had their nest.

Federal officials also recognized the area’s spiritual value. Samuel Hinman (1874:95), in his appendix to the “Report of the Sioux Commission,” wrote that the Black Hills were “high, bleak, and cold, traversed by fearful storms in winter and spring and in summer time almost truly said
by the Indians to be inhabited by the thunder-gods, ever angry at and jealous with hot displeasure of intrusion upon their sanctuary and mountain home.” This refers, of course, to the well-known connection of the Hills to the Wakinyan or Thunders. A year later in September of 1875, E. L. Howard (1875:253), the Agent at Spotted Tail Agency, wrote in his annual report to E. P. Smith, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs the following:

Other apparently insurmountable difficulties have been overcome by the same means, notably the preparations for opening the Black Hills, which it was predicted would surely precipitate an Indian war, so violently opposed had the Indians been, by tradition and education, to the presence of the white man on that their sacred ground (emphasis ours).

From these comments, it is clear that federal officials were well aware of the Hills’ sacred significance to the Lakotas. Taken together, all of the early written sources suggest that the tribal nations who lived in the area had important spiritual connections to the Black Hills. Yet, ironically, a century later a number of historians and anthropologists would cast doubt on the time depth and veracity of Lakota claims that their ancestors held the Black Hills sacred.

None of the sources written before 1877 offer any in-depth interpretation of the spiritual meaning behind the region and its various sites, but all of them uniformly agree that it was sacred to the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Nevertheless, there is enough information to determine what sites were important, especially in the northern and central areas of the Hills where most of these outsiders traveled. There is also enough to suggest some of the reasons for their centrality in tribal religious traditions. It must be remembered that, with the possible exception of Hinman and some members of the Black Hills and Jenney expeditions, most of the early observers never reached locations in the southern Hills. The sites identified in most reports include places in the far north, Inyan Kara Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte (a.k.a Devil’s Tower), and Bear Butte, and in the central Hills, Harney Peak and the Central Prairies. They also include, at least generically, references to the religious importance of the caves and springs located in the Hills. All of this documentation suggests at least seven significant religious interpretations of the Black Hills, all of which can be traced to later writings on the subject: 1) the area’s association with the Thunders and renewal; 2) its link with game animals and ideas of emergence; 3) its relationship to winter and a spiritual figure of gigantic stature; 4) its connection to sacred caves and springs; 5) its importance as a location for collecting plants, stones, and minerals used in religious practice; 6) its position as a sanctuary for individuals seeking a relationship with the sacred; and 7) its ties to the conduct of tribal ceremonial observances, including the Sun Dance.

B. Ethnographic Writings and Texts: 1878-1945

From 1878 to the end of World War II, several ethnographers and historians began working with Native peoples to record their oral traditions, some of which include references to the Black Hills and specific topographic features within their range. American Indians themselves also drew, narrated, or wrote their own cultural accounts, and many of these contain revealing information about the region as well. The enormous body of material from this period can be divided into four general groupings. The first contains a wide variety of sacred texts that specifically mention the Black Hills as a location of genesis and emergence in myth time or as a place where mysterious events took place within historic memory. It also includes a large number of narratives where the Hills are not identified, but where, nonetheless, they can be inferred indirectly from the kind of landforms described in a text. The second encompasses a wide range of ethnographic descriptions of specific places where religious observances were actually conducted or where significant cultural institutions originated. The third contains stories from Euro-
pean Americans who lived in the Hills. These range from historically valid eyewitness observations to romanticized legends and lore of the type typically aimed at popular audiences. Finally, the fourth covers accounts by Lakotas and Cheyennes, who conveyed varied information about their own sacred knowledge of and spiritual experiences in the Hills.

Much of the early literature on sacred sites in the Black Hills, with a few possible exceptions, offer only hints of how some of these places may have been interpreted and used when the Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and other tribes occupied the area. The common impression that information on the religious significance of the area is spotty is true, if examined in the absence of a wider body of traditional cultural texts. There are many bits of material in early sources that appear as isolates, unstitched pieces in a larger quilt pattern whose design remains elusive. This need not discourage the intrepid researcher, for as the archaeologist Robert Hall (1997: x) wrote in his classic study *Archaeology of the Soul* “texts were valuable for discovering mental associations between otherwise discrete classes of phenomenon, associations that provided clues to patterns of thought and belief that might otherwise escape attention.” When taken as a whole and contextualized in a larger body of information on Lakota and Cheyenne cultural traditions, the record is far richer, allowing for the reconstruction of wider cultural patterns that shed light on the spiritual significance of the Black Hills over time.

Above all, the paucity of certain kinds of documentation should not be read, as some scholars have, as evidence of an absence of any sacred attachment to the area. Instead, it should be viewed first in light of the times and circumstances under which the knowledge was preserved as part of the written record. It must be remembered that the decades immediately following 1878, when ethnographers began their systematic efforts to salvage information on pre-reservation tribal cultures, were difficult and stressful times for the Lakotas and Cheyennes, who had been forcibly removed from areas to which they held strong emotional attachments. Two Lakotas, Battiste Good and Luther Standing Bear, as well as two Cheyennes, Wooden Leg and Iron Teeth, vividly conveyed the painful memories of their tribes’ expulsion from the Black Hills. But the enormity of the loss to the Lakota and Cheyenne people and their reservoirs of cultural knowledge are incalculable and only hinted at in the published literature. One of the reasons some of the Lakotas and Cheyennes did not specifically identify sites of sacred significance is that their recollection brought with it the painful memories of losing the Black Hills.31

It should also be remembered that the late nineteenth century was a time when many Lakota and Cheyenne religious practices were being outlawed by missionaries and government officials. Understandably, people would have been reluctant to talk about some of these things, even with outsiders they respected and looked kindly upon. Many of the elders of the time certainly knew the whereabouts of spiritually significant sites, but as George Bird Grinnell (1910:574) wrote, nearly a century ago, certain sacred matters are simply not discussed and “excepting in rare instances the old men are reluctant to talk of these things, partly because the subject stirs up painful regrets and partly from the inherited feeling that these are matters which must not be talked of under any circumstances to anyone outside the tribe.” Some twenty years later, when Dick Stone (in Shirl 1982:14) attempted to collect stories about Devil’s Tower from Cheyenne elders, he was told: “There are some things we don’t like to talk about, that was a very ‘Holy Place’ to us.” There is no question that some of the rich body of sacred knowledge about the

31 One of the well-known psychological effects of traumas associated with Diaspora is amnesia (Lifton 1961,1983). This can take many different forms, including the refusal to name and mention the places from which one has been dispossessed because it recalls the separation and the pain this evokes.
Black Hills held by the Lakotas and Cheyennes was kept secret during this time and off-limits to ethnographers.

A case in point involves one of the most important documents from this period. This is a map drawn by Amos Bad Heart Bull at the end of the nineteenth century that was not widely known until Helen Blish published a copy of it in 1967. The map (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) locates and gives the names of several significant sites in and around the Black Hills, including Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, the Black Mountains, Warbonnet Creek, Old Woman Butte, Thunder Butte, Slim Buttes, the Buffalo Gap, Hot Springs, and the Race Track. It is one of the earliest tribal sources that actually document many of the sites to which Lakotas and Cheyennes of the same and subsequent generations attributed sacred properties. Many of these sites hold spiritual significance for other tribes too, including the Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Mandans.

1. The Race Track

The Race Track was identified as Ki Inyanka Ocanku [The Running Path] on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), and it was called Okin’inyanka Ocanku by another Lakota Wawoslata (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264; Manhart and Buechel 1998:452). Contemporary names in Lakota include Wamaka Xhan O’Ki’inyanke [Running Path of the Animals] or We Ok’papsun Xkokpa [The Valley Where They Shed Their Blood] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:208). Also known as the Red Valley, this depression nearly encircles the Black Hills and crosses the eastern section of Wind Cave National Park. Samuel Hinman (1874:93) referred to it as “the great Indian trail leading around the hills,” when he toured the southern Black Hills in the late summer of 1874, and Henry Newton and Walter Jenney (1880:136) called it the “Race Course” when they traveled the area a year later.

In the early twentieth century, Eagle Shield, one of the Lakota consultants for Francis Densmore’s monumental text *Teton Sioux Music and Culture* (1918:319) spoke about its meaning, and Little Cloud narrated a story about it in Lakota to Reverend Eugene Buechel that was transcribed by Ivan Stars and entitled *Unkcekiha Kin Kiinyanka Ohiya* [The Magpie Wins the Race]. Although Little Cloud’s story was collected in May of 1915, it did not appear in print until 1978 when it was published in the book *Lakota Tales and Texts* (Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:94-96 [also, in Buechel and Minhardt 1998:145-150]). In 1915, Wawoslata told Ivan Stars a story about Tall Dung performing a Yuwipi ceremony at an unspecified location along the Race Track that predicted the successful outcome of a raid (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264-269; [also in Manhart and Buechel 1998:452-463]). In 1944, Nicolas Black Elk shared another Lakota rendition of the Race Track story with John Neihardt (in DeMallie 1984:309-310).

Four decades earlier, Alfred Kroeber (1900:161-163) published a narrative about the Race Track from the Cheyennes. In subsequent years, George Bird Grinnell (1926:252-254), Frank Marquis (collected in 1928 and published with Limbaugh in 1973:30-31), and Richard Randolph (1937:189-192) recorded other Cheyenne versions of the story as well. Described in greater detail in the next chapter, the various renditions of the story not only explain how the nature of relations between humans and animals was established, but they also account for many topographic features in the Hills including the Race Track itself. This is one of many cases where striking similarities are found in Lakota and Cheyenne interpretations of the cultural significance of sites.

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32 The original map was buried with Amos Bad Heart Bull’s sister when she died in 1947 (Blish 1967: xx).
associated with the Black Hills. It is also a site that cultural resource officers from different
Lakota and Cheyenne tribes told us remains very important to their tribes and needs protection
(Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Within and beyond the Race Track, most of the sites appearing on Bad Heart Bull’s map can
be organized into three general geographic groupings that roughly correspond with the southern,
central, and northern regions of the Black Hills.

2. The Southern Hills and Their Peripheries

Closely connected to the Race Track and the stories of its importance is the Buffalo Gap. Marked and named *Pte Tali Yapa* [the Doorway of the Bison Cow] on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), the Buffalo Gap is located less than ten miles east of Wind Cave National Park. Another site in the southern Black Hills located on his map are the thermal waters at Hot Springs, *Mnikaha* [Hot water] also near Wind Cave National Park. Wind Cave, however, is not indicated on this map, although some of the spiritual significance attached to it by modern Lakotas is linked to early representations of the nearby Race Track, Buffalo Gap, and Hot Springs. Also not identified on Bad Heart Bull’s map are the rich flint quarries at Battle Mountain and Flint Hill or the rock art sites in Craven and Red canyons in the southern Hills. Warbonnet Creek and Old Woman Butte, located just outside the Hills’ southern borders, are located and named, however.

a. The Buffalo Gap

The Buffalo Gap was one of the sites singled out in early historic records because of its signi-
cficance to local tribes. In early ethnographic sources, it appeared in a Cheyenne story about the
Race Track published by George Bird Grinnell (1926:252-254), and it can also be identified as the location where quillwork originated among the Cheyennes because of its connection to the story of the Buffalo Wife in other Cheyenne texts (Grinnell 1972:2:385-391; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:9-24; Powell 1969:2:472-475). The Buffalo Gap’s name in Lakota also appears in a Little Cloud story published by Father Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:96). In this story and another collected from Lone Wolf (in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242-245) in 1915, the Buffalo Gap is called *He Okiksaha* [the ridge with a gap] and the land inside the gap is known as *Tatanka makalhpaya* [the Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull] (Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:95; Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242). In Lone Wolf’s story, the Buffalo Gap is the location where a spiritual bison bull transforms himself into a human (see translation in Chapter Fourteen). Another contemporary name for the gap is *Tatanka Ta Tiyopa* (Black Elk, C. 1986a:210), identifying the gateway with the bison bull [*tatanka*] instead of the bison cow [*pre*].

The Buffalo Gap and other Hogback gateways to the Hills are identified today with the hero figure Stone Boy (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:29; Bucko 1998:208). In his travels, the hero confronts various dangers including the double-teeth bison of the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1926:182) and *Iya* or *Waziya* of the Lakota (Bad Wound in Walker, 1917:193-202, in Walker 1983:140-153). In these and other versions of the story (Wissler 1907:199-201; McLaughlin 1916:179-197; Old Walker in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:56-57 [also in Buechel and

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33 Yvonne Kelly translated these names with the assistance of Jerry Dearly. These translations may very well have other meanings and metaphorical associations. They are different from Paul Manhart’s translations of Buechel’s texts. Manhart translates *He Okiksaha* as “Mount Abyss,” which is not the best way to interpret the name of this site.
Manhart 1998:5-20]; Deloria 1978:87-95; Sword in Walker 1983:89-100), most of which were collected in the early twentieth century, he is associated with the origins of the sweatlodge. In George Sword and Old Walker’s texts, he is also connected to the origin of pounds used in bison hunting.

Luther Standing Bear (1975:3), who was born in 1868, made references to the Buffalo Gap in two of the books he published between 1928 and 1934. In his work My People The Sioux (1975:19 [reprint of 1928 edition]), he described it as a passageway through which the buffalo entered the Black Hills to winter and where the people followed them to camp when he was a child. In the same era, Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:155-156) also identified the Buffalo Gap as a location for hunting and camping. In a later book Land of the Spotted Eagle (1978:43 [reprint of 1935 edition]), Standing Bear again described the importance of the Buffalo Gap as a gateway to some of the Oglalas’ favorite winter camping grounds. He wrote:

According to tribal legend these hills were a reclining female figure from whose breasts flowed life-giving forces and to them the Lakota went as a child to its mother’s arms. The various entrances to the hills were very rough and rugged, but there was one very beautiful and easy pass through which both buffalo and Lakota entered...Every fall thousands of buffalo and Lakotas went through this pass to spend the winter in the hills. Pte ta tiyopa it was called by the Lakotas, or ‘Gate of the Buffalo.’

One observation is worth making here about Standing Bear’s words, and that is the obvious contextual connection between the Buffalo Gap area and Lakota stories of fecundity and emergence, a linkage that is made very explicit in later published sources. His statement does not appear to identify the area as sacred in a literal sense, but metaphorically, his description of the Hills as a feminine force giving birth to life has strong spiritual roots not only in Lakota cosmology but also in Cheyenne and Kiowa traditions.

Although the Buffalo Gap is outside the boundaries of Wind Cave National Park, it is integrally connected to the Race Track and Wind Cave in Cheyenne as well as Lakota traditions. It remains a culturally important area today as evidenced in some of the contemporary sources discussed momentarily.

b. The Hot Springs

Although marked and named on Bad Heart Bull’s map as Mnikahta [Hot water], the spiritual significance of the thermal waters at Hot Springs is not well documented before World War II. There is one story, however, recorded for the Cheyennes by George Bird Grinnell (1926:193-200), in which a hero figure, Red Tracks, triumphs over a “Bad Hearted Man,” who has his lodge near these springs. A few references also appear in local history accounts, but most of them constitute the sort of legendary tales written for popular consumption. If we look beyond some of their flights of fancy, they contain certain elements of truth. In 1927, Badger Clark, the Poet Laureate of the state of South Dakota, published, through the Hot Springs Kiwanis Club, a book entitled When Hot Springs Was Still A Pup (republished in 1983). This includes a lengthy story about how Battle Mountain received its name from a hostile encounter between the Lakotas and Cheyennes over access to the region’s hot springs, which were known and valued by both for their therapeutic properties. He describes how after the Lakotas discovered the area: “…a band of Cheyennes, coming to the springs with their sick people as their fathers had done before them, found the strange intruders in possession of the canyon, and were by no means pleased…”(Clark 1983:3). A battle ensued and afterwards, he goes on to write:
That evening the Sioux plastered their wounds with mud made of the sacred red soil and spring water, and held a victory dance, but it was not long until they discovered that they were not to be left in undisturbed possession of their winnings. It was in the nature of a holy war, and the Cheyennes’ religious feelings would not let them leave the shrine (Clark 1983:4).

Whatever else one might gain from the story, one may presume that local whites, at the very least, recognized these hot springs had some spiritual value to the area’s native inhabitants. In their book The Black Hills Trails, Jesse Brown and A.M. Willards (1924:18) also wrote about the healing properties the Lakotas attributed to these waters. Twenty five years earlier, in 1899, Annie Tallent in her classic history The Black Hills or The Last Hunting Ground of the Dakotahs (1899:644,695) described the unverified battle\(^{34}\) between the Lakotas and Cheyennes near this site, and the moccasin-shaped stone used by them for bathing at one of the springs. She also wrote down some of the “Indian” legends\(^{35}\) that local whites associated with the springs, and one of these about a distraught maiden who flung herself over a precipice,\(^{36}\) was republished by S. Goodale Price (1935:45) nearly forty years later. Even though none of her stories appear to be tribal in origin, they at least acknowledge an indigenous connection to the springs.

Two decades earlier, in 1877, John Setter (in Richter n.d:1) sighted Lakotas bathing at the thermal waters where Hot Springs now stands, and in 1888, S. D. Cook wrote that the Lakotas called the region of Hot Springs mini kata and the springs proper, wiwila kata [Hot springs]. He went on to write that prior to their occupation of the area, the springs were possessed by the Cheyennes, who “built an immense city here which covered many hundred acres. The remains of this once great Indian city are still plainly apparent and the evidence is seen upon the lands adjacent to and within a circuit of many miles around the springs.” In fact, in 1940, a group of Cheyennes from Montana were reported to have visited one of their sacred springs near Hot Springs (Odell 1942:144). Over the years, many other local residents and visitors also commented on the Lakotas’ frequent use of these thermal waters in the early days of Hot Springs (Rosen 1895: 473-474; Tallent 1899:651-652; Casey 1949:284; Petty 1973:3; Williams, B. 1973:16, 30-31; Fall River County Historical Society 1976:143; Clark 1983:9, 23; 26; de Mandat-Grancey 1984:293-294). One of Hot Springs’ long-time residents, Mary Bingham (1973:3-4), recalled how the Lakotas would cover themselves with mud from the springs and the Fall River to obtain relief from various ailments.

Although Luther Standing Bear (1978:51) did not single out these thermal waters in his writings, he does describe the reverent attitudes that Lakotas held towards springs and the reasons why they did so. As discussed earlier, springs were highly revered by all the tribal nations who occupied this region. Another Lakota name, Mni Woblú [Boiling Water], is the ascription for the nearby Fall River (Buechel 1970:339).

\(^{34}\) Although this battle is seen as an important event in local history texts, confirmation of its occurrence is lacking in the oral traditions and winter counts of either the Lakotas or the Cheyennes. While hostilities did exist for a short time between segments of these two tribes at the turn of the nineteenth century, the likely combatants for a major battle at this locale are the Lakotas and the Kiowas (who might have included some of the Wotapio Cheyennes that apparently lived among them) or the Lakotas and Crows (a battle between these two tribes is reported to have taken place at the Buffalo Gap in some Lakota winter counts).

\(^{35}\) Tallent’s legends represent a genre of stories with European American origins that were popularized during the Victorian era and commonly associated with thermal springs throughout the United States, including Saratoga Springs in New York State. They constitute one of the common ways in which native landscapes are culturally appropriated by whites in tourist settings.

\(^{36}\) This story is remarkably similar to the suicide story of a young Dakota woman connected to one of the bluffs, called “Maiden’s Leap,” near Lake Pepin in Wisconsin.
Again, this area is located outside the borders of the park, but many of the stories associated with it are integrally tied to the Race Track and Wind Cave in the historic and modern cultural traditions of the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Herman 1965a, 1965b; La Pointe 1976:45-46, 79-84; Goodman 1992:61; Catches in Parlow 1983a:2-3; Catches in Gonzalez 1996:67).

c. Wind Cave

Wind Cave, also located near the Race Track, is not indicated on Bad Heart Bull’s map, nor is it explicitly named in any of the Lakota and Cheyenne texts collected by ethnographers before World War I. Nevertheless, versions of three Lakota stories collected by James Walker, when he served as a physician at Pine Ridge from 1896 to 1914, became associated with this cave in later years. One story, told by Long Knife (George Sword) (in Walker 1917:181-182, 1983:204-206), refers to a cave from which Tokahe and the Buffalo people, the Lakotas’ ancestors, emerged to the earth’s surface. Two stories narrated by Left Heron (in Walker 1917:183-190,212-215, 1983:109-117) specifically designate a cave in the mountains where a human man marries a woman of the underground buffalo nation. That the caves in Walker’s texts are not located or specifically identified with Wind Cave is not surprising since few of the narratives in his collections have any geographic placement. What is significant, however, is that different renditions of these stories came to be identified with Wind Cave by later generations of Lakotas (Herman n.d.; Herman in One Feather 1972:102-105, 149; Black Elk, H. in Theisz 1975:16-18; LaPointe 1976:79-84; Powers, M. 1986:38-42, 50; Lone Hill 1996:550-553). Also important are the early and recurring symbolic connections between caves, bison, and ideas of human emergence in these and other narratives from the Walker collection (Walker 1980:144, 229), all of which are consistent with contemporary Lakota and Cheyenne ideas about the role caves play in the emergence and regeneration of animals and humans.

In 1915, Asa Bad Yellow Hair told another version of the Buffalo Wife story to Father Eugene Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:66-69 [also in Buechel and Manhart [1998:91-93]). In this story, the Buffalo wife’s mother lives in a cave “in the hills” where she keeps the dead remains of the men she has taken captive. A third variation of the Buffalo Wife story was given by Left Heron to Dakota scholar Ella Deloria, who translated and published it in 1932 as part of a collection of Lakota (and Dakota) texts (Deloria 1978:86-89; also, in Rice 1994:67-126). Joseph Eagle Hawk narrated an abridged version of the story to Martha Beckwith (1930:399-400) in the 1920s. In his text, entitled “The Story of Blue Jay” he passes through a hill with a canyon in it that closes in on him, but there is no mention of a cave.

Lakota narratives of the Buffalo Wife have many of the same motifs as a Cheyenne story collected in the same time period and later associated with the Buffalo Gap and the Race Track (Grinnell 1926:87-103; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:9-22; Powell 1969:2:472-475). As reported in the previous chapter, the story of the Buffalo Woman or Buffalo Wife is told among many tribes in the northern Plains (Parks 1996:165). Most of the tribal nations who tell the story associate it with the origin of some kind of sacred knowledge. Narratives about subterranean encounters between humans and bison are present in other early sources on the Lakotas too (Bushottedter in Dorsey, J. 1894:476-477; Judson 1913:53; Robinson, D. 1928:515; Little Wound in Walker 1980:124), and as discussed in the next chapter, the connection between caves, bison, and the breath of life is a ubiquitous theme in the sacred stories of tribal nations throughout the Plains (Powers, M. 1986:38; DeMallie 1987:28).

There are other early sources that provide more concrete evidence about the Lakotas spiritual relationship to Wind Cave. One comes from Catherine Stabler’s recollections of the cave (in Bohi 1962:391), in which she talks about a group of Lakotas singing as they toured the cave in the
1890s. This describes one form of prayerful communication common among the Lakotas when beholding a sacred place and encountering its spiritual presence. The other is found in an article from the *Custer County Chronicle* written by Rufus J. Pilcher (1964, n.p), a former superintendent at Wind Cave National Park. He describes an incident that took place in 1910 when Stinking Bear and his party requested permission to take a stone from the cave’s floor. He explains why he reluctantly allowed them to do so “because the amulet would cure the old lady of her lameness and good luck would be had by everyone including myself.” These are two of the earliest accounts we came across that suggest this cave had spiritual significance, and what they record is consistent with other early reports of the sacred nature and healing powers of caves in Lakota traditions.

There are also materials in park documents that suggest early spiritual connections to the area of Wind Cave National Park. A newspaper clipping from the *Hot Springs Star* (July 22, 1937) reveals how tribal elder Left Hand Bear associated the area with bison, health, and healing (his words are quoted in Chapter Six). In a letter sent to Edward Freeland the park superintendent, Charley Eagle Louse (1939) reiterates the connection between the park’s lands, the bison, and good health (also quoted in Chapter Six). Another unpublished document from this period is especially instructive. In a letter written to Arno B. Cammerer, Director of the National Park Service, on July 25, 1937, William S. Campbell a.k.a. Stanley Vestal, the well known historian of Sitting Bull and White Bull’s lives, wrote that Wind Cave was a “sacred spot” to the Lakotas and that they called it the “Cave of the Winds.” Equivalent Lakota names provided more recently by Charlotte Black Elk (1986a:209) include *Tatoye Oyurlokapi* [The Opening of the Four Winds] and *Tate Waxun* [Cave of the Wind]. As Campbell’s letter reads:

I have just returned from a trip into the northern plains, where I was doing research among the old Indians. On my way through the Black Hills I stopped at the Wind Cave National Park...While there I was given a booklet on the Wind Cave National Park...

In this booklet, I find a statement that the Wind Cave was discovered by a white man in 1881. Of course it was known to the Sioux Indians long before that. As I recall, their calendars show that they discovered the Hills about the time of the Declaration of Independence.

As you may know, the four winds were major deities of the Plains tribes, and wind was associated in their belief with the breath of life and the vital principle. Hence the Cave of the Winds was a sacred spot to them. Many of the Plains tribes had myths in which the story was told of how the buffalo first came out of a cave (I suppose this was an objectification of the fact that all flesh is made of earth), and Chief White Bull (Pte San Hunka), Sitting Bull’s living nephew, informed me that the Sioux believe that the Wind Cave in the Black Hills was the cave from which Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery, sent them out into the Sioux hunting grounds. This was a reason why the Sioux fought so hard for the Black Hills when they were invaded by the whites. The Chief also told me that some of his people still hoped that when they regained the favor of their gods, the buffalo would once more issue from that cave, and fill the Plains.

Not only does he identify Wind Cave as sacred to the Lakotas from information that White Bull shared with him, but he also clearly links it to Lakota stories of animal emergence. Campbell’s letter appears to have been taken seriously, because in a statement issued by the National Park Service (n.d), entitled “Know Your Service” (No. 12) and contained in the same document box at the Wind Cave National Park Library as the copy of the letter, is a printed description of Lakota beliefs about the cave that reads as follows:

One thing pretty special to the Sioux aside from the plentiful game and other Indians to fight, was a little hole in the ground through which air whistled in and out. To the Indians of the
Great Plains this was the Home of the Four Winds, and thus a sacred spot, closely associated in their beliefs with the Breath of Life and the Vital Principle. To this general legend the resourceful Sioux added one of their own: According to Chief Joe White Bull (Pte San Hanka), nephew of the late great Sitting Bull, the Sioux like to think that Wakan Tanka, the Great Mystery, sent the buffaloes out through the wind crack to populate the plains with fresh meat. It was these convictions which fired the Sioux with such enthusiasm when they defended their Hills against the white man.

If we can assume that this was an officially approved document, probably one distributed to the general public, then we have evidence that the National Park Service agreed, almost word-for-word, with W. S. Campbell that Wind Cave was sacred to the Lakota people. A year later, in 1938, a similar statement about the cave appeared in The Black Hills Engineer written by the Superintendent of Wind Cave National Park, Edward D. Freeland (1938:272):

From various sources have come colorful Sioux legends, the common theme of which seems to be that the cave was sacred, being the dwelling-place of the four winds. The buffalo lived there also, and when the Great Spirit is no longer displeased with his red children, the sacred animals will come forth again in great numbers from their subterranean home.

Excluding its message of divine wrath and redemption, this quote echoes some of the Lakota beliefs that Campbell spelled out in his earlier letter.

In the same era, Dick Stone gathered many stories from tribal elders about Devil’s Tower or Bear Lodge Butte. Recently, some of these stories have been republished in a booklet entitled First Encounters: Indian Legends of Devil's Tower (edited by Shirl in 1982) and sold by the National Park Service at Devil’s Tower National Monument. It contains a narrative by One Bull (Stone 1982: 24), who told Stone that his uncle, Sitting Bull, had visited Wind Cave sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, suggesting that the Lakotas knew about it before it was “discovered” by European Americans.37

The area of Wind Cave may also be associated with the genre of orphan boy narratives, including a Lakota Falling Star story that Nicolas Black Elk told Neihardt in 1944 (in DeMallie 1984:400-403) and that Iron Shell recounted in 1915 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:24-36). In this cycle, the hero travels to several different star villages where he performs miraculous feats. In the one we believe is connected to the Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap region, Falling Star saves a village from starvation at the hands of Waziya. While this connection is entirely hypothetical, it is consistent with the theme underlying two other stories where Waziya or a giant figure is explicitly mentioned in relation to Wind Cave (Herman in One Feather 1972:149; Anonymous n.d., Manuscript in Wind Cave National Park Archives). As discussed in other chapters, the connection also makes sense given the long-held and ubiquitous idea among the Lakotas that bison come from the direction of the North Wind, Waziyata, and his grandfather, Waziya. Also, one additional story in Black Elk’s Falling Star cycle (in DeMallie 1984:401-408) is specifically identified with a site in the Black Hills at Rapid Creek and another appears to be connected to Pe Sla, the high elevation central prairies of the Black Hills (Sundstrom, L. 1996:179-180, 1997: 195). There is also a parallel Lakota story of an encounter between Blood Clot Boy and Waziya near a cave that was preserved in the early twentieth century by Edward Curtis (1907-30:3:111-118). Cheyenne versions of the Falling Star (or Bow-Fast-to-His Body)...

37 Another subterranean location connected to Sitting Bull is a cave the Duhamel’s operated in the Black Hills and where Nicholas Black Elk performed. The name of the cave, Sitting Bull Cavern, was adopted because Sitting Bull was known to have camped in this area (Born 1994).
cycles are very similar to those of the Lakotas. One cycle was recorded by George Grinnell (1926:189-190, 209-211) and another by Richard Randolph (1937:37-42). Both include the story of the Winter Man. In the Cheyenne stories, one of the villages the hero saves is clearly identified with the lake below Bear Butte (Grinnell 1926:185-186).38

**d. Craven, Red, and Hell’s Canyons**

Also situated in the southern Black Hills are Craven and Red Canyons, where some of the richest displays of rock art in the Black Hills are located (Sundstrom, L. 1990). Neither of these is identified on Bad Heart Bull’s map, even though later generations of Lakotas clearly held them in high regard. Craven Canyon is called *Maya Kaka [The Cliffs of Writing]* in Lakota (Black Elk, C. 1986a:210). Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:101), more than a century ago: “Some cliffs and hills are mysterious. A cliff with round rocks in it is mysterious. Certain cliffs had hieroglyphics on them; they were mysterious.” Nor were Battle Mountain and Flint Hill singled out on Bad Heart Bull’s map, even though both contain some of the richest flint quarries in the region (see Chapter Eleven). As the case with caves and springs, there are a number of sources on the Lakotas and Cheyennes that describe the generic spiritual importance of rock art but do not locate the specific sites to which it applies (Good in Mallery 1893:290; Densmore 1918; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984; Clark 1982 [reprint of 1885 edition]). These canyons are considered very sacred to the Lakotas today (La Pointe 1976:54-55; Around Him in Lewis, L. 1980:22; Eagle Hunter in Parlow 1983a:13; Red Owl in Parlow 1983a:21; Phyllis Young in U.S. Senate 1986:48; Good Eagle in Little Eagle 2000:212-213). Another location not designated on the Bad Heart Bull map is Hell’s Canyon, which contemporary Lakota identify as one of the routes people followed in their ceremonial pilgrimages to the Black Hills (Black Elk, C. 1992a: 51).

**e. Warbonnet (a.k.a. Hat) Creek and Old Woman’s Butte**

To the south and outside the Black Hills proper are Warbonnet Creek and Old Woman’s Butte, both of which are located on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Warbonnet (or Hat) Creek, *Wapaha Kagapi [Warbonnet Maker]* is a tributary of the South Fork of the Cheyenne River. It is reputed to be the place where warbonnets were originally created (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290). This may also be the location, reported by Clark Wissler in 1912 (p. 72), where a spirit wolf visited a Lakota war party and gave them instructions on the manufacture of regalia associated with the Brave Heart Society.

Old Woman’s Butte, *Winurcala Wanti*, is a famous landmark north of Fort Laramie. Situated along the historic “Cheyenne” trail, which entered the Hills from the west along Stockade-Beaver Creek, it is associated with the story, reported earlier, about an old woman who predicts the success of a Lakota war party (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290; Sage in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272).

**3. The Central Hills**

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38 Falling Star stories appear among tribes throughout the Great Plains and with considerable variation. Not uncommonly, the stories are linked to the geographic area in which a tribe lives, and they contain implicit or explicit references to specific local landforms. The Cheyenne narrator of the Falling Star stories that Randolph (1937) collected explicitly locates them in the Black Hills.
Three locations in the central Hills are identified on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Two are identified as Pe Sla (Bald Hill) and Mnilusahun (Fast Running Water). The first name refers to the upland central prairie region of the Black Hills, specifically to Reynolds Prairie, and the second glosses the waterway known as Rapid Creek. The specific identity of the third location marked on Bad Heart Bull’s map in the graphic image of a spirit figure is not clear. Later interpretations associate it with two different places, Harney Peak or Inyan Kara Mountain. Another location, Sylvan Lake, is not on Bad Heart Bull’s map, but the region where it is located is widely regarded as a sacred place in Lakota traditions. All of these areas are important especially to contemporary Lakotas, and although they have a broad connection to the Wind Cave National Park region, the cultural meanings attached to them are different.

**a. Rapid, French, and Grace Coolidge Creeks**

European Americans identified Rapid Creek, Mnilusahun, by its Lakota name as early as 1859 (Raynolds in McLaird and Turchen 1974:49), but little about its spiritual importance appears in ethnographic sources published before World War II. The Cheyenne name for this creek is Haeoeohe (Petter 1913-15:124). In Black Elk’s myth cycle, this waterway is explicitly identified as one of the star villages that Falling Star visits (in DeMallie 1984:406). It is also the place where Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:159) reported that the famous medicine man Chips erected a sweatlodge in 1874 and received a vision warning people of danger. Areas along its mainstream and tributaries remain culturally significant to contemporary Lakotas (LaPointe 1976:89-91), and one of these Victoria Creek was the sight of the well-known and highly politicized Yellow Thunder Camp.

French Creek is not marked on Bad Heart Bulls’ map, although it is an area where rock art sites are found with probable Lakota attributions (Sundstrom, L. 2002). Grace Coolidge Creek and the great Council Oak on its lower reaches are associated today with one of the routes Lakotas followed when they traveled to the high elevation interiors to conduct their ceremonial observances. The start of this pilgrimage coincided with the time when the bison moved through the Buffalo Gap to the open prairies from their wintering grounds along the Race Track near Wind Cave (Black Elk, C. 1992a:50).

**b. The Central Prairies: Slate, Gilette, and Reynolds**

As noted earlier, the high elevation central prairies of the Black Hills were identified in the 1870s with sightings of an abandoned “medicine lodge” and a large stack of elk horns, both of which have spiritual significance. Indeed, one of the modern sacred names in Lakota for Reynolds Prairie is Heraka blaye (Elk flats), which is also known as Pe Xla (Bare/Bald Head), and Pe Hunkakoza (Head of Peace Making Rite) (Black Elk, C. 1986a:208). Neighboring Gilette Prairie is called Keyapia (Meadow of the Turtle) (Ibid:209), while Slate Prairie is known as R’e Xla (The Bare Ridge) or Tayamnipa (Principle of the Three Relations) (Ibid:208). This region was not singled out in early ethnographic writings, although Sundstrom (1997:195) speculates that this may have been one of the places Falling Star visited in the myth cycle Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:400-407) narrated in the 1940s. It was identified, however, as a site for eagle trapping in a Lakota winter count for the year 1807 (Colhoff in Powers 1963:29). The three central prairies are considered highly sacred today and the location for a ceremony known as
FIGURE 23. Sacred Sites In and Around the Black Hills

- Bear Lodge Butte
- Belle Fourche River
- Sundance Mt.
- Bear Butte
- Inyan Kara
- Limestone Plateau
- Crystalline Core
- Rapid Creek
- Hogback
- Castle Rock
- Central Plains
- Harney Peak
- Sylvan Lake
- Red Canyon
- Hot Springs
- Buffalo Gap
- South Fork of Cheyenne R.
- Warbonnet Creek

c. Castle Rock and the Cathedral Spires

West of Pe Sl on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) is a graphic image of a spirit figure with the name Hinyankagapa [owl maker/imitator hill] written below it. As Sundstrom (1997:190) notes, this name is frequently associated with Harney Peak, but the geographic placement is incorrect. She suggests that the figure, but not the name, might denote Inyan Kara Mountain, which is located west of these prairies. Based on some of the names that Charlotte Black Elk (1986a:209) compiled for locations in the Black Hills interiors, this image might refer to Castle Rock, known today as Hinhan Karata [Flapping Owl], which is located to the west of the upland prairies as opposed to Hinhan Raka [Rattling Owl], a name for the Cathedral Spires, situated to the east close to Harney Peak. Black Elk (Ibid.) also indicates that this site is connected to stories told to children that teach them how to properly behave or the “owl would get them.” In both Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, according to Helen Blish (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290), Hinyankagapa is also known as Ghost Butte, and it is associated with a spirit buffalo bull that was often sighted but always disappeared into the rock.39 In 1940, a group of Cheyenne traveled to the nearby town of Mystic to locate their legendary “Hole-in-the-Wall” (Odell 1942 144).40

There are two famous stories, one Cheyenne (Marriott and Rachlin 1975:43-47) and another Lakota (Deloria, E. 1978:113-116), about an owl-maker associated with a high mountain whose geographic identity is unspecified. In these stories, which some Lakotas associate with Harney Peak, the owl captures and takes away small children (LaPointe 1976:89-91). I would suggest, however, consistent with Charlotte Black Elk’s interpretation (1986a:209), that a more likely geographic placement is Castle Rock, Hinhan Karata. As Sundstrom (1997:190-191) also notes, the name for ghost in Cheyenne is the same as the name for owl. Owls, as already described in Chapter Ten, are not considered birds but ghosts by the Cheyennes. Given the likely Cheyenne origin of these stories, it is not surprising that ideas associated with the two became conflated. The Lakotas also link owls and ghosts and believe that when an owl hoots, it foretells of death (Tyon in Walker 1980:165). In addition, one of the names of the female figure that admits the spirits of the deceased into the spirit world is Hinhan Kaga [Owl Maker] or To Win [Blue Woman] (Little Day in Hassrick 1964:298; Goodman 1992:22-23, 38).

d. Harney Peak and Sylvan Valley

Harney Peak and Sylvan Valley do not appear on Bad Heart Bull’s map. Many modern Lakotas (Black Elk, C. 1986a:206, 209) call the mountain Ox’kate Paha (Mountain of the Playful Thunder Beings) or Rpanta Yate (Territory Where Wakinyan Hatches His Young), names that are consistent with early historic descriptions of Lakota beliefs dating back to Denig’s writings in 1851 (Ewers 1961:6). The South Dakota Writer’s Project (1941:110), which collected Lakota oral traditions in the depression years, associated this site with the Thunders too, as did S. Goodale Price in his book (1935:44) on Black Hills legends. Harney Peak is most widely known as the place where Nicholas Black Elk was taken to the center of the earth as a child and received the Daybreak Star herb in an important and life-defining visionary experience (in DeMallie 1984:

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39 Whether or not these are one and the same place is not known. David White (2002:203) claims that Hinyankaga Paha refers to a site at the head of the Moreau River near Spearfish, South Dakota.
40 A similar story of a spirit buffalo bull, incidentally, is connected with Wind Cave (see Chapter 14).
In his narratives, he spoke about it as the “center of the earth” (Ibid:258), and today, another sacred ascription for the peak is Opahata I [Mountain at the Center Where He Comes]. The common household name for this mountain is Paha Pestola [Pointed Hill] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:209). This is another location where ceremonial observances were conducted during the Lakotas’ spring ceremonial pilgrimages (Goodman 1992:12).

Also in the central Black Hills, but not on Bad Heart Bull’s map, is the area around Sylvan Lake, which is considered sacred to many modern Lakotas. In Stanley Vestal’s work (1934:73), it was identified as the location where, according to his nephews, One Bull and White Bull, the much revered Hunkpapa leader, Sitting Bull, had an important prophetic vision about his future role in Lakota society. In the stories he collected about Devil’s Tower, Dick Stone (in Shirl 1982:23) was told by One Bull that his grandfather often camped at this location during the winter months because its climate was more moderate than the surrounding plains. Obviously, all of these places are now submerged under the lake that was created in the twentieth century.

In the 1930s, the South Dakota Writer’s Project (1941:113-114) collected a story about the origin of Sylvan Lake’s distinctive rock formations and S. Goodale Price published a story in his Black Hills, The Land of Legends (1935:25-28) about an owl maker that he attributed to the Cheyennes. Its Lakota name does not appear in the published literature.

3. The Northern Hills and Their Peripheries

Five sites, Bear Butte, Black Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte, Thunder Butte, and Slim Buttes, on the northern side of the Black Hills or their peripheries are marked on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Besides their importance to the Lakotas and Cheyennes, several of these sites have long been known to have sacred meanings for many other tribal nations too, including the Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Mandans, and Plains Apaches. Indeed, most of the sites with documented multtribal cultural affiliations and with continuing spiritual significance to multiple tribes are located in this area. Two other sacred locations, the Cave Hills in northwestern South Dakota and the Medicine Rocks in southeastern Montana, are curiously not marked on the Bad Heart Bull map.

a. Inyan Kara Mountain

Inyan Kara Mountain is not identified on Bad Heart Bull’s map, unless it is the figure associated with the name Hinyankagapa drawn at a location west of Pe Sla. The name of this site, which European Americans adopted directly from the Lakotas in the 1850s, refers to the first act of creation when Inyan, the spiritual essence of stone, produced earth and sky out of its own movement or flow, Kara (Sundstrom, L. 1997:189-190). Today, it is also called Hor’ewin Ti Paha [Mountain Home of Creation], which is a sacred name denoting an old woman who quills a bison robe representing creation (Black Elk, C. 1986c:206). Intriguingly, in 1849, De Giradin (1936:62) learned that Harney Peak was called Inyan Kaga. How and why the Lakota names

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41 The tribal attribution of this story and the name of the owl figure are hard to trace. While the author acknowledges that he secured this and other stories in his book from the work of scholars like George Bird Grinnell, this one is hard to link with any story in the published literature other than one appearing some years later (Marriott and Rachlin 1975:44-47).

42 This has intriguing connections to Arapaho ideas of a female whirlwind figure associated with creation and the art of quillwork (Anderson, J.2000, 2001:103-104, 127-128).
associated with these peaks became conflated over the years is a complete mystery for which there are no ready or obvious explanations.\(^{43}\)

To add further confusion, Sundstrom (1997:189) points out that John Bourke was told in 1877 by some Cheyennes that the Lakotas called Inyan Kara Mountain, \textit{Ihancaja-paja}, “the butte where ghosts live” (Sundstrom, L. 1997:189). This translation makes no sense in the Lakota language unless the word is a corrupted form of \textit{inyan kaga pa} [stone maker butte], as Sundstrom (1997:189) suggests, or it might be another name entirely, which means “the hill that ice passes through.”\(^{44}\) In Lakota, \textit{ihan} means “to stand in or at” or “to remain” (Buechel 1970:216), while \textit{paja} when combined with a verb denotes an action that moves or passes “through” or “into” something (Ibid:427). \textit{Caja} might be a corruption of the word for ice \textit{[caga]} (Ibid:113; see also discussions in Appendix C). The crystalline, ice-like appearance of gypsum formations that wind their way like ribbons through limestone formations may very well be what the name, \textit{Ihancaja-paja}, denotes. This translation also makes sense for the general area, which is well known for its rich gypsum deposits, but it probably applies to another location, perhaps even the one that Ludlow described north of Inyan Kara Mountain along Redwater Creek. Historically, at least, gypsum powder was used by the Cheyennes and Lakotas to mark lines around ceremonial altars (Densmore 1918:122; Grinnell 1972:2:292; Schlesier 1987:93; Whiteman in Schultz 1988:54). Other than the names associated with this mountain, there is little published information on its meaning before pre-World War II. More recently, however, the region has been reported as a location for important ceremonial observances (Goodman 1992:12; Chirinos 1991:86-88; Black Elk, C. 1992a:51).

\textbf{b. Sundance Mountain and the Black Buttes}

Sundance Mountain, which is located in the vicinity of Bear Lodge Butte in Wyoming, does not appear on Bad Heart Bull’s map, although early references to its importance can be found in the literature on the Lakotas. Sundstrom (1997:193) reports that one account from 1886 identified it as the site of a summer rendezvous linked to subsistence activities and the Sun Dance. Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:366) described this area as the site of an old Sun Dance grounds for the Lakotas, and it was also recognized as such in the work of European American writers who wrote popular accounts about the Hills during the same period (Price 1935:42-43).\(^{45}\) Several decades later, Rev. Peter Powell (1969:2:477) connected this site with some of the Cheyennes’ earliest Sun Dances.

The Black Buttes, west of the Black Hills and northeast of Inyan Kara Mountain in Wyoming, are marked on the Bad Heart Bull map as \textit{He Sapa} [Black Ridge], but there is little we could find in early published sources that describe the specific nature of their spiritual importance to any of the tribal nations known to have occupied this area. This may have been the general area, already reported previously, where Ludlow (1875:15) found an outcropping of gypsum that local tribes were mining north of Inyan Kara Mountain.

\(^{43}\) One possible explanation relates to the common practice of Lakota Heyoka (Contraries) inverting the names, and possibly even the locations, of places. Since Harney Peak is associated with their guardian, the Thunders, it is quite likely that they may have switched its name with another nearby site actually identified as Owl Maker Peak, \textit{Hinhan Kaga Paha}.

\(^{44}\) Yvonne Kelly translated this word with the assistance of Jerry Dearly.

\(^{45}\) S. Goodale Price (1935:31-33) also offers a story about Spearfish Canyon, which comes from the work of the Rev. Peter Rosen (1895:438-442). The story is about the Little People. Although he claims the story is “Sioux,” the native words included in the story appear to be from an Algonkian rather than a Siouan language.
c. Bear Lodge Butte (a.k.a. Devil’s Tower)

This site is sacred to all of the tribes who were known to occupy the Black Hills in historic times and to other tribes as well. In the late nineteenth century, when they shared stories of their former homelands in the northern Rockies and Black Hills with James Mooney (1979:156-160, 322-324), the Kiowas talked about the spiritual significance of Bear Lodge Butte (Devil’s Tower), which they call Tso ai [Tree Rock]. Other early ethnographers, including Elsie Clews Parsons (1929:9-11) and John Harrington (1939:169, 174-176), also collected stories about this site from the Kiowas. The Kiowas’ story, common among other tribes, tells about a girl and her brothers being chased by a gigantic bear. As they stand on a tree stump, or rock in some versions, and pray to it for help, it begins to rise underneath them. The bear claws the side of the butte as it attempts to reach the children, who eventually are taken to the sky where they become the stars of the Pleiades constellation. Early on, similar stories were recorded about this site for the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:152-153), Cheyennes (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:52-54; Randolph 1937:185-188), and the Hidatsas (Lowie 1939:220-227).

This landform appears on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) in a pictorial representation. Many tribes shared the same name for this butte, Bear Lodge, including the Cheyennes, who knew it as Nakoeve (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51) and the Lakotas, who called it Mato tipila. It is explicitly named along with the Buffalo Gap in the Race Track story that Little Cloud shared with Buechel in 1915 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:95), and it is also named as a vision questing site in a story Lone Man told Ivan Stars in 1920 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:275-276; [also, in Buechel and Manhart 1998:472-474]). Harrington (1939:169) provided three other Lakota names for this land formation: 1) Witchatchepaha [Penis Mountain], 2) Hinyan kaga paha [Owl Maker Mountain], and 3) Wanaghipaha [Ghost Mountain]. The last two names were also applied to Harney Peak, Inyan Kara Mountain, and Castle Rock as noted previously. Today, the Lakotas have many different names for it including Hu Nump Otiwita [Sanctuary of Wisdom], with which the sacred bear [Hu Nump] is closely associated, and Inyan Wiconi [Stone of Life Renewed], a name linked to the observance of the Sun Dance held in its vicinity (Black Elk, C. 1986a:207).


d. Bear Butte

This site has long been recognized as a highly sacred place for many tribal nations. The Cheyennes and their close relatives, the Sutaios, called it, Nowah’wus (Teaching Hill). In his ethnographic monograph on the Cheyennes, first published in 1923 (1972:1:368-381, 2:201-202),

46I heard and read stories about the sacred significance of this sight to members of the Shoshone-Bannock tribes in Idaho when I conducted ethnographic and ethnohistorical work for them in the 1990s. This information, however, is privileged and confidential.
and in other publications (1909, 1910) as well, George Bird Grinnell ranked it as one of their most important ceremonial locations, the origin place of highly sacred religious objects, knowledge, and practices.\footnote{47} Earlier in 1905, George A. Dorsey (1905:1-15,30-48) also acknowledged its place in Cheyenne origin stories and in the emergence of two of their most important ceremonies, the *Oxhehoem* [New Life Lodge or Sun Dance] and *Massaum* [Animal or Contrary Dance]. Dorsey never identified the place by name or location, but it is obvious from Grinnell’s later work that the “mountain” in Dorsey’s writings is unquestionably Bear Butte. Finally, the local historian Thomas E Odell’s self-published book *Mato Paha: The Story of Bear Butte* (1942:9-20,140-152) contains excerpts of interviews with Cheyennes that reveal Bear Butte’s importance as an origin place for their Sacred Arrows as well as a major site for fasting and vision seeking. He also includes some of General Hugh Scott’s recollections of the Cheyennes’ strong religious attachments to this site in 1878 (Odell 1942:17-18).

In the same period, less substantial, but no less significant, information appeared on the importance of Bear Butte to the Lakotas, who call it *Mato Paha*. James Owen Dorsey (1894:448-449) quoted George Bushotter’s recollections of his visit to Bear Butte as a child:

> The mountain had many large rocks on it...The children prayed to the rocks as if to their guardian spirits, and then placed some of the smaller ones between the branches of the pine trees...Some trees had as many as seven stones apiece. No child repeated the ceremony of putting a stone up in a tree; but on subsequent visits to the Butte he or she wailed for the dead, of whom the stones were tokens.

This site also appears on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), and there is an early reference to it in one of Eagle Shield’s healing songs recorded by Francis Densmore (1918:256) that establishes its early connection to visions and medicine in Lakota traditions. Pretty Weasel narrated a story to Ivan Stars in 1915 that gives an alternate name for this site, *Wacinko Paha* [Pouting Butte], because of a young man who once sulked there. His actions led to wondrous events after which people left offerings of remembrance there (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:121-130; [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:201-225]). White Bull told Stanley Vestal (1934:92-93) that an elk spirit came to him in an oak grove west of the butte. The sacred importance of this site was recorded in a story about Crazy Horse collected by the South Dakota Writer’s Project (1941:111-112) in the 1930s. Thomas Odell’s book (1942:21-30) also includes materials from his interviews with Lakotas that reveal Bear Butte’s significance as a major location for fasting, vision seeking, Sun Dances, and Scalp Dances, and as a place to memorialize the deceased. This site has other names in Lakota, including *Sinte O Cunku Paha Wakan* [Sacred Mountain on the Road Along the Trail], or simply *Paha Wakan* [Sacred Mountain], and *Okawita Paha* [Gathering Mountain] and (Parlow 1983b:xii; Black Elk, C. 1986a:207).

Additionally, there are references (Sundstrom, L. 1996, 1997) on its importance to other tribes. One early source (Rosen 1895:54) connects a Mandan tradition of the Great Flood to Bear Butte and an annual pilgrimage from their home on the Upper Missouri to conduct ceremonies at this site. Even the Kiowas and Plains Apaches, long removed from the Black Hills, remembered Bear Butte and the lake beneath it as the source for some of their most sacred stories and objects (McAllister 1937:162; Mooney 1979:322-324).\footnote{48}

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\footnote{47} The origin of their Sacred Arrows, *Mahots*, comes from Bear Butte and the use of shields is also said to have originated here (Price, S. 1935:21-22).

\footnote{48} The Plains Apaches called this landform Black Rock (McAllister 1965:217). 496

e. Thunder Butte, Slim Buttes, and the Cave Hills

Makinyan Paha [Thunder Butte] and Baha Zizipela [Slim Buttes] are also marked on Bad Heart Bull’s map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Located outside the Hills, these buttes and the Little Missouri Buttes Unçi Yapi [The Grandmothers] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:207) have cultural significance to the Lakotas and other tribes as well, most notably the Hidatsas and Mandans (Bowers 1950, 1963). Of particular importance here is Ludlow Cave, not placed on the map, which is located in the Cave Hills north of the Slim Buttes. Some of the older traditions associated with this cave were recorded by members of the Black Hills Expedition (Krause and Olson 1974:19; Sundstrom and Keyser 1998; Sundstrom, L. 2002:110; Sioux Ranger District 2003:3:60-73; see also, Chapter Twelve), and a few of these bear a striking resemblance to early narratives about subterranean locations in the Black Hills, including Wind Cave.

5. The Black Hills As A Whole

The literature from the pre-World War II era clearly suggests that a number of specific sites within or surrounding the Black Hills were held sacred because they were locations where spiritual happenings took place in mythic times, where sacred objects, knowledge, and performances originated in tribal memory, where communal ceremonial observances were held, and/or where individuals sought and received personal visions with extraordinary messages and meaning. But a question that remains unanswered is whether any of this earlier literature reveals a spiritual significance for the Black Hills as a distinct entity that transcends the sites contained within them.

In the case of the Lakotas, the answer is clearly yes. In 1893, Garrick Mallery published his work Picture-Writing of the American Indian, in which he included Brown Hat or Battiste Good’s recollection (pp. 289-290) of a vision he received in the Black Hills (the specific location of which remains unidentified).

In the year 1856, I went to the Black Hills and cried, and cried, and cried, and suddenly I saw a bird above me, which said: ‘Stop crying; I am a woman, but I will tell you something: My Great-Father, Father God, who made this place, gave it to me for a home and told me to watch over it. He put a blue sky over my head and gave me a blue flag to have with this beautiful green country. [Battiste has made the hill country, as well as the curve for the sky and the flag, blue in his copy]. My Great-Father, Father God (or the Great-Father, God my Father) grew, and his flesh was part earth and part stone and part metal and part wood and part water; he took from them all and placed them here for me, and told me to watch over them. I am the Eagle-Woman who tell you this. The whites know that there are four black flags of God: that is, four divisions of the earth. He first made the earth soft by wetting it, then cut it into four parts, one of which, containing the Black Hills, he gave to the Dakotas, and because I am a
woman, I shall not consent to the pouring of blood on this chief house (or dwelling place), i.e., the Black Hills.

The time will come that you will remember my words; for after many years you shall grow up one with the white people. She then circled round and round and gradually passed out of my sight. I also saw prints of a man's hands and horse's hoofs on the rocks [here he brings in petroglyphs], and two thousand years, and one hundred million dollars ($100,000,000). I came away crying, as I had gone. I have told this to many Dakotas, and all agree that it meant that we were to seek and keep peace with the whites.

We cannot conclude very much from this because Good was speaking in bitter times, only a few years after the Black Hills had been taken from the Lakotas. In his text, the words, “sacred” and “spiritual” are never used to describe the Black Hills, but their presence is implied by the source of the narrative -- a vision, which by definition is wakan. We can also deduce that the Black Hills represented an extraordinary place. Not only did they constitute four distinct tiers of the cosmos, but they were also a space where blood was not to be spilled. This is culturally significant. Blood shed through war, parturition, and menstruation was understood by Lakotas to hold properties inimical to the other phenomenon that possessed wakan or created it in acts of religious observance (Powers, M. 1980). Peace, therefore, was not simply a political strategy: it was a necessary observance in a consecrated setting. This may explain, in part, why many of the reported raids on the early white prospectors and settlers entering the Hills took place at the gateways to the Hills and in regions outside the Race Track.49

Similarly, Luther Standing Bear (1978:44-45) expressed the deep seated emotional suffering the Lakotas experienced after the Black Hills were taken, and he again alludes to their importance as a site of birth and emergence when he writes:

Two lovely legends of the Lakotas would be fine subjects for sculpturing -- the Black Hills as the earth mother, and the story of the genesis of the tribe. Instead the face of a white man is being outlined on the face of a stone cliff in the Black Hills. This beautiful region, of which the Lakota thought more than any other spot on earth, caused him the most pain and misery. These hills were to become prized by the white people for reasons far different from those of the Lakota. To the Lakota the magnificent forests and splendid herds were incomparable in value...If the Lakotas had been relinquishing any part of their territory voluntarily, the Black Hills would have been the last from the standpoint of traditional sentiment...

How long the Lakota people lived in these mid-west plains bordering the Black Hills before the coming of the white men is not known in tribal records. But our legends tell us that it was hundreds and perhaps thousands of years ago since the first man sprang from the soil in the midst of these great plains....So this land of the great plains is claimed by the Lakotas as their very own. We are of the soil and the soil is of us. We love the birds and beasts that grew with us on this soil. They drank the same water we did and breathed the same air. We are all one in nature. Believing so, there was in our hearts a great peace and a welling kindness for all living, growing things.

Standing Bear’s association of the Black Hills with genesis and a feminine force matches cosmological connections made and recorded in the same period for the Cheyennes and Kiowas. The Cheyennes, as noted in Chapters Nine and Twelve, believed that two female spiritual figures, Grandmother Earth, Esceheman, and her daughter, the Yellow Haired Buffalo Woman,

49 Similar prohibitions against the spilling of blood were also reported in the early nineteenth century for another site sacred to the Lakotas and Dakotas, the Pipestone Quarry in Minnesota (Nicollet in Bray and Bray 1976:72-85). Indeed, contemporary Lakotas believe the Cheyenne River is a road that connects the Hills to this quarry (Black Elk, C. 1992:51).
Eyostopah, lived in sacred caves underneath Bear Butte where they nourished and guarded the game animals upon whose flesh humans depended (Schlesier 1987:79,82,102-104). The Kiowas’ called the Black Hills Sadalkani K’op [Tripe Mountains], which, as originally reported in the late nineteenth century by James Mooney (1979:419), referred to the intestines of a bison cow. Gadombitsonhit, Old Woman Under the Ground, is a Kiowa spiritual figure that is envisioned as a member of a dwarf-like race living in the subterranean habitats of the Black Hills and other mountainous regions (Mooney 1979:239).

Like Brown Hat, Standing Bear does not explicitly speak of the Black Hills as sacred or wakan, but, again by context and association, we can infer its implicit presence as a concept. He clearly emphasizes that the Lakotas saw the Hills and their surroundings differently than the Whites, and that the basis of this difference was rooted in the Lakotas’ sense of the relatedness and oneness of all living things. As discussed in great detail in Chapter Nine, this is a foundational precept underlying Lakota religious thought: it speaks directly to the cosmic singularity that is Wakan Tanka (DeMallie 1987:27-28). Moreover, the overall respect and veneration that Standing Bear expressed for the Hills is consistent with a Lakota understanding of wakan as something possessing a sacred quality and capable of generating an ultimate state of goodness (Buechel 1970:525).

The same can also be said about Nicholas Black Elk’s words regarding the Black Hills. Again, he never literally talks about them as sacred, but he refers to them in a variety of metaphorical ways typical of Lakota sacred forms of address (Black Elk, C. 1986b:192; Powers, W. 1986:11-41; New Holy 1997:113-154). This is especially clear in Black Elk’s rendition (DeMallie 1984:310) of the Race Track story in which he said:

...The Thunder-being told Red Thunder: ‘With this weapon the tribe shall expand and be mighty. So you go back to your people and teach them to make bows. Hereafter you can shoot buffalo.’ (Red Thunder: Wakina Luta [Wakinyan Luta] They further told him that at the place where they had the race was the heart of the earth. He said, ‘Someday your tribe will be in this land.’ It was the promised land. ‘This land is a being. Remember in the future you are to look for this land.’ I think at the present time we found it and it is the Black Hills.

Similar to Standing Bear, Black Elk attributed a distinct animate quality to the Black Hills, which as all other living things in the Lakota world, manifest some measure of wakan (Brown 1992:6-10; DeMallie 1987:28-32). This is made even more emphatic by the idea that they were “the heart of the earth,” and in his vision at Harney Peak, “the center of the earth” (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:296), a sacred position recognized by the central placement of the hocoka (altar) within the circle of the Sun Dance and all other important Lakota ceremonies (New Holy 1997:113-154). It is also implicated in the reference to the “place they had the race” or the Race Track, a location long recognized as culturally significant and sacred to the Lakotas.

If we go back even earlier in time, as discussed elsewhere, we can see in the words of Red Cloud and other Lakotas the use of metaphorical expressions that impute a sacred quality to the region. Certainly, some of the early government agents among the Lakotas understood this, as did various newspaper reporters writing of the area in the 1870s. Even military men, such as Richard I. Dodge, admitted to this, but only as way to justify seizing the Hills because the Lakotas purportedly did not occupy them. So, it is curious that a century later some scholars (Parker, W. 1985; Feraca 1990; Chirinos 1991; Worster 1992) and journalists (Bordewich 1996) would argue that ideas regarding the Hills’ sacredness are recent inventions.
C. The Transitional Years, 1946-1981

From World War II until 1981, when Lakotas occupied lands at Wind Cave National Park, materials on the sacredness of the Hills as a whole or specific sites in their midst continued to appear in print. The published material, however, is very uneven. Although some of the richest information on Cheyenne and Kiowa sacred sites in the Black Hills comes from this period, the Lakota record is very sparse until the 1970s. This is the decade when a variety of publications begin to appear that explicitly identify sites in the Black Hills of sacred significance to the Lakotas and that also reveal the nature of some of their spiritual underpinnings. Most of these publications are based directly on Lakota sources and do not represent the views and interpretations of ethnographers.

1. Lakota Sources

Curiously, from 1946 to 1969, there is a striking absence of published ethnographic material on places in the Black Hills of spiritual importance to the Lakotas. It is difficult to know what to make of this except to note that anthropological interests at this time were generally directed towards documenting change and acculturation among the Lakotas, not recovering traditional knowledge, reinvented or otherwise. In his famous work *The Sioux: The Life and Customs of a Warrior Society*, Royal B. Hassrick (1964:75, 165) wrote that the Lakotas called the Black Hills their “meat pack,” a reference to its value in their historic subsistence cycle. He made no mention of its place in their spiritual life, however. Yet, even ethnographers (Malan and McCone 1959; Hurt 1960; Feraca 1961, 1998; Kemnitzer 1970, 1976; Powers, W. 1977) who conducted studies on Lakota religion during the 1950s and 1960s did not give much attention to geographic places of sacred significance to the Lakotas, including sites in and around the Black Hills. Generally speaking, their work focused on some of the more abstract tenets behind Lakota religion and/or the conduct of the ceremonies, which remained important in the mid-twentieth century, especially vision seeking, the Sun Dance, the Native American Church, and *Yuwipi*.

This stands in marked contrast to a variety of different non-ethnographic publications, which were written locally and based on materials collected in the 1950s and 1960s. One of these is a remarkable book *To Kill An Eagle* published in 1981 by Edward and Mabel Kadlecok, local ranchers from Beaver Creek in northwestern Nebraska, and based on interviews conducted in the 1960s with over twenty different Lakota elders from the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Standing Rock reservations. The book is remarkable not only because of its geographic specificity, but also because it includes the verbatim narratives of the elders who described the significance of sites in Nebraska’s Beaver Valley and the nearby Black Hills. Harney Peak, Bear Butte, and other high peaks in the Hills were noted as locations where the Lakotas fasted, prayed, and sought visions (Bordeaux in Kadlecok and Kadlecok 1981:90-91; Gregg in Kadlecok and Kadlecok 1981:107; Kicking Bear in Kadlecok and Kadlecok 1981:118, Swift Bird in Kadlecok and Kadlecok 1981:146-147). Wind Cave was singled out in a story Stella Swift Bird (in Kadlecok and Kadlecok 1981:147-148) narrated about her grandfather and so were the neighboring Hot Springs. Also collected in the 1960s but published two decades later is a story about an eagle who saved a young girl and married her, eventually taking her to his home on the highest pinnacle of the Black Hills, obviously Harney Peak, when the earth was flooded (Lame Deer in Erdoes and Ortiz 1984: 94-96).

Another source of stories about Wind Cave comes from *Ehanni Ohunkakan: A Curriculum Resource Unit*, first published in 1972 (revised in 1974) and compiled by Vivian One Feather for the Oglala Sioux Culture Center. It contains many stories drawn from tribal elders in the 1960s
and also from unpublished materials in the Dr. James Walker Collection at the State Historical Society of Colorado. It includes the Walker version of *Tokahe*’s emergence from a cave (Sword in One Feather 1972:102-105), but no explicit connection is made to Wind Cave. Instead, Wind Cave is linked to a different story narrated by Jake Herman (in One Feather 1972:149), a respected Lakota storyteller, well known rodeo clown, and a former member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council, who passed away in 1970 at the age of 77 (Cash and Hoover 1971:102-103; Bettelyoun and Waggoner 1988:142 n4). Another version of Herman’s story, whose lineage can be traced to an earlier narrative that Left Hand shared with James Walker, is found in an undated manuscript held at the Wind Cave National Park Library (n.d) and was probably recorded in the 1960s. Herman also wrote stories about the sacred significance of the Hot Springs, Bear Butte, and the Black Hills in general that appear in the One Feather collection (1972) and in other publications, including *Oglala Sioux Historical Pictorial Booklet* (1965a) and *Historical Stories and Legends of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (1965b), or as unpublished manuscripts in the collections of various libraries and archives, such as the South Dakota History Center and the American Indian Oral History Project at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

Wind Cave is also the subject of a story in Emerson Matson’s *Legends of the Great Chiefs*, published in 1972 and narrated by Edgar Red Cloud four years earlier. Unlike Jake Herman’s story, Red Cloud recounts an incident that took place within historic memory. This is also true of an article written two decades earlier on March 11, 1951, entitled “37 Years Haven’t Dimmed the Memory of Being Lost in Wind Cave” by Joe Koller and published in the Rapid City Journal. Reprinted in 1970 in *Wi-lyohi, Bulletin of the South Dakota Historical Society*, this is the earliest published reference we were able to find that links Wind Cave to a Lakota story with spiritual significance. Wounded Horse’s narrative is also not related to any stories that claim Wind Cave is the origin place of humans or bison. Instead, like Stella Swift Bird and Edgar Red Cloud’s accounts, it is a story about a mysterious event that unfolded at some point in historic memory.

A collection of contemporary Lakota oral traditions, *Buckskin Tokens: Contemporary Oral Narratives of the Lakota* (1975), edited by Ron Theisz, contains a series of traditional stories told by Lakota elders and audiotaped at Sinte Gleska College in Rosebud, South Dakota in the late sixties. Some of these narratives are site-specific, including a story about Wind Cave by Henry Black Elk, a descendant of the famous Nicholas Black Elk. In its essential features, this story is very similar to Jake Herman’s, and its lineage can be traced back to renditions of the Buffalo Wife story that Left Heron told James Walker and Ella Deloria in the early twentieth century. It also contains a Stone Boy story with possible connections to the Buffalo Gap by Kate Blue Thunder. Richard Erdoes also edited a collection of Lakota stories in a book entitled, *The Sound of Flutes and Other Indian Legends* (1976). In one narrative, Eagle Elk (pp. 33-36) tells how small thunderbirds once lived in the Black Hills near Harney Peak but left after the area became desecrated by tourist attractions, and in another text, Crow Dog (pp. 108-16) tells his version of a Stone Boy story.

Another very important work from this is period is *Legends of the Lakota* (1976) by James LaPointe, a boarding school educated Lakota who was born on the Pine Ridge Reservation on April 6, 1883 (Giago 1999:85-87). Wind Cave and most of the other places LaPointe writes about are located in the Black Hills, and many of them correspond with locations marked on Bad Heart Bull’s early map of the region. In relation to Wind Cave, which he names *Washun Niya* [Breathing Cave], he tells the story of how *Taopi Gli* [Returns Home Wounded] brought the buffalo to the people through his marriage to a buffalo woman. This narrative shares many features in common with Left Heron’s Buffalo Wife story. LaPointe writes about how Wind Cave is not only connected to the Buffalo Gap in Lakota traditions, but to the Hot Springs as well (LaPointe 1976:45-46, 79-84, see Chapter Fourteen for details). He also had things to say about

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Harney Peak, which he describes as part of the *Chokata*, a sacred and centrally located altar. He names it, *Hinhan Kagha Paha*, and associates it with the story of an evil, owl-like figure that abducts children and young animals (Ibid:89-91). In LaPointe’s version, the monster gets slain by Falling Star, the “divine helper of the Lakota people.” Falling Star also intervenes on the people’s behalf in another of LaPointe’s stories (Ibid:74-76) that takes place on the northeastern side of the Black Hills at Rapid Creek, *Mini Lusahan Wakpa* [Fast Water Creek].\(^{50}\) For Red Canyon in the southcentral Black Hills, he relates a story about the journey of Fox Man and the wisdom he gained from *Inyan Owapi* (rock writing) that served him well and laid the foundation for the formation of the *Tokala* (Kit Fox) Society, a warrior organization among the Lakotas (Ibid:54-55).\(^{51}\) Bear Butte, according to LaPointe (Ibid:38-41), has many different spiritual meanings for the Lakotas, one related to healing and to the story of the bear after whom the mountain is named, another connected with the *Chekpa Oyate* [Twin Nation] who are guardians of twins and reincarnation, and many others associated with *hanblecheya* or vision seeking. Finally, Bear Lodge Butte is another site for a Falling Star story, but even more important, LaPointe claims it as the origin place for the Lakota Sun Dance (Ibid:66-68).\(^{52}\)

Comparing LaPointe’s stories for different parts of the Black Hills, it is clear that, more than any other location in the region, Wind Cave is closely associated with bison and game animals, although it is strongly linked to Little People, medicinal plants, and healing too. The other sites he describes don’t focus as much on the procreativeness of game, nor do they place as much emphasis on a subterranean universe. Lakota notions about Bear Butte make connections to an underground world, but these are not as comprehensive as the Cheyennes’, nor are they as extensive as those associated with the Wind Cave area.

The idea that the entire Black Hills is a sacred space for the Lakotas is also evident in LaPointe’s writings. It is revealed in his narration of the Race Track story (1976:17-20), which tells how the Hills rose out of a flat space through the energy released by the animals’ racing, and how the race determined the outcome, the present order, and relationship of humans to animals. LaPointe (1976:3,13) also argues that the Black Hills were the concrete embodiment of the Lakotas’ worldview. As he states:

> The Lakota loved the Black Hills for reasons vastly different [from the whites]. They held the Hills as a shrine, a sanctuary for both beast and man. It was a winter haven for the beast of the land a traditional place of procreation, under the protective shelter of the pines and the deep canyons, a place for worship, where the spiritual yearnings of bewildered mankind were calmed (LaPointe 1976:142).

And that they:

worshiped in the Black Hills ages before the white man came. Through this religious association he came to know every stream, the valleys, and from atop the craggy hills he knew awe when he viewed the breathtaking, panoramic land of the Black Hills, even as we see them now. With utmost devotion and faith, the Lakota traversed the very center of the Black Hills. The absurd notion that thunder gods, ghosts of ancestors, and evil spirits kept the

\(^{50}\) This is also a site in one of the Falling Star stories that Black Elk shared with Neihardt in the 1940s.

\(^{51}\) This may be related to the origins of warbonnets and the Brave Hearts reported on earlier. In an interview with Lucy Lewis (1980:76), John Around Him, a Lakota elder, talked about how some of the petroglyphs in the Black Hills predicted whether there would be war or peace in the coming year.

\(^{52}\) On a recent trip to Sinte Gleska Tribal University (June 2003), a visit to the college’s bookstore revealed that this book and many of the others referenced here, written or narrated by Lakotas, were supplementary or required readings for classes on Lakota culture.
Lakota from venturing into the very central part of the Black Hills is absurd (LaPointe 1976:15-16).

In the same year LaPointe’s book was published, Gilbert Walking Bull (1976) published a book of Lakota stories, entitled Wo-ya-ka-pi: Telling Stories of the Past and Present, including one about the Race Track. Three years later, Rosebud Yellow Robe (1979) published another collection of Lakota stories, entitled Tonweya and the Eagles and Other Lakota Indian Tales, which contains references to areas in and around the Black Hills, including Bear Lodge Butte. Also in the 1970s, Thomas Mails (1972) published Fools Crow’s autobiography. The most important aspect of this book is the detail it provides about the history of Fools Crow’s fasts, prayers, and vision seeking at Bear Butte and also his involvement in the revitalization of Lakota religion in the 1970s. Starting in 1914, when he was taken to Bear Butte to seek a vision as a boy, until 1965, when he received his greatest vision there, he describes in some depth the chronology of the spiritual knowledge he received at this site, much of which was associated with his work as a Yuwipi and bear healer (in Mails 1972:86-87, 95, 102, 109, 149, 151, 169-171, 181-184). In the 1970s, Bear Butte gained considerable stature as a vision seeking location among the Lakotas and other tribal nations. This was not only a continuation of past practices for the Arapahos, Cheyennes, and Lakotas, but also a result of its association with spiritual leaders, such as Fools Crow and Pete Catches (and Catches 1990), who guided many young Lakotas through their own fasting and vision seeking at this spot. Today, many of the Lakotas who apprenticed under Fools Crow and Catches are now elders themselves, and they are currently training future generations of Lakotas in this tradition (Forbes-Boyte 1996; 1999).

There is no doubt from the perspective of people who were tribal elders from 1950 to 1981 that the Black Hills are sacred to the Lakotas, a focus of their deepest veneration and spirituality. Their position then, and in later years, is quite explicit in this regard and is stated even more strongly and directly than some of their predecessors (i.e., Battiste Good, Standing Bear, Black Elk), whose sentiments on this subject were recorded well before Red Power and the rise of Lakota political activism in the 1970s. It might be argued that the timing of James LaPointe’s book lends credence to the position that its ends are political, and its stories shaped to justify the return of the Black Hills to the Lakotas on religious grounds. This seems unlikely. The author himself explains his reasons in the Preface, and these have everything to do with a nostalgic remembrance of his past, passing a cultural legacy onto his children, and little to do with political strategizing. Or it might be argued that Fools Crow’s religiosity and reverence for the Black Hills were manufactured for a political purpose, since he was active in the treaty-rights movement and other political struggles of the time. But again, it is hard to sustain this position given the history of his spiritual attachment to the region that extends back to the early years of the twentieth century, even predating the popularity of tourism in the area after the 1920s.

Importantly, while specific references to sacred locales in the southern Hills are generally lacking in writings on the Lakotas prior to World War II, these represent a significant portion of the literature dealing with Lakota sacred geography in later decades. The reason for this is difficult to determine, but it is noteworthy that places such as Hot Springs and Wind Cave receive as much coverage in publications from the 1950s and 1960s as Harney Peak and Bear Butte, which are widely acknowledged as sacred places to the Lakotas.

2. The Ponca Material

James Howard’s monograph (1965a:20) on the Poncas includes the first reference to Wind Cave in an ethnographic publication. It comes from an historical manuscript that Peter LeClaire, a Northern Ponca, shared with James Howard. Originally written in 1928 and then revised in
1947, much of it was based on information LeClaire learned from an elderly Southern Ponca chief by the name of Mazahade a.k.a. John Bull. It reads:

The Wind Cave in the Black Hills was found by the Poncas. It is called the hill that sucks in or the hill that swallows in Pah-hah-wah-tha-hu-ni.

The timing of this discovery is vague, but it probably took place sometime before the 1770s when the Ponca were still traveling to the Rockies and the Black Hills for their semi-annual bison hunts. There is no mention, however, of any sacred meaning attached to the site, although caves and other subterranean locations figure prominently in Ponca and Omaha origin stories (Dorsey, J. 1890).

3. Kiowa and Plains Apache Sources

A couple of important sources appear on the Kiowas and Plains Apaches from 1945 to 1969 that offer detailed readings of their spiritual connections to the Black Hills and its outlying formations, especially Bear Lodge Butte and Bear Butte. Even after a century of reservation life in Oklahoma, the Kiowas still remembered their former homeland in the Black Hills. They retained traditions about Bear Lodge Butte, which are connected to the origins of some of the their most sacred ceremonies (Nye 1962:49-50; Marriott 1968:140; Momaday 1969:7-8). One of the more detailed stories about a tribal connection to Bear Butte also comes from this period; it pertains to the origin of the Plains Apaches’ Four Quartz Bundle, which was given to its original owner at the lake beneath the butte (McAllister 1965:210-224).

4. Cheyenne and Arapaho Record

In contrast to the Kiowas and Plains Apaches, who knew traditions associated with the Black Hills but do not appear to have maintained an active onsite ceremonial attachment to them, the Cheyennes continued to actively engage and renew their sacred relationship to the region, especially at their holiest site, Bear Butte. Three important works from this era, Llewelyn Hoebel’s The Cheyenne People (1960), John-Stands-in-Timber and Margot Liberty’s Cheyenne Memories (1967:19-24, 41) and Reverend Peter Powell’s two volume treatise Sweet Medicine (1969:1:4, 18, 41, 2:467-469, 472-475, 483, 571) offer modern renditions of sacred stories relating to the Black Hills, including more recent versions of Sweet Medicine’s experiences on Bear Butte and the Race Track story. These and other sources (Marriott and Rachlin 1968; Ottaway 1970; Schlesier 1974) present concrete evidence of how sacred stories were remembered and recreated in the context of contemporary Cheyenne and Suhtaio religious observances. They tell how modern ceremonies conducted in Oklahoma and Montana, where the Cheyennes’ reservation homes are now located, symbolically recreate the geography of Bear Butte, and they also explain why the Cheyennes continue to travel to this site to seek visions and conduct other religious observances, especially the renewal of their Sacred Arrows and Sacred Hat (Stands-In-Timber and Liberty 1967:89, 90; Powell 1969:1:xxiii, 366, 390-391, 2:412, 414, 416-419, 423-424, 494). Likewise, the neighboring Arapahos (Trenholm 1970:80) continue to look towards Bear Butte as a site for spiritual inspiration, the place where their sacred pipe was revealed and a location for fasting too.

D. Modern Readings, 1982 to Present

Over the past three decades, there has been a stunning outpouring of published materials dealing with the sacred significance of the Black Hills, not only for the Lakotas and Cheyennes
but other tribal nations as well. The richness of more recent documentary sources is directly related to the renaissance of tribal religious belief and practice since the 1970s, and it is also linked to contemporary efforts to preserve indigenous languages and culture traditions through the work of tribal colleges and culture preservation offices. Although some of this writing involves new forms of interpretation, it does not depart in any significant way from earlier documents. Not only is there a striking continuity in the places regarded as sacred, but there is also a remarkable persistence in the spiritual meanings attached to these sites.

1. Lakota Narratives

Before 1981, most of the literature on the Black Hills’ sacredness to the Lakotas was not politically motivated. The same cannot be said for some of the writings by Lakotas in subsequent years that were clearly influenced by the political climate of the times. In the early 1980s, the Black Hills Steering Committee (BHSC) played a major role in documenting the sacredness of the Hills and in making this information available to Congress as part of the testimony surrounding the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act sponsored by Senator Bill Bradley. According to Gerald Clifford (U.S. Senate 1986:168), coordinator of the BHSC, “Individuals affiliated with the Black Hills Steering Committee have been conducting primary research on oral traditions and cross-referencing these legends with accepted scientific research.” Included in the report on the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act [S.1453], heard before the U.S. Senate’s Select Committee on Indian Affairs, are the testimonies of well known and respected Lakota religious leaders, such as Fools Bear (U.S. Senate 1986:43), and Reginald Bird’s Head (U.S. Senate 1986:83), who said:

You would understand how we feel about the sacredness of these lands and why restoration is necessary. There are thousands of us who believe, as our ancestors before us believed, that the Paha Sapa, the Black Hills are very holy. All the Black Hills is like a temple to us. There are certain places in the Black Hills like Wind Cave and Mahto Tipi which the non-Indian identifies as the Devil’s Tower, and others that are emergence sites for some of our people. There are numerous places where our sacred ceremonies and common ground are still being held (emphasis ours).

Also, there is the testimony of Lakota scholar Charlotte Black Elk, accompanied by several important written statements by her and the Black Hills Steering Committee. One of these presents information on two buffalo robes: the first contains a map of important topographical features in the Black Hills and the second a map of the constellations associated with them. These robes, which had been kept secret until then, reveal what Lakota elders had long said: that the Black Hills’ topography mirrors the constellations in the Lakotas’ Falling Star cycle (Black Elk, C. 1986:189-190). Another refers to Long Knife’s narrative of Tokahe and the emergence of the Lakota people as well as a more recent version of the Race Track story (Black Hills Steering Committee 1986:196-202, 203-204). Finally, a list (Black Elk, C. 1986a:205-210) of names for sacred sites in the Black Hills is given along with their meanings.

Directly related to, and indeed, some might even argue, a direct result of the research behind Lakota testimony for the Bradley Bill, is a book written and edited by Ronald Goodman (1992 [reprint of 1982 edition]) of Sinte Gleska University, entitled Lakota Star Knowledge: Studies in Lakota Stellar Theology. Its original purpose was to gather together curriculum materials for Lakota students in K-12 and higher education institutions (Goodman 1992:2), and it is the first published effort to systematically link the Black Hills and its various sacred sites to a cosmologically integrated ceremonial complex. It is worth examining here in some depth.
According to Goodman (1992:1), certain constellations in the sky and certain physical features in the Black Hills are understood to mirror each other. Each spring, as these constellations moved across the sky, a select group of Lakota religious leaders would follow their movement through the Black Hills, performing particular ceremonies at specific times as directed in their star maps and oral traditions. He further asserts:

Traditional Lakota believed that ceremonies done by them on earth were also being performed simultaneously in the spirit world. When what is happening in the stellar world is also being done on earth in the same way at the corresponding place at the same time, a hierophany can occur, sacred power can be drawn down; attunement of Wakan Tanka can be achieved (Ibid:1).

The link, as it is formed when the activities of the star world match those of the Black Hills, is represented by two cone-shaped vortexes attached together at their apex as follows:

Each vortex (the top one descends from the stars, while the bottom ascends from the earth) channels a force that twists together with the other to create a powerful emanation (Ibid:31). As Goodman (Ibid:18) writes: “Sacred above grandfather and sacred below grandmother represent the two cosmic principles which together form a single unity; restoring a oneness to the One, the always and the only One -- Wakan Tanka” (Ibid.).

During a three month period from the spring equinox to the summer solstice, the sun travels through four Lakota constellations which are connected by oral tradition to specific places in the Black Hills. By synchronizing their arrival at each of the four sites with the entrance of the sun into a corresponding constellation, the Lakotas were following the sun’s path on earth. Furthermore, by being at the right place at the right time and doing the appropriate ceremonies, the Lakotas hoped to receive spiritual power from the Wakan Waste, the cosmic powers of good (Goodman 1992:11-12). As Goodman (Ibid:7) represents the Lakota perspective, the Black Hills constitute a “micro-cosmic hoop out of which annually new life is born.” In other words, it is a “consecrated enclosure.” The Race Track or the Red Valley is the physical manifestation of the circle within which the sacred space of the Black Hills was created, and it is linked to a circle of constellations known by the same name, Ki Inyanka Ocanku [the Race Track] or Can gleska wakan [the Sacred Hoop].

Later in the book, Charlotte Black Elk (1992b:44-45) gives her modern version of the Race Track story (the same one attached as a written statement in her testimony before the Senate, 1986c). In its essential features, it is basically identical to earlier ones appearing in the literature, including the version her great-grandfather narrated to John Neihardt. When a certain star, Capella, approached the sun, Charlotte Black Elk (1992a:50) wrote, people moved to an eastern entrance into the Hills for an annual ceremonial cycle which began and ended at this site:

As the bison entered through the Buffalo Gap, the Lakota entered at the Maka Can Opaya, Valley of the Council Oak. We were now entering back into our home in the spirit of renewal and regeneration, passing through the Wamakaskan Oki Inyanke, Running Path of the Animals, the red formation circling the Black Hills.
In describing the entire ceremonial pilgrimage, Black Elk (Ibid:49) writes:

Each spring a small group composed of especially devoted members from several Lakota bands journeyed through the Black Hills, synchronizing their movements to the motions of the sun along the ecliptic. As the sun moved into a particular Lakota constellation, they traveled to the site correlated with that constellation and held ceremonies there. Finally, they arrived at Devil’s Tower at midsummer for the Sun Dance where they were joined by many western Lakota bands.

After entering the Hills in the Valley of the Council Oak, probably Grace Coolidge Creek near Hermosa, South Dakota, the celebrants moved to Harney Peak, which is associated with the constellation Pleiades and the story of the seven little girls, Wicinca sakowin (Goodman 1992: 1, 3, 7). At Harney Peak, the Lakotas performed a ceremony called Yate Iwakcipi [Dancing for the Thunders] (Ibid:12). Charlotte Black Elk (1992a:50-51) also describes what happened at this site:

When the sun is aligned with the Tayamnipia, Principles of the Three Bodies, we are among the Grandfathers. The leaves of the shielding tree that whispers, the aspen, are now the size of a thumb nail. We travel to Opaha Ta I, Mountain at the Center Where He Comes, and welcome the thunders back for another season of renewal.

Once the ceremonies were performed to welcome the Thunders, the Lakotas moved to the prairies on the central Limestone Plateau to conduct additional rituals. This area is associated with the three stars of the Tayamni Cankaku constellation, each of which is linked to a different prairie -- Keyapiya (Turtle or Gillette), Tayamni (Bear or Slate), and Pe Sla (Bare Place or Reynolds) (Black Elk, C. 1992a:50-51). Here a ceremony of peace and renewal was conducted, called Okslataya Wowahwala [Peace at Bare Spot] (Goodman 1992:8, 13, 16; Black Elk, C. 1992:50-51). According to Goodman (1992:13), the ceremony involved “feeding the plants by pouring water into the earth; scattering seeds for the birds, and an offering of tongues for the meat-eaters.” This has some parallels to the Cheyenne Massaum ceremony, which was also practiced in the Hills and coordinated to celestial markers (Schlesier 1987:88-104; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:68-70).

After the ceremonies were completed on the central prairies, some of the people moved west and collected stones at Inyan Kaga, which carries the sacred name Pte He Sapa [Black Buffalo Horn], for use in the ceremonial sweatlodge at the Sun Dance. Others moved south through Hell’s Canyon to conduct ceremonies of an undisclosed nature in the southern Hills (Goodman 1992:12; Black Elk 1992a:51). The main group then traveled to Bear Lodge Butte, whose sacred name is Pte He Gi [Grey Buffalo Horn], where the annual Sun Dance was held when the sun entered the constellation Mato Tipila. This site is identified with a Falling Star story too, and the origin place of the Lakotas’ sacred pipe (Goodman 1992:4, 9, 12, 14; Black Elk 1992a:49,51). After the Sun Dance, people went to Bear Butte, which holds the sacred name Pte Pute Ya [Buffalo’s Nose], where important national councils were held (Goodman 1992:13-14). This site also goes by the proper name Sinte O Canku Paha Wakan [Sacred Mountain on the Road Along the Trail], which refers to the idea that the Black Hills is a south facing buffalo (Black Elk 1986a:207). The last three sites on this ceremonial pilgrimage form a triangle which the Lakotas called the ‘Buffalo’s Head.’ During the time when ceremonies took place before and after the Sun Dance, this head became spiritually alive, and its sites were addressed by their sacred names (Goodman 1992:13).
FIGURE 24. Spring/Summer Ceremonial Pilgrimage of the Lakotas

Returning to the location where the ceremonial pilgrimage begins and ends, there are some additional points of information with relevance to the general area of Wind Cave. The season before the people gathered at the Valley of the Council Oak to conduct their ceremonial cycle corresponded with the time when the sun approached a constellation the Lakotas call *Cansasa Ipusye* [Dried Red Dogwood], which is formed from stars in Triangulum and Aries (Goodman 1992:7). This time marked the season of the year when Lakotas gathered materials for their tobacco mixtures. These included various ingredients made up largely of the inner bark of the red dogwood combined with dried willow and kinnikinick, which in this region is found primarily in the Black Hills. The Lakotas believe that the red dogwood used in tobacco must be gathered after the first frost in autumn and before thunderstorms arrive in spring (Black Elk, C. 1992a:59). According to Goodman (1992:7), “*Cansasa Ipusye* was also an esoteric shamanic expression for the wooden spoon used ritually to carry a live coal from the fireplace to light the contents of the Pipe during the smoking of the Sacred Pipe.” The pipe ceremony conducted at this season corresponded with the arrival of newborn buffalo calves who appeared on the prairies from their birthplace in the Black Hills by way of the Buffalo Gap (Black Elk 1992a:50). When the buffalo moved through this gap in the spring, the Lakotas entered the Black Hills to conduct ceremonies to celebrate life and its renewal.

Another constellation, the Big Dipper, was sometimes called *Cansasa Ipusye*, and it also served as a metaphor for the ladle that lights the Sacred Pipe (Goodman 1992:7; Black Elk, C. 1992a:59). Curiously, one of the stars in this constellation is called *Tokah* after the name of the leader of the Buffalo people *qua* humans who lived in the cave formations underneath the Black Hills (Black Elk, C. 1992a:58). The bowl of the constellation is associated with the story of Falling Star’s mother who, while digging turnips, opens a hole in the sky and falls down to earth where she dies. Her son is raised by the meadowlarks. This woman, *To win* [Blue Woman], occupies the empty space between the four stars in the dipper’s bowl, and she is regarded as the spirit who guides women in childbirth but also the one who helps the spirits of the deceased find their path to the Milky Way (Goodman 1992:3, 22-23, 38).53

This is the sky connection to the stories mirrored on earth that relate the ideas of birth and regeneration to Wind Cave and its environs. Wind Cave and the Hot Springs embody a primordial subterranean presence personified in the form of a buffalo. Goodman (1992:61) puts it this way, “We have heard the entire Black Hills frequently referred to symbolically as ‘A Buffalo,’ with Wind Cave as the opening of the womb, Hot Springs representing ‘milk’ and the Buffalo Gap leading to the outer world of the prairie.” From the perspective of modern traditionalists, at least, not only does *Tokah* appear as a star on the ladle of a constellation which gives life to the sun and the people, but he also appears on earth in connection with a cave and an area that begins a ceremonial cycle renewing the sacred fire and pipe each year, a cycle that connects the origin of the Lakotas to Wind Cave and their rebirth to Bear Lodge Butte with the coming of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, the Sacred Pipe, and the Sun Dance. Indeed, the timing of this ceremonial cycle makes perfect sense given the fact that this was the off-season in the local hunting cycle; it was a time when game was generally not taken because the meat was considered unpalatable (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:128).

Notwithstanding the political context in which the book *Lakota Star Knowledge* was produced, and notwithstanding the political purposes for which it was used, it does not produce in principle anything that is inconsistent with stories collected and recorded in earlier times. It

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53 There are also accounts (Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:135-136 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:232-233]; Tyon in Walker 1980:123; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127) where another spiritual figure, identified as *Waziya* or *Waziyata*, determines the path a spirit will follow.
integrates sites in ways the older texts do not. Some of the details are new (the sacred names of sites in the Buffalo Head, for example). Many of the interpretations use a more modern language to express various Lakota philosophical ideas about sacredness and spirituality. But there is nothing to suggest, as some writers (Parker, W. 1985; Chirinos 1991; Worster 1992; Bordevich 1996) have, that all of this is a recent fabrication invented for political ends.

One year after *Lakota Star Knowledge* first appeared, Anita Parlow (1983a) edited a book on behalf of the Oglala Lakota Legal Rights Fund, entitled *A Song from Sacred Mountain*, that contains the words of many influential religious leaders among the Lakotas and Cheyennes. In addition to talking about the sacred character of specific locales in the Hills’ region, including Wind Cave, Craven Canyon, Harney Peak, Bear Butte, and Bear Lodge Butte, the contributors discuss the importance of the Hills as an integrated totality. This is an important book because it offers further interpretation of some of the sacred meanings of the Black Hills to contemporary Lakotas. Also appearing in the 1980s is Tom Charging Eagle and Ron Zeilinger’s book, *Black Hills: Sacred Hills* (1987), published by Tipi Press of St. Joseph’s Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota. This book confirms the continuing importance of the Buffalo Gap, Wind Cave, the Hot Springs, Bear Butte, and Harney Peak to modern Lakotas, although some of it draws on ideas and quotes from other sources. Finally, Arvol Looking Horse (1987:67-68) contributed an article to a volume on Sioux religion edited by Raymond DeMallie and Douglas Parks that tells of the origin of the Lakotas’ sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe and Sun Dance at Bear Lodge Butte.\(^5\)

There are several more recent sources that echo the idea of the Black Hills’ sacredness to the Lakotas, and they give additional interpretative evidence for the meaning of specific sites already identified in the literature as sacred. In 1994, the book, *Standing in the Light*, was published. Based on the joint collaboration of Severt Young Bear and Ronald Theisz, it also contains important insights on the spiritual significance of the Black Hills. Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:33), a respected contemporary Lakota storyteller and a well-known member of the Porcupine Singers, revealed how the area’s landscape is spiritually interpreted:

Some of the elderly men that have died since also talked about the Black Hills as the center of the universe. They were born, raised, and became adventurous, nomadic warriors. They would always go from here to the next highest point and then go on to the next highest point they could see. They would go on to see what’s on the other side of that next point and keep going till they ended up someplace in a strange land and see the enemy and different animals. But they would always return to the Black Hills. There was always a center of the universe for them to return to. Many of our famous medicine men would go to Bear Butte or Harney Peak to seek their visions or dreams or their medicines. Even the movement of camps of the Lakota people always remained close, within eye vision from the Black Hills as much as possible, so they would always use them as a landscape they could identify. They could always find their way back to the He Sapa, the Black Hills.

Elsewhere, Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:31-32) tells a story about the interior region of the Black Hills, probably the area the Lakotas call *Pe Sla*, that describes a vision and the origin place

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\(^5\) Historically, the territory north and west of the Black Hills was the area the *Itazipo* (Sans Arc or Bowless) band of Standing Walking Buffalo traveled, and these were the Lakotas who first received the pipe. To the present day, descendants of this band, including Arvol Looking Horse the pipe’s current keeper, have guarded and passed on the pipe through their family line. So it is not surprising that its origins would be attributed to this general region, even though the specific site might be disputed. Other Lakotas (Bird Horse in U.S. Senate 1986:168,207; Looking Horse 1987:67-68; Goodman 1992:2,12-13; Black Elk 1992a:50-51) also believe that Bear Lodge Butte is the origin site and/or a location for their early Sun Dances.
of a particular kind of vocalization in singing. It is a long narrative and worth presenting at some length here because it is illustrative of the way locations in the Black Hills continue to be innovatively incorporated into religious discourse. The story is about an old warrior of fifty who becomes ill and finds a medicine man to doctor him. Nothing works. As his sickness worsens, he goes from one hilltop to another to find a place to rest. On one hill, he sees the Black Hills and decides to go there to seek some peace. He takes out his pipe and prays to the Great Spirit asking for guidance in finding a ‘suitable place where I will feel good.’ He travels to the center of the Black Hills where he finds a stream in a meadow surrounded by pine trees. Here, he makes some bedding with grass and fixes himself a resting place on a ledge. Then he lays down there and prays, “This will be my resting place. I will stay here and let you take me.” When he awakes, he finds the spirits left him some medicine that he takes. Just as he starts to fall asleep again, he hears what sounds like singing. His first thought is that it might be an enemy but soon discovers it was some wild chickens. He sees a rooster leading a bunch of hens to a spring. The rooster turns his neck and makes a sound, and when his head started to shake, his comb would quiver. Seeing this, the warrior feels good so he lays back and listens to the rooster while it croons a song. He lies still and listens. The song has Lakota words in it, so he really listens, learns it, and starts singing it himself. Then he hears another man singing the same song and starts singing with him. Soon the man’s skin is healed, and he feels better. He returns home to the tipi iyokiye (council lodge) and tells the elders what happened. ‘I went to the Black Mountains to die, but I heard this rooster sing this song. By learning this song, I got well, so I brought it back and I want to sing this song to my people.’ The camp crier tells everyone to come listen to this man sing. According to Young Bear (Ibid:32-33) that “was the first song that was openly sung to the people. After that traditional singers all put their neck sideways in a certain rooster way, and they would iyaki s’s a’ (give a high pitched yelp), crowing like a rooster, they’d start a song. It was done in honor of that rooster who sang the first special song in the Black Hills” (Ibid:33).

Among its other lessons, this story clearly links the Black Hills and this area in particular with healing as do so many other visionary stories associated with the region. In the process of revelation, some visions, like the one reported in this story, lead to the origin of an idea or practice of considerable cultural significance to the Lakotas. The area around Gillette, Slate, and Reynolds prairies is regarded as having a special position for the Lakotas, one which can be linked directly to the sites on Amos Bad Heart Bull’s nineteenth century map and the abandoned medicine lodge that Dodge reported in 1875. Knowing that this area also contains many unique and diverse floral species with established medicinal uses among the Lakotas (see Appendix A), it is not surprising that it would still hold spiritual significance for people today. Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) also alludes to other ideas about the Hills when he says: “There are even little people, sort of small spirit people who are staying in the Black Hills who are believed to be taking care of the Hills for the people.” This is consistent with stories told by Swift Bird and LaPointe, decades earlier, as are Young Bear’s remarks (and Theisz 1994:29) about the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap. Although newer voices are telling stories about the Hills, their basic themes are much the same as the older ones.

There are a variety of other persisting ideas associated with the Black Hills in Lakota traditions. The notion that the Hills are a home and place of origin has long-standing roots. As Leonard Crow Dog (and Erdoes 1995:5) recently expressed it:

My father told me that after Ptesan Win (White Buffalo Calf Woman) came four chiefs—a medicine man, a man of knowledge, a warrior, and a hunter. They dwelled together in the Black Hills. The White Buffalo Woman had taught the people sacredness. The four chiefs taught the people how to survive, how to live in this world, when to sleep and when to get up, how to make bows and arrowheads, and the different ways to make a fire. They taught them their language.
The connection between the Black Hills and death is also old, and evidence of it appears in the writings of European Americans as early as the 1840s (De Giradin 1936:63; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:156-157; Rosen 1895:130-131). Some of the accounts of early correspondents in the 1870s, including William Curtis and Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:129, 149, 192), reveal the links between the Hills and ideas of immortality as well. Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:30) offers a modern view of this relation when he states:

A long time ago elderly warriors when they knew they were very sick would start to get very restless and keep moving around. they would call that owanka iyokipi sni (he doesn’t like the ground he is sitting on). They would be so restless they would move here and there and moving and finally say, “Well, I might as well go into the Black Hills and prepare myself to die within the Black Hills.” So after they were gone so many days, their relatives would go look for them in the Black Hills, and sometimes they would find them and sometimes they wouldn’t.

In the 1980s, Fools Crow also gave testimony on the Hills’ association with death and burial in the famous case Fools Crow v. Gullet as follows:

The Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota people. The Black Hills are our church, the place where we worship. The Black Hills are our burial ground. The bones of our grandfathers lie buried in those hills...(quoted from Charging Eagle and Zeilinger, pp).

Rich Two Dogs (in Parlow 1983a:6) told about one of his ancestors being buried near Wind Cave, and more recently, Olivia Pourier (in Neihardt and Utrecht 2000:135) remembered her father, Ben Black Elk, traveling the Hills to follow the spirit of his son who died in the 1940s.

Even more emphatic words about the Hills’ holiness as a sanctuary in the afterlife and a source of regeneration in the present life come from an article Mario Gonzalez published in 1996. In this article Gonzalez quotes an important statement made by Pete Catches (presented in Chapter Nine), who describes the Hills as sacred because they contain seven spirits representing aspects or forces in nature, including, land fire, air, water, stone, animals, and plants. Taken together, these elements encapsulate the whole, the totality of all that is, the circle of life. Catches also explains the reasons why specific sites, including Wind Cave and the Hot Springs, are sacred. Elsewhere, Catches (Parlow 1983a:3-4) offers additional details about how the Hills encompass the universe in its entirety.

In the Encyclopedia of American Indians, Karen Lone Hill (1996:550-553) of Oglala Lakota College also described the significance of the entire region to the Lakota people as follows:

The entire Black Hills region has always been known to the Oceti Sakowin as "the heart of everything that is," because within the Black Hills lie the psychological and physical curing elements for the people. Other places within the Black Hills of religious significance are Harney Peak, Devil’s Tower, and Bear Butte. Stories tell of the creation of these particular formations. Religious ceremonies were conducted at these sites, beginning in the spring and continuing throughout the summer in accordance with the movement of the constellations. The Oceti Sakowin as a whole never resided in the Black Hills for long periods of time, but they did return annually for their religious and social gatherings.

55 **Oceti Sakowin** refers to the seven council fires of the entire Sioux Nation, including the Teton, Yankton, Yanktonnai, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, and Mdewakanton.
The sacred relationship Lakotas hold to the Black Hills, according to Alexandra Lyn New Holy (1997), in her recent work *The Significance of Place: The Lakota and Paha Sapa*, must be seen in its totality and in the multiplicity and complexity of the symbols and metaphors that express its pivotal placement in Lakota cosmology. The Black Hills are the center of the universe, and as told to her by Little Dog, they are the only place on earth that has survived intact “four cataclysmic cleansings.” The Lakota people came from the Black Hills and returned to them to be reborn every time the earth was cleansed (New Holy 1997:4). Whether this process is expressed in the cycle of creation stories recorded by James Walker or the visionary narratives told by Black Elk, it reveals and embraces everything that constitutes and creates life, everything that makes up and builds the universe. In New Holy’s perspective, it is not specific sacred sites in the Black Hills that inspire awe *per se*. Each place, whether it is the Race Track, Bear Butte, Harney Peak, or Wind Cave, has its own distinctive character and position in Lakota cosmology and in their sacred geography of the Black Hills. Yet, each place draws its uniqueness from its relationship to other sites as part of a larger spiritual whole that is the Black Hills.

2. The Literature on the Cheyennes and Other Tribal Nations

There are many recent sources that demonstrate the continuing importance of the Black Hills to the religious beliefs of the Cheyennes. Karl Schlesier (1987) published one of the most detailed descriptions of what Bear Butte means to this tribal nation in his book *The Wolves of Heaven*. His work reaffirms its status as their most sacred *axis mundi*, but it also gives a clearer picture of where this site stands in relation to the Black Hills as a whole. Of special interest is the association of the Hills and Bear Butte in particular with *Ehyophstah* (Yellow Hair on Top Woman) as the master of the animals and the underground world (Ibid:82, 04-109). This matches Lakota ideas, which are not as well articulated in the published literature, that the Hills embody a female presence who stewards the underground homes or caves of the animals.


Also during this period, Wayne Leman (1987) recorded and transcribed texts in the Cheyenne language on many different topics. The monograph, *Naevahoo’ohtseme/ We are Going Back Home: Cheyenne History and Stories*, includes an important version of the Race Track story by James Ant (in Leman 1987:245-250) and a story with sacred implications of how the Cheyennes came to the Black Hills by James Shoulderblade (in Leman 1987:17-20). Father Peter Powell also published another two volume treatise, *People of the Sacred Mountain* (1981), which contains numerous references about the Cheyennes’ continuing sacred relationship to the Black Hills and especially its outlier, Bear Butte.

Two recent autobiographical accounts contain important references to the Black Hills in Cheyenne spirituality. One edited by Warren Schwartz (1988), *The Last Contrary: The Story of
Wesley Whiteman (Black Bear), refers not only to the modern importance of Noavos (Bear Butte) (Ibid:46-50) and Nakoeve (Bear Lodge Butte) (Ibid:51-52), but also the sacred nature of the Antelope Pit at Belle Fourche, South Dakota and the Race Track (Ibid:50-51 67). Wesley Whiteman (in Schwartz 1988:68-70), born in 1897 at Lame Deer Creek in Montana, narrates his remembrance of a Massaum [Animal Dance] that his aunt sponsored in the Black Hills sometime in the early twentieth century. Even more significantly, he explicitly identifies the Buffalo Gap as the origin site of the Sun Dance, the place where it was performed by the buffalo who taught the tribe how to perform it (Schwartz 1988:72). Renate Schukies (1993:129, 153-156,158) work, Red Hat: Cheyenne Blue Sky Maker and Keeper of the Sacred Arrows, includes important material about the Cheyennes’ connection to the Black Hills and the pivotal role that Bear Butte continues to play in their religion.

It is obvious from the literature published at this time and earlier that much of Cheyenne sacred knowledge is associated with Bear Butte, which serves metaphorically as a model and connecting point for the entire cosmos, bringing the sky, the earth’s interior, and the surface world together at one central location: an axis mundi. This stands in contrast to the Lakotas’ sacred landscape, which appears to have been much more diffuse, encompassing many more sites and covering a much wider area geographically. Fools Crow implied as much when he told Thomas Mails (1972:154) that “Cheyenne and Arapahoe make much of Bear Butte.” This is not to say that other sites in the Black Hills do not hold any religious importance for the Cheyennes, for they certainly do. It only means that much of what has been published on Cheyenne spiritual orientations are more focused on Bear Butte, while the literature on the Lakotas takes in the entire Hills and its major outlier formations as well.

There are also a few recent sources (Fools Crow in Mails 1979:154; Catches in Parlow 1983a:6; Young Bear in Parlow 1983b:276; Parlow 1983b:xiv-xv) that suggest the Black Hills and its outliers, Bear Lodge Butte and Bear Butte, continue to hold importance to the Arapahos. Unfortunately, very little about the specific nature of the Arapahos’ relationship to these places appears in published sources.

Over the past three decades, Maurice Boyd (1983:88-93) added more to our understanding of Kiowa knowledge about Bear Lodge Butte and described how this remains an active and vital component of their sacred storytelling traditions. Red Hat, the Keeper of the Cheyennes’ Sacred Arrows, also told Rene Schukies (1993:287) that the Kiowas received some of their sacred knowledge from Bear Butte. Recently, Kay Parker, W. Schweinfurth (2002:60-66, 90, 150) published a book on the spiritual universe of the Plains Apaches, which contains important references to the origins of their Manitidae in the Black Hills and their horse medicine at Bear Butte. She also includes another version of their story about Bear Lodge Butte (Schweinfurth 2001:38-42). Many of the Apaches’ stories about the Black Hills region contained in Schweinfurth’s work were recorded in the 1960s by William Bittle from interviews with Rose Chalestin, Joe and Ray Black Bear, Connie Mae and Louise Saddleblanket, and Fred Bigman. Douglas Parks (1991:1-4:88, 179, 508, 511 ,733, 775) also recorded many narratives in the 1960s and 1970s about the Arikaras’ knowledge of Bear Lodge Butte and the Black Hills proper.

56 At least from the standpoint of the published literature, it appears this way. However, there may be a vast repository of stories in Cheyenne oral traditions for other sites, including Wind Cave, that have not been made available in a public forum. Therefore, this assertion might easily be challenged
3. Other Recent Sources

In more recent times, a number of books published for tourists also include references to the sacredness of the Black Hills. One of the Sierra Club’s guides (1984:181) to national parks mentions the spiritual importance of the Hills and offers a brief description of the connection of Wind Cave to the bison. In 1989, Helen Rezatto published the book *Tales of the Black Hills*, which includes a compilation of many stories of different tribal origin that have been told about various landforms in the Hills (Ibid:175-176). None of the stories that she relates about Wind Cave, the Race Track (Ibid:20-26), and the Hot Springs (Ibid:51-54) is original. Taken from other sources, they are told as “legends,” implying, given the context of the other stories that appear in the book, that they need not be taken seriously as legitimate understandings of the Hills. Another tourist-oriented publication *South Dakota’s Black Hills and Badlands*, by Barbara Tomovick and Kimberly Metz (2000:364) includes a much abbreviated reference to the Lakota origin story connected to Wind Cave labeled again as “Legends and Lore.”

Over the past decade, several other studies have appeared based on research pursuant to the significance of sacred sites as “cultural properties” (Hanson and Chirinos 1991; Chirinos 1991; Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999; Dorst 2000; White, D. 2002). These studies have focused on Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, and the Badlands. Already mentioned are the numerous studies of Linea Sundstrom (1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002), which combine archaeological studies and oral narratives with ethnographic and ethnohistorical information on the Black Hills and its many sacred sites.

So what can we conclude from the various historic, ethnographic, and narrative accounts? On the one hand it is fairly obvious that the Black Hills as a whole and specific sites within or adjoining this range have a special place in the sacred stories of many tribal nations who are known to have occupied the area, and some of these can be traced back to historic sources in the nineteenth century. It is also safe to say that the stories, by virtue of their associations, impute a sacred quality to the Hills or, at the very least, certain areas within (or geographically related to) them. On the other hand it is clear that at least three tribal nations, the Arapahos, Cheyennes and Lakotas, have maintained active spiritual relations to various regions in the Hills or to their outlier formations and that some of these stretch far back in time as well. The most prevalent and widely documented spiritual use of the Hills is associated with fasting, prayers, and vision seeking at places such as Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, Harney Peak, and the Central Prairies. Unpublished evidence, described in the next chapter, also points to the use of Wind Cave National Park for ceremonial purposes, but much more has appeared on the sacred importance of the park’s landscape to the Lakotas and the Cheyennes. The performance of the Sun Dance by Lakotas and Cheyennes in or near the Hills has been documented for earlier times and in more recent decades as well. The ritual renewal of the Cheyennes’ Sacred Arrows continues to periodically take place at Bear Butte. Local tribal peoples still collect medicinal plants and learn of their application in sweatlodges and in pipe ceremonies performed in the Black Hills. Finally, tribal nations near and far still narrate stories with sacred meanings and lessons that link fundamental cosmological principles to the Black Hills as a whole or to sites within and immediately surrounding them.

II. THE CONTROVERSY

In the 1980s, a series of writings began to appear that questioned the legitimacy of American Indian, but particularly Lakota, spiritual connections to the Black Hills. Most of the critics do not doubt the strength of the beliefs or the sincerity of those who claim the Black Hills are sacred
and/or who hold spiritual attachments to specific places within the general region. What most of them question is the assertion that the Black Hills, as a whole or certain specific locales, Wind Cave among them, have always been sacred to the tribal nations who lived in the area. Instead, they argue in various ways and degrees that Lakota claims of an ancient connection to the Black Hills is actually of recent origin and integrally tied to their modern struggle to reclaim their proprietary interest in the Hills. Other writers have viewed this struggle in a less cynical light, and some have even amassed a considerable body of evidence to demonstrate that many Lakota ideas about the Black Hills have a much older legacy than many of the critics would lead us to believe.

A. The Critics

Richmond Clow (1983:315-324) wrote one of the first published articles to challenge the idea that the Black Hills has always been sacred to the Lakotas. Clow did not provide any evidence for his challenge, however. He contended that the Hills had become a “tribal symbol” in response to the Lakotas’ united interest in the Black Hills’ land claim and that their sacred attachment to them was recent in origin. He also argued that the Lakotas used the idea of the Hills’ sacredness to pursue their claims and to drive a wedge between themselves and non-Indians (Ibid:322).

In 1984, E. Steve Cassells, David B. Miller, and Paul V. Miller wrote a report for the National Forest Service entitled Paha Sapa: A Culture Resource Overview of the Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota and Wyoming, in which they maintain that there is little dispute among scholars regarding the sacred nature of sites on the Hills’ outer edge (Cassells, Miller, and Miller 1984:108). In terms of sites in the interiors, however, they assert there is little agreement (Ibid:112). When one of them went to Pine Ridge to take interviews in accordance with provisions of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, he acknowledged that “Lakota elders, medicine men, and other traditionalists” at Pine Ridge were reluctant to document the locations of sacred sites, although there was a general consensus that the “entire Hills were sacred” (Ibid:111). Following the historian, James Hansen, who expressed his ideas in interviews and court testimony in the early 1980s, Cassells, Miller, and Miller argue that there is little historical depth to the Lakotas’ sacred relationship to the Black Hills (Ibid:112-113).

Watson Parker (1985), a long time historian of the Black Hills, is perhaps the staunchest critic of Lakota claims that the Black Hills are sacred to them. In a 1985 article, he challenged the time depth of the spiritual significance Lakotas assign to the Hills. He claimed the Lakotas did not occupy lands near the Black Hills long enough to “sanctify” the landscape or “build it up into a legendary shrine.” Following remarks made by Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, he asserted that the Lakotas were afraid of the Black Hills and viewed them as a dangerous place to visit. As a consequence, they seldom entered the area. To defend his position, he also asserted that there was no discussion of the Hills’ sacredness by Red Cloud or other Lakotas when negotiations for their sale were taking place. He further argued that the notion of the Hills being sacred was probably sparked by Lakota participation in the region’s tourism after World War I (Ibid:588-591) and also an extension of the military, political, and legal conflicts between the Lakotas and the United States since the 1850s (Ibid:602). In many respects, Parker’s argument mirrors the position of an earlier commentator on the subject, James Hansen, who expressed his ideas in interviews and court testimony in the early 1980s (Cassells, Miller, and Miller 1984:112-113).

In 1990, Stephen Feraca (1990:68-69), a former Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator, took the position that the Black Hills were never sacred to the Lakotas and that modern Lakotas came to adopt as their own myths propagated by non-Indians for tourism. He claimed that the Black
Hills were regarded as neither sacred land nor an original and long-term homeland of the Lakota people until American Indian Movement followers allegedly fabricated this story in the 1970s. He argued the Lakotas “have their origins” in what is now the state of Minnesota. Recalling a common phrase of the 1960s, “Cousin, I’ll pay you back when I get my Black Hills money,” he asserted that the spiritual aspects of the claim have no historical foundation and that what the Lakota really wanted was the money. A different perspective on how this phrase was being used comes from Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:103-04), who interpreted it to mean that the Lakotas had no hope of ever receiving any compensation for the seizure of the Hills, and so borrowing money from one’s cousin was likened to the taking of the Black Hills as an exchange transaction in which there was no expectation of any concrete or immediate return.57

A year later, Sally Chirinos (1991) wrote a master’s thesis in which she asserted that the sacredness of the Black Hills is an idea the Lakotas constructed during the reservation era as an adaptive strategy to face poverty and powerlessness and to resist forced acculturation. Using Anthony Wallace’s theory of revitalization, she argued that the Lakotas altered their cultural beliefs as a response to the broader societal Diaspora they were experiencing (p. 2). More specifically, she focused her attention on Bear Lodge Butte and its neighboring outliers, Bear Butte and Inyan Kara, to show that there is no historic precedent for the spiritual beliefs Lakota people are now investing in these sites. Acknowledging Watson Parker contributions to this discussion, she reviewed the historical record to determine the time depth of the beliefs and concluded from the sources she studied that beliefs in the sacredness of these sites are modern. In this work and another (Hanson and Chirinos 1991), which were based on a cultural properties study conducted for the National Park Service, she dismisses many modern Lakota attachments to Bear Lodge Butte. Not only does she question the idea that their sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe was received at this site, but she also challenges the rationale behind the use of National Park Service lands for holding modern Sun Dances and sweatlodges run by Gerald Clifford and Charlotte Black Elk in the 1980s (Chirinos 1991:50-53,73-84). She did acknowledge, however, that there was earlier evidence, which White Bull shared with Dick Stone in the 1930s, on the importance of this site for fasting, prayer, and vision seeking (Ibid:52). Essentially, she argued that there are no historical precedents for holding Sun Dances here, when, in fact, there are a number of accounts dating back to the 1880s that record locations south of the butte near Sundance Mountain (see Sundstrom 1997:186, 193). Similarly, Chirinos (1991:86-88) questioned the validity of Lakota claims that another site, Inyan Kara, had any sacred value before the modern era, although she does admit that the accumulated lithic debris at the site indicates a use with some considerable time depth. What she was unable to find from a one day foot survey of the site and from an interview with a local rancher, who owns and leases lands around this site, was any evidence of contemporary use in the form of prayer bundles except, as she put it, “a Native American poem was found in a coffee tin atop the mountain, placed upon the carved name of George Armstrong Custer” (Ibid:88). She clearly missed the irony here, but she also mistakenly assumed that prayer bundles are always present when a site has sacred significance. Nevertheless, and in spite of the testimony of the Lakota people she interviewed who told her they used it, she retained her skepticism about the historical depth of the Lakotas’ sacred associations with this place.

Another advocate of the idea that the sacredness of the Black Hills is a recent phenomenon among the Lakotas is Donald Worster (1992:113, 135-136, 141). To support his argument, he took the position that neither Black Elk nor James Walker and his Lakota advisors ever mentioned anything about the spiritual importance of this area. He concluded that Lakotas

57 See also Edward Lazarus (1991:206) for a similar interpretation.
invested the Black Hills with spiritual significance solely to regain the Black Hills. As the Lakotas’ legal avenues for the return of the Hills were exhausted, Worster alleges, their spiritual attachment became more intense. He also argues that Lakotas created these notions out of a need for a nostalgic past to escape the grinding hardships they faced in the present. In a convoluted way, he maintained that the Lakotas’ modern claims are not less valid because of the recency of their origins, and therefore, these should not serve as an obstacle to returning the Hills to them (Ibid:153).

The most recent work to raise questions about the validity of Lakota claims is Fergus M. Bordewich’s *Killing the Whiteman’s Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century* (1996). Bordewich also maintains that the Lakotas occupied the Black Hills in late historic times and that the various creation stories they assign to the Hills actually originated in an era when they still lived in the Great Lakes. He writes “scholars similarly believe that the story of the emergence of the Pte people from the earth is a portable myth that the Sioux brought with them from the East and that it never applied to the Black Hills at all” (p. 224). Like others, he asserts that the Lakotas never advanced their claim to the Hills on religious grounds until the 1980s. He quotes William Powers, who began working among the Lakotas in the 1940s, that “Forty or fifty years ago you didn’t hear people assert a spiritual connection to the Hills...You heard people talk about various vision quest sites as sacred but not the Black Hills. Monetary compensation is what people wanted” (pp. 229-230). In response, Bordewich (p. 234) later writes:

> It is hardly strange that many Sioux are ransacking both the real and the imagined past for values and practices that will give meaning to modern Indian life. Thus the Sioux campaign to reclaim the Black Hills has already succeeded in a quite unexpected way, transforming them from a shaming reminder of all that has been lost into a modern symbol of collective salvation. Although the Hills may not have been sacred in the past, that doesn’t mean they are not sacred to the Lakotas now...There is no doubt that the Black Hills are extremely important to Lakotas today and that they are the source of a whole lot of spirituality. Religious attitudes can legitimize a place as sacred almost overnight. It is a natural evolution...

Whether or not the critics question the authenticity of the Lakotas’ spiritual relationship to the Black Hills, critics uniformly agree that it is politically motivated and lacks temporal depth. They see the attachment as a modern creation, inspired by twentieth century challenges and circumstances.

**B. The Supporters**

Over the past decade, a number of studies have appeared that offer a more supportive reading of the Lakotas’ spiritual ties to the Black Hills and their various outlier sites. Kari Forbes-Boyte (1996, 1999), a geographer, published two important articles in the 1990s based on cultural properties research she conducted at Bear Butte. She describes this butte as the Lakotas’ “most sacred altar” because it contains the seven sacred elements that *Wakan Tanka* gave them, which are land, air, water, rocks, plants, animals, and fire (Forbes-Boyte 1996:104). She also points out that this site is strongly connected to the bear and its role in doctoring. Finally, she argues that the modern association of Bear Butte with medicine and the importance of this site for vision seeking or *hanbleceya* has a long historical legacy dating back to the late nineteenth century (Forbes-Boyte 1996:105-106). Even Stephen Fereca (1998:89n3), who otherwise questions the legitimacy of contemporary sacred attachments to the Black Hills, verifies the importance of Bear Butte in Lakota vision questing.
In her work, Forbes-Boyte does not tackle the question of the historical depth of Lakota beliefs surrounding this area, nor does she attempt to explain them away as a modern political phenomenon masquerading in traditionalist garb. Instead, she endeavors to show how their sense of this sacred place is embedded in a complex and integrated symbolic structure. As she puts it:

Symbolically, Bear Butte exhibits bear power. Bear Butte is a type of hierophany; it is a physical representation of spiritual power. Physical locales or objects throughout the world are believed by various cultures to be sacred because of their symbolic resonance. Geographer Robert Sacks describes the principle of mimetic sympathy in which objects sharing visible, spatial or geometric similarities can be considered representational of the whole. Bear Butte, for example, symbolizes the bear because it is shaped like one. The Lakota associate the bear with powerful medicinal properties. As a symbol, Bear Butte evokes this power; thus it has become associated with the medicine men of the society (Forbes-Boyte 1996:106-107).

She goes on to argue this is a place that powerfully and simultaneously expresses and interconnects many different levels of meaning, from primordial stories of origin to personal narratives of regeneration (Forbes-Boyte 1996:106). It is a site of power because it quintessentially embodies all the elements that signify life to the Lakotas (Forbes-Boyte 1996:104). It is a mirror of the cosmos, an *axis mundi* that brings the sky, earth, and underground together at one place (Forbes-Boyte 1999:28). It is a location where culturally situated knowledges face existential truths, where the time filled moment of experience meets and is transcended by the timelessness of mystical revelation (Forbes-Boyte 1999:26-27). Her writings offer a much fuller appreciation of contemporary Lakota spiritual attachments to Bear Butte and the wider religious worldviews in which they are embedded, and they do so in a way that makes it difficult to simply dismiss them as recently contrived imaginings to achieve political ends.

Linea Sundstrom is another scholar who views Lakota and also Cheyenne spiritual connections to the Black Hills area in a more sympathetic light. In recent years, she has published numerous works (1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002) on the sacred importance of the Black Hills that are based on exhaustive studies of the prehistoric, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic record as well as tribal winter counts and oral traditions for all of the tribal nations known to have lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills. She presents a wide range of evidence to demonstrate that the Hills and its associated outlier sites have been sacred to many different American Indian tribal nations for hundreds of years. Although she does not tackle the question of the ultimate time-depth of the Lakotas’ sacred attachments to the Black Hills, she presents a considerable body of evidence that demonstrates that these connections existed well before the legal battles and political struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. In addressing the idea that the Lakota people did not live in the Black Hills long enough to be able to “sanctify” the landscape, Sundstrom (1997:203) discusses how American Indians moving into new areas “often adapted the sacred landscape of their predecessors to their own beliefs and traditions” She says that this phenomenon “may be viewed as a matter of perceiving an intrinsic sacredness of place that does not depend on beliefs specific to any one group for its definition” (Ibid:206). Sundstrom (Ibid:203-206) also writes that Lakota sacred stories of the Black Hills are closely related to Cheyenne traditions, and these in turn are linked to Arikara, Kiowa, and Plains Apache narratives. In other words, the region itself holds traditions that have been shared cross-culturally for centuries, and as groups moved through the area, they came to learn the “customs of the country,” so to speak.

religion and politics surrounding the Black Hills to a much more encompassing and holistic sense of Lakota identity and nationhood. More than that, she offers an in depth semiotic and interpretive analysis of Lakota religious symbolism, which expresses metaphorically the sacredness and centeredness of the Black Hills in Lakota cosmology. She argues that this cosmological positioning stands at the center of the way contemporary Lakotas see and create themselves as a people through their participation in Sun Dances, vision seeking, and other ceremonial observances.

Finally, John Dorst’s recently published article (2000:303-320), “Postcolonial Encounters: Narrative Constructions of Devil’s Tower National Monument,” discusses the contested nature of the stories that surround this unique geological formation. In particular, he shows how European American narratives have come to dominate our cultural understanding of this site, and how, in the process, they have served to trivialize and delegitimize American Indian interpretations. A similar deconstructionist approach is followed in Jesse Larner’s recent book, Mount Rushmore: An Icon Reconsidered (2002), which considers how American Indian cultural definitions of the Black Hills have become delegitimized in the shadow of European American myth-making.

C. The Question of Authenticity and Temporal Depth

It is not hard to refute the position of scholars who argue that the Black Hills and its various sites have not been sacred to the Lakotas and other tribal nations since the late 19th century (Giago 1999:10-11). There are ample ethnographic and historical documents to support the spiritual status of the Black Hills, and as Sundstrom (1990, 1996, 1997) argues, there is a great deal of archaeological evidence that suggests it had spiritual uses in prehistoric times as well. Nor is it difficult to challenge the idea that modern Lakota religious notions about the Black Hills are fabricated. There is simply too much continuity in their foundational premises, even in the particulars of their expression, to dismiss their traditional authenticity.

Worster’s argument and evidence, as one example, can be easily refuted. He makes two allegations: one that there is no mention of the Black Hills being spiritual in any of James Walker’s texts, and two that Nicholas Black Elk never used the word “sacred” in relation to the Black Hills in any of his narratives. In relation to Walker, the absence of any evidence in his texts to connections between spiritual beliefs/practices and the Black Hills neither confirms nor disconfirms their presence. As already noted, Walker and most of the other ethnographers who recorded native texts at the turn of the twentieth century made little effort to identify tribal geographic sites with spiritual significance. Even when they referred to a geographic feature, the association was generally vague and nothing more than a generic listing of a “mountain,” “spring,” or “cave.” We can see this in the text of Walker’s contemporary, George Dorsey (1905), who wrote much about the Cheyennes’ sacred mountain but never linked it to Bear Butte. The same is true for many other texts from the same period, and this applies not only to the Lakotas but also to other tribal nations in the plains region at large (Parks and Wedel 1985:167). With respect to Nicholas Black Elk’s narratives, there is plenty of internal evidence in his writings that show he viewed the Black Hills in the kinds of awesome, respectful, and reverential ways that would, in modern English usage, be termed as “spiritual.” That he never employed the word “sacred” does not determinatively eliminate it from his sense of what the Hills meant to him and his people. As mentioned earlier, Black Elk made a number of statements about the Black Hills which imply, given how Lakotas use and think about the word wakan, a holy relationship to these mountains. In fact, many of his statements refer to the Black Hills through the use of

metaphorical allusions typically found in the sacred discourse known as hanboglaia (Buechel 1970:165; Black Elk 1986a:192; Powers 1986106-107).

It is also fairly easy to challenge Parker’s arguments (1985). With respect to his assertion that Lakotas never spoke of the Hills’ sacredness when they were negotiating an agreement over its sale in 1876, two counter arguments must be made. First, we must be mindful of the context of these negotiations. Not only did they take place outside the settings where liturgical discourse is properly expressed, but they also involved people who lacked the authority to use it in the first place. Red Cloud, for one, was not trained as a medicine man, and even if he had been, the Allison Commission proceedings were not a fitting place to speak of the Hills in sacred terms. In a speech delivered by Crow Feather (in Allison 1875:191), however, there are references to the Black Hills that allude to their spirituality. When he said: “Our Great Father has asked me to give up the heart of this land where I was born and raised, and the heart of this land is big and good, and I have camped all around it and watched and looked over it,” he was using “heart” as a metaphorical reference that has sacred moorings. When Red Cloud (in Allison 1875:189) described them as the “head chief of the land” he was referring to the stature of a place. Similar references are found in relation to animals as in the bison as “head chief of the animals” or the eagle as “head chief of the wingeds” (Brown 1992). In all cases, the use of this expression refers to something special, something that commands respect and reverence – something sacred. Certainly, a year later, when Running Antelope (in U. S. Senate 1876:48) was talking about the Hills as the “center of the land” he was using a metaphor charged with sacred meaning.

Secondly, we must consider the audience (see also, Sundstrom 1997:207). These were foreigners, most of whom had little respect for, much less an understanding of, Lakota culture. Appealing to them on the grounds of the area’s sanctity would have been futile in all likelihood. So instead, Lakota leaders addressed them in terms of the pecuniary language the commissioners understood. But even here, under considerable duress and pressure, it is clear that the Lakotas were trying to make the case that the Hills’ had a value far greater than any single monetary settlement. Its value was, in the words of many, including Crow Feather and Red Cloud, the very survival of the Lakota people for “seven generations to come,” a phrase which, when used in particular contexts, also has spiritual implications (in Allison 1875:191). All of the speeches of the tribal representatives whose people had familiarity with the Black Hills conveyed the vital importance of this place to their lives and livelihoods, a worth that could only be equaled by providing perpetual support for the people’s survival in this generation and all of those to come (Allison 1875:189-191; U.S. Senate 1876:33-89).

What is bewildering is why historians who took such great pains to attack the credibility of modern Lakota beliefs ignored many published and easily accessible historic sources that verify contemporary Lakota claims about the long-standing nature of their sacred attachments to the Black Hills. Neither Watson Parker nor Donald Worster examined the accounts from members of the Black Hills’ expedition, nor evidence contained in the kind of standard documentary source most historians rely upon, the Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Indeed, some of the historians’ interpretations appear to be guided by the same kind of politically inspired inventions they accuse the Lakotas of creating. The historians cannot be excused for their failure to examine and draw upon the full range of historical sources available to them, although they might be forgiven for their lapses in interpretation when reading cultural meaning from some of the ethnographic and historic document they did rely on. By failing to fully engage the historical record, much less the cultural contexts to which it refers, they end up giving a distorted picture of the history of Lakota cosmological beliefs and their sacred relation to the Black Hills.
Stephen Feraca (1990) and William Powers’ (as quoted in Bordewich 1996) comments, however, are not so easy to dismiss. Both worked for many years with the Lakotas, and so we might expect that either of them would have heard about the sacredness of the Black Hills, especially since religion was the focus of much of their research. Feraca’s words, on the one hand, need to be read cautiously because they are written in the context of a book that defends his own career with the BIA and that is highly critical of more contemporary American Indian political struggles including, but not restricted to, those of the Lakotas. William Powers’ words, on the other hand, need to be taken very seriously, not only because he has “no axe to grind,” but also because he is a fairly fluent Lakota speaker. Powers does not deny that Lakota people today hold a sacred attachment to the entire Black Hills, nor that they had spiritual associations with specific places connected to fasting and vision seeking in times past. What he questions is the historic depth of some of the Lakotas’ modern claims, especially the view that the entire Hills were held sacred before the 1970s. But then neither Powers nor Feraca ever tell us whether they actually queried Lakotas about the spirituality of the Black Hills as a whole or specific places in or outside their reach, and if they did, how people responded to their queries.

I am not particularly surprised by Powers’ observations because before the 1970s and the revitalization of traditional religious practice, Lakota people did not talk very much about spiritual matters in casual conversation and were reluctant to discuss them even when questioned. Based upon my own experiences since 1964 with Lakota and Dakota peoples, which, granted do not go as far back as Powers, I would also have to say that one never heard a lot of talk about the Black Hills as sacred or as spiritual much before the 1970s. But then, one did not hear these words uttered for most other places that nowadays are called sacred. The expression I often heard people use in relation to sites that are now considered spiritually significant is that they were “special,” which means they had an incomprehensible presence -- one of the definitions for wakan. When I traveled through the Black Hills in the summer of 1970 with two Dakota female elders, Veronica Dunn and Martha Left Bear, this is precisely what I heard about the Hills: they were “special.” The women did not know exactly why they were a subject of reverence because their community, Spirit Lake, was too far away. Yet, they knew this to be true from what they had heard from their parents, one of whose brothers joined ranks with the Oglalas after the Minnesota Conflict in 1862.

Forty years ago, places acknowledged as “special” were often accompanied by remarks such as, “If you respect that place, you won’t mess around with it.” This meant that people shouldn’t go near it unless they knew how to approach it properly. Since many Lakotas and Dakotas in the 1970s no longer knew what was proper, their best course of action was avoidance. My sense was that there was a great deal of ambivalence surrounding such places, and that interference with them posed a danger to those who did not respect their spiritual presence. In fact, I heard countless stories about real life incidents of what befell people when they failed to leave a place alone or ignored admonitions to pray and leave tobacco there. Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:19-22) talks about this in relation to a site at Pine Ridge called Sio Paha (Prairie Chicken Hill). In former times, this was a site for vision questing and other religious observances, but, as he put it, “People lost interest in the place” (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:21).

Generally speaking, anthropologists, including Feraca and Powers, have not been particularly helpful in identifying sacred sites in the Black Hills or disentangling some of the meanings that have surrounded them over time. Sadly, many of the ethnographers who write about Lakota religion and cosmology have failed to follow the kind of direction Keith Basso pursued in his classic work (1996) Wisdom Sits in Places, in which he shows how the historical memories of the Cibecue Apache are tied to their landscapes. For the Lakotas and other tribes of the Black Hills as well, landscapes act in mnemonic ways, embodying, preserving, codifying, and immortalizing cosmological precepts, while simultaneously carrying memories of a lived past. They do both
because there is no clear line between what historians and anthropologists call history and cosmo-
1997). Although ethnographers might be forgiven for an excessive and often false presentism
when trying to engage the cultural worlds of the Lakotas they consulted, they cannot be excused
for failing to understand some of the grounds, no pun intended, on which Lakotas make their
history. In the end, ethnographers who dismiss what the Lakotas and other tribes say about the
Black Hills or who fail to appreciate the significance of this place in their world view are as
remiss as the historians who fail to fully cover source materials that are their stock in trade.

When Charlotte Black Elk, Gerald Clifford, and other members of the Black Hills Steering
Committee (1986) submitted stories of the Black Hills sacred significance in congressional
hearings on the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act, they were not digging around the attic for the lost
remnants of their nation’s past. Instead, they were conveying a body of knowledge with
demonstrable historical depth and unmistakable integrity in relation to a much wider corpus of
knowledge about Lakota cosmology, much of which was recorded before the 1970s, although not
always in published form. There is no question that there has been a reawakening of Lakota
spirituality since the 1970s. Much of its impetus came from younger generations seeking to
regain a knowledge of their religious heritage that had been silenced for so many years. In this
era, there were many elders who still retained an awareness of some of this knowledge but who
refused to speak about it casually, and when they did, it was for a specific reason or purpose. And
yes, some of the elders did speak out at treaty conferences and in court testimony on the
sacredness of the Black Hills when they had not done so before. In doing this, they were not
creating something anew; they were telling what they understood to be true because they had
been called upon to do so. People with spiritual knowledge are not supposed to call attention to
themselves or what they know. Lakota cultural conventions are very clear on this, so it is not
surprising that no one, especially outsiders, ever learned much about the sacredness of the Black
Hills, or for that matter, any other place known to be wakan.

It is also true, as several scholars (Walker 1917:78-79; DeMallie in Walker 1983:17, 1987:29;
Powers, W. 1986:23-25) of Lakota religion have pointed out, that esoteric understandings of the
sacred, whether expressed in relation to particular places or spirituality in general, were not
widely known among the common people, or at least, this knowledge was not casually shared
with outsiders. Among the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1910:574; Schlesier 1987:14), sacred knowledge
was held and guarded by select religious specialists who not only possessed the requisite spiritual
gifts and training to speak about it, but who were also endowed with the right to determine when,
with whom, and under what conditions it would be shared. Much of the esoteric knowledge that
persists today among the Lakotas and Cheyennes is still kept secret and not a subject for public
discourse and debate. Moreover, much of this knowledge is conveyed in a special and highly
metaphoric language, where the sacred is not addressed literally but, rather, figuratively through
commonplace as well as esoteric allusions (Powers, W. 1986:11-41).

Nor is there any question that the modern regeneration of Lakota spirituality has been closely
tied to the return of the Black Hills. Indeed, in many ways it has defined and expressed itself
through its relationship to the Hills (New Holy 1997:9). As the center of the circle that is the
totality of life, it stands as a concrete embodiment of the Lakota peoples’ own aspirations to
regain a sense of the centeredness and wholeness that were lost in the cultural Diaspora of the
reservation era. Something that is lost, however, can be recovered. Most contemporary efforts to
revitalize tribal languages and cultures today are built on the premise that it is not only possible
but also imperative to make this recovery. Insofar as the efforts to achieve these goals have
involved litigation and legislation, they are political. But to describe them solely in political
terms is to deny their ultimate intent, which is to recover the very cultural foundations of a
people’s identity and being. For most contemporary Lakotas, reclaiming the Black Hills and all the sacred wisdom attached to them is fundamental to this effort (New Holy 1997:9).

Even if one acknowledges that the Lakotas hold the Black Hills sacred and that they have done so throughout the twentieth century, the question still remains: how far back in time does their spiritual relationship to the area extend? Many Lakotas claim it reaches back to the beginnings of time. But how does one respond to their harshest critic, Watson Parker, who argues that their historical association is hardly more than two hundred years of age, a time span much too short to have imbued the area with any real “sanctity”?

One way some Lakota traditionalists respond is through stories of a Diaspora and return to the Black Hills. In one of the appendices attached to the testimony in the congressional hearings over the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act, is a story entitled “Ozuyeya Ig’lamna” or “Legends of the Counter Attacking Journeys.”

_Maka_ [earth] then sent a sign, instructions on how the journey would be undertaken. The _Ikce_ [common Lakota people] would call on _Heyoka_, the counter attacking power, to accompany with them on their journey. They would travel in a counter clock-wise direction [starting in the Black Hills], going back west, then south, east and north until finally they would be home. But this journey would take ages and would require that messengers periodically return home with any information on how the world was and the behavior of the nations living on her.

The _Ozuyeya Ig’lamna_ became the principle task of the _Ikce_. Some of the travelers would return home, new ones would join the journey. At times, a few grew tired of traveling and remained in the lands they liked. At other times, some of the people from nations that were visited, would join the _Ikce_ (Black Hills Steering Committee 1986:202).

This is consistent, at least in part, with Nicholas Black Elk’s story (in DeMallie 1984:307-316) of Red Thunder’s vision of the Race Track, which foreshadowed the Lakotas’ movement to the Black Hills. What is different is the presumption that the Lakotas originated in the Black Hills and returned after journeying to other places. It departs from Jake Herman’s various versions of the “Legend of the Seven Camp Fires” (1965a, 1965b:4-5, 1966), which tell how a medicine man told the Lakotas to migrate with their dogs to _Re Sapa_, the Black Hills, where they came in contact with their friends, the Cheyenne, and it contrasts with William Bordeaux’s version of Lakota history too (1929:16-19). So, how can the story of the _Ozuyeya Ig’lamna_ be reconciled with the historical evidence that the Lakotas did not enter the Hills in any great numbers until after 1775?

(Linea Sundstrom (1996:187-188; 1997:203-206) offers one way to resolve the dilemma, and that is to propose that there was a regionally based, cultural knowledge about the Black Hills and its various sites. This knowledge was widely shared and transmitted across cultural bounders and over time as one tribal nation entered the landscape and eventually replaced another (Sundstrom, L. 1996:177). She offers a wide variety of site-specific evidence to demonstrate the close parallels in the beliefs that various tribes held about the Black Hills, their relation to constellations, to origin stories, and to knowledge about the conduct of important ceremonial observances (Sundstrom, L. 1996:187). Her line of argument and the evidence she brings to bear on her case are very convincing, but these can be extended even further. There is also another argument that can be made for Lakota claims that their ancestors occupied the Hills for untold generations, and this rests on the strong relationships of marriage, alliance, and ceremonial collaboration that the Lakotas built with their neighbors during their movements to the Black Hills. Although much of this material is presented in the first two sections of the report, it is worthwhile to review some of the highlights as these bear upon the question being raised here.)
D. Genealogical Connections

The Lakota people of today are not the same as the Lakotas four centuries ago. This is not intended to be either a trite or a self-evident statement. The Lakota nation of the twenty-first century represent a population whose ancestral roots extend back to the Lakota and Dakota speaking peoples of the western Great Lakes. But it also constitutes a population whose genealogical heritage can be traced to tribal nations known to have lived in the region of the Black Hills well before the late eighteenth century. In contrast to an older and simplifying view of tribal nations as discrete and well bounded units, there is another perspective that sees ethnic identity formation as much more complex and fluid (Moore 1987, 1996; Albers & Kay 1987; Albers 1993, 1996a; Hall 1997). In this perspective, American Indian cultures have always been dynamic and permeable, constantly changing and adapting their peoples and ideas to new circumstances. This has been accomplished through the borrowing of ideas and practices between tribes who were allies and who shared trading, hunting, military, and ceremonial partnerships. Even more fundamentally, it took place through extensive patterns of intermarriage and adoption that enabled people to make claims on the lands, cultural legacies, and social support systems of more than one tribal nation. The historic genealogies of today’s Lakotas connect them directly to the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Poncas, and Arikaras. All of these populations were known to have lived in the general region of the Black Hills before the main body of the Lakotas arrived and eventually dominated the area.

Starting with the Cheyennes, there has been a long history of intermarriage and alliance between them and the Lakotas. Notwithstanding intermittent conflicts, these ties can be traced back to Minnesota, when the Cheyennes still lived there at the end of the sixteenth century. The Cheyennes’ Mazikota, Wotapio, Omisis, and Totoimana bands, in particular, trace their ancestry to the Lakotas (Moore 1987:220-222,229-232), but the Dog Soldier bands also married Lakotas, especially Sicangus (Grinnell 1902:143, 1972:2:63; Powell 1981:1:247). According to Cheyenne and Lakota traditions, the Cheyennes introduced the Lakotas to the Hills and eventually became their allies (Grinnell 1956:36-37; Herman 1965b:4-5; Bent in Hyde 1968:25-26; Howard 1980:20-21; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:307-316). In the process, they created joint use and occupancy rights to the Black Hills. Much of this was accomplished through co-residency and intermarriage, so that by the reservation era, Cheyenne bands reckoned Lakotas in their midst and conversely many Lakota groups contained Cheyennes in their ranks (Hayden 1862:277; Warren 1875:51; Curtis 1907:6:139; Kindle in Beckwith 1930:351; Hyde 1937:89, 93, 1961:190-193; Grinnell 1956:165-262; Bent in Hyde 1968:137-222; Hurt 1974:125; Powell 1981:1:164-179, 375-390, 414-416; No Ears, Short Man, and Iron Crow in Walker 1982:125). As Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:121) described the relationship:

The Sioux tribes had ways closely resembling those of the Cheyennes. We traveled and visited much with them, particularly with the Ogallahs, sometimes with the Minneconjous. The Sioux tribal governments were almost the same as ours. Each of them had numerous tribal chiefs, each had various warrior societies and chiefs of them.

In fact, some Cheyenne were parties to Lakota treaties and were considered by local Indian Agents to be part of the Sioux Nation (Twiss 1855:82-83, 1856:96; Cree, 1871:25; Lawrence 1876:200). Later in testimony before Congress (U.S. Senate 1879), the right of the northern Cheyennes to be included under the terms of the two 1868 Fort Laramie treaties was affirmed by government officials. During an investigation into the Dull Knife tragedy, Wild Hog (U.S. Senate 1880:6), a northern Cheyenne, said:
Great numbers of Sioux have married our women; and some of our men have married Sioux women. This intermarrying has taken place principally with the Spotted Tail and Red Cloud bands of the Sioux. We used to live with Red Cloud and Spotted Tail and their bands just as if we were all one tribe; used to give each other our children in marriage, and mix with them in all ways as if we belonged to the same tribe.

Wild Hog and other Cheyennes who testified before Congress not only expressed the pain of removal to Oklahoma territory, but they also revealed their bands were not accepted by the Southern Cheyennes, who considered them “Sioux.” As Wild Hog (1880:6) put it:

No sooner had the Northern Cheyennes got down there than the Southern Cheyennes began to show dislike for them. They said: “What are you Sioux doing here?” Little Rogue pointed his finger at me and asked that. After there was quarreling between the Northern and Southern Cheyennes all the time.

Other northern Cheyennes, including Wooden Leg and Iron Teeth, described to Thomas Marquis (1931:308; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973) their intense emotional attachments to the Black Hills and their desire to remain in this country with their Lakota relatives and friends. Rev. Peter Powell (1982:2:1067-1070,1125-1131,1245-1261) also writes at some length about these strong ties. The famous book of Mari Sandoz, Cheyenne Autumn (1942), immortalized the story of the Cheyennes under Morning Star (a.k.a. Dull Knife) and Little Wolf returning to their home in the north among the Lakotas after their forced removal to Oklahoma in 1878.

In this light, one could argue that the incredible growth of the Oglala Lakotas in the mid-nineteenth century, even in the face of major epidemic disease outbreaks, was not simply the result of people being siphoned off from other Lakota divisions, as Kingsley Bray (1994) argues, but also a process where the Cheyennes were losing some of their members to the Oglalas and also the Sicangus. This would certainly make sense after 1868, when technically speaking, those who remained in the neighborhood of the Black Hills were considered part of the Sioux Nation. After 1877, many Cheyennes were still associated with the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies. Even though most of them were eventually relocated to agencies in Oklahoma and on the Tongue River in Montana, some remained and eventually settled at Pine Ridge (Eastman in Graber 1978:28, 132-134; Starita 1995:74-75). Today, many Oglalas at Pine Ridge are descended from Cheyennes, and until recent times, some were able to speak and/or understand the Cheyenne language (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:119 n9; Schukies 1993:129; Striata 1995:74-75). As John Stands In Timber (and Liberty 1967:119) tells it,

They were allies for many years, and the Sioux are always mentioned in Cheyenne ceremonies when they call the names of four special friendly tribes. They mingled and intermarried, and today there are still quite a few Cheyennes over at Pine Ridge. That reservation even used to be called half Sioux and half Cheyenne.

It is not surprising, given the strength and intimacy of the alliances between these two populations that they came to share a great deal in common regarding the places they jointly occupied and traveled. Lakota beliefs about the Black Hills and specific sites in the region closely parallel the Cheyennes’ and in some instances, they are virtually identical.

Although these two tribal nations and others as well were closely connected to one another, they maintained separate identities and positions in intertribal camp circles. Each of them held distinct religious symbols as markers of their separate histories and identities. For the Cheyennes, it was the Sacred Arrows, for the Sutaiois the Sacred Hat, for the Arapahos the Sacred Flathead
Pipe, and for the Lakotas the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe. Yet, despite their differences, these tribal nations held a great deal in common. All of them shared a tradition of fasting, praying, and seeking visions in the Black Hills and their outlier formations, especially Bear Butte (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:89). All of them had stories of the emergence of humans and bison that were connected to underground cavern formations in the region. Some of the stories the Cheyennes and Lakotas shared, including the one of the Great Race and another of Falling Star’s adventures, are nearly identical. Finally, all three tribes participated in the Sun Dance and sometimes even held their Sun Dances together (Powell 1981:1:248-249; Feraca 1998:12-13).59

If we move further back in time, we know the Cheyennes had close relations with the Plains Apaches and Kiowas. In fact, the present Keeper of the Sacred Arrows is descended from a Red Hat who was born in 1780 and had three Apache wives (Schukies 1993:187). John Stands In Timber (and Margot Liberty 1974:244-245) also tells how the Cheyennes learned about a certain kind of horse medicine from the Apaches who acquired it at Bear Butte. Apaches were located in the Hills well before the Cheyennes; some even hypothesize their presence as far back as the Late Archaic period of prehistory. Also, some of the Cheyenne stories about sacred places in the Black Hills are shared with the Kiowas and Plains Apaches (Sundstrom, L. 1996:183-184). The stories of the Kiowas’ Sun-Boy are very much like some Cheyenne and Lakota culture heroes who are also the progeny of a falling star (Mooney 1979:238). Gadombitsonhit, Old Woman Under the Ground, who is envisioned as a member of a dwarf-like race living in the subterranean habitats of mountainous regions (Mooney 1979:239), is reminiscent of Cheyenne and Lakota ideas about an underground female figure sometimes associated with Little People in the Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:82,102-104; Herman 1974:149). Equally interesting in this regard is the Kiowa name for the Black Hills, Sa’dalkani k’op, which refers to the manifold or stomach rind of a bison cow (Mooney 1979:419) and the Lakota and Cheyenne image of the Hills embodying a female bison presence (Standing Bear 1978:43-45; Schlesier 1987:79).

The Cheyennes learned the Sun Dance from the Sutaios who, in turn, were taught the ceremony by the Arapahos (Mooney 1907:369-370; Schlesier 1990:18-19; Schukies 1993:214-215). One of the Kiowas’ sacred Sun Dance bundles contains a taiine image that originated with the Crow, who gave it to an Arapaho, who married into the Kiowa nation, and until the late 19th century, the keeper of this object had to be descended from an Arapaho (Mooney 1979:240-241). The Cheyennes learned the Night Dance from the Kiowas and taught it to the Lakotas (Wissler 1912:78-79). The Cheyennes also had close connections with the Arikaras and, at times, good relations with the Mandans and Hidatsas, and many of their ceremonies and cosmological traditions bear close resemblances to these tribes as well (Moore 1987:100-102; Sundstrom 1997:200-205).

The Lakotas also reached out to other tribal nations in their movements to the Black Hills. There were close ties of marriage and collaboration with the Arapahos, who probably come to the Hills around 1750 (Meker 1901b: 1; Curtis 1907-30:6:143; Fowler 1982:43). The Poncas, known to have used the southeastern Black Hills as a camping and hunting ground in the mid-seventeenth century, allied themselves with the Lakotas at certain times in their history. There is some evidence that Yankton Dakotas lived for a time in the villages of the Poncas (Howard 1980:21). In the early nineteenth century, some Poncas joined ranks with the Sicangus (Brules), intermarrying and jointly collaborating in ceremony, hunting, and trading (Howard 1965a:28; 1965b:28-29).
The Wazazi,\(^{60}\) originally a band of the Sicangus and then Oglalas, had Ponca roots, and their territorial range covered much of the southeastern corner of the Black Hills after the 1830s (Hyde 1961:56,59-61,70,218; De Mallie 1975:353-356, 1976:260-261). Notwithstanding periods of hostility between the Lakotas and the Arikaras, there were also strong trade ties, many of which were associated with intermarriages and adoptions (Vestal 1934:22-24; Young Bear and Thiesz 1994:110). Indeed, some of the Oglalas and Minneconjous were reported to have lived among the Arikaras at the turn of the nineteenth century (Tabeau in Abel 1939:104).

Once again, there are remarkable similarities between certain Lakota and Cheyenne oral traditions and those of the village tribes. The Arikaras, for example, have a Great Race story (Parks 1996:127-130), and so do the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:395-404). These stories are not explicitly about the Black Hills. What is curious about them is that they include themes commonly connected to the Black Hills in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions.\(^{61}\)

The kinship relations and intermarriages with Cheyennes, Arapahos, Poncas, and Arikaras, among others, indicate that the Lakotas did not just adopt certain beliefs from other tribes but could actually trace their ancestry, and thus their cultural origins, to a time prior to their occupation of the Black Hills as a distinct nation. One modern storyteller, Jake Herman, is a good example of this: his ancestry included Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arikara parentage (Bettelyoun and Waggoner 1988:34). Another case in point is the Lakota holy man, Pete Catches, who was descended from Arapaho, Cheyenne, Oglala, and Hunkpapa people (Catches and Catches, Jr. 1990:51). Thus, when today’s Lakotas say that their peoples have always lived in the Black Hills, and that they have always considered them sacred, there is a legitimate historical and genealogical truth to their reasoning.

Certainly, the Lakotas were aware of other occupants in the Black Hills and maintained knowledge of this before and after their arrival in the area. Calico (in Wissler 1912:78-79), Black Elk (in DeMallie, 1984:314), and James LaPointe (1976:17) acknowledged as much and told about the earlier occupation of the area by the Kiowas, or a people named Witapaha (Island Hill), which is the ethnic ascription the Lakotas use for the Kiowas and possibly at one time the Watapio division of the Cheyenne. But this does not contradict the fact that people who are now identified as Lakota are indeed descended from tribes with a longer history in the region and an older tradition of knowledge associated with its various sites.

Some of the critics of Lakota spiritual attachments to the Black Hills take a very one-dimensional view of their history, which traces their movements in the region at a particular point in history. They do not account for the fact that small groups may have broken away from the larger body of the Sioux nation and become incorporated into neighboring tribes in protohistoric and even prehistoric times, or vice versa. In historic times, the Lakota nation did pick up peoples from other nations and drop off some of their own as they made their way back to the Black Hills. This is revealed in their centuries of genealogical relationship with other tribes, but this side of their history is generally hidden in the event-based, chronologically ordered records of their history. Many scholars dismiss Lakota traditions about an early Lakota relationship to the Hills, as posited in their traditions of an ancient Diaspora and long journey of return because these lack concrete proof, that is, verification in the hard copy of the written record. Their traditions end up being cast as legends and read as speaking to other aspects of their experience. What is being suggested here is that we think about the histories of the Lakotas and other tribal nations in terms

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\(^{60}\) Wazhaze is the Ponca and Omaha name for the Osages (Fletcher & La Flesche 1972:1:47, 49-50, 57-60,101) and for the gens of the two tribes related to the Osage.

\(^{61}\) There is also a Race Track story that the Dakotas once told about the area around Spirit Lake (a.k.a. Devil’s Lake) in North Dakota (Eastman, C. 1971:163-170). This also reveals that certain common storylines were widely shared among the tribal nations of the northern Plains but applied, often simultaneously, to different geographic sites.

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of alternative historical paths. Along these trails, history is not marked by what historians identify as “events.” Instead, it is shaped around what Raymond Fogelson (1989) labels “nonevents.” These include things that happened but are not regarded as having saliency in conventional historic perspectives or that occurred but are represented by narratives that do not carry the kind of transparent meanings or “facts” upon which historians typically construct a peoples’ history. It can be argued that Lakota history, as told in their stories of the “Return Journey” or the “Buffalo Wife,” represent a tribal memory of movements associated with complex and diffuse webs of genealogical relationship. It is this kind of history that gives legitimacy to Lakota assertions of an ancient, “prehistoric” relationship to the Black Hills.

III. WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK AND ITS CHRONOLOGY

There is a strong body of evidence that supports the long-standing spiritual attachments of the Lakota people to the Black Hills and that predates by more than a century the political activism and legal struggles of the 1970s, when some historians and anthropologists claim the Black Hills became sacred to them. From 1851 to 1918, well before tourism developed and expanded in the region, there are several sources that describe the Lakotas’ spiritual reverence for the Black Hills as a whole. There are also many references on their sacred regard for a variety of specific sites in and around the Hills, including, among others, Inyan Kara Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte, Bear Butte, Harney Peak, Castle Rock, Rapid Creek, Craven Canyon, Hot Springs, the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and of course, Wind Cave. In truth, there is an uninterrupted line of documents to the present day that attest to the spiritual importance of these sites to the Lakotas. In general, the sources strongly concur not only on which sites have been significant but also what they have meant and what oral traditions and ceremonial observances have been associated with them over time. Moreover, the evidence suggests strong connections to the beliefs and practices of other tribal nations who preceded their coming or who co-occupied the region once the main body of the Lakota nation arrived in the Black Hills.

In recent interviews (Kittelson and Albers 2002) with tribal cultural preservation personnel, it is clear that the Black Hills and specific sites within their reach continue to have sacred significance to a wide range of tribes. The southeastern Hills, including the area of Wind Cave National Park, holds significance as a location of historic occupation and use for the Arapahos, the Arikaras, the Cheyennes, the Lakotas, and the Plains Apaches. For two of these tribes, the Cheyennes, and Lakotas, this is also an area for which there is a long and well-documented history of spiritual attachments.
Chapter Fourteen

THE SACRED SIGNIFICANCE
OF WIND CAVE AND ITS ENVIRONS

Probably no area speaks to the controversy over the sacredness of the Black Hills better than Wind Cave and its environs, which include the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and the Hot Springs. The identification of Wind Cave as a sacred site appears to be recent, at least from the vantage point of published sources, even though this is not the sense one gets from tribal elders White Bull, Left Hand Bear, Charlie Eagle Louse, Wounded Horse, Stella Swift Bird, Jake Herman, Edgar Red Cloud, Joseph Black Elk, and James LaPointe, who spoke or wrote about it from the 1930s to the 1970s. From their perspective, the stories they shared were part of the traditions of their ancestors, some extending back many generations. Still, we were unable to uncover any narratives about the cave’s spiritual significance published before 1951, although there are unpublished documents from 1937 that give evidence of the cave’s sacredness to the Lakotas and one article (Freeland 1938b) that alludes to its spiritual importance. Also, a couple of articles (Bohi 1962; Pilcher 1964) document some of the reverential ways the Lakotas approached the cave in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the same time period, a number of references can be found on the sacred nature of the cavern formations underneath the Black Hills and also the general spiritual meanings assigned to caves in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1894:476-477; Walker 1917:82; Sage in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:156-157; Boller 1972:327; Knappen in Krause and Olson 1974:19; Curtis in Krause and Olson 1974:129, 150; Burrows in Krause and Olson 1974:192; Little Wound in Walker 1980:67, 124; Short Bull in Walker 1980:144).

Knowledge about the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and the Hot Springs is associated with a long written legacy that stretches back to the late nineteenth century when they were mentioned in the writings of white settlers, government agents, and ethnographers. One Lakota, Amos Bad Heart Bull (and Blish 1967:89), marked them on a map of the Black Hills that he drew at the end of the nineteenth century. All of these sites are conceptually connected to Wind Cave and, in some cases, they are a part of the same story. Indeed, one might argue that the cave’s position in Lakota cosmology cannot be adequately understood without reference to these other sites. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to discuss the broader basis and unity of the spiritual ideas that are attached to this area of the Black Hills and, more specifically, to describe their relation to the various sacred stories associated with Wind Cave.

Much of the discussion that follows focuses on Lakota traditions because these are the best documented in published sources, but it also includes reference to the Cheyennes who hold a strong spiritual connection to the area as well. Other tribal nations known to have occupied and traveled this area, particularly the Arapahos, Arikaras, Kiowas, Poncas, and Plains Apaches are considered here only indirectly. Although these tribal nations may have some sort of religious attachment to this area, it has not been recorded in any of the published or unpublished materials reviewed for this report.
I. THE TEXTS

The region where Wind Cave National Park is located speaks very powerfully to four fundamental Lakota cultural precepts about the workings of the cosmos. Each of these precepts is distinct yet integrally related, and taken together, they form the foundation of much Lakota intellectual and religious thought. The first precept has to do with the origin and regeneration of life, as it is understood metaphorically in the image of the bison, an animal on whose existence the Lakotas and other tribal nations of the region depended for their livelihood and sense of identity. The second one is related to understandings of how the universe is given form and motion through the actions of the Four Winds, and how, in particular, the North Wind, Waziyata, is linked to regeneration and the breath of life. The third covers basic knowledge about how the celestial, earthly, and subterranean planes of the universe are interconnected, as revealed not only in the myth cycles of orphan boys, variously named Falling Star, Stone Boy, Blood Clot, and Ironhawk, but also in stories about nations of diminutive or gigantic stature who co-occupy spaces in the cosmos. The final has to do with the circular order of the universe and its expression in the topography of the Black Hills, in the conduct of religious ceremonies, and in the structure of sacred texts, most notably, the story of the Great Race.

A. The Origin and Home of the Bison

Every human culture has centralizing metaphors that serve as the foundation upon which they build their most fundamental ontological notions about what is reality, what it means to exist, and what are the origins of life. Centralizing metaphors act as condensation points around which manifold ideas get imagined, expressed, and acted upon. They are synergistic, weaving and integrating a common concept through different areas of experience. They not only underscore a culture’s dominant values but also help realize its greatest hopes and highest aspirations. In Lakota (and also in Arapaho and Cheyenne) traditions, the bison, the winds, the earth, and the circle all serve as centralizing metaphors or holy symbols which can be used to represent an aspect of the other and which, in turn, speak to the workings of the universe (Schlesier 1987:4-12; Moore, J. 1996:204-212; New Holy 1997:114-118; Anderson, J. 2000, 2001).

Without question, the buffalo is a dominant and centralizing metaphor in Lakota philosophy. Its appearance is ubiquitous in their sacred stories of creation and renewal. Its spiritual essence, ton, is called up in nearly every significant ceremonial event, and its presence is imagined over many landscapes that make up the Lakotas’ historic territorial range. The Black Hills is one of the geographic locations where this imagery stands out because they have long been understood as the birthplace and home of the buffalo.

Like Bear Butte, as described by Forbes-Boyte (1996:13), the Black Hills constitute a hierophany: they stand as the physical manifestation of the sacred that, in this particular space, is envisioned in the symbolic image of a buffalo. The Buffalo Gap, one of the gateways through which the bison historically left their home in the spring with newborn calves and returned in winter, is the opening to the birth canal. Today, its neighboring sites, Wind Cave and Hot Springs, are imagined as the womb (tatamani) and milk (asanpi) of the buffalo, respectively (Goodman 1992:61). Harney Peak and Pe Sla at the center of the Hills constitute the heart of the buffalo (Goodman 1992:12; New Holy 1997:154). Outlier sites in the northern reaches of the Hills, Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, and Inyan Kara, comprise the buffalo’s head (Goodman 1992:13). Indeed, the entire Hills stand metaphorically for the body of the buffalo, which in some representations is envisioned as Pte (buffalo cow) and in others as Tatanka (bison bull). Some of this figurative imagining has appeared only recently in the published literature, but the
The general idea of the Black Hills as having an animate presence appears much earlier in Standing Bear’s writings (1978:43-45) and in Black Elk’s words (DeMallie 1984:296, 310). It is an idea that is also consistent with Cheyenne and Kiowa notions of a spiritual bison figure that guards the animals in the cavern formations underneath the Black Hills (Mooney 1979:239; Schlesier 1987:82, 102-104).\footnote{The Kiowa also envisioned the Black Hills and their surroundings in the image of a buffalo’s internal organs. According to Harrington (1939:168), they had four names for landforms in the region, which represented the parts of a buffalo, which sacrificed itself for seven children fleeing a mad bear. As they ran away from the bear, the children threw its parts to the bear, including the 1) Sadlka’e k’oup [leaftripe], 2) Aakya’e [honeycomb tripe], 3) Biimsadl [hairlike part of the tripe], and 4) tsouldlpakhae [brain sack skin]. Each of these organs became landforms of similar appearance. The particular landforms to which they refer, however, remain unknown.}

The notion that the Buffalo Gap is a passageway connected to the bison’s place of origin is not only old but also consistent over time. In Lakota, this site is called \textit{Pte Tali Yapa} (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:280) or alternatively, \textit{Pte Ta Tiyope} [Doorway of the Bison Cow] and \textit{Tatanka Tiyope} [Doorway of the Bison Bull] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:210). It is also known as \textit{He Okiksaehe} [The Ridge with a Cut or Wedge], and the land inside it is called \textit{Tatanka makalhpaya} [The Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull]\footnote{The word, “makalhpaya” refers to a place where the earth has been compressed. Again, credit for the translation of this word and \textit{He Okiksaehe} is given to Yvonne Kelly with the assistance of Jerry Dearly.} (Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:95; Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242). In 1915, Little Cloud (in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:95-97) told Father Eugene Buechel a story of a spiritual nature associated with the Buffalo Gap. It is translated from the Lakota as follows:

In this way they made buffalo medicine. They called the place the “stomping grounds of the buffalo.”

There was a village at the Buffalo Gap and they were rich in dried beef. Now, one day a man there stated, “On this day, the [buffalo will make something?] and from the tipi in the middle of this camp two horns will come straight out of it, so go to the tipi quickly, before anything happens.”

Now, a man saw a buffalo head with horns coming along the outside of the tent circle, snorting repeatedly for quite a ways, so before anything else happened, he went to where the people were gathered inside the tent circle. He had a rifle and came up to them on horseback showed them how to load the small leaden bullets in the rifle. Then he trotted over to the door of the tipi, and they gave him a branch in return and set it in the ground like a pole.

Now the buffalo came and began rubbing against the pole,\footnote{There are several significant images in this story, one of which is the allusion to the Sun Dance center pole and its power of rejuvenation. It may also allude to a common habit of bison to rub their bodies against trees and poles.} during which time a man on a horse came out of the right side of his body as one being born. Suddenly the buffalo fell and lay face down as though asleep. Then, he stood and began to stagger as he was bleeding from the nose and mouth\footnote{Bison are associated with the color red, in part because of the red mucus that exudes from a cow’s nose after she gives birth and that she licks on her newly born calf. This substance is symbolically important to the Lakotas, and Black Elk (in Brown 1971:134-135) specifically mentioned it in reference to the visionary origins of the Throwing the Ball Ceremony.} and then grunted and ran away. Shortly, he returned to where the pole was and began rubbing against it again. Then a yellow haired man came out of the left side of his body and again the buffalo fell down and was bleeding badly from the nose and mouth. He staggered to stand and went into the tipi. The people raised the walls of the tipi so they could see the back part of it. The buffalo was laying face downward so they set a big wood bowl filled with water in front of him. He began to drink and drink until he emptied it. They filled it again and again he emptied it. Then he stood, grunted, walked in a circle in the tipi, came back to the bowl, shook his shoulders and fell in front of it.
Then the first man took the bowl and the people stood up and continued to stand around the buffalo. Then they saw two flattened bullets, one small and one large. Then the man said, “Look, the first one went into the throat and the other one went into the back.” And then, there was a hole in the middle of this bone and on account of the amount of blood coming out of it, this last bullet must be the one that did him in.”

The wounds were still freshly bleeding and then the man said, “As I stand here, they are looking well! The wounds are closing up.” Now the buffalo snorted and ate a medicine that was lying by his hoof, then rolled around before standing up. Then the people all saw something that was very holy. In the doorway of the tipi stood a man just like you.

The meaning of this narrative, cloaked in the imagery of wounds and warfare, is actually a story about the continuity of life as an ongoing exchange between death and birth. The juxtaposition of death and birth is revealed in the close connection between the buffalo’s life-threatening injury, as symbolized in the blood flowing from its nose and mouth, and its ability to heal itself, allowing for its ultimate transformation into human form. Humanity and the bison are related as one because human materialization is embodied literally in the spiritual presence and the organic essence, the blood, of the bison. Universally, blood is a sign that stands for the principal of life in death. The death of one material form, the buffalo, gives rise to the birth of another, humans, but the two are not discrete because they are conjoined in the same life-perpetuating process. It is this immortal, perpetual cycle (motion) of life that mysteriously revealed itself in the story that took place at the Buffalo Gap, a canyon widely reputed to metaphorically stand for the birth canal.

Although nearby Wind Cave does not appear in Little Cloud’s story, its connection to this metaphysical event becomes obvious in other texts that link the two places together. As LaPointe writes (1976:85):

. . . Lakota legends say, that at one time, there was no such gap there. But, through the ages, as countless herds of hungry and thirsty animals came out of the Wind Cave, they would make a wild dash eastward to get to the cool waters and lush grasses. Legends say, that after countless years the sharp hooves of the stampeding herds have cut down a high ridge into a narrow gorge. Thus it has become known as the Pte Teteopa (doorway of the buffalo).

There is also a more recent source that confirms the connection of the Buffalo Gap to Wind Cave. In their 1987 book Black Hills: Sacred Hills published by Tipi Press of St. Joseph’s Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota, Tom Charging Eagle and Ron Zeilinger (n.p) connected the Buffalo Gap to Wind Cave when they wrote:

In another part of the hills, to the South, is a place called ‘Wind Cave.’ It is an opening large enough for a man to enter the earth below. On certain stormy days, this hole in the earth makes a breathing sound.

We have a legend that from here [Wind Cave] the buffalo came. It is said that they came forth from this cave no larger than ants, but grew to full size in a very short time.

They came forth in great numbers running down the valley to the plains beyond, making a path through the hills as they went. In this way, they created the place known as the ‘Buffalo Gap.’ ”

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66 Story translated by Yvonne Kelly with the assistance of Jerry Dearly. This translation gives a different sense of this story than the one done by Paul Manhart. Manhart’s efforts to translate Buechel’s texts are sometimes awkward and at times misleading.
That the Buffalo Gap and other passageways through the Hogback\textsuperscript{67} were the exits through which animals moved after they were newly born to reach their grassland feeding grounds during the spring and the entrances through which they traveled to winter at locations along the Race Track is an old idea. As noted in previous chapters, early nineteenth-century white observers, such as Antoine Pierre Tabeau and Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, noted these annual movements. More recently, Linea Sundstrom (1990:322-325) suggests in her writings on rock art that these gateways probably represented transitional spaces, which metaphorically call forth images of fertility and birth, and which, in the process, reveal a possible connection to ritual observances associated with the life cycle.

**FIGURE 25. The Black Hills as the Body of a Bison**

Modern Lakotas clearly attach importance to the Buffalo Gap in their ceremonial observances. Historically, the movement of bison through this gap in the spring marked the beginning of a major ritual cycle (Looking Horse in Parlow 1983a: 42-43; Goodman 1992:7). It signaled the

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\textsuperscript{67} Gilbert Walking Bull (1980:25) uses the term “Pte-tah ti-yo-pa (gateway of the buffalos)” to refer to the canyon at Deadwood, South Dakota.
time when Lakotas started to enter the Hills to conduct ceremonies near Harney Peak and at Pe Sla (Black Elk, C. 1992a:50). According to Arvol Looking Horse (in Parlow 1983a:42), the Lakotas entered the Black Hills at the Buffalo Gap en route to Harney Peak. Even though bison no longer pass through this gateway, the arrival of the vernal equinox is still celebrated with a special pipe ceremony that, according to one of the tribal cultural preservation officers with whom we spoke, is held at locations near the Buffalo Gap (Albers & Kittelson 2002).

In the past, this area was probably associated with the spiritual performances of the Tatanka kagapi [Buffalo Makers or Imitators] described earlier (Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242-245), and it would not be surprising to learn that it had some association with certain kinds of sweatlodge performances connected to the Cheyennes’ Isiwunhetániu [Buffalo Men] (Grinnell 1914; Anderson 1956). The significance of the Buffalo Gap is something the Lakotas share with the Cheyennes, suggesting that its importance extends back to the documented presence of both the Cheyennes and Suhtaios in this area by the mid-eighteenth century. According to Wesley Whiteman who was in his eighties when he shared his knowledge of Cheyenne traditions with Warren Schwartz (1988:72), the Buffalo Gap is the sacred origin place of the Sun Dance, the site where the buffalo first performed this dance after the Great Race and taught its teachings and performance to humans. This link is also found in other sources on the Cheyennes (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:23; Powell 1969:2:472-478). The Cheyenne women’s quilling society is tied to this location as well because the buffalo wife’s husband, who is the central character in certain Race Track stories, founded it.

Also consistent over time is the idea that the buffalo’s place of origin is a cave, a hole (in Lakota this word can be used as a synonym for cave), a spring, or other subterranean location (Buechel 1970:331, 551; Moore, J. 1996:211, see also, Chapter Twelve for more details). Some of the earliest recorded stories of this association among the Lakotas come from tribal elders who worked with James Walker at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Walker recorded several stories that describe a link between bison and caves. Left Heron, Hokacatka or Makula, whose mother was a member of the Oglala Gopher Band and whose father was a Minneconjou (Walker 1980:103 n1), told Walker one of these (Left Heron in Walker 1917:183-190, 1980:109-118). In this story a man marries a woman who is a buffalo. As Left Heron (in Walker 1983:113) puts it, “They traveled together and came to mountains where there was a cave. They went down through the cave and came to the regions under the world. There they saw a camp with many people.” These were the Pte Oyate, the Buffalo People, which the man freed from their oppressive rulers. The Buffalo People were very happy about this, and they offered to make the man their head chief. He agreed, but said he hunted for his family on the earth, and they needed a way to have food if he was not there to provide for them. The buffalo said they would go to the man’s family and offer themselves as food. According to Left Heron (in Walker 1983:117), this was how the buffalo came to the Lakota people.

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68 The version published in Elaine Jahner’s edited collection (Walker 1983) of James Walker’s manuscripts of Lakota myths is closer to the original version than the one Walker translated and edited for publication in 1917. Many important geographic references, including the buffalo living inside of a cave in the mountains, are absent in the 1917 version.

69 Left Heron narrated a number of different versions of this story to James Walker and Ella Deloria. All of the versions share a common narrative structure and similar themes, including references to the old man, Waziya, and the old woman, Wakanka, and the tension between the Buffalo Wife and the Corn Wife. Some scholars (Rice 1994) interpret the story in terms of the light it sheds on the dynamics of Lakota kinship. This is certainly one important way to approach it. However, embedded in this story and the tensions between the Corn Wife and the Buffalo Wife is a historical story about migrations and the role that marriages between nations play in these movements (see Chapter Fifteen). The stories, although sharing a common thematic structure, are played out in varied ways and lead to different sorts of ceremonial outcomes, including the origin of the Sun Dance, Wiwanyan wacipi.
In the years Left Heron⁷⁰ was sharing different versions of the Buffalo wife story with James Walker and Ella Deloria (1978:86-89; in Rice 1994:67-126), Father Eugene Buechel recorded a variant of the story from Asa Bad Yellow Hair (in Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:66-68 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:91-96]). In Asa Bad Yellow Hair’s version, recorded in 1915, the hero discovers that his mother-in-law lives in a cave in the hills where she has taken many men captive and killed them.⁷¹ The hero slays his mother-in-law and brings the men back to life. This particular version is very similar to a Cheyenne Sweet Medicine story that takes place at a cave in the southern Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:79).

What is important to emphasize about these stories is that the cave in question is located in the mountains or hills, which would have meant the Black Hills to most Lakotas of Left Heron and Yellow Hair’s generation. There are many caves in the Hills, so on what grounds, other than what they learned from prior generations, might storytellers Jake Herman, Joseph Black Elk, and James LaPointe connect a female bison theme to Wind Cave? One answer is its proximity to the Buffalo Gap. Of all the caves in the region, which, incidentally, are understood by the Lakotas to be interconnected, Wind Cave is not only the most unusual, but it is one that can be reached by a direct route of travel along Beaver Creek. Indeed, as pointed out in Chapter Six, early settlers in the region knew about an old Indian trail that followed the Buffalo Gap and passed near Wind Cave (Tallent 1899:647).

Jake Herman related two slightly different and much abridged versions of the story that Left Heron told Walker. One appears in Ehanni Ohunkanan: A Curriculum Resource Unit (in One Feather 1972:149) as follows:

The wind cave, where Wind Cave National Park is located, was a sacred cave where the buffalo lady dwelt. At first the Sioux feared the cave because they thought a giant lived in it. They thought that the wind, which blew in and out of the mouth of the cave was caused by a giant breathing. This giant invoked the providence of the Great Spirit to give him knowledge of the mysterious hidden powers of Mother Nature that lurked in the cave the Indians feared.

One day, a medicine man stood at the mouth of the cave pondering, and suddenly, a vision appeared to him. A young Indian maiden told him she was the immortal buffalo lady from below the earth.

The buffalo lady told the medicine man to tell his people that the cave was one of the sacred places of Paha Sapa. She said, “Tell your people to come to this cave and offer gifts and tokens by dropping them into the sacred cave. By your offerings the Great Spirit will provide your temporal wants by providing great herds of buffalo for your livelihood.

In an undated manuscript held at the Wind Cave National Park Library, probably written in the 1960s, Herman (n.d.: Wind Cave National Park) tells the same story but in a slightly different manner:

A medicine man of the Sioux tribe discovered the Wind Cave or Wa-shun Wakan. As he stood near the entrance of the cave a strong strange whistling sound came out of the cave by

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⁷⁰ In his Iron Hawk cycle, Left Heron (in Beckwith 1930:379-390; in Deloria, E. 1978) also includes an episode where the hero marries a bison woman and confronts his cannibalistic in-laws and their stone associates, including a Little Man.

the strong current of wind that blew alternately from the mouth of the cave. He thought a giant lived in the cave and it was caused from his breathing. He feared he would be sucked into the cave and fled. At first the Sioux people were afraid to go near this cave. One day a handsome brave warrior was sent to the cave to find out if the giant still occupied the cave. As he came near the cave a beautiful lady appeared out of the cave and told him that she was the buffalo lady who possessed the mysterious power from below the earth and that she would provide for the Sioux people with game if they would dedicate this cave and offer tokens to the Great Spirit. Herds of buffalo would come out of the cave and migrate through Buffalo Gap into the Great Plains. This is a legend of the Wind Cave as told to me by Sioux Indians.

Herman’s stories are noteworthy because they combine two different Lakota traditions about caves, one associated with a giant and the other a female bison figure (see Chapter Twelve).

The association of the Black Hills with a subterranean giant is an old idea recorded in the writings of several non-Indian observers in the last half of the nineteenth century (Denig in Ewers 1961:6; Boller 1972:327; Curtis in Krause and Olson 1974:129, 150). Herman suggests that the connection of Wind Cave to a giant is an older idea that no longer held currency among the Lakotas in the 1960s. This notion may well have been associated with the strong ties between the bison and Waziya, the Old Man, and/or his grandson, Waziyata, the North Wind, both of whom are commonly depicted as giant figures. It certainly corresponds with something James Owen Dorsey (1894: 468) alluded to when he commented: “They used to pray to him, but when they found that he did not heed them they desisted.” James Walker (1917:91) also wrote about this too.

The Buffalo People are those who dwell in the regions under the world and are the people of the Sun. Waziya was their chief, but when he was deposed they chose the Buffalo God to be their chief and He is so.

Although the significance of Waziya and his control over the bison may have been deemphasized, it is clear from material presented elsewhere (see Chapter Twelve) that the close connection between the two never actually disappeared from Lakota stories and liturgical texts.

In the last half of the twentieth century, the association of Wind Cave with a female bison figure appeared in other stories as well. In 1973, Henry Black Elk (in Theisz 1975:16-18) told a story very similar to Herman’s. In his narrative, a large Lakota encampment, located at the edge of the Black Hills, is facing hunger. The leader of the camp instructs two young men to go out and look for food. They travel for many days and arrive at a hill where, as Black Elk continues the story:

The two warriors stopped dead in their tracks as they got on top of the hill and not far away there was a howling sound, a sound that would scare anybody. As they went closer it was a huge cave, and from this very cave this sound came. It was a howling wind. So the two warriors approached the cave and they sat by the cave constantly hearing that sound that came out of the mouth of the cave. And the two warriors were so tired they fell asleep. Then during the night they awoke by a noise. So as they opened their eyes. There stood a beautiful Buffalo Maiden. She had on the most beautiful buckskin dress decorated in the best ornaments that you could see. And she said to the two warriors, ‘You must go back to your people, to your encampment. Tell your chief and your medicine man to get some tokens and you will proceed back to this very cave with the tokens.’

The young men returned to their camp and told of their encounter. Tokens were collected for a gift, which the two young men and a medicine man brought back to the cave in the company of twenty warriors. When the medicine man approached the cave:
The beautiful Buffalo Maiden appeared again in her white buckskin regalia. And when the medicine man gave the token to the beautiful Buffalo Maiden she said ‘Your people will not hunger no more!’ In that instant she disappeared into this very cave with the token and that weird sound that came from this cave suddenly ceased. And from this very cave a herd of buffalos came out. So the warriors went and killed some of the buffalos, but did not waste. They killed enough for the whole Sioux encampment to eat. And up to this day, this very cave is in Paha Sapa in the Black Hills. To me and to all of us it is known as Wind Cave.

Black Elk goes on to say that he learned this story from his grandfather, Nicholas, and his father, Ben, and that he wanted to pass it on to the children so that when they visit the cave they will know of the buffalo there. He also claims that this is a true story in the historic memory of the tribe and not a legend from the time of myth. Nonetheless, it is still a story that speaks of the kind of mysterious, wakan experience that attaches sacred significance to the place where it happened.

Three years later, James LaPointe (1976:79-80) described the cave in some detail. As he wrote:

This place has been deep in the history of the original American for thousands of years before the advent of the white man. Like many other places in the Black Hills, this ‘hole that breathes cool air’ was a landmark.

Lakota history says that medicine men of ancient times journeyed from far away lands to worship at Washun Niya, and to offer sacrifice. It was their belief that buffalo and other game animals came out of this cave, the animals being bred and supplied by mysterious beings that inhabited the underground regions.

Singers of holy songs came here to capture the soft, sighing sounds that exuded from this great cavity of the earth. Legends say these were the whispering and the singing of those people who occupy underground lands. The Indian made flutes to imitate the pensive overtones of this hissing hole. Its breath was like a fall breeze. So say the Lakota.

Clearly LaPointe implies that knowledge of this cave and its whereabouts was held by the Lakotas and other American Indians for many millennia. He suggests that its spiritual status drew people from great distances to pray and learn sacred songs. This is precisely the kind of sacred communication or dream speech denoted by the word hanbloglagia described in an earlier chapter. Some of the Lakotas we spoke with told us that today some people could still hear the voices of the spirits who dwell in Wind Cave (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

LaPointe (1976:80-84) also tells a story in which a young man named Taopi Gli [Returns Home Wounded] is lured into the cave by a beautiful woman while he and a companion are hunting for deer. When Taopi Gli disappears, his companion senses that he has been seduced by the dreaded Winyan Nupapika [Double Woman] and races breathlessly back to their camp through a narrow canyon (quite possibly the Buffalo Gap) to alert others of Taopi Gli’s fate. The elders decide to search for the “mysterious hole” into which Taopi Gli has disappeared. After all the village’s ropes are gathered and assembled into long cables, they travel to Wind Cave and volunteers are repelled into the cave only to find “grotesque formations and eerie shadows.” Finding no evidence of Taopi Gli, his family and friends gather together to grieve over him. A medicine man advises his grieving father to fast and cry for a vision in which he might learn of

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72 This story is actually an amalgamation of themes from several different traditional narratives. Not only does it contain elements of the “Buffalo Wife” story recorded by James Walker and Ella Deloria, but it also incorporates aspects of narratives associated with the Blood-Clot Boy, Stone Boy, Iron Hawk, and Falling Star.
his son’s fate. The father, a chief in his village, travels to *Hechinskayapi Paha* [Bighorn or Sheep Mountain], now Mount Coolidge (located in Custer State Park), where after four days and four nights, Falling Star appears to him and shows him through a series of dreamlike images that his son is alive and a member of the underground nation *Maka Mahe Oyate* and a ruler of these people. He also tells him that this marriage is a good omen. Since the underground nation are the “keepers and breeders of all game animals,” Taopi Glí’s people on earth will never go hungry. In interpreting the story LaPointe writes:

For ages, according to Lakota legend, since the marriage of a surface man to a distinguished girl of the underground world, famines were unknown, because out of the mouth of the Wind Cave, never-ending hordes of buffalo and other game animals emerged as time went on. If its difficult to believe that large animals such as the buffalo are able to come out of such a small hole, legend explains that the animals came out like a string of tiny ants, but as they emerged and sucked in the invigorating surface air, in a very little time they expanded into their natural sizes. This indeed was true until the white man came, bringing along new conditions, disturbing ancient religious traditions, and burdening the natural world with entirely foreign ways of living (LaPointe 1976:84).

Here again, there is a strong connection between bison and other game animals with the subterranean world. Like Jake Herman and Henry Black Elk’s narratives, LaPointe’s version is noteworthy because of its obvious and very consistent links with Cheyenne stories of the Buffalo Gap and the Great Race as well as Left Heron’s early narrative of the man who married a buffalo woman, entered a cave in the mountains, and visited the nest of a Thunderbird on a mountain peak. The fact that this is not a story of human emergence makes it no less important from a spiritual standpoint. Its sacredness comes from its association with the replenishment of the bison and the other game animals the Lakotas depended upon for their survival. It is also important spiritually because of its links to stories in the Falling Star cycle that are related to other sacred sites in the region, and, as indicated momentarily, one of them might even be connected to the region of the Buffalo Gap and Wind Cave.

Stories of a marriage between a human man and a woman of the underworld, often personified as a buffalo, are found among tribes throughout the Great Plains (Walker 1983:104; Parks 1996:165). Many stories about human-bison relations, even among the Lakotas, do not speak of any marriage between the underground buffalo and a human; they simply refer to encounters between humans and bison in their subterranean homes (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1894:476-477; Judson 1913:53; Short Bull in Walker 1980:144). The story of a male figure, usually a hunter, coming upon the underground home of the bison is a fundamental theme in many Lakota stories. But there is another variation on this theme, and this is the one most commonly told today in relation to Wind Cave.

It is the story of *Tokahe* and the emergence of the *Pte Oyate* [Buffalo People] or humans from the underworld. The story was told by the Oglala intellectual Long Knife (George Sword) to James Walker as part of a larger genesis story, which begins with *Inyan* [rock or stone] differentiating itself into earth and sky and then goes on to tell how all the major figures in the Lakota pantheon came into being. It also includes the story of human genesis and the emergence of the *Oceti Sakowin*, the Seven Fires or divisions of the Sioux (Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota) peoples. In the segment of the story (Walker 1917:181-182) that covers the emergence of humans, *Wazi* [Old Man] and *Wakanka* [Old Woman] desire to gain more power and conspire with *Iktomi* [the spider or trickster] to have their beautiful daughter, *Ite* [Face], affiliated with one of the “gods.” This daughter ends up marrying *Tate* [Wind], but eventually has a liaison with *Anpteu Wi* [Sun]. The adulterous affair angers their leader, *Skan* [Sky/Motion], who transforms the daughter into *Anog-Ite* [Two-Face] and banishes her along with *Iktomi* to the edge of the
earth. Lonely for her people in the underworld, Anog-ite conspires with Iktomi to bring them to the earth’s surface. The story goes on to tell how Iktomi gathered up many soft, tanned skins and enlisted the help of the wolf to take these to the Pte Oyate [Buffalo people] who were still underground:

Iktomi gave the pack [of skins] to a wolf and went with it to the entrance of the cave that opens down through the world. He told it to go and watch the people under the world and when it saw a strong and brave young man to speak with him alone and to give him the pack and tell him that there were plenty of such things in the world. It went through the cave and saw the camp of people far away. Before it came to the camp it met a strong young man (Walker 1917:181).

This young man was Tokahe, “The First.” He showed the meat and skins to his people, and they wanted some for themselves. Tokahe chose some men to go on the surface of the earth and see if these things were really plentiful there. The wolf “led them through the cave and when they were on the earth, he led them to the lake73 where the double-woman had her tipi” (Walker 1917:182). She served them a feast, and the wolf gathered up a lot of game so it appeared plentiful. After returning to the cave’s entrance, the young man asked the wolf to take him back to his people. When the wolf returned, he told him “to wait and guide others who wished to come to the world, and when they had passed through the cave to lead them for food and water” (Walker 1917:182). The people of the underground debated if they should go and live on the earth.

Six brave men chose to go with Tokahe. They took their women and children and went from camp. The wolf met them and guided them through the cave, all day. At night they came to a strange place and the children cried for food and drink. Then Iktomi appeared and laughed at their misery and Tokahe was shamed...In the morning the people did not know where to go. They were hungry and thirsty. Then the old man and woman appeared and they gave them food and drink. The old man led the people so they traveled swiftly and came to the region of the pines. Then he and the old woman showed them how to hunt the game and how to care for the meat and the skins, and how to make clothing and tipis. Thus Tokahe and his friends were the first people on the world and their children are the Lakota (Walker 1917:182).

After its original publication in 1917, an abridged version of this story appeared in Royal B. Hassrick’s work (1964:205-217). In 1972, it was released in a body of curriculum material for use in Lakota schools. The story was not connected to Wind Cave, however, in either of these contexts. Instead, it was Jake Herman’s narrative about the encounter of a human man with a buffalo woman that became identified with Wind Cave in the curriculum material assembled by Vivian One Feather (1972).

The first published connection of the Tokahe74 story to Wind Cave that we could find is Marla Powers’ book Oglala Women (1986:42-43, 50), in which an encapsulated version of the Long Knife narrative was given and the cave in question identified as Wind Cave. This story was also included in one of the appendices (Black Hills Steering Committee 1986:203) that accompany the testimony for the Bradley Bill, but here it is linked to the entire cavern formation under-

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73 According to Fannie McAdam (1973:28), there once was a lake on the old Valentine ranch now inside park boundaries that was drained when the road to Custer State Park was built.

74 Earlier in 1953, it is curious that a delegation of Lakota who attended Wind Cave National Park’s fiftieth anniversary celebration adopted and named the park’s superintendent, Earl M. Semingson, Tatanka Tokahe, which can be translated as “First Born Bison Bull” (Bohi 1962:465). This suggests that the Tokahe story may have been associated with Wind Cave at least thirty years prior to any published reference to the association.

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neath the Black Hills not just Wind Cave. More recently, Karen Lone Hill of Oglala Lakota College wrote about Wind Cave in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* (1996:590-593) as follows:

The Sioux contend that they have always lived in the northern Great Plains area. If there was a migration that occurred, they say, it was outward from the Black Hills into the outlying regions. The Black Hills have a strong religious significance for the *Oceti Sakowin* -- particularly the Lakotas, the chosen caretakers and protectors of the Black Hills -- because the Black Hills are the traditional birthplace of the Sioux Nation.

According to tribal tradition, the Sioux originated within the Black Hills themselves. The story goes back to a time in history when they lived underground beneath the Black Hills. Eventually they were enticed to the surface of the earth, emerging through Wind Cave, in the southern Black Hills. Once they had emerged, they were unable to return to the place that had been their home for thousands of years. Their leader, whom they had left behind underground, foresaw the fate of his people and the hardships they would encounter and, sacrificing his safe existence, came to the surface in the form of the buffalo. And it was the buffalo that sustained the people during that early period; it provided food, clothing, shelter, and tools—all the necessities of life.

How Long Knife’s genesis story became the defining narrative of Wind Cave rather than the one with a genealogy linked to Left Heron, Jake Herman (1974), Henry Black Elk (1975), and James LaPointe (1976) is unclear. Today, however, there is no question that Long Knife’s story and some of its close modern variants hold considerable sway among Lakotas/Dakotas living in reservation communities in Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota and among those who live in urban areas like the Twin Cities. As James Fenelon (1998:289) noted, this story was alluded to during a Sun Dance held at Prairie Island, Minnesota in 1994, when David Chief, a Lakota elder, remarked:

> We Lakota, and our relatives here the Dakota, originated from sacred places on earth, according to our scared traditional knowledge. The Pte Oyate, we as buffalo people, came out from the earth near the place where the holy winds blow out, very close to the Paha Sapa, the Black Hills, always known to us as the sacred “He Sapa.”

Although Wind Cave is not specifically mentioned in a story that the Standing Rock religious leader Joe Flying By (in Parlow 1983a:37-38, 39) narrated in the 1980s, it bears repeating here because it represents a modern variation of the *Tokahe* saga. It also conveys several fundamental themes that underlie Lakota understandings of the Black Hills and their relation to caves and bison. As he tells it:

> …The *Paha Sapa* was full of four-legged, and winged people, creeping people, small people and animals and there were no humans around. The Buffalo Nation, of brownish color, brown ones and red ones. And the King Buffalo are white ones. They are talking Buffalo People. One day they have a council and they ask one of the young buffalos, a brownish color one. In the Black Hills area, there are many caves. Some of them don’t find

75 In the 1930s, Standing Bear (1978:44-45), quoted in the last chapter, also alludes to the fact that the Black Hills are the site of the Lakotas’ genesis as a people.

76 In her introduction to the collection of myths gathered by James Walker (1983), Elaine Jahner (in Walker 1983:15-24) discusses at some length Ella Deloria’s correspondence with Franz Boas regarding the origins of George Sword’s tales. In contrast to the stories attributed to Left Heron, which were recognized by the Lakotas she interviewed in the 1930s, those linked to George Sword appear to have had no precedent. They were unfamiliar to most of the people she interviewed, leading her to believe that they were the unique creation of this very gifted writer and storyteller. It is not surprising, therefore, that the more recent *Ohankakan* stories about Wind Cave, namely those of Jake Herman and James LaPointe, have more in common with Left Heron’s “Buffalo Wife” stories than with Sword’s “Tokahe” saga.
these. Some are caved in. There are many caves that are hidden beneath the Black Hills. And there are many channels that are hidden beneath the earth. Maybe this is why we know that there are people under the Black Hills, Paha Sapa. There is life under that hills. They asked the brownish buffalo to make a journey to one of these entrance ways of the cave and make a noise, a buffalo call through this hole. Not actually going in, but making noise how the buffalo are making noise. On the other side of the place there are people. Somehow a young man was going other places and he heard this voice. He came to the entrance way, to the cave. It was this hole, but they didn’t know about this. They came to this hole and it was dark in there but there was some kind of noise and he went in there but seemed like it was telling him to come. And he followed this voice until he came to an open place. And another world, another place of light. And all he saw was the shaggy people, the four-legged. They were standing looking at him. A strange person that come to this place. And the White Buffalo starts talking: Kola Mitakuyapi ‘That’s my relative, that’s my friend.’ They greet him. Tanyan Yahi Yelo, that means, ‘you come here, that we greet you.’ And the White Buffalo, the old one, said, ‘we depend on older people to tell us what is true.’

And that day on that time, that is what happened. The White Buffalo said, ‘look over this place. This area. If you think you can live with your relatives here, you can do so. But first you must look over the place good. If you’re satisfied you can go home, bring your family.’ So he stayed with the Buffalo People for quite a while and he said he was going back to bring his family. And before leaving, the White Buffalo said, ‘When you bring your family, we buffalos will feed you. They are going to offer themselves to you, that your peoples shall live. They’ll feed you.’ The young man went back to this hole. He went running—it was a distance—I don’t know how deep. That hole, that tunnel went to another place. So this body went back to his own home and it seemed like the people already knew where he went to. All looking at him. So he made a speech to his family. Talked a good while. And they said they wanted to go that place. ‘Maybe a better place that we can live.’ So they got ready packed their stuff and another meeting was called and there were six families wanted to come—and so there were seven now. Seven families were now getting ready. They all carried their stuff and they went through this hole and they came to the Buffalo People. At that time there was direction but they see the Sun. Sure enough six Buffalo People were in this area, white ones. And they were looking over to the other ones. So the two-legged person was in the middle. That was the beginning of the life of the Indian person.

Indian people, when they came to this place, they looked for places to sleep when the sun goes down. The sun was moving and pretty soon it was on the other side. They don’t know the directions. And there was no direction—they didn’t say ‘Wimahel Iyaye’ or sundown. Or sunrise. They don’t know what this life is—that big ball of fire. And that white one is telling it to the people. So that’s where they’re taking the Sioux nation from this world. They’re beginning to understand each other. In the meantime the other families, the children, they have things in mind that sometimes it’s no good. Bad thoughts against somebody, against the shaggy buffalo. It’s time to kill the buffalo, but these people are in the way of stealing. They are going to kill that buffalo. With spears. They are close enough to get them because they are friends and relatives. But things are getting bad. When they came to be among the buffalo, the buffalo are talking back. ‘If you are fast enough that you can catch us, then you can eat. But you have to chase us and get us. Your mind is no good, we need to get away from you.’ That happened. The people are getting hungry and cold. They eat anything. But they have to chase them.

…This is the world that the Indian people came to. And when we’re dead we will go back through this hole. So these are the legends, of the Lakota people. They are our relatives. The Buffalo people.

This story represents yet another variation of the primal relationship between humans, bison, and caves, and it is interesting because it combines elements appearing in the buffalo wife stories of Left Hand and in the Tokahe saga of George Sword. In stories related to or descended from Left
Heron, humans already live on the earth’s surface, but, through a marriage (or an encounter) of one of their own with a bison person, they are insured a plentiful supply of bison whose home of origin is reached through a cave opening. In the versions whose genealogical ancestry is connected to the Long Knife story, humans live underground and are drawn to the earth’s surface. But the humans in this story are the *Pte Oyate*, the Buffalo Nation, who are transformed into their human form once they arrive on the earth’s surface. As in Little Cloud’s story associated with the Buffalo Gap, humans and buffalo are joined together as one. As reported earlier, in Chapter Nine, James Walker (1917:91) wrote about a common belief among the Lakotas that bison not only had the capacity to take on a human form, but they also had the power to “transmogrify” humans into bison and bring them to their underground homes. The different juxtapositionings of humans and bison in these stories probably does not matter in the larger scheme of things because all of the stories speak to the integral relatedness of the two. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Left Heron narrative is the one that is the most consistent with other Lakota and Cheyenne stories told about the general region of Wind Cave, which includes the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap.

There are many caves that dot the Black Hills and their surrounding environs. These caves are understood by modern Lakotas to be interconnected, as suggested in Joe Fly By’s story (1983a) and by Charlotte Black Elk (1986a:209) when she applies the sacred term *Chantoyeya* [Arteries of the Heart] to the underground regions of the Black Hills. Some Lakotas and Dakotas believe that all the caves in the Black Hills are interconnected and also linked to the ones in the Cave Hills. Theoretically, all of these caves are entrances to the spiritualized underworld that is the home of the buffalos, and also other game animals (Sioux Ranger District 2003:3.3.60-65). Therefore, all of them might be implicated in Lakota origin stories. But, once again, the fact that a cave, Wind Cave no less, is located upstream directly in the path of the Buffalo Gap, their sacred passageway into and out of the Black Hills, makes it easy to imagine how Lakotas and other tribal nations might have come to make a connection between the two, and how they linked them to stories of the Race Track as well.

There is also the relation of the bison to the home of *Inyan* or Stone, commonly associated with mountains, and their placement in rock structures under the earth (Walker 1917:82, 183). In fact, in the story of the Buffalo Wife that Walker published in 1917, the bison’s tipi is made of stone (Walker 1917:183), and in the one published in 1983, it is identified even more specifically as a cave inside the mountains (Walker 1983:113). In the nineteenth century, the Black Hills were the mountains with which the Lakotas were most familiar. Since bison originated in stone formations under the earth, it is not surprising that Lakotas traditionally used stones to locate and summon them (Densmore 1918:210). Although Rufus J. Pilcher (1964), a former superintendent of Wind Cave National Park, does not tell us why a group of Lakotas came to him in the early twentieth century to secure stones from the cave for healing, their motivation undoubtedly had to do with ubiquitous Lakota traditions linking bison with healing, stone, and the subterranean world. It may have also been related to the idea that the crystalline formations in caves were the material out of which *Taku Skanskan* formed the first man and woman of the *Pte Oyate* [Buffalo Nation] (Walker 1983:227-228), or to the mysterious white, ice-like stones George Bushotter (in Dorsey, J. 1889:153-154) describes.

Given its unique geophysical properties, it is also not coincidental that Wind Cave has been singled out as the primordial and quintessential place of Lakota origin stories about bison and

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77 As described earlier, the Lakota and Arikara scouts told journalists on the Custer Expedition of a cave formation that ran under the Hills from one end to the other (Power in Krause and Olson 1974:87-88; Krause and Olson 1974:129, 150).

78 This appears to have been a common practice among the tribal nations of the Plains. In the northwestern Plains of Canada, the Stoney and Cree used the fossilized shell, ammonite, to attract bison (Geist 1996:88).
humans. It appears to breathe, both taking in and releasing air. It mimics a life-sustaining function in humans and animals that is necessary to and definitive of life itself, something that Pete Catches (in Gonzalez 1996:67) explicitly linked in his statement (quoted in Chapter Nine) about how the Hills contain all of the fundamental spiritual forces necessary to life, and how Wind Cave is associated with the spirit that created breath. Lakota names for Wind Cave are many, but one is descriptive of this breath like quality, Washun Niya [Breathing Cave] (LaPointe 1976:79; Black Elk, C. 1986a:209). Another name, Washun Wakan [Holy Cave] (Herman n.d.; Swift Bird in Kadlec 1981:148), simply marks the sacred nature of the place.

Both the breath-like quality of the cave and its association with bison is a significant theme of another genre of stories told about Wind Cave. Wind Cave was described in a story Stella Swift Bird narrated in the 1960s about her grandfather (in Kadlec 1981:147-148). It reads:

Fast Thunder was a traveler. He and another man were coming back from the hills on the other side of Hot Springs. A buffalo was chasing them. There was no place to hide, for they were in a little draw with few pines. Grandfather prayed for his holy bear. As grandfather was leading, a short, little man with long hair came. He led them to a cave -- a spirit hole -- then he said, ‘Just squeeze in, but don’t come any farther.’ They could feel the wind raw and blow. The little man disappeared. At that time they called it spirit hole, but now it is Wind Cave. When they went in Grandfather’s heart was jumpy and the other man was crying. ‘Don’t be scared, pray.’ Grandfather said. Grandfather took his bow to feel around, but it was a drop-off. The buffalo stuck in his head, but couldn’t come in. All afternoon and all night they stayed as they were afraid to go out. But the buffalo had gone.

Unlike other accounts about Wind Cave, which take place in mythic times and are what the Lakota identify as ohunkakan stories, this is a woyakapi story of something that happened as a real historic experience. There is no implication that this is the cave from which either humans or bison originated. Like other narratives, however, it is connected with the appearance of a buffalo. This buffalo appears in the guise of Gnaskinyan [Crazy Buffalo], who is the hunter rather than the prey and conforms to the image of the killer bison that are the parents of the Buffalo Wife in the stories of Left Heron and Yellow Bad Hair. This figure also has a connection to Lakota and Cheyenne ideas about the giant “Two-Faces,” including Anog-Ite, who eat humans and are sometimes linked to caves and Wind Cave in particular (Grinnell 1926, Ivan Stars in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:374-378 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:644-658]; Schlesier 1987:79).

A decade earlier on March 11, 1951, an article entitled “37 Years Haven’t Dimmed the Memory of Being Lost in Wind Cave” was written by Joe Koller and published in the Rapid City Journal. Reprinted in 1970 in the Wi-lyohi, Bulletin of the South Dakota Historical Society, this is the earliest published reference we were able to find that explicitly links Wind Cave to a Lakota story with spiritual significance. In this story (Wounded Horse in Koller 1970:1-2), which was told by Wounded Horse to R. J. Smith, a school superintendent at Pine Ridge, a group of hunters entered the Buffalo Gap in the Black Hills in search of buffalo. They found a herd being watched over by a white buffalo bull. The hunters held a council and decided to hunt down this bull and appointed two young men to make the kill. The old men held a Buffalo dance, and then the hunters isolated the white bull and led him to a place where the two hunters on horseback were waiting. The story goes on:

It was a long chase. When the white bull tried to cut across a snow filled gully he was trapped. The two hunters closed in and bristled his back with shafts. Blood reddened the snow as he turned and charged his tormentors. The hunters retreated. The bull paused on a
hilltop and stood there with head roped in exhaustion. He moved on again as the hunters approached.

Their next chance came when the bull hid in a gulch. In the shelter of a rock, he was down and licking his wounds. The hunters came up on him on foot. Now they discovered a black hole beyond the rock that looked like a tunnel. Each man had one arrow left for the kill.

As they crept up, the bull scented danger. He arose, blood dripping from his wounds and glared toward the hunters. As they were putting arrows on bow strings, the white buffalo tottered on a few yards and disappeared in the black tunnel.

The hunters had no desire to corner a wounded buffalo in the dark. They stood peering into the hole when suddenly a blast of cold wind came out of it half freezing them with fear. They piled rocks over the cave and returned to their party. When told of the buffalo’s strange action the Indians moved camp to the cave site and there kept vigil. The bull never came out.

They closed up the hole, leaving only a little opening to permit the buffalo to breathe. They had felt the wind blow out, they had felt the wind return and blow into the cave so they named it “White Buffalo Cave, Home of the Wind God.”

Wounded Horse’s narrative is also not related to any of the stories that claim Wind Cave is the origin place of humans or bison. Instead, like Stella Swift Bird’s account, it is a story about a mysterious event that took place at some point in historic time. What ties this story with others and makes it sacred is its reference to a white buffalo — highly revered by the Lakotas, and an important figure in their historic mortuary practices (Curtis 1907-1930:3:110; Densmore 1918: 446). 79

The idea that the cave was discovered is the theme of another story about Wind Cave, published in 1972, in Emerson Matson’s Legends of the Great Chiefs and narrated by Edgar Red Cloud. This version, collected in the late 1960s, tells how two Lakotas, White Antelope and Red Wolf, discovered Wind Cave while chasing a white buffalo into the Black Hills (Red Cloud in Matson 1972:39-42). As the story goes, the hunters shoot it, but it disappears. The buffalo’s tracks, however, lead to the entrance of what appears to be to a large cave with a strong wind coming from its opening. Red Wolf and his companion presume that the white buffalo fell into the cave, and decide to go down and look for it. Their rope, however, is not long enough to reach the bottom, so they return home and tell everyone what they found. Later, their chiefs return with them to find the cave. After a two-day journey, they locate it.

Using longer and sturdier ropes, they lowered some men down through the hole and into the cavern. Deep in the cave, the party found the bones of many buffaloes. But they could find no trace of the great white buffalo.

Later, a scout located the huge animal’s unmistakable tracks leading from another entrance. Near the tracks were the four bloodstained arrows the hunters had used during the chase. The elusive white buffalo had escaped once again. But because the hunters had come so close to making a prize of him, he had left them a gift of a cave that could blow strong winds.

79 As noted earlier, albino animals were commonly identified as the ‘chiefs’ of their species (Howard 1979:3). A white buffalo is the leader of the bison who bring humans to their land as revealed in Joe Flying By’s story presented earlier. Tatanka, a member of the Tobtob and the spiritual leader or “chief” of the animals is often represented as a white buffalo (see Chapter Ten).
The chiefs decided that the great white buffalo had earned his freedom. To hunt him now would bring bad medicine to their people. Instead, they would accept the gift of Wind Cave in the sacred Black Hills.

Here, too, is the implication that the Lakotas discovered, although some might be more inclined to say rediscovered, Wind Cave and apparently had not known of its existence since time immemorial, raising the question of whether this is the cave of the Lakota emergence story. Insofar as this narrative carries the wider cultural theme of a connection between caves and bison, particularly a white buffalo (often the form the spirit figure, Tatanka, assumes), it is consistent with a larger and older genre of stories that surround Wind Cave.

In contrast to some of the stories connected to Left Heron and Long Knife, which take place in a timeless mythical past, the narratives of Wounded Horse, Stella Swift Bird, and Edgar Red Cloud occur in lived experience as incidents remembered and connected to known historical figures. Two involve a white buffalo, a highly revered figure in Lakota culture, who is hunted but eludes capture by descending into the cave. Metaphorically speaking, in escaping death, the immortal buffalo releases life as signified by the breath-like action of the cave. In a broader sense, these stories are connected to the Long Knife and Left Heron narratives because all of them involve hunters, the act of hunting, and the food of the bison that is the fundamental source and origin of Lakota life, survival, and regeneration. Again, these are intrinsically linked to the Buffalo Gap and the Race Track story which is about how the universe gets ordered in such a way that humans are fed by the buffalo rather than being the buffalo’s food.

The Swift Bird story involves yet another interesting twist on the overall theme of Wind Cave and the region of which it is a part. Here we have a buffalo that is not the prey but the one who stalks humans. This is an image of Gnaskinyan, a much reviled and feared spiritual figure because he inverts the “natural” order of things established by the primordial race of the animals, which began and ended at the Buffalo Gap. On the surface, this figure appears to represent a departure from the theme of buffalo offering life rather than bringing death. But it really isn’t because many narratives about bison and humans, including those commonly associated with the Race Track, begin with antagonistic relationships between the two nations. Indeed, Gnaskinyan and his kind appear in two of Left Hand’s versions of the Buffalo Wife story and also in Yellow Bad Hair’s rendition.

Buffalo have the power to both give and withhold life, and the ambivalence that this evokes is a common motif in many Plains Indian stories. Raymond DeMallie (1982; 1994), Shepard Krech (1999:146-150), and John Moore (1996a:267) have written about how several tribal nations in the plains presumed that humans could never destroy the bison no matter what they did. It was the bison themselves or the spiritual guardian of the bison, a female person like the Yellow-Haired woman and the water spirits of Cheyenne stories, or Waziya, the old man and his grandson, Waziyata, the North Wind, of the Lakotas that will their appearance or disappearance. From an American Indian perspective, drought or overkilling was never sufficient reason for the absence of bison. Bison were immortal, mysteriously giving and withholding their lives. They never died, they simply returned to their underground homes waiting for a propitious time to reappear on the earth’s surface. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, after bison had nearly been exterminated on the Plains, some American Indians believed the bison were not extinct but had simply returned to their underground homes where someday they would be reborn and return to the earth’s surface. It is perhaps ironic but certainly not fortuitous, at least from a Lakota perspective, that when the bison first reappeared in the Black Hills in 1913, it was at Wind Cave.

Jeffery Ostler (1999) examines the range of explanations, both spiritual and practical, that the Lakotas advanced to explain the bison’s sudden disappearance in the 1860s and 1870s.
National Park, the very location where historically the bison returned to their home each winter awaiting rebirth and the movement to their grassland feeding grounds in the spring.

The Cheyennes also have a tradition about a cave in the southern Black Hills. Karl Schlesier (1987:79) writes about this cave as the place where the Cheyennes first experienced resistance in their movements to the Black Hills under the leadership of Sweet Medicine or Motseyoef:

According to Tsistsistas tradition, they encountered the first resistance in the grasslands after they had moved to the Black Hills. These enemies are still called haztova hotexceo (from haztova, ‘both,’ in the sense of ‘on either side different,’ and hotexceo ‘stars.’)--two face star people. They preyed on Tsistsistas camps, killed people, and ate their flesh. They appeared invincible until Motseyoef, using shaman power, and acting under the grant of the spirits of the region, found their hideout in a cave in the southern part of the Black Hills and entirely destroyed them. He restored the remains of slaughtered Tsistsistas to life in a sweatlodge which he conducted at the cave.

This story contains several themes that are associated in Lakota traditions with Wind Cave. The first is the link to underground spirits, the second to double figures, and the third to some form of reincarnation or regeneration. In fact, like Motseyoef, the Lakota’s culture hero Tokahe is associated with using a sweatlodge for healing (Walker 1983:375). This theme is also closely linked to some of the Cheyenne and Lakota Stone Boy stories, where the hero brings his uncles back to life in a sweatlodge and kills the double-teeth bison in the Cheyenne version (Grinnell 1926:180) or Iya [a fabled gluttonous monster figure] in some Lakota renditions (Walker 1917:193-202, 1983:140-154; Red Shirt 2002:79-82).

In this context, it should be noted that there are interesting parallels between the stories of Tokahe (Long Knife’s narrative) or Taopi Gli (LaPointe’s story) and Cheyenne and Suhtaio narratives of their culture heroes, Sweet Medicine and Stands On The Ground. In the various stories associated with these two culture heroes, they encounter an Old Man and an Old Woman in an underground cave and one marries their daughter. This daughter plays a critical role in keeping the Cheyennes supplied with bison and other game. An old man and old woman appear in Long Knife’s origin story of Tokahe’s emergence from a cave, as does the double-woman figure who is also present (or at least implied) in Left Heron and LaPointe’s stories. While a marriage to an underground woman is absent in Long Knife’s story of Tokahe, it is present in LaPointe’s Taopi Gli narrative and in Left Heron’s Buffalo Wife stories.

While there are similarities, there are differences too. For the Cheyennes, the cave where most of their sacred stories of animal emergence unfold is located at Bear Butte.81 This is also the place where Motseyoef [Sweet Medicine] learned the seven rituals associated with the stars of the Big Dipper. One of these was the Massaum, a ceremony that marked game regions and insured the fecundity of game; it was observed historically in the Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:88-109; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:68-70).82 For the Lakotas, the cave of origin for bison and humans is Wind Cave just west of the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap. Seven sacred Lakota ceremonies are also attached to seven stars in the Big Dipper, but these encompass the entire Hills and their two outlier formations, Bear Butte and Bear Lodge Butte. Also different from the Cheyennes, who concentrate many of their stories of origin and regeneration at one place and in relation to a unified set of figures, the Lakotas separate their stories of genesis and renewal. Wind Cave and its

81 Some of the narratives associated with another Cheyenne culture hero, Stands On The Ground, however, take place at the Suhtaio’s ‘Black Mountain, the identity of which has not been specified in the literature.

82 The Arapahos acquired their sacred bags and the spiritual knowledge associated with them when a man of their tribe came upon a cave, although its identity is not specified (Trenholm 1970:80).
environ connect an underground female or male bison figure with primordial stories of animal and human origins. By contrast, the story of Lakota revitalization is associated with the White Buffalo Calf Woman, *Pte San Winyan*, a reincarnation of the celestial figure *Wohpe*. She is the one who brings the sacred pipe and its associated seven ceremonies to the Lakotas at Bear Lodge Butte.

**B. The Lodge of the Winds and Waziya**

Another common household term for Wind Cave is *Tate Waxun* [Cave of the Wind] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:209), while *Tatoye Oyurlokapi* [The Opening of the Four Winds] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:209) is a sacred name used only in the context of religious discourse, and it is the same one given in English but without a Lakota gloss by W.S. Campbell in his 1937 letter to the National Park Service (see Chapter Thirteen). Wounded Horse gave one other name in 1951 in a story published by Joe Koller (1970:2) as “White Buffalo Cave, Home of the Wind God.” *Washun Pte San* would be the Lakota translation for first part of this name, while the second part, *Tate Tipi*, is clearly a synonym for the sacred ascription. The term ‘White Buffalo Cave’ is completely unique, although some of the stories associated with Wind Cave deal with a white buffalo. The connection of bison to breath, *ni* or *niya*, and to the Wind, *Tate*, and his four sons, but especially with *Waziya, Waziyata*, or *Yata*, the North Wind, is a pervasive theme in Lakota sacred stories and liturgical texts (see Chapter Nine).

As previously noted, the name *Tate* is closely linked to the verb *tate* meaning “to hunt” or “to chase.” Two sons of *Tate*, the North Wind and the West Wind, are associated with *Taku Skanskan*, the spiritual figure that presides over movement, hunts, and war (Walker 1917:84; 1980:272). “*T*” is a generic term for food animals that is prefixed to three species of special importance to the Lakotas, *tatanka*, the buffalo, *tatoka*, the antelope, and *tahca*, the deer (Buechel 1970:472). All three of these species were known to seek shelter and winter along the Red Valley, entering the area by way of the Buffalo Gap. All three were also known to leave this gateway when they returned to the grasslands in the spring. As reported in Chapter Ten, the Lakotas drove antelope into a pit along the White River at Cache Butte less than fifty miles from the Buffalo Gap, and the buffalo herds who wintered in the Black Hills near Wind Cave moved in the spring to the grasslands on the upper reaches of the White and Niobrara rivers (Crow Dog in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:96).

In Lakota cosmology, as Joseph E. Brown (1992:111-115) argues, there are complex sets of metaphorical relationships that connect the winds *qua* directions to specific animals. According to Clark Wissler (1905:258), the Lakotas viewed the wind as a “great mystery” because “it was intangible and only visible in its effects.” In answering the question why dragonflies, moths, a spider’s web, the buffalo, and the elk have an essential relation to each other, Brown (1992:113-114) wrote:

> The unifying power underlying these disparate forms was seen to be the wind or whirlwind represented as Umi. That the moth had access to this power was evident in its wind-creating wings, and the cocoon was the container of this potential wind-power. The spider had access to this power because his ensnaring net stretching out to the four directions, which are conceived as the home of the four winds. The bison had the wind-power that he employed for

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83 New Holy (1997:119-128) also shows their connections to the Lakota kinship order as it unfolds in their story of creation.
his own purposes, while the elk’s particular utilization of this wind-power was witnessed in his ability to ‘whistle’ in such a manner that cows were attracted to him.

Even more specifically, the Lakotas believed that a chrysalis, *wamniyomni*, caused whirlwinds, and these were located on the backbone of certain bison (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1889b:137). Essential to this cosmology is the idea that the winds are a central integrating and ordering principal in the universe, an idea that the Cheyennes and Arapahos also share. Wind is breath is life; it is the foundation of all movement, especially that which is associated with hunting and racing. Wind is embodied by its offspring, each with a direction and a duty. As discussed in previous chapters, different species of mammals, birds, and plants, are linked metaphorically and systematically to different winds in Lakota cosmology. Indeed, it might be said that some of their basic taxonomic principles are organized around their conceptualization of the Four Winds.

The Four Winds are considered highly *wakan* among the pantheon of the most influential spiritual beings, and, as such, they are appealed to in most every major ceremonial observance from *Hanbleceya* [vision seeking] (Black Elk in Brown 1971:44-66; Thunder Bear in Walker 1980:131; Walker 1980:133) to the *Hunkapi* [Making Relatives] (Black Elk in Brown 1971:101-116; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:124-127; Walker 1980:210, 221). Their stories brought order, direction, and movement to the world, but they also represent some of the characteristics and contradictions in human behavior. Through their actions, the world is renewed, plants are created, and birds and animals are assigned their places in the world. So much about Lakota cosmology is collapsed in their notions of *Tate* and his sons, the Four Winds, and the fifth, the Whirlwind (Jahner in Walker 1983:200-203).

Of the Four Winds, *Waziyata*, the North Wind, is the one most often linked to Wind Cave. Except for one anomalous story found in the archives at the Wind Cave National Park Library entitled “The Cave of Waziya,” which bears only a remote resemblance to Lakota traditions and was probably written by a non-Indian, most of the other stories about the Four Winds are not connected, at least explicitly, to Wind Cave. Nonetheless, they share certain fundamental motifs in common that are consistent with a broader spectrum of Lakota beliefs about the relationship between caves, bison, the winds, and breath as life-giving forces. We can presume that these stories apply in one way or another to the cave since it is specifically identified in some sources as the home of the Wind (Campbell 1937, Wounded Horse in Koller 1970:2; Black Elk, C. 1986a:209). There are two groups of stories relevant here, one is part of the Four Winds cycle in the Lakota genesis narrative recorded by James Walker, and another, discussed in the next section, is associated with Falling Star and other orphan boy figures.

The story of *Tokahe*’s emergence from a cave, which many Lakotas identify today as Wind Cave, and another about how the four directions were established as part of a sequence of creation stories that Long Knife (George Sword) shared with James Walker (1917:171-179; 1983:58-89, 157-162, 183-187, 200-205, 300-369; Dooling 2000). Since many of the figures who appear in the stories of the Four Winds are connected to, and, indeed, lead up to the Lakota genesis story, it is not surprising that *Tate* and his sons are linked to the cave too. The creation stories collected by Walker were probably once restricted to the narrative repertoire of the wicasa *wakan* and not part of the general populace’s storytelling traditions (Dooling 2000: ix). This may explain why they were not widely known or told in Lakota communities in the early twentieth century, and why they differ from other stories associated with this cave. Again, the very fact that a Lakota name for Wind Cave was identified as early as 1937 with the Winds suggests that at some point in time, the myth cycle of *Tate* and his sons, which begins with *Inyan*’s creation of the world and ends with *Tokahe*’s emergence on earth, was associated with this cave.
In the Lakota story of creation, as told by George Sword or Long Knife, Waziyata, or simply Yata in sacred discourse, is the first-born son of Tate and Ite (later Anog-Ite or Two Face), daughter of Waziya (the old man, the wizard) and Wakanka (the old woman, the witch). The last three figures play important roles in the Tokahe story too. Tate bestows on his firstborn son, Waziyata, the right to establish the first direction, but he ultimately fails because of his meanness and cowardliness. In challenging Waziya and ordering the magpie to befoul his grandfather, he loses his birthright (Walker 1917:172-173). After his younger brother, the West Wind, marks the first direction, he establishes his direction in the north. His name, Waziyata, has several levels of meaning. The direct translation is “toward the pine,” but it can also mean on the side of Wazi, the old man with whom he is forever associated and from whom he gets his name (Walker 1917:157, 1983:84; Herman 1965a, 1965b; Powers, W. 1977:191-192). Indeed, his home is the dwelling place of his grandfather, although he never stays there (Walker 1983:89). He is the quintessential symbol of winter and is sometimes represented as a giant who hordes the buffalo and kills humans that try to approach them. He is identified with cold, snow, ice, and warecayuhagila [hail from the north] (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1889:155; Dorsey, J. 1894:468; Beckwith, M. 1930:407; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:126). He also knows when the weather is going to change (Dorsey, J. 1894:468), which, incidentally, is something shared in common with Wind Cave’s barometric features.

In many different sacred stories, Waziyata represents symbolically that part of the life cycle that is death, cold, winter, and rest, which bring forth and are necessary to ni [breath], new life, regeneration, and rebirth. He is associated with life that comes through death, and it is along his path that spirits travel after death from the south to the north in order to be reborn (see Chapter Twelve). In the Lakota creation story, his father, Tate, is the one who blocks the entrance to the spirit world so Tokahe and the other original people, the Pte Oyate, cannot return directly. This suggests Wind Cave, the place from which Tokahe comes (Walker 1983:373). In one of his prayers, Black Elk (in Brown 1971:19-20) locates the home of Waziya in geographic proximity to the Thunders, who were widely known to frequent the area of Harney Peak. This prayer, which is said during a Spirit Releasing Ceremony, contains the following lines:

O You, Thunder-being, there where Waziah has his lodge who comes with the purifying winds and who guards the health of the people; O baldheaded eagle of the north. Your wings never tire! There is a place for You too in this pipe, which will be offered to Wakan-Tanka. Help us, and give to us one of Your two sacred days (Black Elk in Brown 1971:20).

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84 Again, Wakanka and Waziya also appear in the Buffalo Wife stories.
85 This idea also appears in Joe Flying By's story (in Parlow 1983a:39), quoted earlier, in which the hole or cave leading to the bison’s underworld home is also the portal through which the deceased return to the spirit world.
Figure 26. Kinship Relations of Lakota Deities

Adapted from Walker (1983)
As revealed in other chapters, Waziyata’s direction is linked not only with the bison but also with magpies, crows, white owls, geese, bald eagles, coyotes, wolves, foxes, and tobacco (Dorsey, J. 1894:127, 232; Curtis 1907-30:77; Wissler 1912:19-20, 91; Walker 1917:172-173; Densmore 1918:67-68; Beckwith, M. 1930:412n2; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear and Sword in Walker 1980:101; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:125; Walker 1980:222, 231-232, 249, 1983:340, 344-345; Powers 1977:191, 1986:139-140; Brown 1992:35). Wolves, who followed the same movements as the buffalo, were also believed to produce wind qua breath [ni] in the form of fog when they howled, and so a time of dense mist and fog was known as a “wolf’s day” (Wissler 1912:54, 91). In fact, the wolf served as an accomplice to Inktomi when he enticed Tokahe and the other Pte Oyate to move from their subterranean home at Wind Cave to the surface of the earth (Walker 1917:181-182).

Waziyata’s color is red, but sometimes the color with which he is associated is reversed with that of the South Wind and becomes white (Black Elk in Neihardt 1961:26-27, 179; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:108-109). He is also reputed to do things in a contrary manner, going naked in the winter and wearing furs when it is hot, and as a result, the Heyoka sometimes imitated his actions (Dorsey, J. 1894:468). Indeed, Heyoka are believed to embrace the North Wind because both are known to do things backwards (Beckwith, M. 1930:416n1).

Waziyata is identified as a superhuman man of “uncertain moods who may do harm or good according to his humor” (Walker 1980:222). He is always at war with his younger brother, the South Wind, Itokagata, but sometimes he assists his other two brothers, the West and East Winds (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:108-109). He is the one who withholds and releases [ni] breath, which is life to the buffalo and to the people, and therefore, he can be viewed as stingy, selfish, and morose (Walker 1983:182, 313, 322, 330). He is characterized as a life-taker, filled with avarice and always killing things (Walker 1983:183). Yet, as many Lakota liturgical texts reveal, he is paradoxically a life-giver as well, the one who by taking life, purifies the earth over the winter months and guards the health of the people (Black Elk in Neihardt 1961:27; Black Elk in Brown 1971: 20, 119-120, 132). In this context, it is hard to avoid making an analogy to the north-south migrational movements of bison, which, according to Brown (1992:59), symbolized to the Lakotas “a coherent and integrated totality.” As Edward Curtis (1907-30:3:77) put it, “Waziya” is the one “who sends the biting north wind and blinding snow and who also controls some of the mysterious movements of the buffalo.” The travels of bison and other animals through the Buffalo Gap mirrored the movements of the seasons and the winds, which in the form of breath emanate from Wind Cave. By further analogy, these movements replicate the movements of spirits, who after death travel south towards the Milky Way but eventually return to the north in the underworld awaiting rebirth.

It can be argued that the Black Hills stand for the homes of the Four Winds. This is clearly implied by Leonard Crow Dog (and Erdoes 1995:5) when he said that four chiefs reside in the Hills, “a medicine man, a man of knowledge, a warrior, and a hunter.” I would propose that the hunter represents the North Wind, the warrior the West Wind, the man of wisdom the East Wind, and the medicine man, the South Wind. If this association is correct, then the Black Hills may be

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86 As revealed later, the crow and magpie are primary players in the famous story of the Great Race that , in some versions, begins and ends at the Buffalo Gap.

87 Usually Heyoka are linked to the West Wind, since it is the Thunders who cause them to act in a contrary fashion.
FIGURE 27. The Order of the Four Winds

*Adapted from New Holy (1997: 126).
seen in yet another way as a hierophany, a physical metaphor for the establishment of order and motion in the universe by Tate and his five sons.\(^88\) It can be hypothesized even further that specific sites in the Black Hills metaphorically mark the homes of the Four Winds. New Holy (1997:125-128) describes and diagrams the spatial relationships between the Winds in terms of two intersecting circles, one representing the lodge of their father, Tate, and the other marked by the trail their grandfather, Wazi, blazes in his endless wanderings on the edge of the earth. In connecting the positions of the Winds to specific landscape features, we must bear in mind that these shift depending on their point of reference. In some cases, they appear inverted, and this is because, as Robert Hall (1997:133) explains, the directional coordinates of the sky and the underworld are often opposite those on the earth’s surface.

In Long Knife’s story, the Winds come to a great mountain with a trail around it and a fire on the highest mountain peak, and it is from this place that they mark their directional positions in the world (Sword in Walker 1983:81). During his wanderings while awaiting a star message from Taku Skanskan, Wazi creates the circular trail at the worlds’ edge on which the brothers travel. Waziyata gives up his birthright to mark the first direction to his younger brother, the West Wind. Wiyohpeyata [toward the place where the sun falls off] or Eya. (Powers, W. 1977: 192). The West Wind establishes his home at a flat spot on top of a mountain near the nest of the Thunders (Sword in Walker 1983:83), an area widely associated with Harney Peak in Lakota traditions. Although Harney Peak is actually on the east side of the Black Hills from the perspective of the directional coordinates on the earth’s surface, these are reversed in the celestial and subterranean worlds. A common cosmological notion throughout North America is that when night comes to the earth’s surface, the Sun travels to the subterranean world where it is daylight (Hall 1997:133-134). In Lakota traditions, the Sun stays in the underworld at night with his friends, the buffalo (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1889:154; Little Wound in Walker 1987:67). In the subterranean world, the order of the universe is reversed, and thus, it makes sense that Wind Cave, the home of Waziyata, is located on the southeastern edge of the Hills and that Harney Peak, the Home of Wiyohpeyata, the West Wind, is on the eastern side of the Hills. Also, the West Wind (the Thunders)\(^89\) and the North Wind commonly act in opposite, contrary, or inverted ways, and as a result, both are associated with the Heyoka.

\(88\) Pete Catches (in Parlow 1983a:2-4; in Gonzalez 1996:67) also talks about the Hills in reference to important spiritual figures, which he identifies as seven in number rather than four.

\(89\) As William Powers (1986:36) and Martha Beckwith (1930:407-408) write, the Lakotas believe in the existence of Thunders who come from the left or east and who produce the fiercest storms.

\(90\) Another possible location for the South Wind is the Buffalo Gap, and Hot Springs area, which, as hypothesized in the next Chapter, may be linked to the Cheyennes’ Southeast Wind. Instead of a semi-annual struggle between the Old Man of Winter and the Sun of Cheyenne cosmology, the Lakotas often allude to this conflict as a battle between Waziyata and Itokagata.
Hills either. In some texts he dwells in the mountains (Walker 1983:161), but in others his abode is an island in a lake or river (Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:126).91 Yamni, the Whirlwind, has no set location but is frequently linked to Wohpe, who becomes the companion of Itokagata at the center of the world.

Curiously, when Black Elk (in Brown 1971:134-135) describes the Throwing of the Ball Ceremony, he changes the directional coordinates of Waziyata to the East. He says that when the girl tosses the ball in the Four Directions, she first throws it “towards the place where the giant lives, towards the place where the sun comes up.”92 In another context, however, he talks about the giant’s home in the north. At first glance, this appears to be an inconsistency, but it is not if one understands two things: one that the directional coordinates change depending on the point of reference, and two, that they are sometimes expressed, as they often are in Cheyenne texts, as the medial positions between the cardinal points on the compass (e.g., NW, SW, SE, NE). This would locate Waziyata’s domicile in the direction of the southeast on the earth’s surface.

In Cheyenne traditions, the old man of winter is known as Homiaha. The old woman of the North or Nadir, suggesting the figure of Esceheman or Grandmother Earth, controls his actions (Grinnell 1926:189-190). As with the Lakotas, the north and the nadir of the earth are interchangeable. When Ma’heo created the cosmos, he made this woman and also a man who guarded the south zenith and directed the actions of the Thunders. The female and male poles of the cosmos stand in perpetual conflict, as evidenced in the continual cycle of movement between the fall/winter and spring/summer seasons which each of these figures respectively controls (Grinnell 1907:171-172; 1926:243-244; Moore, J. 1996:207-208).

C. The Portals Between the Underworld and the Sky World

In Cheyenne and Lakota cosmologies, the universe can be understood to exist in a constant state of motion, revolving around the axis of a horizontal elliptical plane and a vertical one. The intersections of the planes, the points where they cross or connect, are powerful positions charged with energy and movement. As day turns to night and as one season gives way to another, the planes come together, bringing celestial and subterranean spaces into contact and, in the process, releasing powerful forces (Goodman 1992; Moore, J. 1996). The Sky and other celestial figures, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, in Lakota cosmology have counterparts and companions in the underworld and on earth (Schlesier 1987; Goodman 1992; Sundstrom 1996). In Lakota traditions, there are a number of important mediating figures who link sky spaces with the tiers of the earth and the underworld. Besides the Winds, the most famous of these is Wohpe [Meteor], who appears as a central figure in the stories of the Four Winds, who reappears as the Pte San Winyan, the White Buffalo Calf Woman, and who is considered one of the Lakotas’ primary spiritual benefactors through her gift of the sacred pipe. Another figure is the orphan boy, who appears among the Lakota as Wicahpi Hinhpaya [Falling Star], and who, like Inyan Hoksila [Stone Boy], Cetan Maza [Iron Hawk], or Weota Hoksila [Blood Clot Boy], has miraculous origins. Falling Star and Stone Boy are the subject of several story cycles among the Lakotas, some of which are nearly identical to those of the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1926:178-199, 206-211). These are recorded for tribes throughout the Plains, and sometimes, they are told in relation to specific geographic features in tribal environments. The Lakota and the Cheyennes situate several of their stories in the Black Hills.

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91 Another possibility is Castle Rock because of its association with owls, one of the East Winds’ helpers.
92 This is significant in terms of the association of the Buffalo Gap with the sun.
In the Falling Star cycle, the orphan boy is descended from an earth woman who marries a star. In the Lakota version told by Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:401-408), his mother is admonished not to dig too deeply for turnips lest she open a hole in the sky. She does so anyways and falls through the hole to the earth and dies. Her son miraculously survives and is raised by the meadowlarks. When he reaches adulthood, the orphan is sent on a quest where he encounters dangers and saves the people of various villages. One of the places on his journey is identified as Rapid Creek (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:406), and another can be easily read as the interiors of the Hills near Pe Sla (Sundstrom 1997:195). The first location he arrives at is not identified by name or location, but its characters and topographical features unmistakably situate it in the neighborhood of the Buffalo Gap and Wind Cave (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:401-402). Here, Falling Star helps a village whose people are starving and being killed by Waziya whenever they go in search of buffalo. Falling Star eventually disables and slays the giant so that the people are able to hunt without fear of death from his bow and arrow. One of the giant’s children remains alive, escaping into a crack in the earth’s surface where he remains visible by his “frost” or breath, niya. Even though winter still remains alive, it now retreats, allowing humans to approach the buffalo. This is confirmed by a nearly identical Falling Star story told by Iron Shell in 1904 of an encounter with Waziya, who is hoarding the buffalo (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:24-36 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:45-63]). In this version, the children disappear into a “cave.” Each of the villages Falling Star saves represents the stars on the Big Dipper constellation. The first village is connected to the story of the buffalo and Waziya. Interestingly, it represents the star called Tokahe, the First Buffalo Man, who emerged from the underworld at Wind Cave (Black Elk, C. 1992a:58). The Lakota have a very similar story about Waziya and his offspring associated with another hero figure, Blood Clot Boy (Curtis 1907-30: 3:111-118).

In the Cheyenne Falling Star cycles recorded by George Bird Grinnell (1921, 1926:182-193) and Richard Randolph (1937:37-42), the hero also slays the Winter Man, Homiaha, whose children survive in a crack in the earth’s surface where they appear as frost, possibly an allusion to the gypsum formations in the Hills. He saves another village from a water monster that

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93 Other versions of the same story exist, for example, among the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1926:182-193) and the Dakotas of Minnesota (Riggs 1893:83-94). What is different about Black Elk’s story is the particular way in which he describes the geography of the area through which Falling Star travels. In one episode, he specifically identifies one of the places in Falling Star’s journey as Rapid Creek but other locations can be inferred from the descriptions too.

94 The origin of the bow and arrow is tied to the Race Track in a tradition that Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:307-316) tells.

95 Note the similarity here to more recent stories, described earlier in this chapter, about Wind Cave where a slain white buffalo retreats to the cave and releases its breath.

96 Arvol Looking Horse (in Parlow 1983a: 42-43), the Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe, talked about the importance of Falling Star to the Lakotas as follows:

What we’re seeing is Wicakiyuhapi [to have trust or faith in something] everywhere. North Star, Wicahpiowsonjila – Falling Star’s father, in some stories, fixed in one place in the sky-why? Sorrow of the death of his wife first. Second, because he’s faithful and steadfast to the Lakota people and continues to send power and love to them. The Falling Star story is dignity to the Lakota people because it says you have a human mother but you have a divine father. Your father was a star, waniya—and your mother was of earth. And when we say, we’re part spirit and part matter – the story of Falling Star tells the same story [translation ours].

Stars are known as the woniya [breath of life] of Wakan Tanka [The Creator], and Falling Star symbolizes this. His birth is connected to another significant life-giving symbol in Lakota traditions, the tipsila or prairie turnip [Psoralea esculenta], a plant with intriguing symbolic connections to celestial and subterranean spaces.

97 In Cheyenne stories, the mother of Falling Star reaches the stars while climbing a tree in pursuit of a porcupine, an animal whose quills also represent the breath of life and the power of the sun.

98 The Cheyenne identify one of their ceremonial objects made of gypsum as frost (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:54).
inhabits a lake, which in a similar Sweet Medicine story is Bear Butte Lake, and he confronts an owl monster, commonly tied in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions to the high elevation interiors of the Black Hills. Finally, he encounters the Double Eyes and returns people to life in a sweatlodge. A similar event is recorded in a Sweet Medicine story associated with the Two Faces who lived in a cave in the southern Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:79).

Another orphan boy figure of earthly origins is Stone Boy. In Lakota traditions, he is connected to the Buffalo Gap and other gateways into the Hills. Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) describes the association as follows:

Tohan inyan Hoksi takpapi na mahipya sabya hahwoke.’ That means that whenever buffalos started chasing the Stone Boy and the dark clouds are flying by, buffalo herds start to migrate into the Black Hills because they know winter is coming. The clouds they talk about are winter clouds; towards the end of fall, dark clouds blow real fast. They call them mahpiya sabya kahwoke.

This same idea was also expressed by one of Raymond Bucko’s Lakota advisors who said:

Then I go towards the north, the thathaka oyate [‘buffalo people’]. I see these whenever the winter storm-clouds are like buffalo. I learned this through the elders: Wana thathaka oyate khichiksa [‘now the buffalo people play around’], ukiye [come back’]. They bring back the white blanket of snow for uci makha [‘grandmother earth’] (Bucko 1999:208).

George Sword or Long Knife (in Walker 1983:89-99) recounts a Stone Boy story that explains the connection. After recounting Stone Boy’s origins and some of his miraculous feats, Sword tells how Stone Boy kills four white buffalo girls one winter. Their grandfather seeks revenge for their death and retaliates when the “brown clouds” start to arrive over his territory. In the confrontation, Stone boy slays the old bull. He returns home and tells his uncles to build enclosures, and after they do so, the brown clouds drift in and with them come buffalo from all directions. Stone Boy and his people drive the buffalo into pounds and slay them. In her version of the Stone Boy story, Kate Blue Thunder (in Theisz 1975:58-59) describes the old bull as “mean,” implying gnaskiyan. She also tells about the brown clouds, “Sicangu mahpiya.” Although the clouds are not mentioned in Old Walker’s text (in Buechel 1978:53-78 [also Buechel and Manhart 1998:5-20]), he tells of a bull warning the buffalo to come back home to the hills, “Heyata ko po,” in order to avoid Stone Boy’s fence [cunkaskie].

In another Lakota Stone Boy story, narrated by Bad Wound (in Walker 1917:193-202, 1983: 140-154), the hero conquers Iya, a glutinous monster. As in the Sword text, the story cycle

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99 A similar confrontation between a water monster and a hero figure at Bear Butte Lake is recorded for the Plains Apaches (McAllister 1965).

100 In the Falling Star cycle collected by Richard Randolph (1937:27) from Oneha, a Cheyenne woman in her nineties, she tells of the hero going north into the Black Hills to find his mother’s people, and it is in this area that most of his heroic encounters with various monsters unfold.

101 Old Walker told one version of the story where the bison chase Stone Boy in 1904 to Father Eugene Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:53-62; also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:5-20). The Buffalo Gap, however, is not specifically identified in this rendition. In the same time period, Naopi-sica told James Walker (1917:193-203) a Stone Boy story in which some events also take place in a mountainous environment similar to the area of the Buffalo Gap (cf. Wissler 1907:199 for another version of this tale).
begins with four brothers who live alone and carry on the work of women. One of the brothers gives birth to a girl from his big toe. When this woman grows into adulthood, she refuses to marry. The brothers tell her that they will keep her as their sister and provide for her forever. Each of the brothers goes out hunting but never returns. The woman, grief stricken by the loss of her brothers, climbs to the top of a hill where she mourns and discovers a white, crystal pebble. She swallows the stone, and it grows inside her as a boy child. When her son reaches adulthood, she holds a feast at which she announces her own and her son’s miraculous origins. She tells the people her son is going on a long journey to find his uncles, and four of the guests give him special gifts to protect him in his travels. He journeys far to the West where he finds a valley filled with animals of many kinds and behind them mountains with a barren valley containing only a stone, a tree, and a small brown hill. Stone Boy challenges them and the stone and the tree that try to kill him. He then enters the lodge where he finds an old woman who tries to deceive him. Suspicious of her “forked tongue,” he protects himself. She attempts to kill him but to no avail. Finally, she informs him that she is Iya and that she is beholden to only one master, the “living stone.” Singing his death song, she tells him he will die from her poison. Stone Boy responds with his own song, in which he proclaims that he is the only living relative of the stone, that he is descended from the stone she threw away, and that he is her master. When the two struggle, Stone Boy discovers that the old woman is really a man. Taking control of Iya, he forces him to reveal the whereabouts of his uncles who the monster cannibalized. In order to bring the bones of his uncles back to life, Iya instructs him how to make a sweatlodge with the skins of the bear and coyote and a fire with limbs from the tree that tried to slay Stone Boy. After his uncles are reborn, Iya continues to threaten but Stone Boy prevails, stomping on his stomach until he vomits cherry pits which represent all the people Iya had sucked in with his breath. Throwing the cherry stones into the fire, he is able to revive the people. He then goes on to destroy Iya by stomping on his chest from which a great whirlwind is released and attacked by the Thunderbirds. Through all of this, Iya still survives and grows into a giant again, becoming so large that he nearly covers the entire valley. Now Stone Boy tramples him on the head and forces the breath out of his mouth. Although Iya takes hold of Stone Boy’s feet, he is not strong enough to hold him. Henry Crow Dog tells a similar version, in which Stone Boy travels to the mountains and confronts the giant (in Erdoes 1976:108-116). Stone Boy’s ability to conquer Iya appears to be a variation on the theme of Falling Star slaying Waziya. Indeed, Waziya and Iya often play parallel roles in Lakota stories, making it difficult to separate them. This particular Stone Boy story has been described at some length because Iya is a central character in an anonymous text entitled, “The Cave of Waziya,” located in the Wind Cave National Park Library.

The Cheyenne story of Stone Boy has many of the same characters and plots as some of the Lakota texts, except in their tale the hero has seven uncles (Grinnell 1926:178-182). All of the brothers go out to hunt for their sister, and an old woman kills all of them. While mourning their loss, the sister finds a “Sun Arrow,” a piece of gypsum and swallows it. From this stone, the Stone Boy is conceived. As in the Lakota narratives, Stone Boy goes in pursuit of his uncles, confronts the old cannibalistic woman, erects a sweatlodge, and brings his uncles back to life.

102 The number of brothers and the origin of their sister vary from one story to another and also some of the details of Stone Boy’s journeys and encounters with dangerous spirit figures, but all share in common his miraculous stone origin.

103 Marie McLaughlin’s version (1916:179-196) of the Stone Boy story is very similar to Left Heron’s rendition. Curiously, it contains references to two geographic place names. One is the Smoky Hills or Paha Sota and another to a waterway called Stone Boy Creek, Wakpala Inyan Hoksila. If Smoky Hills is an alternative name for the Black Hills, which is possible given the reports of huge billows of smoke issuing from their peaks in the 1830s, then Stone Boy Creek might have been a Lakota name for Beaver Creek. If it denotes other hills, such as the Cave Hills or the Slim Buttes area, it illustrates yet another example of how the same story can be placed in different but topographically similar geographic settings.
After his uncles are reborn, Stone Boy accompanies them on a hunt where they kill two white buffalo, the sons of the double-toothed buffalo that Stone Boy slays.104

The attacks of cannibalistic figures either in the form of bison, an old woman, or the winter man, who may also stand for the North Wind, reveal the paradoxical nature of life and its dependence on death for survival. Here again, these figures are both life-givers and life-takers; winter brings death yet it is necessary for the renewal of life that is triggered by the Thunders and the Sun (fire). The earth, in the guise of an old woman, controls the bison, winter, and the cycles that bring about life through death. Stone Boy, Blood Clot Boy, and Falling Star mediate the elemental forces through which life is both destroyed and regenerated. The first two hero figures are most commonly tied to the origins of the sweatlodge, at least in Lakota traditions (Bucko 1999:147-154), and in some stories to the creation of pounds for hunting bison. Some of the texts, suggest the region of Wind Cave National Park; if not here, they unfold in topographic settings that appear like the Buffalo Gap or the Hot Springs. In fact, there’s a location at Wind Cave National Park, identified on old GSL maps, as the “Giant’s Thumb.” Whether the origin of the name for this landform has any connection to local tribal traditions is unknown, but it is certainly consistent with tribal stories of the area.

These locations are also associated with other culture heroes, who appear later in cosmic time, notably Tokahe for the Lakotas and Motseyeef [Sweet Medicine] and possibly Tomosivisi [Stands on the Ground] for the Cheyennes. Thus, they are highly sacred earth centers where life is perpetuated in the cosmic struggles of the north/nadir and south/zenith that take place twice every year as the seasons change from summer to fall and from winter to spring. The forces that generate these cosmic transitions are often envisioned as figures of gigantic proportions, greater than life characters with the capacity to bring about life’s ultimate destruction unless combated by countervailing powers and forces.105 Falling Star, Blood Clot Boy, and Stone Boy, all of whom have miraculous origins, gain some of the knowledge and power to mediate or balance the dangers of these forces so that humans can overcome and survive their destructive powers.

Another cast of spiritual characters linked to the Wind Cave area are diminutive figures commonly called “Little People” in English. 106 Three stories about the cave refer to their presence. Since the Lakota names for these figures are not given in the texts, it is difficult to know what diminutive figures they represent. The different varieties of Little People, while potentially dangerous to humans, can be benefactors too. One of the Little People saved Swift Bird’s grandfather, Fast Thunder, from a Crazy Buffalo at Wind Cave (in Kadlec and Kadlec 1981:148). In LaPointe’s stories (1976:84), they breed the game animals in their underworld homes, and in a story whose attribution is unknown one directs a Lakota hunter to Wind Cave from the Hot Springs and drives Waziya from his home (Anonymous, n.d.: Wind Cave National Park Archives). In one of the stories, the Little People are also associated with the neighboring Hot Springs. As La Pointe (1976:45) writes:

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104 Many of Stone Boy’s exploits, including making pounds, are associated in Arapaho texts with their culture hero, Found in the Grass (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:341-387).
105 There are many dangerous giant and/or cannibalistic figures in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions that represent the antithesis of the life-giving properties of the natural world. There are monster-like figures connected to water, caves, mountain peaks, and forests. In general, most of the locations that are conceptualized as earth-centers, places where powerful cosmic forces come together, have transformative possibilities that are both beneficial and dangerous to humans (Moore, J. 1974:165).
106 These figures are described in greater depth in Chapter Eleven under the section that deals with spiritual beings linked to water and springs. They appear in Left Heron’s Iron Hawk texts (in Beckwith 1930: 382-383:388-389), where they are associated with the Uke’gila (the petrified water monsters of the Badlands). Of interest, the place in Left Heron’s text where Iron Hawk meets a little man is in the context of the story where he marries a buffalo woman. Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) also talks about Little People in the Black Hills.
The Little People bred game animals for human consumption and kept perpetual fires ablaze to heat the waters that flow up to the surface, thus keeping the flowers in bloom and the medicinal shrubs growing year around.

He goes on to describe the springs further:

The lands nourished by the warm waters were fertile places of great value. Sweet smelling peppermint plants and pulpy rosebuds for tea abounded here. A profuse growth of medicinal herbs and leafy green for soups, and many kinds of edible tubers thrived around those areas. The open warm water streams attracted waterfowl and other game animals the year round. The Lakota say these oasis-like places were gifts of Taku Wakan, and they cleansed themselves in the mineral pools and drank the saline waters to maintain their health. They gave the name Mini awoblu mokoche (land of bubbling waters) to this part of the Black Hills, and they cared for it well...(LaPointe 1976:46).

Stella Swift Bird (Kadlacek and Kadlacek 1981:149) also claimed the Hot Springs had healing powers, although she did not associate them with Little People. She said:

Hot Springs was called holy water or holy place. When people got sick they went there to drink the holy water. They drank four times and each time it had a different taste. They drank four mouthfuls and prayed.

Nor did Jake Herman (in One Feather 1974:149) identify the springs with Little People. In one story (Herman n.d.: Wind Cave National Park Archives), he wrote:

A small band of Sioux buffalo hunters discovered the Hot Springs. This group came near the Hot Springs beneath a high rocky mountain wall and as they dismounted their ponies to rest they heard a laughing voice that echoes from the rocky walls. Then out from the rocky walls appeared two beautiful twin sisters. The sisters informed the hunters that they were mortal creatures that lived in the Black Hills and asked the hunters to follow them and they would lead them to the sacred place called Mini-Kata where the water was hot and had curative powers. When the twins led them to the springs they proceeded to tell and show the hunters how to use the springs and told them this. ‘You tell your people to offer up tokens and never reveal this place to anyone but your people.’ The twin sisters then disappeared back into the rocky walls into the mysterious hidden powers of Mother Earth.

Herman goes on to tell how, in later years, a young warrior recklessly told a white man the whereabouts of the springs whose location the Lakotas kept secret. In exchange for a gray horse, he took the white man to the springs. After he returned to his camp, a thunderstorm approached and lightning killed his gray horse. The story concludes with the statement: ‘The Thunderbird had taken its toll.’ (A portion of this story also appears in One Feather 1972:149).

The Twin Sisters of this story are remarkably similar in their features to the Double-Woman, who also appears in LaPointe’s story (1976:80-81) of Wind Cave. The Double-Woman, Winyan Nunpapika, was an important spiritual figure, often represented as a blacktail deer that took on the appearance of tall twin women (Dorsey, J. 1894:480; Tyon in Walker 1980:165-166). She was a patroness of Lakota quill workers, and images associated with her have been linked to some of the rock art on the walls of nearby canyons in the Black Hills (Sundstrom 2002).107 Another figure, which is often conflated with her but is different, is Anog-Ite (Double Face), who plays an important role in the story of Tokahe and the emergence of the Pte Oyate from their

107 See also the discussions on deer in Chapter Ten and in Appendix A.
home at Wind Cave. This figure, usually portrayed as a female, is widely reported to harm pregnant women and lure lone hunters astray (Tyon, Garnett, Bear, Sword, and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:107), but there are also male two-faces in Lakota/Dakota traditions (Dorsey, J. 1894:473-475; Bushotter in Dorsey 1889:151-153; Ivan Stars in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:374-378, [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:644-658]). In Cheyenne stories, some of the two-faces are associated with a cave in the southern Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:79). Like Waziya, the Two-Faces and the Double-Woman are often characterized as giants (Bushotter in Dorsey 1889:153).

In Lakota traditions, bluffs and springs that emerge out of rock outcroppings are commonly associated with the homes of Little People, the Double-Woman, and the first Pte Oyate woman, Wakanka. Any site of this order is bound to have some spiritual significance and use. It would not be surprising to learn, for example, that areas near Cold Spring Creek and the Twin Sisters Range [a name the Lakota sometimes use in English to refer to the Double-Woman] have sites of cultural significance. Indeed, just south of this range, outside park properties, is a place called “Witch Springs.” In Cheyenne traditions, springs and water holes have connections to Little People and blacktail deer as well, and they are highly respected (Moore, J. 1974:164).

In the traditions of the Lakotas and other tribal peoples of the Great Plains, the proportions of spiritual figures often change across different planes of the universe. The spirits of the Buffalo Nation or Pte Oyate, for example, are tiny in their underworld home before they emerge on the earth’s surface where they grow to their normal stature (Campbell 1937; LaPointe 1976:87; Charging Eagle and Zeilinger 1987). Spirits of the underworld and the sky world are often miniaturized or inflated to non-human sizes, perhaps as a rhetorical device to emphasize their mysterious, non-ordinary, or out-of-this-world status and power. Whatever the reason, the spirits associated with Wind Cave exist in miniaturized form, sometimes appearing as blue lights, although the sacred figures that govern their appearance and materialization are sometimes envisioned as gigantic in stature.

As discussed elsewhere, any place that connects the underground with the surface of the earth or anything that transverses these planes is sacred to the Lakotas (Powers, W. 1986:113). When the two stand in proximity, that is when plants, minerals, or animals inhabit locations near caves and springs, the effect of their ton is intensified. The area of Wind Cave is especially significant in this regard because bison, gypsum, and certain plants converge at this location in wondrous, powerful, and life-generating ways (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:128; Catches in Gonzalez 1996:67). Earth centers are the places that give rise to life in its materialized form, or to put it differently, give physical form to the spirit. Their association with death and rebirth, their circular form, and their extension across multiple tiers of the universe all come together in complex, symbolic ways to articulate a sense of great mystery. All of these things tie Wind Cave, the Buffalo Gap, and the Hot Springs together and to the area that is the Black Hills. What weaves them all together are the sacred stories about the genesis of bison and their relations with humans, the stories of the Four Winds, especially Waziyata, the North Wind, and his grandfather, Waziya, the various Orphan Boy narratives, and finally, the Great Race.

D. The Great Race and the Race Track

In Alexandra New Holy’s analysis of the Black Hills (1997:128), the cangleska, the circle or hoop, is another centralizing metaphor within which time and space are unified in Lakota cosmology. It is the figurative geometric expression of life in all of its forms (DeMallie 1987:27,
Drawing on the words of Nicholas Black Elk, New Holy shows how the Black Hills stand for this circle of life and become Og’naka I’Cante, “the heart of everything that is.” For her, the circular Race Track is a synergistic symbol inside of which Paha Sapa, [Black Hills], the Wiwan- yang Wacipi [Sun Dance], and the Cangleska Oyate [Hoop of the Nation] become indivisible and part of an essential oneness (New Holy 1997:133-137). She goes on to argue that the circle’s sacred center, the hocoka, is understood as the “seventh direction,” the place where the heart [cante] of a people, their land, and the universe come together with the use of the pipe [cannupa]. Through the prayers that are conveyed in the action of a pipe and its smoke, all time-spaces of the universe are connected, enfolded, and concentrated at a single point that is the center of life and its creations (New Holy 1997:138-143). Similarly, the performance of the Sun Dance draws all that is to its center, the can wakan [sacred tree], through prayer and ritual, thereby renewing the world (New Holy 1997:143-151). The center or altar, hocoka, the pipe, and the Sun Dance are also synergistically connected to the land and its heart. For the Lakotas, this heart is the Black Hills whose innermost center is located at their geologic core -- basically, the area that encompasses the three central prairies, Gillette, Reynolds, and Slate, known as Pe Sla [Bare Place] in Lakota and their surrounding peaks, Harney Peak and Castle Butte (New Holy 1987:151-156). This was the region to which the Lakotas traveled on a religious pilgrimage every seven years to perform a renewal ceremony known as Okisataya Wowahwala [Peace at Bare Spot], a journey that started when the bison left their winter home along the Race Track and returned to the grasslands with their newborn calves through the opening at the Buffalo Gap (Goodman 1992:50).

The landscape of the Black Hills can be envisioned as a series of four circles with the outermost circle bounded by the two branches of the Cheyenne River that nearly surround them. The next circle is formed by the Hogback with its many canyon gateways, which the animals typically used in their annual movements to and from the adjoining grasslands. The third circle is the Race Track where the animals wintered. The innermost circle is marked by the Hills’ limestone and granite interiors, the place where forces of the cosmic nadir and zenith meet, begetting new life through the release of ni [breath]. Once life is reborn within the depths of the Hills and arrives on the earth’s surface through the various cave openings which dot the Hills, its various manifestations need to be ordered to insure its survivance. The process of its ordering is what the famous story of the Race Track is about. There are many different versions of this story among the Cheyennes and Lakotas. Most Cheyenne and Lakota renditions focus on how the race ordered the relationships between different animals and humans, thereby establishing certain basic categorical and cosmological distinctions in the universe.

108 This spot must have been highly significant to the Lakotas. In contrast to their heavily forested surroundings, these open, treeless prairies must have appeared like hocaka, altars, which, in most Lakota and Cheyenne ceremonies, are areas inside a ceremonial circle where the vegetation has been stripped away and the ground unearthed and pulverized before the altar is constructed.

109 The details surrounding the performance of this ceremony are not given. Its purpose is remarkably similar, however, to the Cheyennes’ practice of the Massaum (Schlesier 1987), which was a ceremony dedicated to the renewal of plants and animals that also took place in the Black Hills.

110 Early reports of the volumes of smoke issuing from the interior Hills in the 1830s may very well have made the Hills interiors appear as a colossal recharging of the universe, so powerful that, like a thunderstorm, it was capable of destroying everything in its path. This is reminiscent of John Moore’s characterization (1996:225-226) of the Sun Dance as replicating the fertility structure of a thunderstorm, in which the thunders and their whirlwinds act as primal phallic forces impregnating the earth, so it can bring forth its plants and animals. Since the thunders dwell in the region of Harney Peak, the Black Hills can be imagined as a fertility structure as well, a place where life returns to be regenerated, reborn, and renewed.
Two versions of a Cheyenne-Suhtaio story begin with a marriage between a human man and a buffalo woman (Stands In Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:2:472-475). For four nights, the man dreams of shooting a certain buffalo. After the fourth dream, he decides to find out what it means and goes out hunting. Just as he dreamed, he shoots a buffalo cow, and although wounded, she escapes him. He follows her tracks and finds her living in a lone tipi where she now appears to him as a beautiful woman. He marries her, and they have a son, but she leaves him. Once again, he follows her tracks, which lead to a high ridge where the man is able to see a herd of buffalo grazing below. His son, who is now a young yellow calf, approaches him and warns that the buffalo are going to kill him unless he can identify which of the young calves is his son. The son devises different signals so his father can recognize him. The father succeeds in singling out his son, but the buffalo persist in their efforts to get rid of him. They charge him and put him through more tests, but his human power is too strong for them. Finally, the buffalo decide to run a race against him, the outcome of which determines who is able to eat whom. The man is given a choice of running with either a black or red stick. On the advice of his son, he chooses the black one so he can follow the track along the inside of the Hogback. The buffalo select their fastest runner, Slim Walking Woman, to represent them. All the animals and birds arrive at this momentous race and paint themselves with different colors. They take sides, and the birds band together with humans. The animals race around the Black Hills, many collapsing from exhaustion. Slim Walking Woman maintains the lead throughout the race until the very end when Magpie flies past her and wins the race for humans. Before conceding, the buffalos perform one last act. They organize a Medicine Lodge (Sun Dance) that recreates the Great Race and then turn its knowledge over to humans (Powell 1969:2:477). As John Stands In Timber (and Liberty 1967:24) interprets it:

That race gave mankind the right to use animal flesh for food and to be the master like the buffalo told him. If the animals had won they would have lived on his flesh instead. Man was thankful that he won. The Cheyennes have offered the Sun Dance every year since that time, remembering the Great Race and giving thanks to the Almighty for the way it turned out. They used to put little clay figures of all the animals around the center pole to represent them, but that part is not done anymore, although much of the ceremony is the same as in the earliest days.

In other Cheyenne versions (Kroeber 1900:161-162; Grinnell 1926:252-254; Randolph 1937:189-192), the Great Race narrative is not preceded by any special human-bison relationship. Grinnell (1926, 241) identifies “The Race” as one of the earliest Cheyenne stories, and he places it under a different heading than the “Buffalo Wife” narrative. Similarly, John Ant’s version (in Leman 1987:245-250) and one narrated by an unnamed Cheyenne (in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:30-31) do not include the story of the “Buffalo Wife,” nor does the one recorded by Richard Erdoes (and Ortiz 1984:390-392) from another unidentified Cheyenne person in 1968. As recorded and published by George Bird Grinnell in 1926 (252-254), the story reads:

In the beginning the creator made first the earth, then the trees and the grass, and afterward he made the animals and the people and put them on earth. At that time the animals and people lived together as friends.

Yet after this, as you all know, the buffalo used to eat us people, and the animals as well. The Great Power thought that it would be a good thing to have a race of all the animals, to decide whether the buffalo should eat the people, or they the buffalo.

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111 The Arapahos have a race story, published by George Dorsey and Alfred Kroeber (1903:395-418), that involves a marriage between a human man and a bison woman. It is not identified with the Race Track of the Black Hills, however. Another story is related to Bear Lodge Butte, but the connection is not made in their texts (Ibid:152-153).
So at that time all creatures living upon the earth, Indians, buffalo, birds, and all animals were called together at a place east of the Black Hills, which we call the Race Track. It is near what white men now call the Buffalo Gap.

The story goes on to tell how the Magpie won the race for the people, giving them the right to eat the buffalo rather than become the buffalo’s food.

Another early version, as told by an elderly Cheyenne to Thomas Marquis (and Limbaugh 1973:30-31), describes in some detail how the animals variously painted themselves, and it reads as follows:

In the Black Hills is a certain place where the Indians say, a long time ago all of the birds and animals had a race. Buffalo, deer, elk, antelope, bears, wolves, mountain sheep, crows, magpies, and other creatures entered the contest. In preparation, all of them painted themselves, each with its favorite colors. The meadow lark said: ‘I shall have the moon on my breast.’ Ever since then the moon has given this bird’s breast its color. The magpie and the crow were the last to put on their paints. The others had taken the bright hues, so these two had only the black and white. The magpie used white earth and charcoal. The crow blackened itself with only the charcoal. A slender and spirited deer pranced so lightly that all observers predicted, ‘Surely this deer will win.’

The race continued throughout a whole day, from sunrise to sunset. The catbird stopped, alighted upon a bush, and said: ‘It will be better if I stay here and sing for them.’ The buffalo slowed down to a walk, and from its mouth came so much froth that there are yet many places in that region where the ground is white and frothy. The lively deer became so tired that the blood flowing from its nose made red stains through the rocks and over the soil all over that country. The magpie and the crow kept flying all day and they won the race. Since then, the Cheyennes honor them by not eating their flesh.

The version collected by Alice Marriott (and Rachlin 1968:120-123) from two Southern Cheyennes, Mary Little Bear Inkanish and John Fletcher, clearly joins the ungulate species, elk, deer, and antelope, with the bison, and aligns raptors and carnivores with humans. As John Moore (1984:296-297) points out in reference to the Cheyenne, although some elements found in the story vary from one narrator to another, the game animals and birds that appear are basically identical in all versions. In addition, the overall description and meaning of the race is the same. Generally speaking, the animals that painted themselves stood on the side of human beings, while those who did not were the opponents who ultimately lost the race and became the prey of humans.

John Ant’s version (in Leman 1987:245-250) of the story, which is published in Cheyenne with a line-by-line English translation, has three interesting features. First, it tells how the man raced with the birds by “floating” with an eagle plume attached to the back of his head. Second, it explains how, before the race began, various animals ran out of the hollow log of a large cottonwood tree to find human meat. Lastly, as in all other Race Track stories, it establishes the right of humans to consume bison and other game, and it also creates the prohibition against eating the

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112 This version also links the Sun Dance to the Race Track story, but unlike the one told by the Northern Cheyenne, the race takes place after the performance of a Sun Dance.
113 This is also a significant feature of a Lakota race story told by Left Heron (in Walker 1917:219-221) that appears to take place in the Black Hills too, and it is also associated with the magical abilities of a Lakota orphan hero (Beckwith 1930).
114 This parallels certain Kiowa stories (Mooney 1979) that link human and animal origins to hollow cottonwood logs. These logs might be seen as metaphoric equivalents to caves, and this is especially significant in relation to the Sun Dance where the center pole is a young cottonwood tree.
animals that sided with humans. In this particular version, the allies of humans were a magpie, a crow, a blackbird, a sparrow, and a gopher.

Lakota versions of the Race Track story do not begin with the account of the man who marries a buffalo woman. As discussed earlier, the Buffalo woman tale as told by Left Heron and others at the beginning of the twentieth century is linked in later Lakota storytelling traditions to Wind Cave, which sits on a mountain a short distance to the west of the Race Track. Among the Lakotas, the Race Track story, which Charlotte Black Elk (1986c:200) calls Otakuye Topa Wamaka Og’naka l’Cante Oki inyanka (Run of the Four Relations Around the Heart of Everything That Is), involves the same general message and many of the same animals found in Cheyenne stories. There are some interesting variations, however. For one, Lakota stories often start with the existence of a universal disharmony or chaos between humans and all of the animals, which the race seeks to redress. As LaPointe (1976:18-19) tells it, a council was held to confer on the matter:

It was a memorable event because, in order to bring peace and order to the world, it was agreed that a race of immense magnitude was to be the solution. The race was to decide many things. It would result in sorting and separating the animals into their proper species by the smell of their bodies. It was to be a grand, epic feat of the ages.

Thus, to all the tatuya tona (wind flows or directions), messengers were sent, in order to announce the great event. These messengers were chosen from among the swiftest birds, and from among animals that could run like the flight of a strong arrow. Meantime, other animals were detailed to find suitable ground for a circular racetrack, and lay out a course wide enough and long enough so that the many animals who were expected could take part in the race. There were strict rules established, to insure a fair and orderly event. Every animal would have a chance, whether small or clumsy, weak or strong.

Joseph White Bull, however, told Thomas Odell (1942:168) that the race took place because “the animals in the Black Hills became too numerous, and it was decided to eliminate some by having them run a race around the Black Hills.” In one version, Magpie calls the council after overhearing the buffalos’ plans to exterminate all the humans (Black Elk, C. 1986c:200-201). In another, it is a man who convenes the great meeting (LaPointe 1976:18-19). And in Nicholas Black Elk’s rendition (in DeMallie 1984:309), the thunder-beings are the ones who instigate it.

In LaPointe’s narrative (1976:17-20), there are also unique references to giant reptilian land animals closely related to the Unktehi of the waters, who get destroyed in the Great Race.115 La Pointe (1976:19) writes:

The Lakota say, that even to this day the remains of this ancient race track are still plainly visible, and there are many large bones still lying around along the historic track. The huge bones of the Unkeche Ghila, which, once upon a time, roamed these prairie lands, can be found in the badlands to the east and south of the Black Hills.

Their destruction came about as the Black Hills spewed rock and ashes into the air, killing many of the animals (LaPointe 1976:18-19).

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115 Archie Fire (a.k.a Lame Deer) told Richard Erdoes another story in 1969 about the Black Hills that involves the Unktehi (Erdoes and Ortiz 1984:94-96). In this story, the water monsters were turned into stone, and a great flood drowned the people. One young girl survived, however, because an eagle took her to the highest stone pinnacle in the Black Hills and made her his wife. The association of fossilized animals, from dinasours to mastadoons, with ancient water spirits is widespread in L/Dakota traditions (Dorsey, J. 1894: 438-440.
In most of the published Lakota stories of the Great Race (Odell 1942:168; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:309), as with the Cheyenne, Magpie wins the race for humans, but in some Lakota versions, only the birds race with each other. As Little Cloud told one version of the story in Lakota to Father Eugene Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:94-96),

Now, all the little birds and all their relatives will finish a race. Now, a crow announced it all over the world and returned home saying, “They are coming.”

Then when they arrived, they all said: “Where is your Leader?” The others replied “Spotted Eagle is our leader,” but they looked and they said, “Is he the one who will win?”

We will go together but it is a long and difficult route.”
Then the leader said: “The winners will have many good winters because they will get the best home, strong enough so snow can’t get in and it will be good for many winters.”

Then everyone was happy. Then a magpie stood and said: “Friends, I am slow, but because I am in need of a home, I will take part in this race.” The leader responded saying: “Because all of you have come a long way, you will leave in two days.”

Then he said, “At that time, you will leave Mato Tipila (Devil’s Tower) and circle around the Hills, and return by the way through He Okiksahe (Buffalo Gap). Those of you who can go a long distance, wave your wings.” He said this as they were leaving, but the best three to go the distance were the Big Hawk, the Eagle, and the Prairie Chicken and the slowest was the Magpie.

But, whoever wanted to win did not turn away and kept flapping his wings. First Big Hawk was sweating to death just sitting there. Then, after that time, eagle sat down and after that Prairie Chicken sat down. After that, all the little birds were sweating to death and one after the other, they say down. The Magpie went, and they each said:

“Turn back. As for me, because it is truly a long distance, I can not do it. The Magpie said; “I am slow, but I can fly through my country.” Now, he was thinking that all the relatives would be indisposed, and he really called out while flying and was very happy at heart. Now a few were close to returning home and were half way. The Magpie was alone and the first to get home and now reached his goal.

At that time, all his relatives reached the finish line one right after the other. Then the leader called the Magpie and he went. The leader said: “Now you have won a home, but where do you want to make it?” Then he said, “I would want to be in the dense woods. Yes that is where I will be.”

So that is how the Magpie won his race and acquired his nest, and for all his days lived in that home.

The Magpie was strong for flying alone. It is so. The end.116

A more recent rendition of this version of the story is given by Gilbert Walking Bull (1980:6-8), and like Little Cloud’s narrative, the race begins and ends at Bear Lodge Butte instead of the Buffalo Gap in Cheyenne traditions and in some of the Lakotas’ as well.

The vast majority of the stories imply that only one race took place, although Eagle Shield’s narrative (Densmore 1918:319) suggests that the animals gathered to race at this spot on more than one occasion. As he interpreted the story:

116 Yvonne Kelly translated this story with the assistance of Jerry Dearly. Again, this translation differs somewhat from Manhart’s.
The reason why the Black Hills were so long unknown to the white man was that Wakantanka [Great Spirit or Great Mystery] created them as a meeting place for the animals. The Indians had always known this and regarded the law of Wakantanka concerning it. By this law they were forbidden to kill any of the animals during the great gatherings. In the Black Hills there is a ridge of land around which is a smooth, grassy place called the ‘race-course.’ This is where the animals have the races, during their gatherings. Even small animals like the turtle are there. The crow is always first to arrive, and the other birds come before the animals, while insects and creatures like the frog travel slowly and arrive last. Sometimes it takes 10 years for all the animals to arrive, as they come from long distances and camp whenever winter overtakes them.

Lakota and Cheyenne stories similarly account for the Race Track’s red soil as a vestige of the blood spilled by the animals in the heat of the race. The soil is called neoma [red earth] in Cheyenne (Randolph 1937:191; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51; Walking Bull 1980:9). While the Cheyennes symbolically mark and separate the Hogback from the Red Valley in their stories, Lakotas sometimes go beyond this and explain how the depression and some of its surrounding topographic features were formed as a result of the race. Indeed, in one story, the movement of the racers creates the Black Hills (LaPointe 1976:19).

In some of the earlier Cheyenne and Lakota versions (Grinnell 1926:254; DeMallie 1984:310), humans learn of the bow and arrow after winning the Great Race. It is interesting to note here that the Bow Society of the Lakotas was associated with a sacred race too, although there is nothing in the literature that explicitly connects the origins of this society to the story of the Great Race or the Race Track in the Black Hills (Blish 1934). In several Cheyenne stories, but not in any of the Lakota versions, the Great Race is associated with the beginnings of the Sun Dance. This ceremony was first performed by the buffalos, and after losing to humans, they turned it over to humans. Some say this happened at the Buffalo Gap (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:72). A few writers have pointed out that many aspects of the Cheyennes’ Sun Dance recreate elements of the Great Race (see Chapter Twelve) (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:24; Powell 1969:2:473 n4, 475 n5, 476 n6; 477-478).

Curiously, the Lakotas also have a story (Walker 1917:212-215; Red Shirt 2002:212) of how the buffalos taught human beings the Sun Dance, but this one took place in a cave at the home of the Pte Oyate, where a young man cohabits with a buffalo woman and learns the dance from her people. Later, he and his wife take this knowledge to his people, who, at first, refuse to accept it, even though they are starving. They finally approach the couple for help and learn the dance that brings the buffalo to their camp. Like the story of Tokahe, which is associated by many Lakotas with Wind Cave, Wazi and Wakanka are central characters in this narrative. Also, like the other stories of Wind Cave descended from Left Heron, this one involves a marriage between a hunter and a buffalo woman. Wind Cave is not explicitly identified in this story, nor was it ever mentioned in any of the other stories in the Walker collection, but its themes certainly match those that are now connected to Wind Cave. This location is also consistent with Cheyenne stories of the origin of the Sun Dance at the Buffalo Gap. In fact, Olivia Pourier (in Neihardt and Utecht 2000:135), the granddaughter of Nichols Black Elk, reported that the Lakotas used to hold Sun Dances in the southeastern region of the Black Hills.

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117 In Dakota and Lakota traditions, a similar theme of bison shedding their blood accounts for the red pipestone formations in Minnesota (Nicolett in Bray and Bray 1976:76).
Another story collected by Edward and Mabel Kadlecek (1981:118) from Frank Kicking Bear in 1969 makes a similar connection between the Sun Dance and the Black Hills, although the animals involved are deer and elk instead of the bison:

I will tell a short story about the Sun Dance. My grandfather, his name was Chagla, was the founder of the Sun Dance. He went to the Black Hills one time. As he went about the hills, he heard a dream and he followed the dream sound. As he went around, he saw all kinds of deer and elk dancing in a circle, and after the dance they paired up and went back in the hills. This was where he learned all the Sun dance songs. He saw that in the form of humans. This was the beginning of the Sun Dance. Through this Sun Dance they worship the Great Spirit, and it is the greatest religious gathering the Indians ever had.

Jake Herman (1965b:21) also connects the origins of the Sun Dance to the Black Hills. Indeed, most Lakotas and Cheyennes locate the original Sun Dance in the Black Hills, either at the Buffalo Gap or in the area of Bear Lodge Butte.

Several other Lakota and Cheyenne ceremonial observances are connected with caves too. In one story Little Wound told James Walker (1980:196) of the origins of the Hunka as follows:

A shaman sought a vision. His vision was a ghost like cloud. He followed this ghost and it led him into a great hole in the earth. When they came into this hole it was like a great council tipi, and there were many people there. All were feasting and singing and giving presents. Tate and Okaga were there. They taught the shaman the songs and the ceremony. Then Tate carried him through the air back to his people and told him that when one chooses a Hunka or an Ate, then this ceremony and these songs should be performed.

Although there is nothing to specifically identify the cave in this story with Wind Cave, Tate, after whom Wind Cave is named, is a central character in the story. Also, Tokahe, the first human to come from Wind Cave, is linked to the Hunka (Walker 1983:378-379).

There is yet another Left Heron story recorded by James Walker (1917:219-221) that tells about the origins of foot racing. This narrative is quite different from the vast majority of stories related to the Race Track because it doesn’t involve a race among the animals. Instead, it involves a race between a wakan runner and Wakanka, The Old Woman, identified in this story as the “Witch.” Both are able to transform themselves into animals and both enlist the help of two Winds to win the race. Even though this isn’t the story of the Great Race, it describes topographic features that appear remarkably like the Race Track. In the story the Witch tells everyone that “they would run once around a deep gully, then on level ground to the hills, and once around the hills and back through a gap in the hills to the place where they started” (Walker 1917:220). Nevertheless, it is one more example of the importance of foot racing, which in Lakota traditions often took place before hunts to ensure their success, suggesting that races were not simply recreational but spiritual in their outcome (Walker 1917:278-283, 1982:89). Today, a strong connection is still being made between the Great Race and racing traditions in general and the identity of the Lakota peoples. As Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) tells it:

It was brought up by some of these elderly (referring to Moses Two Bulls, Bunk Left Hand, Luke Weasel Bear, Franks Fools Crow and Dave Badger) that at one time long ago the birds and the two-leggeds had a race against the four-leggeds around the Black Hills. It was a natural track all around the Hills. The animals did this because of the sacredness of the Black Hills and also to show their stamina and endurance, to show how animals could endure

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118 A variety of different competitive games were played by the Lakotas to insure a successful outcome in hunting (Meeker 1901b; Walker 1905; 1906).
hardship, run without water and food for a number of days, how some of the birds could float
through the air and some have to fight hard flapping their own wings, and some animals have
to crawl. But no matter how slow or how fast they went, the endurance was there. As they
ran and hopped and flew and crawled, they wore a valley all around the Hills we now call the
Race Track. Today there are marathon runs held by Lakota young people to honor the Black
Hills and that the first great race all the way around the Hills. I think that’s a great thing and a
way of expressing identity.

Most of the published versions of the Race Track story represent only fragments of the
original narratives whose conventional telling probably involved more elaborate story lines and a
much richer body of detail. Despite variations in some of their characters, storylines, and
outcomes, most of the narrators who tell the story agree that it laid down some of the fundamental
characteristics of the animals, their species identification, and the nature of their relationships
with each other, particularly who would become the hunter and the hunted. It is a story of epic
stature, one that was narrated by the most accomplished storytellers (LaPointe 1976:17) and one
whose recitation may have taken up to four nights to tell (Powell 1969:2:472 n1). It is also a story
that alludes to one of the most powerful spiritual beings in the Lakota pantheon, Taku Skanskan,
who guides all forms of motion. He is the one who invented races and who supervises their
outcome; he presides over the movements of animals, war parties, and camps (Tyon, Garnett,
Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:107), and he is the guardian of Tate, the Wind.

All of the stories, however, support the view, widely held by the Lakotas and the Cheyennes,
that the Black Hills stand within a sacred enclosure or circle, which is mirrored in the heavens by
a great circle of stars, also as known as the Race Track, Ki inyanka ocanku or the Sacred Hoop,
Cangleska wakan (Goodman 1992:7). Whether on earth inside the Black Hills or in the
heavens inside a circle of seven stars, new life is created and reborn. Inside this circle is another
constellation known as Tayamni, which includes Tayamnipa [The Head] in Pleiades; Tayamninte [The Tail] or Sirius; Tayamntucuhu [The Ribs], representing two stars, Rigel and Betleguese; and Tayamnicankahu [The Backbone], the stars in Orion’s belt (Buechel 1970:486). The name Tayamni can be translated in several ways, one derived from the number three [yanmi] and perhaps referring to three kinds of game [ta], or it can refer to a circular action [yunni] which is associated with the act of creation (Buechel 1970:674) and the Whirlwind, the Fifth son of Tate [Wind]. The last translation would best fit the idea that this region constitutes an area where game animals are conceived. The three stars forming the belt are associated with the region of Pe Sla, while the head represents one of the seven peaks in the Harney Range. Rigel at the eastern side of the Race Track marks the backbone, while Betleguese represents the trail leading to Inyan Kara Mountain at Procyon in the west. The tail, Sirius, represents an exit in the southern Hills at the point where the Cheyenne River is believed to move in Four Directions; this exit follows a trail that moves south from the Central Prairies along Hells Canyon near Jewel Cave National

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119 Cheyennes know a circular constellation whose identifying stars are not described, nor have they been associated in the published literature with the Race Track (Petter 1913-15:1009; Moore, J. 1996:204).
120 In one rendition of the Great Race story (Goble 1985), the Milky Way was created from the dust the animals raised in their race. In the 1980s, Paul Goble, a non-Indian, wrote many children’s books based on tribal myths. His book The Great Race of the Birds and Animals (1985) was written for children, and represents a synthesis of the storylines found in different Cheyenne and Lakota versions of this story. He also published a version of the Buffalo Woman story (1984). We have not been able to find a connection to the Milky Way in any of the published stories we have studied, however.
121 The sweat lodge is often described as the womb and ribs of mother earth (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:48; Bucko 1999:76, 85, 148-149). Here, again, we find an example of the interchangeability of symbols, with the interiors of the Black Hills being conceived in the image of a sweatlodge qua animal womb that gives birth to ni, or the breath of life.
Monument (Black Elk, C. 1992:50-51). There are two other stars that mark the circle, Pollux in the west at Bear Lodge Butte a.k.a. Devil’s Tower and Capella in the north that Charlotte Black Elk (1992:50, 53) identifies with the Buffalo Gap. All of these stars are marked by a double vortex image on Lakota star maps, indicating points of intersection between the sky and the earth (Goodman 1992:16), and all of them can be seen together during the winter months in the northern sky. Capella is an especially interesting star whose highest position in the sky corresponds with mid-winter. In spring it moves southeast towards the horizon where it stops in mid-winter.

Curiously, the positioning of the Buffalo Gap star, Capella, on Black Elk’s star map does not correspond with the location of this site in the Black Hills. It is the only site whose location on the earth’s surface does not match. There is no explanation why this should be the case unless it represents the kind of inversion previously discussed in relation to the Four Winds.

Capella is an important star for other tribes as well, including the Crow and Pawnee. Curiously, the Pawnee believed that Capella, the Yellow Star, was one of their “Four Quarter” or “Four Wind” stars. These stars represented the “pillars” of heaven (Chamberlain 1982:94-96, 101, 103, 113, 178). The heliacal risings of other stars, including Aldebaran, Sirius, and Rigel, are important in Cheyenne ceremonialism (Schlesier 1987:83-87), and these are also aligned with some of the stone cairns, alignments, and medicine wheels in the northern Plains (Kehoe and Kehoe 1977:85-86).
summer and returns in a northwesterly direction towards the zenith. It is one of the stars, along with Polaris, the North Star, that, according to Joachim Ekrutt (1990:133), “never sets in the higher latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere.”

Another metaphoric allusion is the connection of the Race Track to the edge of a corral, in which the Black Hills is imagined as one huge hunting enclosure, where the Buffalo Gap forms the chute into which the animals are driven. Linea Sundstrom (2000) shows, quite convincingly, how this representation fits not only with the Cheyenne stories of the Race Track but also their Massaum [Animal Dance] ceremony. One can argue that the enclosure represented by the stories of the Buffalo Gap and Race Track is also connected to the tradition of the Sun Dance in Cheyenne traditions, not only because there are explicit references to this association in Cheyenne stories but also because of many other symbolic connections to their New Life Lodge or Sun Oxehehoom (cf.: Chapter Twelve). Although many of the most famous stories about the first performance of the Sun Dance take place at sites on the northern end of the Hills, notably Sundance Mountain and Bear Lodge Butte, the fact remains that several traditions point to the Buffalo Gap and the Race Track as the setting for the Sun Dance’s origins among the bison and the site of its transfer to humans.

The association of these two locations with the Sun Dance in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions does not appear to be coincidental. From the descriptions of Henry Newton and Walter Jenney (1880), the areas of the Buffalo Gap and Sundance Mountain hold peculiar gypsum/red clay formations. Recalling the discussion in Chapter Twelve, a line is traced around the Lakotas’ Sun Dance altar and filled with red paint and then gypsum, mirroring how red clay and gypsum coexist in the geology of the Red Valley. Where present day Beaver Creek (then known as Amphibious Creek) passes the Race Track, the gypsum stratum are exceptionally wide and prominent (Newton and Jenney 1880:141-142), and in this area and the Sun Dance Hills, the seams of gypsum dissolve into sink holes and crevices (Newton and Jenney 1880:135, 146). It is not hard to imagine how these might have been thought of as openings to the underworld, places where the bison returned and emerged following the crystalline formations that led to and from their subterranean homes (Walker 1983:220-221, 222-223, 227-228). This is the stone, which the Cheyenne call a “Sun Arrow,” that gave birth to Stone Boy (Grinnell 1926:179). There is also the allusion to these formations in one of the Cheyenne Great Race stories, which explains gypsum as the remnant of the froth that flowed from the mouth of the lead bison as she ran around the track (Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:30-31). The culture preservation staffs of Cheyenne and Lakota tribes have singled out the Race Track as a highly significant sacred site and one where all of the areas that follow its path require protection (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

II. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

At this point, it is important to ask why there is so much diversity in the stories that surround Wind Cave, the Race Track, and the neighboring Buffalo Gap and Hot Springs. One simple answer is that the variation reflects the diverse backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and narrating skills of their storytellers. Among the Lakotas, for example, differences in the way stories were told had to do with whether the storyteller was ikce, an ordinary person using everyday language, or someone with spiritual gifts, a wicasa wakan. Holy people were the ones who kept and told the most powerful spiritual stories because they were the ones who knew the sacred names and how to speak in a spiritual way (Jahner in Walker 1983:108). This sort of distinction was not unique to the Lakotas but typical of many American Indian storytelling traditions (Fogelson 1981:134; DeMallie 1984:401).
Another and more complex reason for this variation has to do with the differing cultural influences and genealogical histories of the groups in which particular stories were passed down from one generation to the next. As indicated before, the Lakotas have been an internally diverse peoples throughout their history. They lived in different locations, followed diverse kinds of adaptive strategies, and maintained varied relationships with other tribal nations. Some of the Oglalas, for example, were closely linked through intermarriage with the Cheyennes and Arapahos, others with the Poncas or Arikaras, while many had little connection with outside tribes at all. Variations such as these must have influenced their local cultural traditions and the ways different bands or families understood and related to the geographic landscapes they traveled and lived in. Indeed, Ella Deloria (in Rice 1993:11) wrote about the variations in the narrative traditions of the Lakota storytellers she consulted, and how she needed to accept this diversity as part of their distinctive interpretations and styles of narration.

Importantly, there has never been any single or “right” story associated with any of the places in the Black Hills that the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribes hold sacred. There have always been, and probably always will be, different and competing stories. This variation not only reflects the fluidity and improvisational character of the kin-based social formations that made up their tribal ways of life for centuries but also the very nature of transmitting knowledge and tradition in oral rather than written form (Fowler 1987:19; DeMallie in Walker 1982:7; DeMallie 1984:82).

The varied stories about Wind Cave and the Race Track are no exception. There are significant differences in these stories that reveal the diverse threads of cultural influence under which local storytellers learned the narratives of these places or which reflect whether the storyteller was a common or holy person. Notwithstanding the variation, there are certain common themes that tie the stories together, that link them to other locations in the surrounding region, and that reveal a more encompassing and shared sense of meaning about the relationships between the land, its animals, plants, minerals, and the sky, its birds, winds, and stars. What the Lakotas and Cheyennes shared were certain cultural assumptions about caves, springs, breath as a life-giving force, animals, and humans that were woven together in a range of tapestry-like storytelling that made sense in relation to the unique topography of the Black Hills. Nearly fifty years ago, Robert Anderson (1956:99), when discussing the Buffalo Ceremony, wrote:

Presently, all Cheyenne ceremonies share some elements with this one; perhaps none shares them all. But each ceremony represents a selection from a common fund of elements, and it is this selection and their distinctive ordering that makes any ceremony a recognizable and separate entity, standing apart from the total ceremonial and religious structure of which it is only an aspect...

More recently, Raymond DeMallie (; in Walker 1982:7, 1988:17) made a similar point in relation to the Lakotas when he argued that while Lakota culture carries a common set of ideas and principles, these are represented, interpreted, and actualized in varied ways according to individual experience (see also, Bucko 1999:101, 104, 109, 111). The idea of a foundational and shared corpus of symbolic images and practices reworked in myriad ways to create new religious forms applies very well to the ways in which the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribes in the region thought about and related to various sanctified landscapes in and around the Black Hills (New Holy 1997:27-28). A common body of ideas was transmitted and applied to specific kinds of landforms (see Chapter Twelve), and wherever people moved, they carried and reshaped this wisdom to the places they encountered that conformed to their ideas about certain topographic features. Caves, for example, were widely connected to the sanctity of breath, the bison, the North Wind, and regeneration.
Cultural assumptions of this order were known and understood well before the 1950s when stories about the sacred significance of Wind Cave made their first published appearance. For at least two hundred years, the Black Hills have been written about as the winter home of the animals, the place where new generations were reborn to repopulate the surrounding grasslands in the spring. For over a century, Cheyennes and Lakotas told or wrote stories about the association of the Hills with animal origins, regeneration and, by extension, the source of human life. Because these are quintessential stories about the great mystery, the Lakotas’ Wakan Tanka or the Cheyennes’ Ma’heo, they are sacred. Given the fact that they address basic questions about the ontological status of life itself, they are constituted in, constituted for, and constituted by a realm that is by definition spiritual. The idea of the Black Hills as a meeting place and home to the animals was widely known in the Plains; it was, as Sundstrom (1997:206) argues, a shared piece of knowledge that went with the landscape.

No matter how their details unfold, all of the stories associated with sites at Wind Cave National Park or in its vicinity are about “naming” and giving meaning to the world, placing it in order. As William Powers (1986:153) writes:

> Although the creation of the universe is seen by most people as a theological statement about firstcauses, one may look at the same stories profitably from the point of view of classification. The creation story in any culture is an attempt to put the chaotic universe that surrounds humans into some kind of order, and part of the mechanism used to accomplish this is the simple act of naming everything...The creation of culture including the Lakota, then, is tantamount to the classification of nature, and that act is what makes humans a special kind of animal. But for the Lakota, humans are perhaps not so distinctly separated from the animals, birds, reptiles, and other life forms that make up their universe.

Thus it is not surprising that the Lakota genesis and Race Track stories unfold at proximate locations, and as noted earlier, these locations share a fundamental connection to ideas of primal origin that in many ways distinguish them from landscapes at the northern end of the Black Hills that appear more connected to renewal and revitalization in more recent times.

**III. IMPLICATIONS**

It is true that many of the stories associated with the Black Hills are transportable, and that they can be, and probably have been, laid out in relation to other geographic landscapes. But it is also true that the Black Hills are exceptionally unique. They constitute a place that powerfully calls forth cosmological images that resonate with a particular intensity at this location. Once again, Linea Sundstrom (1996) is correct when she asserts that there are cultural ideas of this place that have gone with its territory irrespective of the identities of the tribal nations who hold them.

In its basic contours, some of the sacred knowledge associated with the Black Hills probably stretches back to prehistoric times. Yet, it is also clear that this knowledge has been refashioned over the centuries as new people have lived and new circumstances have unfolded within their shadows. Religious knowledge and practice are rarely static. Even though certain basic tenets and assumptions persist over time, these are changed in keeping with the cultures and conditions of the people who adopt them. To expect the Lakotas, Cheyennes, or the peoples of any other tribal nation to have harbored a geographically fixed and temporally static set of religious beliefs is not only naive, but it also denies these beliefs the very vitalism that gives people faith in them.
So what does all of this suggest for Wind Cave National Park? First of all, whether or not Wind Cave is the cave of the Lakota genesis story is not necessary for understanding the meaning and cultural significance of the region in which the park is located. All caves in the region connect to the underworld, and by definition, these subterranean sites are the homes of the bison wherever they are found. Many of the Lakota stories about Wind Cave could easily apply to other locations, but again, it is not coincidental that at some point in time they became attached to this particular cave. There is no question that the Lakotas, and probably before them the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Poncas, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, Comanches, and Arikaras, knew about this cave before Jesse and Tom Bingham “discovered” it in 1881. The cave is simply too close to a major access route for bison and humans in and out of the Black Hills to have escaped notice before the arrival of European Americans. It also stands in close proximity to a major hot springs and quarrying site, both of which certainly drew attention from the tribal nations who were known to live in this area. Indeed, according to Rufus Pilcher, (1964) who served as a ranger at Wind Cave National Park in the early 20th century, there were tipi rings and other surface remains of human habitation at the cave entrance and near the elevator, proving that some tribal peoples knew of the cave.

Over time, the Lakotas have associated a variety of sacred stories with this unusual site, some of which include the very origin of humankind. But whatever the story, all share a common theme: their association to the bison, the all-encompassing metaphor of life and cosmic awareness for the Lakotas. It is this theme that links the cave very directly to other sites in its immediate vicinity, the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and Hot Springs, which have sacred significance to the Cheyennes as well. While the cave is clearly important to the national park that bears its name, the park occupies a much larger area that includes the Race Track too. The stories of the Race Track are among the most sacred for both the Lakotas and the Cheyennes. In many versions, the Great Race begins and ends at the Buffalo Gap, which is located just outside the boundaries of the park. Although Wind Cave is explicitly connected to this site in some stories, it stands apart in others. Nonetheless, the two are linked implicitly to the idea that the lands on which the park stands are associated with sites of animal origin and places where the cosmic nature of relations between animals and humankind unfolded. There is no question that these stories hold great power for the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and probably other tribes known to have used the area as well, and there is also no question that, as a result, the places they refer to are held in reverence as well.

In an article entitled “Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom”, originally published in 1991, Vine Deloria (1999:203-217) argues that there are two ways lands can be sanctified. One way is for something of momentous significance in human history to have taken place at a particular place. Deloria uses the Gettysburg National Cemetery as representative of this type of sacred space, and he argues that such places bring social cohesion to people and “remind them of the passage of the generations that have brought them to the present” (Deloria 1999:207). The second way a site is made sacred is by its association with a religious happening; it is a place where the holiest of holies is revealed to humans. Mount Horeb, where Moses received the ten commandments, is such a place. In reference to the second type of sacred land, Deloria (1999:107) writes:

Some of the sites that traditional religious leaders visit are of a similar nature. Thus, the Buffalo Gap is at the southeastern edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota and marks the location where the buffalo emerged each spring to begin the ceremonial year of the Plains Indians. It may indeed be the starting point of the Great Race which determined the primacy between the two-leggeds and four-leggeds at the beginning of the world. Several mountains in New Mexico and Arizona mark places where the Pueblo, Hopi, and Navajo peoples completed their migrations, were told to settle, or where they first established their spiritual relationships with bear, deer, eagle and other forms of life who participate in ceremonials...
And then he goes on to say:

This tradition tells us that there are, on this earth, some places of inherent sacredness, sites that are holy in and of themselves. Human societies come and go on this earth and any prolonged occupation of a geographical region will produce shrines and sacred sites discerned by the occupying people. One only need look at the shrines of present-day Europe and read the archaeology of the site to understand that before Catholic or Protestant churches were built in certain places other religions had established their shrines and temples on that spot. These Holy Places are locations where human beings have always gone to communicate and be with higher spiritual powers. This phenomenon is worldwide and all religions find that these places regenerate people and fill them with spiritual powers...

Among the duties which must be performed at these Holy Places are ceremonies which the people have been commanded to perform in order that the earth itself and all its forms of life might survive. Some evidence of this sacred dimension, and of other sacred places, has come through in the testimony of traditional people at various times in this century when they have explained to non-Indians, in and out of court, that they must perform certain kinds of ceremonies at certain times and places in order that the sun may continue to shine, the earth prosper, and the stars remain in the heavens (Deloria, V. 1999:208-209).

In the Black Hills, there are a number of places of this order, including Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, Wind Cave, the Race Track, and the Buffalo Gap. It is not surprising that traditional people among the Lakotas and Cheyenne nations have at various times and in different ways made requests to hold their religious observances at these and other sacred sites in the Hills. The strong spiritual connections that these groups have to the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and/or Wind Cave recommend Wind Cave National Park as a site for many different kinds of religious observance (see Chapter Twelve).

Beyond the specific character of places like Wind Cave National Park, we must be mindful of their relationships to the overall area that is the Black Hills. It is the more holistic sense of this entire area as the source of the universe’s order and its animal/human beginnings that makes it such a culturally significant and emotionally powerful landscape. Raymond Fogelson (1981:133) states: “Traditional Native American notions about sacred space tend to be more transvaluative and flexible with respect to placement and boundaries. Rather than a fixed point, or set of fixed points, Native American rituals often emphasize movement between relative locations.” Clearly, the Lakotas and Cheyennes’ sense of the Black Hills is embedded in tightly integrated webs of relationship, often described through a language of kinship, where it is impossible to separate specific sites as divisible “points” in a landscape. Each place in the Black Hills flows into another through the actions and movements of the spiritual figures whose own relationships created the very designs or “charters” within which the symbiotic connections of tribal peoples to the area are expressed and experienced in their own life-generating passages through this sacred land.

The geography of the Black Hills is sanctified because it reveals and mirrors fundamental precepts underlying the sacred cosmology of the Lakotas and Cheyennes. The Black Hills and many other sacred places within their reaches express a basic principle of cosmic unity that, in the sacred terminology of the Lakotas, make the Black Hills “the heart of everything that is.” Their highest point, Harney Peak, is the heart, altar, and center of the larger consecrated circle, the Race Track that surrounds them. The Buffalo Gap is a sacred gateway into this sanctified space, while Wind Cave is the opening to the sacred womb and to the larger cavern structure that represents the arteries of the heart or circle. Through the sacred stories and texts enacted in the course of important ceremonial observances, Lakotas and Cheyennes recreate their own genesis by coming
into direct contact with the material manifestations of the spiritual as these appear at significant sites or centers in the Black Hills, which simultaneously serve as an expression of game animals, the four directions, the relations between the celestial, earthly, and subterranean tiers of the universe, and, above all, the circular motion of the divine and everything that is.
Chapter Fifteen

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK
IN COSMOLOGY AND HISTORY

Whether or not one chooses to acknowledge the sacred meanings the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribal nations attach to the Black Hills, it is impossible to ignore their cultural importance as metaphors and even representations of practical observations. One persistent theme stretching back to written accounts from the early half of the nineteenth century is the notion that the Black Hills was a place where tribal nations gathered from all directions to winter, to hunt, to procure plants, to collect minerals, to trade, and to conduct their religious observances. Another consistent theme is the Black Hills’ landscape, their game animals, plant life, and mineral deposits had interchangeable and interconnected meanings. The complex web of metaphors that surround this region and Wind Cave National Park in particular, not only speak to some of the broader cosmological concepts described in earlier chapters, but they also relate to the lived experiences and history of the peoples who made this region their home.

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the vast amount material that has been presented so far. It attempts to show how the complex history of the area articulates with tribal cosmologies, and also how it relates to certain European American understandings about the area. Most importantly, it showcases Wind Cave National Park. It demonstrates how its environs, landforms, animal, plant, and mineral resources occupy a significant place in Lakota and Cheyenne cultural knowledge and practice, and it shows how these traditions are affiliated with their contemporary relationship to the park and its environs.

I. THE MOVEMENTS OF ANIMALS, THE SUN, AND THE WINDS

John Ant, William Bordeaux, Nicholas Black Elk, Henry Standing Bear, Jake Herman, John Stands In Timber, James LaPointe, Pete Catches, Rich Two Dogs, Arvol Looking Horse, Wesley Whiteman, and Sievert Young Bear are among many Lakotas and Cheyennes who have spoken or written about tribal understandings of the relationship between the Black Hills and the animals. Pete Catches (and Catches 1990:139), the much revered Oglala spiritual leader, spoke about the Black Hills very specifically in relation to the bison. As he put it:

You see, our people are nomadic, we traveled around the Ka Sapa (Black Hills). Being that the buffalo sacrifices his whole life to help his younger brother, the Lakota, the Lakota people stayed close to a buffalo herd. The number of buffalo was into millions and millions. You did not have to look for them. All you had to do was go over the hill and you could run into a bunch.

The metaphoric interchangeability of the bison and the Black Hills is obvious here. People stayed in reach of the Hills, just as they kept in close touch with a herd of bison. “The bison,” according to Nicholas Black Elk (Brown 1992:23), “is the chief of all the animals and represents the earth,

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124 Since much of what is covered in this chapter has been presented elsewhere, references are only given for new bodies of information. The reader is advised to consult previous chapters for details and sources.
the totality of all that is.” Just as bison stood as a metaphor for the universe, so by extension did the Black Hills exist as a sacred manifestation of the cosmos. Indeed, Red Cloud (in Allison 1875:191) spoke about the Black Hills as the “Head Chief of the Land.”

Historically, the close relation of the Black Hills to the bison and other game animals was not simply a figurative imagining; it was also a matter of practical observation. The Lakotas euphemistically called the Black Hills their “meat pack,” oiyhpaye talo (Hassrick 1964:75, 165). They knew them as the location where certain bison herds over wintered before returning to the surrounding grasslands in the spring to graze with their newborn calves. They also knew the gateways the animals passed through to reach their wintering grounds, and the most famous of these was the Buffalo Gap, which is known as Pte Ta Tiopa [The Door of the Bison Cow], Tatanka Ta Tiopa [The Door of the Bison Bull], or He Okikahe [the Ridge with a Gap] (Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:94-96; Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242-245; Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289; Black Elk, C. 1986a:210). Luther Standing Bear (1975:17) described this gateway as one of the most accessible for both animals and humans to enter and leave the Black Hills, and as a result, he indicated that this was a highly desirable camping location for the Lakotas. Henry Crow Dog (Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:96) also described it as a gateway where the buffalo left their winter home to reach their feeding grounds around Alliance, Nebraska. As Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) said:

All around the Black Hills there is a barrier or rim the non-Indians call Hogback Ridge. There are certain gates around the Black Hills where the buffalo used to enter into the Hills. They would go into those canyons for shelter and remain in the Black Hills until the snow started melting and green grass started showing. Then they would migrate out of the Hills again.

The Lakotas and other tribal nations in the region were astute observers of animal behavior. They knew the habits and rhythms of the animals on whose meat they so heavily depended for their own health and livelihood, and they closely synchronized their year-round travels to follow these movements.

Lakota observations are supported by scores of naturalists who traveled in the Hills before many native species were extirpated and then reintroduced at places like Wind Cave National Park. While local tribespeople saw the movements of the animals as mysterious or wakan, European Americans simply interpreted it as a common practice for animals to take shelter during the winter months in areas with access to good forage. Many locations in the Hills, especially along the southern stretches of the Race Track, were ideal because they typically had less snowfall, storms were not as severe, and there were plenty of canyons, overhangs, dens, and caves for animals to find shelter during inclement weather. A common place for game animals to winter was the Race Track, a landform that occupies much of the eastern half of Wind Cave National Park, and this is true even today. In Lakota, the name Wamaka Ki’inyanke Ocanku translates as “The Running Path of the Animals” (Wawoslata in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264; Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289; Black Elk, C. 1992a:208). The area where the Race Track is approached from the Buffalo Gap is called Tatanka makalhpaya [the Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull] (Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:94-96; Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242-245).

Many Lakota stories about this region of the Black Hills take place during the late fall and winter months. They typically tell about villages facing hunger and sending their hunters to the area to find game, or they speak of culture heroes who bring game to humans who are experiencing privation. Most of the stories relating to this region refer to the uncertainties of
finding game during the winter months and the ambivalence that this potentially life-threatening
time evokes. Most of the stories single out the bison as the principal prey, or else bison
appear in a spiritual guise as white buffalo, buffalo women, or crazy buffalo. Indeed, across the
entire range of traditional narratives associated with this area, bison occupy the predominant
thesis position.

The symbolic associations the Lakotas and Cheyennes drew between bison and winter reveal
a sophisticated understanding of this animal. Ernest Thompson Seton (1929:3:677-680), among
others, observed that blizzards, probably more than humans, were responsible for the disap-
pearance of many bison herds during years with hard winters. Clearly the Lakotas and Chey-
ennes knew this too as a matter of practical observation, but they carried it further and connected
it to a wider set of cosmological principles and processes. The causal connections the Lakotas
made between Waziya, the Old Man, and his grandson, Waziyata, the North Wind, caves, and the
movements and health of the bison are an apt illustration of this.

The winter, the time of the year when the North Wind, Waziyata, prevailed was associated
with rest and the potential for renewal. It was the season when new life grew inside the womb
of the bison and Mother Earth and when the spirits of the bison prepared for their materialized
emergence from the cavernous sanctuaries underneath the Black Hills. It was the time of the year
bison herds were easily located by their clouds of frozen breath, and, likewise, it was a season
when certain caves became visible by the vapors that emanated from their depths.125 Breath is
visible precisely at the time of year when life is taking shape inside the womb of ungulate species,
and by extension inside the Black Hills, which symbolized the site of their emergence. It is the
place where the nagi [spirit] becomes attached to a material force, ni [breath], a process that takes
place among all land animals but is especially associated in Lakota teachings with bison. Not
surprisingly, the Lakotas connected the bison’s beginnings and their own origins to caves. In the
Black Hills, where hundreds of cave openings dot the landscape, this association would have been
especially pronounced. Wind Cave represents the quintessential expression of this link, not only
because of its unusual air movements but also because of its location near the Race Track and Hot
Springs, locations where game animals frequently congregated in the winter. Thus, it became a
central site for stories of human and animal emergence.

Yet, winter was also, paradoxically, a time of death, the season when bison often wasted
away and died, when Waziya, widely known for his stinginess, kept the bison to himself until
Falling Star or Blood Clot Boy killed him and forced his offspring into a cave, which was made
visible by the emanations of their frosty breath. Bison were admired for their strength and
endurance because they faced and stood up against this wind even during the most severe
blizzards. As tough as they were, they still sometimes succumbed to its force, and even when
they survived, the North Wind took its toll on their nutritional status.

In this context, it is appropriate to say something about the multiple metaphorical uses of the
term wasicun. Although today it is commonly used as an ascription for white people, it appears
to have had a complex set of metaphorical meanings in the past. In a group interview James
Walker (1980:108-109) conducted with Thomas Tyon, William Garnett, Thunder Bear, and
George Sword with James Walker, the following was recorded:

White is the favorite color of Waziya. The white people are like Waziya. They have no
mercy on the red people.

125 On cold subzero days in mid-winter, some of the early rangers at Wind Cave National Park looked for cave
openings because this was the time when the condensation arising from their depths was visible (Bohi 1962:443).
Wa is the white of Waziya (the snow). Wasicun is the tontonsni of the snowstorm. White men are called wasicun.

There are several interesting connections here. First of all, Waziya has been mistaken by several different writers, from Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:6) to Helen Rezatto (1989:18-20), to be a white person in a European American sense. While many Lakota stories describe him as white in appearance, they are not referring to someone of European American derivation but rather to their fabled and interconnected figures of winter, old age, and the North Wind. Like Waziya, Europeans embodied the sicun or spiritual potency of the snow and winter, which starved the bison and took other life-giving forces away. Linea Sundstrom (Personal Communication, July 12, 2002) also reminds us that the word wasicu is commonly translated today as “takes the fat,” which many Lakota and Dakota speakers interpret as referring to the avaricious nature of European Americans, who like Waziya, take and hoard the “fat” of animals, the land, and the people. As mentioned before, bison wasted away over the winter and lost so much of their fat content that their meat was no longer edible. By extension, the people suffered when the meat from the animal they so depended upon lost its nutritional value.

Equally dangerous to tribes were unseasonably mild winters. During these winters, bison often stayed on the grasslands, failing to return to their customary winter haunts where tribes typically established their homes during this season. In 1832-1833, Lakotas who still lived along the valley of the Missouri River faced starvation when the bison did not arrive and remained on the upland grasslands, days away from their villages (Clow 1995). Hard winters with enough cold and snow to force bison into their usual seasonal movements were favored because these winters made it easier to capture bison using driving techniques. Winter conditions such as these brought the bison, health, and life to the people, as Eagle Louse (1939) and Left Hand Bear (in Hot Springs Star 1938) clearly indicated after their summer encampments at Wind Cave National Park in 1937 and 1938.

In the early historic period, before the arrival of horses, the season between late fall and early winter was probably the time of the year when local tribes hunted bison using pound and jump techniques. The rolling terrain and sheltered recesses of Wind Cave National Park and its nearby surroundings would have been excellent locations to hunt bison in this manner during the winter-time. Theodore Binnema (2001:35) argues that early winter may have been the best season to hunt bison because, as he puts it:

Even the almost incessant winds helped hunters. Bison have a keen sense of smell and can be difficult to approach when the weather is calm or the winds very light and shifting. A consistent wind was particularly useful to communal hunters, who sometimes required several days to coax a bison herd to a kill site.

Bison are very sensitive to the movement and direction of the winds. They face the north winds and the blizzards of winter, and they move south towards warm Chinook winds to find snow free areas to graze during the winter. In the spring and summer, they appear impervious to the west winds’ thunder, lightening, and hail (Lott 2002:84), and this gets expressed in some of the complicated ideas that associate summer storms and hail with bison in Lakota and Cheyenne cosmologies. The Lakotas’ connection of bison to the Wind, Tate, but especially his sons, Waziyata and Wiyohpeyata makes sense given what is known about the behavior of bison in their natural state.

Winter and its wind, Waziyata, were fickle. In some years, Waziyata brought so much snow and ice to the open plains that bison were unable to uncover the grass and water below, and many
died, although the losses never matched those of domesticated ungulates. Unlike cattle, bison have the ability to dig through moderate levels of snow and ice to retrieve their nourishment. They are even known to dig through dirt and sand to uncover hidden sources of water, an ability that some tribal stories link to their emergence from springs. Even in moderate winters, bison quickly use up the reserve fats they store over the summer from grazing on the rich grasses of the prairies, and by early spring, they lose most of the fat that makes their meat nutritious and palatable. This is probably why they were hardly hunted during the late winter and early spring months, and why local tribes preserved their meat with its fat in a dried form when it was still nourishing from the late summer to the early winter. In the end, Lakota notions of Waziya and parallel ideas among the Cheyennes about Hoimaha give evidence of the paradoxical associations between winter and the bison.

Along the Race Track, especially in the southern reaches of the Hills, the generally milder temperatures and lesser amounts of snow cover meant that bison had extended access to good forage, including rich stores of cool season grasses that have a second growth period in the early fall months. Ricegrasses also provide excellent forage for wildlife in the fall months, and one variety, the rough-leaf \([Oryzopsis asperifolia]\), keeps its green leaves through the winter (Larson and Johnson 1999:418), a fact that may have had symbolic significance for some local tribes. Canada wildryes also mature late, but their nutritional value rapidly declines after flowering (Ibid:404). There were also dried stores of late sprouting warm season grasses, the nutritious blue and hairy gramas and the buffalograsses. Importantly, the rich grassland environment of the southern portions of the Race Track extended the period bison and other ungulates could be hunted, and its lighter snow cover and generally level surface probably created conditions that made animals easier to reach during the early months of winter as well.

Locations along the Race Track, including those in the area of Wind Cave National Park, were highly valued, not only because these were common winter haunts for bison, but also because other animals would be available for food if bison failed to return. The season from late fall to early spring was the primary time of the year to hunt elk and mule deer, which commonly inhabited the Race Track and the rocky recesses of the Hogback. Blacktail Creek and Elk Mountain were no doubt given their identities because these were areas frequented by the species after whom they were named. As mentioned several times before, most of the Lakota stories associated with the Wind Cave area take place during the winter months, which matches the time of year the tate hunted for elk and deer. Whether Lakota winter camps were in the park at places like Wind Cave Canyon, at nearby locations along Beaver Creek and the Fall River, or outside the Hills along the Cheyenne and White rivers and even as far away as the Platte, it is clear that this was an area to which small groups of hunters came during the late fall and early winter months to find game (see Chapters Seven and Ten). The lands that make up most of the park’s properties were clearly understood as a game reserve. They were a favorite winter hunting ground for the Lakotas, an area that once held large numbers of bison. Even after this animal disappeared from the region, it was still rich in other sorts of large and small game, including several different species of birds commonly taken for food. The snowbird (\(Junco hyemalis\)), which appears in the Lakota origin story, is one of these and abundant in the area of Wind Cave National Park. In the early 1970s, a Lakota elder, Moses Circle Bear (1971:12,14), would echo these associations when he talked about the Black Hills as a safety net, a place the people could always count on to find food.

Also, the rich grasses found along the Race Track would have made this a good place to graze horses during the winter months. By the end of the eighteenth century, this became an important consideration as local tribes adopted these animals and amassed huge herds for their own use and trade. Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:6), however, commented about the lack of sufficient
grass in the Black Hills to supply the herds of large camps for extended periods of time. While it is true that the Hills would not have been well suited to supporting the pastoralist adaptations of large populations year-round, there was sufficient forage to support smaller herds during the winter months when tribes broke up into their band groupings and stayed near the Hills. Locations along the Race Track and some of the Hills’ lower elevation valleys offered prime winter grazing conditions for horses. In fact, many American observers in the 1870s made special note of the abundance of high quality grasses for grazing cattle and horses in this area. And in the 1880s, several large ranches in the area raised thoroughbred racehorses that grazed on lands, which eventually became part of Wind Cave National Park. Since there is no evidence that local tribes ever maintained large concentrated settlements inside the Hogback and along the Race Track during the winter months when they typically used the area, and since the only time of the year they did gather in large groups was in the summer during the season of communal bison hunting, which took place at locations outside the Black Hills, Denig’s point is moot. It does, however, have some bearing on those populations who specialized in horse pastoralism and who eventually migrated to the southern Plains. But it has little merit for the groups, who remained in the vicinity of the Hills and whose economies were more oriented towards hunting for subsistence or trade rather than horse raising (see Chapter Seven).

Throughout the year, local tribes timed the movements of the animals and their own annual subsistence and ceremonial cycles to the position of the sun and other stars. When the star of the Buffalo Gap (Capella) began moving towards the Sun on Lakota star maps, it signaled a time when the bison left their winter homes at the Race Track and moved to the open grasslands with their newborn calves. As mentioned before, this is one of only a few stars in the northern hemisphere that does not set and that moves towards the horizon in the months of spring and summer and returns towards the zenith in the fall. In the months after the vernal equinox, some Lakotas began to make preparations for a ceremonial pilgrimage into the Black Hills that led up to the performance of the Sun Dance near Bear Lodge Butte and other locations in and around the Black Hills. Other Lakotas entered the Hills during the late spring and early summer to cut lodgepoles, to collect food and medicinal plants, to fast and carry on other prayerful observances. Arvol Looking Horse (in Parlow 1983a:42) describes this journey as follows:

The Lakota originally had an archetypal annual sacred journey of the people following the buffalo around the plains. The buffalo are migrating north April-May and the people are coming from the winter camps. The buffalo lead them through Buffalo Gap up the lower section of the Black Hills and they get to Mount Harney. The buffalo, the principle representative of the sun in the animal world, and the incarnation of solar power and divine generosity, led the people on the archetypal sacred annual journey from place to place. Each place corresponding to constellations in which the sun has just entered… The constellations are visible scriptures of the people. The land forms are visible scriptures telling the same stories during the day. As the people followed the buffalo, they were literally on the sunspath. What the sun was doing was going through those different constellations which correspond to these earth forms. In terms of spiritual attunement, following the sunspath is living in harmony with the will of the Creator…The sun is going clockwise and the Lakota are being led by the buffalo counterclockwise, they are following the sunspath on the earth.

In the month after the summer solstice, when the Sun arrived in the constellation Mato tipila, groups started to leave the interiors of the Hills to travel to the places where they gathered together in large encampments for the Sun Dance near Sundance Mountain, for meetings at Bear

126 Charlotte Black Elk (1992b:50-51) states that the Buffalo Gap star is Capella, although it is located on the opposite side of the celestial race Trace Track where the star Rigel is placed on Lakota star maps. When the Sun rose in Rigel, bison left the Hills through the Buffalo Gap and the Lakotas entered the Hills’ interiors to conduct their ceremonial observances.
Butte where they deliberated on military strategies and engaged in trade, and for making preparations to commence the *wani-sapa*, the large communal hunts, which took place at the end of the summer on the grasslands beyond the Hills. These hunts were held over a period of a few months, after which time the bands went their separate ways, traveling to trading posts to secure their supplies and returning to the locations where they conventionally encamped over the winter months. November, when the Big Dipper and the Milky Way start to move closer together (Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:135-136; in Buechel and Manhart 1998:231-233), was the month bands established their semi-permanent winter campsites at locations where they typically remained for the next four to five months. Many of these were situated at the base of the Hogback or along the Race Track, including locations near Wind Cave.

The careful observation of the sun’s movements in relation to landforms and constellations fits Andrew Isenberg’s characterization of Plains Indian bison hunting as a “solar economy.” As he writes:

> In the summer, the shortgrasses of the western plains transformed solar energy into carbohydrates, the bison transformed the grasses into protein...Because the nomads’ economy ultimately relied on solar energy, it was renewable. But the nomadic economy was limited by the ability of shortgrasses to produce carbohydrates. Drought, for instance, interfered with the predictable operation of the nomads’ solar economy (Isenberg 2002:68).

The Lakotas clearly understood that the migrations and habits of bison were also closely related to the movements of *Wi*, the Sun. They not only timed their own movements according to the sun’s position, but they also incorporated this awareness into some of the symbolism associated with their Sun Dances. The circle around the outer edge of the dance area was known as the “Sun Trail” or “Sunspath,” and the sunflower [*Helianthus annuus*] was used in this ceremony because, like the bison, it followed the sun (see Chapter Twelve).

The Cheyennes also had a similar annual cycle that followed the movement of game in and around the Black Hills. The Northern Cheyennes, some of whom continued to camp in the vicinity of the southeastern Black Hills, used the area in and around Wind Cave National Park for hunting bison, elk, and deer in the winter as well. Like the Lakotas, they set up their winter campsites in the low elevation, sheltered valleys of the Black Hills, dispersed in the early spring, and then regrouped in the summer for ceremonies, communal bison and pronghorn hunting, and large-scale war parties to protect existing territories and/or establish new ones. The timing of some of these events was also coordinated with the position of the stars (Schlesier 1987:15, 25). Most of the details of this knowledge have been lost, but Karl Schlesier (Ibid:15, 25, 83-87, 104-105) has written about a fifty-six day ceremonial cycle that was coordinated with the risings of Aldebaran, Rigel, and Sirius, stars also important to the Lakotas in signaling the time for some of their summer ceremonies.

Particular kinds of meteorological events, especially cloud formations and wind directions, also marked changes in the movements of animals and the annual living cycle of tribes (Young Bear in Parlow 1983a:26-27). For the Lakotas, as one example, the month of November was marked not only by the position of certain stars in the night sky, but also by the appearance of

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127 Throughout the northern plains are the remains of stone cairns, wheels, and alignments that appear to have functioned in astronomical observances (Kehoe and Kehoe 1977; Hall 1985; Liebman 2002). Most of these stone formations were constructed in prehistoric times, but many historic tribes continued to use them as sites for fasting and vision seeking. Not coincidentally, 28 radiating stone lines make up the famous Medicine Wheel in Wyoming and 28 poles are used to construct the Cheyenne and Lakotas’ Sun Dance lodges (Hall 1985:181-182). Twenty eight days also make up the lunar month for most tribes in the Plains.
Stone Boy’s clouds over the gateways to the Black Hills and the prevailing direction of the wind. When Waziyata, the North Wind, started to gain prominence, his dominating presence signaled the bison to take shelter inside the Buffalo Gap. It was here, just above the Race Track at Wind Cave, that the bison, returned to their underworld home, a cave that released breath and from which new life came into the world in the spring, probably after the time the sun started to rise over the Buffalo Gap, emerging from the underworld where it spent much of its time with its friends, Tatanka and the Pte Oyate, over the winter months.

The spring and fall equinoxes also coincided with the timing of the golden eagle’s return to and departure from the Black Hills. Golden eagles (the chief of the wingeds), which are often symbolically equated with bison (the chief of the animals, four-leggeds), typically frequent the eastern side of the Black Hills (the chief of the land), arriving here in the spring and leaving in the fall, and this probably did not go unnoticed in determining the locations and seasons of tribal eagle trapping. The commencement of this trapping may have been coordinated with the position of the sun too, and this would make sense given the fact that the eagle is understood as a messenger of the Sun, Wì, and carries the ton of his rays in its tail feathers. The arrival and departure of other avian species in the area were also harbingers of seasonal change and the movements of other animals. (Buechel 1970:423; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:117, 277-278).

Nighthawks, which are highly sacred to the Cheyennes and the Lakotas, were the last to arrive in the spring after the grasses started to green and the buffalo began to put on fat and the last to leave in the fall when, like the bison, they began to leave for their winter homes (Dorsey, J. 1894:500; Buechel 1970:444; Moore 1986:182-184). Both tribes also saw tension between the Sun and the North Wind or Winter (see Chapters Nine and Ten). The Lakotas connected the two in very specific ways, and they did so especially in their understanding of the bison’s movements and life cycle. Fire carried the sicun of the sun, and when the force of the sun came into contact with certain stones (i.e., flint), it released its energy in fire and heat. As in Lakota conceptions of the workings of the sweatlodge, the interactions between fire, water, and stone release ni, the breath of life. In a similar way, as the sun moved higher in the sky during the spring, it triggered birth by releasing new life from the interactions of its rays with stone and water. This solestial shift around the time of the vernal equinox marked the season of birthing, the actual material emergence of bison and other animals. It also meant the reign of Waziyata had ended and the warm southerly winds of Itokagata were about to return.

The Sun remained much of the winter with the bison, his companions, in their stone home under the earth. When the Sun filled the sky during the daytime, or when he rose higher in the sky after the vernal equinox, the bison left their sheltered retreats and followed him in their migrations to the open grasslands. As part of this seasonal movement, the Lakotas clearly connected the Buffalo Gap and Wind Cave to each other and attached a shared meaning to both. They specifically associated the Sun’s arrival at the Buffalo Gap with the bison’s emergence from their underground winter homes in the Black Hills and their return to the grasslands (Looking Horse in Parlow 1983a:42-43; Black Elk, C. 1992; Goodman 1992). They believed that the bison followed the movements of their companion the Sun, leaving their cave homes as their friend moved farther north after the vernal equinox. As the Sun rises higher in the sky, and by analogy when a fire is lit, it drives Waziya away and back to his underworld abode (Black Elk in Brown 1971:314; Walker 1980:245; Goodman 1992:7).

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Another associate of the Sun, the porcupine, may have been systematically hunted at this time of the year. Curiously, the quills of the porcupine, like the tail feathers of the eagle, hold the ton of the sun’s rays. In Cheyenne and Lakota traditions, this animal is also connected to the Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap area.

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As discussed before, the Lakotas understood the universe to be in a constant state of motion, revolving around the axis of a horizontal elliptical plane and a vertical one. The intersections of the planes, the points where they cross or connect are powerful positions charged with energy and movement. When the days and seasons change, the planes come together, bringing celestial and subterranean spaces into contact with each other. In the process, powerful forces are released. One of these junctures takes place sometime around the vernal equinox, a time when the sun may have risen through and been aligned with the v-shaped land formation known as the Buffalo Gap. If so, this would have marked a wondrous and joyous event to the people who lived within its reaches, something that could have been readily observed from locations at Wind Cave National Park, atop Elk Mountain, where Wind Cave is situated, or farther north along Rankin Ridge at what is now Lookout Point. Again, it is important to note that the Lakotas marked this event, and still do so, with a special pipe ceremony around the 21st of March. The dates and years when alignments might have taken place here need to be determined, but the fact remains that the Lakotas saw a relationship between the higher movement of the sun in the spring and the migrations of bison to the grasslands through the Buffalo Gap from their home at Wind Cave. According to Arvol Looking Horse (quoted above), the Lakotas traveled through the Buffalo Gap on their sacred journey to Harney Peak, following a path that very likely took some of them across the lands of Wind Cave National Park.

The Cheyennes may have done so as well, but there is nothing in the literature that speaks to this directly. One might hypothesize, however, that the Buffalo Gap area may have been associated with one of their four sacred pillars or mountains, the place where the Southeast Wind, *Hesenota* or (*Esseneta’he*) lived, a *Maheyeno* who symbolized the coming of spring and whose primary messenger was the Sun and his associates the golden eagle and the porcupine. As revealed earlier (Chapters Nine and Ten), this might be the location for the origin of the *Me e no’ist st*, the quill-workers guild among the Cheyennes. Both the Cheyennes and the Lakotas equate porcupine quills and the tail feathers of the eagle with the Sun, the special friend of the bison. By extension, both connect porcupine quills, eagle plumes, and bison hair with the breath of life. The yellow hair of young calves is especially equated with the sun. Here again is another example of the complex synergistic relationships between natural forces, topography, and animals. Also, as discussed earlier (Chapters Nine and Twelve), each of the Cheyennes’ sacred winds is associated with a distinct mountain where the spirits of different sets of animals have their homes, which in Cheyenne traditions are also identified with caves.

When the Thunderbirds reawakened later in the spring, many Lakotas traveled towards the home of these sacred birds in the high elevation interiors of the Hills to conduct ceremonial observances and cut lodgepoles as well as gather a host of different plants for medicine and food. In doing so, they followed well-established trails to reach the higher elevations. These included routes that followed Stockade-Beaver Creek on the western side of the Hills, Spearfish Creek in the north, and Rapid and French creeks on the east. In the south, there were two common routes: the Red Canyon and Pleasant Valley or Shirrtaill Canyon trails and another by way of the Buffalo Gap and Beaver Creek, a route that would have taken them across park properties. Some Lakotas continued to follow and camp along the routes across Wind Cave National Park after 1877, when

129 This needs to be tested, of course, and calculations made for the dates when the sun is aligned with the Buffalo Gap and how this has changed over time. Even if there is not an exact alignment today between the timing of the vernal equinox and the date the sun rises through this gap, such a correspondence may very well have existed in the past.
130 Charlotte Black Elk (1992a) writes about the Lakotas following another passageway into the Hills to perform ceremonies at Harney Peak. Given the fact that Lakota camps encircled the Hills, it is likely that local groups entered the Hills at the any one of the gateways closest to their winter camps.
131 Linea Sundstrom (2002, Personal Communication) needs to be acknowledged for suggesting this possible connection.
they returned to the Hills each summer to cut their lodgepoles and attend celebrations in local white communities (McAdam 1973; Smith 1973). These were also the routes that some European Americans traveled when they entered the central Hills during the Gold Rush years.

Some local bands also probably traveled to the interior regions along these trails in the fall and winter months to hunt animals whose peltries and hides were at their prime during this time of the year. This would have been particularly true for the Lakotas and Cheyennes whose immediate families were linked by marriage to European American traders and trappers. As revealed earlier, Walter Jenney and Henry Newton described how blazes were set in the Hills’ interiors to mark trails when these were covered by snow. Again, the familiar route that crosses Wind Cave National Park along Beaver Creek and its tributaries may have been used for this purpose.

In the late summer, when the bison were well established on their summer grazing grounds outside the Hills, so were the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Until the 1850s, they were able to follow the herds that left the Buffalo Gap to migrate to their grassland feeding grounds east and south of the Hills towards the upper reaches of the White and Niobrara Rivers. When bison began to disappear from these locations, some Lakotas continued to winter in the area of the Buffalo Gap and Wind Cave because abundant supplies of winter game, notably elk and deer, remained there, but now they had to travel to locations west and north of the Hills, or even as far south as Kansas and Colorado, to hunt bison over the summer months. Even after bison were extirpated from the Buffalo Gap-Wind Cave area, the Lakotas still associated the region with their spiritual presence. The bison were still here but no longer in their materialized form. Their spirits, including Tatanka, the immortal leader of the animals, continued to reside here, however.

It is worthwhile to reiterate here that over time Tatanka and Wi appear to have become more significant than Waziyata and Waziya, as guardians of bison movements. Although the latter two figures never disappeared from Lakota stories and liturgical texts, their relative positioning in Lakota cosmologies seems to have changed (Dorsey, J 1894:468; Walker 1917:91; Herman, n.d.: Wind Cave National Park). This is particularly apparent in relation to Wind Cave where some of the earliest traditions make explicit connections between the subterranean recesses of the Black Hills and a white, giant figure, while many later stories tell of a white bison bull, which is often the symbol for Tatanka. In fact, this cosmological shift may have followed the historical change in the seasons bison were typically hunted. Prior to the widespread adoption of horses and the commercial marketing of their robes, bison were usually hunted in the late fall and early winter through driving techniques at locations with natural enclosures or precipices. In fact, just south of the park is the Sanson Buffalo Jump, where bison were hunted in this manner during prehistoric times. By the early nineteenth century, the customary time of the year to hunt bison was the late summer and early fall when the herds congregated on the open plains at locations outside the Black Hills. After 1850, bison were no longer even present in sizable numbers on the eastern side of the Black Hills and in the vicinity of Wind Cave.

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132 As discussed in Chapter Seven, the Black Hills fit into the annual cycles of tribes in a number of different ways. When the Lakotas and Cheyennes wintered along the Missouri River, they approached the Hills during the seasons of communal bison hunting from late summer to late fall. Since bison hunts took place on the grasslands surrounding the Hills, tribal parties would have entered them only for special kinds of procurement, such as lodgepole collection and bear hunting. Similarly, in later years, when bands wintered at agencies located on the White or Platte rivers, they generally entered the Hills for specialized purposes from the late spring to the late fall. Those whose summer bison hunting grounds were located in the Powder-Tongue River country often stayed at locations in and around the Hills when they traveled back and forth from their winter settlements at the agencies. These travels generally took place in the spring and the fall. The groups, however, who wintered in and around the Hills left their reaches in the summer months to hunt on the open plains.
When bison were nearly extinguished on the northern plains, Lakotas and Cheyennes believed that they had not died out but had simply returned to their underground cavern homes from which they would reemerge someday to repopulate the earth’s surface. From a Lakota perspective, this followed a perfectly natural part of the bison’s short-term and long-range cycles, in which their numbers and locations fluctuated with climatic changes in the region -- a fact attested to in the archaeological and historical record of the Great Plains (Clow 1995:259-262; Isenberg 2002:27). Again, when bison were reintroduced in the Black Hills at Wind Cave National Park in 1913, this event probably did not go unnoticed, nor would it have been unexpected. After all, Wind Cave was a major portal to and from their underworld home, and so logically, this would be the place they would first reappear. This event was certainly consistent with tribal beliefs, and it may have even reaffirmed the conviction that Wind Cave was the origin home of the bison. Nor is it fortuitous that some Lakotas would link the story of their own emergence to this particular cave since they saw their own identity and origin as closely tied to the Pte Oyate, the Buffalo Nation. Like their bison progenitors, many Lakotas returned every winter to the sheltered recesses of the Hills. Winter was the season when tribes were the most sedentary and when the earth was at rest, covered with a blanket of snow and ice that took on appearances similar to the crystalline formations inside caves, the home of the first immortal buffalo man, Waziya, and his grandson, Waziyata, the North Wind, who directed the movements of the bison and their close human relatives (See Chapters Ten and Fourteen).

Besides bison, many other animals are associated with the lands that now make up Wind Cave National Park. Indeed, one could argue that all of the animals have a connection to this region, insofar as they gathered here for the Great Race whose outcome determined the nature of animal and human relations. However, as pointed out in the last chapter and also in Chapter Ten, the animals of greatest significance in this story are those who sided with humans, notably the magpie and crow. Both of these birds are closely linked to bison in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions because they were able to tell humans the whereabouts of the large herds. The coyote and wolf were also allied with humans in the Great Race, and both of these carnivores are also linked with bison. In Lakota cosmologies, all four of these species share with the bison a special connection to the north wind. These animals were closely associated with Waziya, probably because their own movements were dictated by the migrations of the bison on whose meat they also depended. The wolf plays an important role in the Lakotas’ emergence story as an accomplice of Iktomi who enticed Tokahe and other humans to leave their underground home at Wind Cave. In Cheyenne traditions, wolves and coyotes occupy highly revered positions because they are seen as the sacred messengers of the Maiyun (see Chapter Ten). In the early twentieth century, wolves were extirpated from their homes in the area of Wind Cave National Park through a systematic policy of extermination by local ranchers and federal agencies, and no attempts have been made to reintroduce them to the area where they were once very plentiful.

In the early half of the nineteenth century, Wind Cave National Park and its surrounding environs, including the Buffalo Gap and Hot Springs, remained ideal locations for winter settlement because of their easy access to game, notably, bison, elk, deer, and pronghorn. The region offered other necessary amenities, including access to good shelter, wood, fresh water, and even forage for small herds of horses. Even in later years, when bison were extirpated from the Black Hills, this area remained rich in game until European Americans reduced local game populations in their sport, subsistence, and commercial hunting. After 1874, when European Americans began to settle this region, they soon came to recognize the advantages of the area’s milder winter climate, fine grasses, and potable waters. They homesteaded along the nearby Fall

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133 Indeed, there are a host of birds that have special associations with bison in Lakota traditions, and some of them are named after the bison, such as Pte gopeca [Northern Harrier], Ptehin ciccila [Killdeer], Pteya hpa [Cowbird], and Pte’gaglouca [grasshopper sparrow].
River and along Beaver and Highland creeks, and they ran their cattle and horses on the open range that covered park properties until this use was prohibited. They also gathered timber and plant foods in the area and hunted here, and it is probably not a coincidence that most of their stories about Wind Cave and its discovery involve hunters and hunting too. Indeed, European American ranchers who settled here tended to fare better at this location during the years of severe blizzards than some of their comrades who settled in the grasslands outside the Hogback (see Chapters Six and Seven).

II. THE SEASONS OF PLANT AND MINERAL LIFE

While the Black Hills were unquestionably associated with the movement of local animal populations, they were also distinguished by their plant life, which included many species that never died over the winter months. The year-round greenery of the Hills’ abundant and concentrated stands of lodgepole pines, ponderosas, cedars, sages, spruces, and kinnikinick must have underscored the idea that this region had powers to perpetually renew and regenerate life. Kinnikinick or bearberry, the gift of a spirit wolf, comes from the same direction as the North Wind and the bison, and it was a vital ingredient in the tobacco mixtures that local tribes used when smoking the pipe to carry their messages to the spirits and Wakan Tanka or Ma’heo. Trees in the pine family are also identified with the Winter Man, and as indicated before, the name Waziya can be translated to mean “toward the pine,” an association that no doubt underscored this spiritual figure’s immortality. The notion that the Hills embodied immortal forces and spirits is a long-standing one that, at least in terms of the written record, extends back to the mid-nineteenth century. This association no doubt imbued the Black Hills with their reputation for providing tribal people the animal, plant, and mineral resources necessary to maintain and regenerate their own health, and it is probably the principal reason why the Hills remain a preferred site for the collection of many plants used in tribal healing today.

Like animals, plants follow seasonal cycles. The ripening of plants, according to specific seasons, also influenced when and where local tribes moved their locations in any given year. The time around the summer solstice, for example, marked a short window of opportunity for identifying and gathering the wild turnips that grew in abundance at various locations along the Race Track and in the Foothills, including areas of Wind Cave National Park. The early part of summer, from June to July, was the season for harvesting different varieties of fruit, including strawberries, chokecherries, serviceberries, and golden currants. A large number of medicinal plants reach their potency at this time of the year too, and many of these were only found in the Hills. The Wood lily (Cilium philadelphicum), which grows at Wind Cave National Park and is not found on the surrounding grasslands, is one of the medicinal plants used by the Lakotas.

The early months of summer were also the time of the year the Lakotas traveled long distances to reach the interiors of the Hills to secure their lodgepoles, an activity widely acknowledged and reported in historic sources. While most reports document this activity at locations farther north along Spring and Rapid creeks or near the Central Prairies, some of the higher elevation locations at Wind Cave National Park may have been used for this purpose as well. In fact, Luther Standing Bear (1975:16-17) wrote about the processing of ponderosa pine for lodgepoles in the vicinity of the Buffalo Gap. Whether or not lodgepoles were procured regularly on park properties, two major trails, one along the Race Track and the other along

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134 In the western plains of South Dakota, the only dense stands of pine were located on the precipices of high elevation formations like the Black Hills, Slim Buttes, and the Cave Hills. Some of these areas are also associated with stories of the old man of winter, Waziya.
Beaver Creek, led tribal parties to locations where lodgepoles were taken in the interiors and where other kinds of plant procurement and ceremonial activity took place in the late spring and early summer.

Other plants, including wild plums, do not ripen until the late summer when most tribal groups were camping in the grasslands near the large herds of bison. Yet, some berries and species of nuts are not ready for picking until the fall, the time when some bands began to return to the Hills for specialized procurement activities and/or to establish their winter campsites and around the Hills, including areas near Wind Cave National Park. In fact, the Lakotas harvest red-berried dogwood only in the fall and winter months after its stems turn red.

Many of the most important food and medicinal plants for the Lakotas and Cheyennes grow in the neighborhood of Wind Cave National Park (see Chapter Eleven; Appendix B). Even though the vast majority are found in other locations, it can be suggested that those located near Wind Cave, along the Race Track, and on the Tatanka makalpeya, “the Stomping Grounds of the Bison,” are imbued with special potencies and symbolic significance. Again, the Lakotas believe that bison, which are the patrons of healing and herbal medicine, eat plants that are especially healthy and beneficial. The Lakotas and Cheyennes carefully observed the browsing and grazing habits of local animals. They not only connected specific species of plants to the animals who typically consumed them or took shelter in the areas they commonly grew, but they also believed that the plants held the ton or spiritual potency of the animals who were associated with them. The fetid marigold, common around the prairie dog towns of Wind Cave National Park, is associated with the powers of the animal on whose lands it grows, and it is considered a potent herbal remedy. Also located in Wind Cave National Park is the groundplum milkvetch \([\text{Astragalous crassicarpus}] \) or \(\text{pteta tawote} \) [buffalo food], which begins to blossom at the time of the spring equinox in March and it is a highly valued food plant that is associated with the nutritious properties of the bison who ate it.

It can also be suggested that the Wind Cave area and other locations in and around the Hills were singled out for plant collection because of the great variety of species located here. Many of the plants the Lakotas and Cheyennes depended upon were widely scattered on the surrounding plains, rarely appearing in the same concentrations as found in the Hills. The Black Hills, as Joseph Black Elk (in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:81) once remarked, were indeed a vast supermarket where just about everything the Lakotas and Cheyennes required to provision, shelter, heal, and enhance themselves could be found. It is little wonder that after the Hills were seized by the U.S. government in 1877, the Lakotas and Cheyennes continued to return here to collect valued plants and minerals used in their medicines and ceremonies, even traveling to the area from locations as far away as present day Oklahoma.

The times when plants blossomed or bore fruit were also associated with the developmental cycles of animals and other plants, often signaling to tribes when they needed to move and shift their productive activities. The pasqueflower was an important medicine that bloomed at the time of the spring equinox, and its rebirth, which coincided with the season when newborn calves arrived, was celebrated in song and ritual among many of the tribal nations who lived in and around the Black Hills. Its appearance also marked the time tribes started to break up their winter camps and move to other locations in and outside the Hills as they began to carry out the productive activities of the new season. Bearberry was another plant whose leaves were picked for tobacco at the time of the vernal equinox and the birthing of bison calves.

No matter what season groups were in the Hills, they clearly sought out local springs in the area either for drinking water or for healing. The thermal waters just south of Wind Cave
National Park at Hot Springs were widely used by the Cheyennes and the Lakotas. There is abundant archaeological evidence of campsites in the vicinity of these springs, and this is one area where Lakotas and Cheyennes were reported to return on a continuing and recurring basis after 1877. While their reverence for and use of these thermal waters is the best-documented, other springs have cultural significance too. Springs that emerge out of bluffs and rock outcappings are commonly associated with the spiritual homes of Little People in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions and also with the Double-Woman of the Lakotas, who is an important figure associated with excellence in quillwork. Any site of this order is bound to have spiritual significance and use, and, again, it would not be surprising to learn of such places inside the boundaries of Wind Cave National Park.
While Lakotas and Cheyennes were in the area to draw on the healing properties of the thermal waters at Hot Springs, some no doubt used it as an occasion to travel to nearby areas, including the lands of Wind Cave National Park, to hunt, gather plants and collect mineral resources. Indeed, prior to the acquisition of trade metal and European-made tools, such as axes and awls, the Black Hills would have been a prime location to acquire rock and mineral suitable for manufacturing and ceremonial use. Two locations near Wind Cave National Park, Battle Mountain and Flint Hill, were important areas to quarry flint used in the making of arrow points, and several archaeological sites on park properties also reveal quarrying activity.

The gypsum and red clay deposits found along the Red Valley are explained in Cheyenne and Lakota traditions as originating in the Great Race between the animals and humans, and both play a significant role in their ceremonial observances, including the Sun Dance (see chapters Eleven, Fourteen, Appendix C). Gypsum is also the “Sun Arrow” that gave birth to Stone Boy in Cheyenne traditions. This mineral is particularly intriguing because the Lakotas and Cheyennes appear to have understood its appearance and connection to caves in ways that mirror modern-day interpretations in the field of geology. Given their names for it, the Lakotas and Cheyennes clearly had knowledge of gypsum’s properties, especially its ability to absorb and release moisture and its transformative properties under fire and the sun. In the geological history of Wind Cave, for example, gypsum played a critical role both above and below ground, creating and filling fractures in the surrounding limestones that set the stage for the cave’s evolution and its unusual boxwork formations (Pisarowicz 2001o:2). The Lakotas seem to have connected the calcite crystals found in gypsum to what appeared inside caves and to ice, while the Cheyennes connected them to frost and hailstones. The Lakotas believed that these crystals were the material out of which the Creator molded the first buffalo qua humans.\footnote{135} Crystalline stones gathered by Lakotas were known to have healing properties and were capable of holding the sicun, the immaterial potentialities of spirits. In fact, there is one report of Lakotas making requests for these stones at Wind Cave in the early part of the twentieth century. Most translucent crystalline stones, including the ones ants bring to the earth’s surface, are believed to have special powers. The Cheyennes imagined the white streaks of gypsum along the Red Valley as the remains of the froth issuing from the lead buffalo’s mouth as she careened around the Hills during the Great Race. At many places along the Race Track, gypsum dissolves into sink holes and crevices, connecting the earth’s surface with the underworld. Quite possibly, Cheyennes and Lakotas may have seen the ribbon-like gypsum formations along the Race Track as sun trails the bison followed when they returned to and emerged from their cavern homes underneath the Black Hills. The Lakotas, however, took this one step further and associated the crystalline structures with the spiritual figures who embodied the sacred potency of winter,\footnote{136} its winds, snow, and ice, notably, Waziya and Waziyata whose home was located, in some Lakota traditions, at Wind Cave.

Soils brought up to the earth’s surface by badgers, prairie dogs, and voles, especially at locations linked to bison, have considerable cultural significance. These soils are believed to hold the purifying properties of the deep earth, and they are closely associated with ideas of regeneration and renewal, notably the emergence of corn, bison, and people from the underworld.\footnote{135 Intriguingly, a number of speleologists have advanced theories in recent years that trace the origins of life to caves. Researchers are now finding that caves have complex microbial formations, and some are starting to link these formations with the possibility of life on other planets (Harrington 2002:69-75). Obviously, the Lakotas and Cheyennes had some understanding of this possible connection when they envisioned the birth of Stone Boy from a stone made of selenite or when they proposed that the first humans were formed from the crystalline formations in caves.\footnote{136 This is also consistent with their ideas about water being a fundamental medium by which medicines are transported. In its frozen form, water is saved and stored until it is released by heat, transforming itself into its liquid form or steam. Gypsum has some of these properties too, when heated it liquefies and could have been seen as an especially suitable medium for preserving spiritual essences.}}
Lakotas and Cheyennes view the prairie dogs as cultivators, animals whose actions set the stage for the growth of plants that humans and bison depend upon (Anderson, R. 1958; Moore, J.1974:164; Standing Bear 1988:158-159). Instead of seeing the areas these animals inhabit as having a negative impact on the environment, a common perception among European Americans who historically made every effort to destroy the tunnels these animals created and the animals themselves, they are looked at positively as having properties necessary for regenerating the soil and producing grasses and plants with nutritive and therapeutic properties. In fact, some recent scientific research has revealed that prairie dog towns actually aerate the earth and create ecological conditions conducive to the growing of certain native grasses and plants. Again, the Lakotas and the Cheyennes clearly recognized and respected these relationships, even though they understood and explained them in different terms (see Chapter Eleven).

If we take the word “science” to mean, as it does in its original and broadest sense, a systematic body of knowledge, then we must acknowledge that the Lakotas and Cheyennes had a specific kind of scientific understanding of their environment and the Black Hills in particular. This understanding was based on careful observation, an awareness of recurring associations between different phenomena, and a tacit recognition of the forces and processes underlying the life forms -- animal, plant, and mineral -- that made up the Black Hills. Different from European American approaches, where science typically separates and isolates the region’s life forms into distinct and differentiated phenomena, such that bison, caves, and winds are discussed in largely independent discourses (i.e., zoology, geology, and meteorology), the Lakotas and Cheyennes recognize these elements as interconnected in processes where beginnings and endings are an inherent part of a singular, cyclical, and circular unity. Whereas European American forms of science reduce these phenomena to their material elements and forces, denying the existence of any spiritualized dimension, the Lakotas and Cheyennes see the materialized appearances of phenomena as manifestations of their spiritualized potentialities. From their perspectives, the Black Hills are not made up of inanimate rocks and minerals or depersonalized plants and animals. Instead, their elements, winds, animal nations, plant communities, and mineral formations have agency; they are intertwined in one another’s existence in such a way that each has the capacity to stand for the other, speak on behalf of the other, and indeed become the other because of their shared spiritual potentialities. Bison, juncos, wolves, gypsum, dogwood, bearberry, winter, snow, the North Wind, and the area of Wind Cave National Park embody common potentialities that differentiate them from the potentialities embodied in blacktail deer, slate, dragonflies, swallows, hawks, thunder, the West Wind, and the Harney Peak region.

The incredible diversity of the Black Hills’ various life forms made them a culturally significant and sacred place to the tribal nations who lived within their reaches. The Hills contained examples of most of the natural resources known to these tribes, representing not only all seven tiers of the Cheyennes’ universe but also the seven universal elements of the Lakotas’. They also embodied the Four Directions, Winds, or Pillars (Mountains) of the Cheyenne and Lakota worlds. The area of Wind Cave was especially connected to the North Wind, the bison, and the breath of life in Lakota traditions, while the Buffalo Gap may have been linked to the Southeast Wind, the Sun, and fire in Cheyenne cosmologies. In sum, the Hills contain the whole and “heart of everything that is;” they are a sentient and conscious presence, a living entity that quintessentially reveals and expresses the principles of cosmic singularity.
III. LANDSCAPES AND CEREMONIAL CYCLES

Many tribal nations in the northern plains kept star maps that were coordinated with significant landforms in the areas they lived and traveled (Chamberlain 1982; Goodman 1992; McCleary 1997). Not surprisingly, for those Lakotas and Cheyennes who remained among the Black Hills, it was distinctive landforms like the Buffalo Gap, Bear Butte, Inyan Kara Mountain, Harney Peak, and Bear Lodge Butte that were coordinated to the position of the sun and the movement of the stars, helping to mark the seasons in their annual rounds and determine where people should stay and travel at particular points in time (Schlesier 1987:15, 25, 83-87, 104-105; Goodman 1992:12-13). Springs and openings to caves set inside or in proximity to mountains were especially significant because they revealed locations where the nadir of the earth in the north and the zenith of the sky in the south come together. The points where earth and sky meet are highly regarded and considered especially sacred because they concentrate and channel the forces and powers of the universe. These portals exist throughout the plains, but one of the largest concentrations is associated with the Black Hills. The area of Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap represents one of the landscapes where this earth/sky juncture takes place.

Springs and caves were significant because these were places that revealed the interactions between stone and water that were understood to produce ní, the breath of life. Like the bison, stone stands for the universe. As Wallace Black Elk (and Lyon 1990:51) writes in reference to the stone bowl of a pipe, “The buffalo gave his life so we could wear his robe. His blood sifted into the ground and became stone. The stone represents the universe. It represents the woman.” It is not hard to envision how, by extension, this fundamental understanding was applied to the Black Hills as a whole. In Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, the stone mass of the Black Hills constitutes a hierophany of subtle yet immense proportions. The highest regions and central granitic core of the Hills are typically associated with stories of sky figures, thunderbirds, and owls. The central area is enclosed by a series of distinct, concentric geologic formations with the Race Track standing out as the most prominent circle. This depression separates the interiors from the Hogback and the surrounding grasslands along the Cheyenne River. Reading tribal stories associated with the topography of the Hills proper, it can be argued that they represent different stages in the life cycle. The innermost circle is the place where the sky and earth come together, mediated by the fertility of the thunders whose actions bring about the conception of new life that is incubated in the vast cavern formations underneath the Black Hills. Here, life emerges from its spiritual form at the openings of caves and springs to take on its physical shape. The Race Track and the adjoining Hogback can be seen as transitional zones, the liminal, betwixt and between spaces where the process of materialization undergoes its completion. It is here that the merger of spirituality and materiality is finalized in the birthing and nursing of newborn bison calves. The outlying grassland and river areas represent the places where life undergoes its maturation and growth. Once completed, it returns to its source or origin in the underworld and sky. The interiors of the Hills, associated with owl figures, symbolize death, but these same areas also signify beginnings with the arrival of the thunderbirds. Together, they signify the cosmic singularity, the inter-connectedness of life and death.

In this schemata, the outlier formations, such as Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, and Inyan Kara Mountain, stand apart from the reproductive structure that symbolizes the formation of the Black Hills proper. For the Lakotas, these symbolically constitute the head of a bison as opposed to its body. The first two landforms are connected to stories of bears and events focused predominantly on healing and spiritual renewal. Just as the bear stands outside Lakota

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137 Linea Sundstrom (1990) alludes to this life cycle model in her exhaustive work on rock art in the southern Hills, but she does not fully some of its develop its metaphorical implications.
classifications of most other animals, so do the two sites symbolically associated with them. In Cheyenne ceremonial traditions, Bear Butte, as represented in the Lone Tipi, stands apart from the Black Hills represented by the circular dance enclosure of the Animal Dance and the Sun Dance. For the Cheyennes, Bear Butte is the original creation site which guards and stewards regenerative processes in the Black Hills and the surrounding plains.

In another tradition, which the Cheyenne and Lakota share, a human man marries a Buffalo Woman whose people live underneath the earth and consume human flesh. Ultimately, the Buffalo People have a race against each other in their human and bison forms at the Race Track to determine which of them will be the hunter and the prey. It is through the death and blood of the bison that human life is born and perpetuated, as in Little Cloud’s story of a mysterious event that took place at the Buffalo Gap. The place and the event are one. The bison are not only born out of the Black Hills, but they are the Hills. Quoting Nicholas Black Elk (from Brown 1992: 13), this land, “the heart of everything that is,” is synergistically united with the bison, the “totality of all that is.” Both the Black Hills (the “Head Chief of the Land” in Red Cloud’s words) and the bison (the “Chief of the Animals” according to Black Elk) are situated within a circle that is mirrored in the sky by a constellation known by the Lakota as the Race Track, Kiinyanka ocanka, or the Sacred Hoop, Cangleska wakan. Inside this celestial circle is another constellation, Tayamni, a figure that represents an animal with stars forming the outline of its ribs, backbone, and tail (see Chapter Fifteen).

In yet another Lakota narrative, the winds, Tate, and his sons, the direct descendants of Taku Skanskan, bring movement and order to life-giving processes within the sacred circle that one of the earth’s first born creatures, Waziya, creates. His grandson, the North Wind, Waziyata, governs the movements that bring “breath” and the continuing rebirth of the Pte Oyate, the Buffalo people, from their subterranean home at Wind Cave. Also, in the story cycle of Wicahpi Hinhpaya [Falling Star], told by Nicholas Black Elk, different parts of the Black Hills are united through the hero’s travels, which transverse locations from the Race Track where Waziya’s offspring survives in a cave to the high interiors where the Thunderbirds breed their young. This is also true in the Cheyenne versions of the Falling Star. In a number of Lakota stories and liturgical texts, Wind Cave, the cave of Waziya, represents the nadir of the Hills (or universe) and the region around Harney Peak, the home of the Thunders, is the zenith (see Chapter Fifteen).

The synergistic unity of the Black Hills with its animals, plants, minerals, landforms, and stars is also recreated in the Sun Dance, which in Cheyenne traditions is seen by some as a dramatization of the Race Track Story. Many aspects of the Cheyenne Sun Dance symbolically represent the physical environment of the Black Hills, and this may apply to the Lakota Sun Dance too. In reference to the Lakota Sun Dance, Arthur Amiotte (1987:78) writes: “Perhaps in their minds they are returning to that mythical time at the beginning of the world, to the sacred lodge of the Pte Oyate (Buffalo People, the ancestors of the Lakotas) that existed originally underneath the world, to a recreation of that sacred spot through which the Buffalo People came into this world, and the other beings with them.” For many Lakota people, today, that sacred spot is the region of the Buffalo Gap, the Race Track, and Wind Cave (see Chapters Twelve and Fifteen).

Like the bison’s progenitor, the Black Hills, the Sun Dance generates its power by recreating an axis mundi that brings together the forces of the sky, earth, and the four directions. Through its performance, the Sun Dance generates renewal and simultaneously wakan as an ultimate state

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138 Remember that the Lone Tipi in the Cheyenne Sun Dance, which represents Bear Butte, stands outside the lodge circle where the regeneration actually takes place.
of goodness and well-being. Indeed, the association of the Hills’ high elevation interiors with the thunders recalls John Moore’s apt description (1996:225-226) of the Cheyenne Sun Dance as the recreation of an “enormous fertility structure” that makes up a spring thunderstorm on the plains. In the performance of Sun Dances by Lakotas and Cheyennes, the sacred tree holds the nest of the thunderbird in its fork, possibly mimicking the nest believed to exist in the Black Hills near Harney Peak. The base of the tree is placed in a ritually prepared hole that is fed with buffalo fat and other offerings, representing the underworld and caves. The tree, as an axis mundi, ties the two together in a manner not too dissimilar to the way these tribes understand the relationship between the high reaches and underground worlds of the Black Hills (see Chapters Twelve and Fifteen). Although the first Sun Dances performed by the Lakotas and Cheyennes are widely believed to have taken place near Sundance Mountain on the northwestern side of the Hills, both tribes have stories which associate the origin of the dance among the bison with either the Buffalo Gap or a cave, which can be easily read as Wind Cave. The area of Sundance Mountain and the Buffalo Gap share certain geological similarities. At both locations, seams of gypsum dissolve into sink holes and crevices (one of the building blocks in cave formation) that might be conceptualized as openings to the underworld, places where the spirits of bison returned and emerged, following the trails of gypsum around the Race Track.

The Race Track is another landform with powerful synergistic imagery that embraces the animals, the corrals in which they were traditionally hunted, and the Sun Dance. Linea Sundstrom (2001) has written about the symbolism of the Race Track in relation to another Cheyenne ceremony, the Animal Dance or the Massaum. She convincingly shows how this geological depression, with the Buffalo Gap as its eastern opening, could have easily conjured up the image of a hunting corral with its chute facing east, and she also provides evidence for the use of this and nearby areas, notably Cache Butte, for impounding antelope, bison, and other ungulates. In the older ceremonies for bison hunting, which employed the use of a corral, there were special rituals in which a spiritually gifted leader, known commonly as a Buffalo Caller, enticed the bison to the spot where they would be driven into a natural or human-made enclosure. Among the Lakotas, bison callers used special stones to attract the bison that were no doubt intended to remind them of their place of origin in the rocks and the mountains. These were probably gypsum or another crystalline mineral found in or near caves. Among both tribes, the large wing feathers of eagles were often used in summoning bison and other animals -- an association that probably linked the eagle with the bison’s special friend, the Sun (see Chapters Nine, Ten, Fifteen). The Race Track is explicitly linked in Cheyenne beliefs to the Sun Dance, and it is present, at least implicitly, in Lakota traditions and practices too.

The origin of certain sweatlodge ceremonies is also associated in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions to a cave in the southern Hills, and in stories associated with various tribal culture heroes including Tokahe, Motseyoef, Falling Star, Stone Boy, and Blood Clot Boy. Caves and sweatlodges are integrally connected to each other as representing the womb of mother earth, places where life is regenerated. For both tribes, there were close associations between bison, breath, healing, and renewal, and there were specialized sweatlodges run by people who had spiritual partnerships with bison. Indeed, sweatlodge ceremonies are understood to replicate the life generating processes that are known to be associated with certain caves in the Black Hills, and some of these have been held at locations above the cave in recent times (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Among the Lakotas, there is also special pipe ceremony, which takes place at the Race Track celebrating the arrival of the newborn buffalo calves and initiating a ritual pilgrimage into the Black Hills every seven years. Importantly, the origin of many religious observances among the Cheyennes and Lakotas are connected to stories that are set in geographic locations that are
implicitly or explicitly tied to the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap/Wind Cave area, as well as a host of other sacred landscapes in and around the Black Hills. It is not surprising that so much of their religious life has its foundations in this region since this is a place where diverse life forms come together in a distinct geological setting -- a location that reveals and teaches people the complex workings of the universe (see Chapter Nine and Twelve). When the Black Hills are understood as an immense reproductive structure, nurturing new life forms in their shadows and feeding the surrounding grasslands with their waters and minerals, it is easy to appreciate the meaning of Red Cloud’s allusion to the Hills as the “Head Chief of the Land.”

IV. TRIBAL ALLIANCES AND MOVEMENTS

There is genre of stories in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions about encounters between a human man and a buffalo woman that is associated very specifically with the Black Hills and Wind Cave National Park. These stories take on many different narrative forms, and they are found among many other tribes in the region as well. Most of the “Buffalo Woman” stories, as they are commonly called, share fundamental motifs, but they also exhibit important variations. In other words, they appear to be part of a pan-regional storytelling tradition in which certain characters and plots speak to a common stock of symbols that have been retrofitted in various ways to specific tribal histories and landscapes. The stories can be read on a number of different levels too.

On one level, and as told in Cheyenne and Lakota traditions, these stories reveal important truths about social relationships (Moore 1974:197, 198; Rice 1994). Not only do they refer to some of the tensions inherent in the relations between a man’s consanguinal and affinal kinspeople, but they also speak to some of the contradictions implicit in relations between people of different nations, associations that are not only fraught with strife and hostility but also embody opportunities for peaceful exchange and enduring partnerships. They tell how people gain entry into nations and territories other than their own through conflict as well as cooperation. Some of the Cheyenne versions of the story are explicitly connected to the story of the Great Race and the Buffalo Gap, and also to the origins of the Sun Dance and their quillworkers’ guild. Several Lakota renditions of the story are linked to Wind Cave, and at least one Lakota version of the story is associated with the Sun Dance (see Chapters Twelve and Fifteen).

Most of the stories told by the Lakotas and Cheyennes are about relationships that come about through travel and movement into the lands of another nation. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the famous Lakota storyteller, Left Heron, related several detailed versions of the story. In the rendition told to Ella Deloria (1978:86-89; also in Rice 1994:67-126), the hero, a young man, is the son of Waziya (the Old Man) and Wakanka (the Old Woman), who also appear as the original Pte Oyate in George Sword’s stories of Tate and his five sons and the emergence of Tokahe from a cave. The young man first marries a yellow-haired corn wife from the east and then takes a black-haired buffalo woman from the west as a spouse. The buffalo wife leaves him with their son, and the hero follows them to their cavern home in the mountains where he eventually remains among the Buffalo People, who can be seen to signify the nations near the Black Hills. The corn wife is abandoned when the hero takes up his new life, and she can be seen to symbolize the associations of the Lakotas with the Arikara villages and their

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139 As revealed previously, some of the stories found in Cheyenne and Arapaho traditions involve an elk wife and a bison wife. Others, as among the Lakota, include a corn wife and a buffalo wife. And in still more versions, the story speaks only about a buffalo wife.
dependence on them for a trade in corn.  This feature of the story mirrors the dilemma the Lakotas would have faced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when deciding whether to live along the Missouri among the neighboring Arikaras and follow a life that included horticulture or one that was given over to the hunting of bison among the Arapahos and other populations farther west. This theme is implicit in many of the Buffalo Wife stories that come from tribal nations who at one time or another practiced horticulture along the Missouri River, and it reflects a basic division in their annual subsistence pursuits between a way of life organized around semisedentary villages and the cultivation of corn and another that entailed the pursuit of bison and other game at some distance away from the villages and their corn fields.

When the hero arrives at the buffalo wife’s home, he confronts hostile in-laws who try to deceive and kill him. Ultimately, he slays the Crazy Buffalo, his father-in-law and his domineering mother-in-law, both of whom take humans hostage and consume their flesh. After he slays the killer bison, who could easily signify the hostile Kiowas and Crows the Lakotas confronted when they first ventured into the Black Hills, he is welcomed into the midst of the other peaceable Buffalo People, the friendly Cheyennes and Arapahos, perhaps. Ultimately, he remains in the mountains among the Buffalo Nation, having abandoned his ties to his corn wife and his home in the east. He continues, however, to bring meat, the gift of the Buffalo, to his community of origin.

In the version that Left Heron shared with Ella Deloria (1978:86-89), there are specific clues about the geographic route the hero’s movements take. When the young man chases after his buffalo wife and son, he follows a trail that takes him over a desolate country (much like Badlands), after which he crosses a river (possibly the Cheyenne) and rests at a large oak tree (maybe the Council Oak near Hermosa) before coming to the land of the Buffalo People behind a ridge of hills (very likely the Hogback of the Black Hills). In the version shared with James Walker (1917:183-190, 1983:109-117), he is very explicit about the buffalo’s home being located in the mountains inside a cave, and in another rendition relating to the origin of the Sun Dance (Walker 1917:212-215), the home of the buffalo people is also in a cave far to the west. Although specific place names are never given, the landscape of his travels mirrors the geography between the Missouri River and the Black Hills, and his descriptions of the cave suggest its location in the buffalo’s mountain home, a place later generations of Lakota would identify as Wind Cave.

In the wider scheme of things, it probably does not matter that we give an exact genealogical reckoning of the kinship between the peoples who historically lived in the Hills or reproduce the actual landscape over which the hero traveled. What is significant about the story is that it expresses some of the decisions the Lakotas and other tribal nations faced in making different kinds of adaptations to their neighbors and the landscapes they lived in, especially prior to 1830 when various tribes moved West, temporarily or permanently abandoning their locations along the bottomlands of the Missouri River to take up a life focused primarily on bison hunting in the region of the domal uplift known as the Black Hills.

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140 This could refer metaphorically not only to the bison proper but also to a tribe who specialized in bison hunting. One of these was the Arapaho who were known as Makpiya To [Blue Cloud] people in Lakota, but coincidentally, they were also known in French sources as the Gens de Vash [Buffalo People] (Fowler 2001:860). The Arapaho also have a buffalo woman/wife story, but in their story the other wife is an elk woman, revealing a tension not between the river valleys and the high elevation prairies but rather the grasslands and the mountains (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:388-403). Unlike the Cheyennes and Lakotas, there is no evidence that the Arapahos ever practiced horticulture or spent any length of time on the Missouri River.

141 I believe this might be an example of what Raymond Fogelson (1989:133-134) identifies as the kind of history where peoples’ movements are not traced through chronologically ordered events but embedded in other kinds of narrative structures or what he calls “non-events.”
At least one thousand years ago, people who practiced horticulture began to settle in the valley of the Missouri River. Within a span of approximately three hundred years, 1000-1300 A.D., the valley was occupied by peoples ancestral to the modern-day Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras. Two to three hundred years later, the Siouan-speaking Poncas and Omahas established settlements on this river as well. In early historic times, all of these populations divided their year between crop raising at the villages along the Missouri and the hunting of bison at upstream locations on this river’s various western tributaries. From the early accounts of European Americans and tribal oral traditions, we can deduce that at various points in the prehistories and protohistories of these tribes, some attempted to establish a permanent presence on the upper reaches of waterways fed by the drainage system of the Black Hills. Few of those who continued to practice horticulture remained permanently in the area, unless like the Crows, they abandoned their farming pursuits. No matter how long some of these populations stayed within easy reach of the Hills on a year-round basis, it is clear that all of them traveled to the area for extended periods of time to hunt bison, since ceramic remains associated with various village traditions are found in the region only a short distance from Wind Cave National Park (see Chapter Two).

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In the protohistoric era, from 1730 to 1780, two of the horticultural populations from the Missouri, the Poncas and the Arikaras, appear to have been the ones with the strongest links to the southeastern Hills. These two populations intermarried and hunted together during this
period, and they were reported at locations on the upper reaches of the Missouri’s western tributaries from the Niobrara to the Cheyenne. In their own oral traditions, the Ponca recall hunting and establishing villages on the upper reaches of the White River between 1730 and 1750. They also remember hunting in the Black Hills and knowing of Wind Cave. The Arikaras also have early remembrances and stories of the Black Hills and some of their landforms, including Bear Lodge Butte and Harney Peak, but nothing, at least in the published record, can be specifically tied to the area of the Buffalo Gap or Wind Cave (see Chapter Three).

Two other semihorticultural groups from the valley of the Missouri River, the Mandans and Hidatsas, also had knowledge of the Black Hills preserved in some of their oral traditions, but most of it refers to landscapes in the northern reaches of the Hills. When these tribal nations traveled to the Hills, they usually followed a route by way of the Little Missouri River. There is no historical evidence that they occupied or even hunted in areas south of the main branch of the Cheyenne River. The Crows, an offshoot of the Hidatsas, however, were reported at locations in the southern Hills in later years, but mostly in small groups associated with either the Kiowas or the Arapahos. Or, they were reported in war parties making raids on their Lakota and Cheyenne enemies. Their primary territorial associations with the Black Hills during this period refer to areas on the northern side of the Hills and along the Little Missouri River (see Chapter Three).

In their various travels to the Hills, the semihorticultural populations of the upper Missouri encountered peoples who lived in the region on a year-round basis and whose subsistence economies were focused on the procurement of bison. One thousand years ago and earlier, peoples associated with many different tool assemblages variously known as Besant, Pelican Lake, and Avonlea occupied sites along the major river valleys surrounding the Hills, and most of them spent time inside the Hogback as well. Artifacts associated with these complexes are found at sites scattered throughout the Black Hills, and the knappable material that went into tool-making comes from quarries inside the Black Hills, including those in the neighborhood of Wind Cave National Park, at Battle Mountain, and Flint Hill. Although some scholars have speculated about the ethnic identities of the peoples associated with these tool complexes, there is no evidence that indisputably links any historic tribal inhabitants of the area with its prehistoric residents (see Chapter Two).

Not until the protohistoric era, which began approximately three hundred years ago, is it possible to assign ethnic identities to the peoples of the Black Hills with any degree of certainty. In the southeastern Hills, where Wind Cave National Park is located, there is an impressive body of evidence that links this region to Apache-speaking populations commonly referred to in the historic literature as the Padoucas, and in the archaeological record, as the Dismal River peoples. Some of these people were specialized bison hunters, but many appear to have followed a broader spectrum of foraging strategies and even casual forms of horticulture. All of them used the bow and arrow, and according to some scholars, may very well be descended from peoples associated with the Avonlea complex. In the eighteenth century, they occupied settlements along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River and the upper reaches of the White and Niobrara rivers, and they may have had settlements as far north as the forks of the Cheyenne River just west of the Arikaras on the Missouri. Lithic material from Battle Mountain was uncovered at Dismal River sites now inundated by the Angostura Reservoir. These Apaches were probably among the first to bring horses to the Black Hills at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but fifty years later, Numic-speaking peoples, notably Comanches, Utes, and Shoshones, started to occupy a major role in the region’s horse traffic, and in time, some of the Comanches covered areas within easy reach of the southeastern Hills inhabited by the Padoucas whose name eventually became associated with them (see Chapter Three).
The historical record is unclear about how the territory in the southern Hills, once associated with the Padouca Apaches, came to be linked with the Comanches, but one thing is certain: by the end of the eighteenth century most of the Padoucas had disappeared from the region as a distinct ethnic body. Some appear to have remained, however, as small remnant groups within the ranks of larger tribal nations such as the Comanches and possibly the Arapahos. When Poncas acquired horses sometime around 1740, their oral traditions indicate that they received them from the Padoucas, but it is hard to determine whether they were applying this name to the Apaches or the Comanches. When the Cheyennes moved to the area around 1760, their oral traditions tell of them learning how to tan hides from the Comanches and how to use a specific horse medicine from the Plains Apaches, also known in the historic record as the Gattakas or Kiowa Apaches. In early historic times, these Apaches were reported primarily on the northern and western side of the Hills. They were distinct from the Padoucas, some of whom may have joined forces with them in later years (see Chapter Three).

The years between 1730 and 1760 brought many other populations to the region of the Black Hills, which was rapidly becoming a rendezvous location for northern and eastern tribes to acquire horses from the Apaches and Comanches with active ties to the Spanish Southwest. Whatever their reasons for coming to and staying in the area, we know that three major populations arrived here from Montana during this period, the Kiowas, the Crows, and the Arapahos. In the 1740s, the Kiowas were clearly among the largely unidentified populations that the La Verendrye brothers encountered on the northern side of the Hills. Their own oral traditions confirm this, but they also indicate that by 1760, the tribe was abandoning its territories in the northern reaches of the Hills to take up residence along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River where they remained for the next thirty years (see Chapter Three).

The Arapahos seem to have arrived in the region of the Black Hills about the same time as the Kiowas. Cheyenne traditions reveal that when they first started moving to the northern side of the Black Hills, circa 1750-60, they encountered Arapahos, Kiowas, Apaches, Crows, and Comanches there. Where exactly the Arapahos resided in this region is unclear until the 1790s, when early historic accounts record their presence simultaneously on the headwaters of the Little Missouri River and also along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River. As the Kiowas, Crows, and Arapahos, moved into areas of Apache and Comanche occupation, they appear to have established a presence on all sides of the Hills, following the course of the north and south branches of the Cheyenne River. In time, the newcomers replaced the Apache and Comanche populations as major horse suppliers and trade partners with tribes on the Missouri River. The Crows appear to have become the major trading partner of their relatives, the Hidatsas, while the Kiowas traded primarily with the Arikaras but occasionally with the Mandans. The Arapahos probably divided their trade between various village tribes depending on where they located their winter settlements. Thus, the Arapahos who camped along the Belle Fourche River most likely traded with the Mandans, while the South Fork bands were the probable trade partners of the Arikaras (see Chapter Three).

During the same period, the Cheyennes and possibly a small number of allied Lakotas were arriving in this region from locations in the east. When the Cheyennes began to break away from their villages on the Missouri River and establish permanent settlements on the upper reaches of the Cheyenne River, probably around 1750, they followed the well-established pattern of movement and adaptation associated with other horticultural populations in the region. They planted corn and established villages near the Missouri River and traveled to the upper reaches of its western tributaries to hunt bison. Over a period of eighty years, 1750 to 1830, the Cheyennes gradually abandoned their ties to the Missouri and permanently occupied areas along the margins of the Black Hills where game, but most especially bison, were plentiful.
By the 1790s, the largest cluster of Cheyennes established their villages at the Forks of the Cheyenne River where most of them remained until the 1820s. Other Cheyennes took up settlements along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River, camping near French Creek and even at locations farther south amidst some of their Kiowa and Arapaho allies. The Cheyennes who lived closest to Wind Cave National Park at this time were probably members of the Wotapio division who were closely aligned with the Kiowas. The Suhtaio and Omisis divisions appear to have pushed some of their settlements south as well, but the vast majority established winter camping locations around the northern edge of the Hills in alliance with the Arapahos and Apaches who lived there. By the time of Lewis and Clark, Cheyenne settlements encircled the Black Hills and were interspersed with those of other tribes who remained or arrived in the region. It was the Cheyennes among whom some of the early French traders lived when they wintered at the Forks of the Cheyenne River and also in the vicinity of French Creek (see Chapter Three).

From the descriptions of early European American observers, it is clear that the Black Hills, including the area of Wind Cave National Park, was an ethnically mixed region in which a variety of different tribes lived together peaceably and shared access to common territorial ranges. Hostilities were evident too. In the south, battles erupted between the Kiowas and the Poncas, and in the north, they engulfed the Crows and the Cheyennes/Arikaras. In 1781, when smallpox swept through the villages on the Missouri River, the locations and trading alliances of local tribes were considerably altered. Many Poncas lost their lives in this epidemic and those who lived no longer had the defensive capacity to maintain their access to hunting grounds in the southeastern Hills against the pressures of the incoming Kiowas and their allies, nor were they able to hold their powerful trading position with the Comanches who began to remain in areas south of the Platte River, abandoning territories within easy reach of the Black Hills. The Arikaras were also devastated by the epidemic, but they were able to retain their access to hunting grounds on the upper reaches of the Cheyenne River for a short period of time through their longstanding ties of friendship and intermarriage with the Kiowas and the Cheyennes (see Chapter Three).

After the 1760s, the Lakotas started to enter this ethnically complex situation in ever-growing numbers. Small groups of Lakotas probably reached the Black Hills as early as the 1760s in association with friends and relatives among the Cheyennes, Arikaras, and Poncas, but it is clear that the greater portion of the Lakota population didn’t establish themselves west of the Missouri until after 1781, when the Arikaras and Poncas, weakened by contagious disease epidemics, were no longer able to thwart their movements to the Missouri River and beyond. When Lakota/Dakota people started to settle on the Missouri, some of them took up farming and lived among and intermarried with the village tribes, especially the Cheyennes, Arikaras, and the Poncas. Following an adaptive pattern well-established in the area, the Lakotas situated their winter settlements along the bottomlands of the Missouri River but traveled to the upper reaches of its western tributaries to hunt bison in the summer and fall. Along the Cheyenne, Moreau, and Grand rivers, their movement seems to have met with little resistance. Indeed, the Lakotas appear to have formed close relationships with the northern branches of the Cheyennes and Arapahos, who lived and traveled in this area, aligning with these two tribes and the Arikaras in their wars against the Crows. The northern Lakotas or Soanes, including the Hunkpapas, Sihasapas, Minneconjous, and Itazipcos probably acquired some of their first horses from the northern branches of the Cheyennes and Arapahos. Farther south, along the Bad and White Rivers, the Lakotas’ movements met with fierce resistance. The southern Lakotas, including the Sicangu and the Oglalas, reached the Black Hills by way of the Bad and White rivers. Indeed, one story in their oral traditions indicates that the Oglalas acquired their first horses from Cheyennes who lived along the White River and in the vicinity of the southern Hills. These were probably the
Wotapio Cheyennes, who had had a long history of intermarriage with the Lakotas/Dakotas and were considered “part Sioux.” It was along the southern front of their movements towards the Black Hills that the Lakotas entered into a major war with the Kiowas that eventually engulfed some of their allies among the Wotapio division of the Cheyennes.\(^{142}\) This warfare, which is recorded in the oral traditions of the Kiowas and also in the local historical lore of European Americans living in the region of Hot Springs, led to the demise of a major division of the Kiowas and some of their Cheyenne allies, and it brought about the eventual departure of the Kiowas from areas in and around the southern Black Hills. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Kiowas had moved their winter camps and hunting areas to the Platte River, where in later years they were joined by some of the Cheyennes and Arapahos who continued to be aligned with them (see Chapter Three).

As the Kiowas abandoned the southern Hills, many of the Arapahos and some Cheyenne divisions became the dominant populations in this area, and they remained so through the early decades of the nineteenth century when their Lakota allies began to arrive in larger numbers. By the 1820s, most of the Arapahos and some Cheyennes were on the western side of the Hills hunting bison in the country of the Platte River and establishing trade connections with the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches who were now located in areas well south of the Platte River. The 1820s was the decade when the main body of Cheyennes started to leave the forks of the river that bears their name to take up residence on the Platte River. While their movement away from the eastern edge of the Black Hills was influenced by the growing presence of Lakotas in the region, it is also clear that Cheyennes and Arapahos migrated south and west to find better grazing conditions for their expanding horse herds (see Chapter Three). The growing importance of horses in the economies of Plains tribes probably played as much of a role in the migrations of tribes away from the Hills as warfare. Without question, the adoption of the horse greatly expanded the geographic reach of local tribes, allowing them to cover much larger territorial ranges and more diverse habitats in their annual subsistence cycles. It is also clear that horses introduced new mitigating conditions, including the need to find adequate pasturage, and according to tribal oral histories, many bands found better grazing conditions for their horses on lands south of the Platte River. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there is no question that the Kiowas and the southernmost branches of the Cheyennes and Arapahos had become pastoralists whose lives centered as much around the maintenance of their growing horse herds as it did the hunting of bison. It is also apparent, at least among the Cheyennes, that some bands traveled long distances every year for trade, and in the process, they covered large stretches of territory extending from the Mandan-Hidatsa villages on the upper Missouri River to Spanish settlements in Texas and New Mexico. The long-distance travel associated with the horse traffic continued a pattern that stretched back to the early eighteenth century and that is associated in early historic documents with mixed Apache-Ute-Comanche groups like the Jëtans (see Chapters Three, Four, and Seven).

After 1820, there is evidence not only of growing economic diversification and geographic dispersal, but also increasing sociopolitical separations within the ranks of the Cheyennes and Arapahos. Most the Arapahos who remained in the north gradually moved their territories to areas west of the Black Hills along the Platte River and even the country of the Powder River. A few bands of Arapahos, who were intermarried with the Lakotas, remained in reach of the Hills, including one under a leader named Black Bear who wintered mostly on the western side of the Hills in the vicinity of Stockade-Beaver Creek. In the same period, many Cheyennes joined the

\(^{142}\) Again, there are many stories in the local histories of Hot Springs that tell of a major battle between the Lakotas and Cheyennes at Battle Mountain southeast of Wind Cave National Park. Although Battle Mountain was a quarrying site not a battleground, there is no question that battles took place between the Lakotas and combined forces of Kiowas and Cheyennes (probably from the Wotapio division) in and around the southern Black Hills in the late eighteenth century.
Arapahos in their westerly movements. Nevertheless, a sizable group of northern Cheyennes remained in the vicinity of the Black Hills until 1877. Most Cheyennes continued to winter along the northern edge of the Black Hills and in the vicinity of Bear Butte. Some of them, including a division known as the Mazikota, remained in the southeastern Hills and along the upper reaches of the White River and the south branch of the Cheyenne. They were closely intermarried with the Lakotas. This is probably the group that Francis Parkman placed in the southern Black Hills on his 1849 map, an area that includes Wind Cave National Park (see Chapter Four).

Meanwhile, the southern divisions of the Lakotas, and some of the northern divisions too, were establishing their winter camps at the base of the Black Hills. By the 1820s, most of the Lakotas had abandoned their settlements on the Missouri River and were living on the upper reaches of its western tributaries from the White River in the south to the Grand River in the north. When the Lakotas began to settle amidst the Cheyennes and Arapahos in the country of the Black Hills, they did so at a time when bison were still plentiful in the area. Until the 1840s, some of the Lakotas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes were able to follow the herds of bison that moved between the Race Track and the upper reaches of the White and Niobrara rivers, entering and leaving the Hills by way of the Buffalo Gap. As other tribal nations had done before them, these populations wintered at sites along the Race Track, in some of the Hills’ lower elevation valleys, and at various locations along the upper reaches of the White River and the South Fork of the Cheyenne. Whether they wintered inside or outside the Hogback, many of them were within easy reach of the lands at Wind Cave National Park, a location favorable to the hunting of elk, deer, and other ungulates during the months of winter. These groups no doubt used the trails along Beaver Creek and its tributaries in the late spring and early summer months to reach locations in the interiors where they cut their lodgepoles, gathered plants, and conducted ceremonial observances. They also clearly came to the area to bathe in the thermal waters at Hot Springs, and they may have also collected knappable stone in the area for manufacturing and ceremonial purposes. As reported earlier, much of the area inside the Buffalo Gap was an ideal site for winter camping. It contained good supplies of water and timber, abundant game, and diverse plant and mineral resources. Its sheltered topography, warmer climate, and rich grasses made it an advantageous place to graze small herds of horses too. Not surprisingly, these same conditions made it attractive to European Americans when they started to occupy the region in large numbers after 1878 (see Chapters Four and Seven).

Among the Oglalas and Sicangus, two bands were closely associated with the Wind Cave region of the Hills in the historic record of the 1830s. The Oyuxpe [Unloads] were a band of Oglalas and the Wazazi [Fringed] comprised a band of mixed Ponca-Sicangu origins that became aligned with the Oglalas in later decades. These were the bands whose winter settlements were located in this area, although Sicangu and Oglala bands that wintered elsewhere accessed the area on a regular basis in the fall, winter, and spring seasons. Even bands that stayed along the Platte River after the 1840s, such as the Wagluke [Loafers], a group descended from marriages between the Sicangu and local European American traders, were reported to come to the Hills to hunt elk and gather their lodgepoles.

During the years between 1820 and 1850, the Mazikota Cheyennes as well as the Oyuxpe and Wazazi Lakotas were the band groupings with the closest reported associations to the area where Wind Cave National Park is now located. Some Minneconjous were also reported in this area, especially after 1850. At this point in history, other Lakotas and Cheyennes maintained their winter camps at a wide variety of locations elsewhere in the vicinity of the Hills, but some were beginning to establish their hunting territories and winter settlements at locations far removed from the area. The second major movement of people away from the Hills in the historic period probably started in the 1840s with the gradual decline of bison herds from the grasslands to the
east. Many groups migrated to the Platte River, where some of the area’s newly established trading posts were built. It must be noted again that other large game remained abundant in and around the Black Hills until the gold rush era, and these certainly would have been sufficient to provide an adequate subsistence for the bands that remained in their reaches. The region was no longer an optimal location for the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho bands whose livelihoods became more dependent on a traffic in bison hides; these were the groups who were now establishing their locations in regions far beyond the Hills (see Chapters Four and Seven).

By the 1840s, the vast majority of Cheyennes and Arapahos, along with many Lakotas, had left the Black Hills for the countries of the Platte and Powder rivers and remained in these areas throughout much of the year. Some of the Lakotas and Cheyennes who hunted in areas south of the Platte River had little occasion to return to the Black Hills, but some of those who hunted north of the Platte still encamped in the Hills over the winter months. Many of the Cheyennes and Oglala Lakotas, who had moved farther west and north, also continued to make use of the Hills, entering them in the spring and fall as they made their way to and from their trading posts on the Platte and White rivers. Whether or not the Lakotas and Cheyennes still wintered at the base of the Hills at locations between the Race Track and the Cheyenne River, many of them returned to the Hills in the summer from distant locations to cut lodgepoles, to collect medicinal and food plants, and to find mineral materials used in manufacturing and for ceremony. They also came back to the Hills to hold political meetings and to conduct their religious observances, many of which originated at and were identified with various sites in the Black Hills including the regions of the Buffalo Gap, Bear Butte, and Bear Lodge Butte (see Chapters Four, Five, and Seven).

Even after the 1850s, when bison began to disappear from the Platte River region, forcing more Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos to move farther south and north to find them, many bands continued to return to the Black Hills especially during the early summer months. Between 1851 and 1867, there are numerous accounts of bands gathering in the Hills and taking sanctuary there, especially during times of hostile encounters with the U.S. military. Indeed, the diversity and size of the populations who used this area appears to have increased during this period. Notwithstanding the declining presence of bison in the region, the supplies of other game and also plant resources remained adequate to support fairly large concentrations of people in the area during different seasons of the year (see Chapter Five).

After the signing of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, which set aside a large tract of territory that included the Black Hills for the exclusive occupancy of the Lakotas and for the Cheyennes and Arapahos who lived among them, the adaptive patterns of many local bands began to change once again. Under the terms of this treaty, the federal government was required to distribute food, clothing, and other supplies to these tribes. These distributions took place at the sites where federal agencies were established along the Platte, Missouri, and White rivers. Over time, growing numbers of Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos began to winter at these locations, leaving them in the spring to carry out various subsistence activities at distant locations. As described in Chapter Five, Nicholas Black Elk’s people sometimes wintered near the Red Cloud Agency at Fort Robinson on the upper reaches of the White river, and in the late spring, they moved to their bison hunting grounds in the Powder-Tongue River countries, camping at various locations in the Black Hills, including the Buffalo Gap, along their route of travel. Other Lakotas, however, continued to winter at locations away from the agencies. Luther Standing Bear’s Sicangu band, for example, established their winter camps at the Buffalo Gap during these years. In the 1870s, the Buffalo Gap and the lands of Wind Cave National Park were less than fifty miles away from Spotted Tail’s Agency and about seventy-five miles from the Red Cloud Agency. Importantly, both of these agencies were within easy reach of the southeastern Hills. It
would have taken only a few days travel for small hunting parties to reach them during the fall and winter from their agency settlements and not much more time for larger camps to arrive there at other seasons for subsistence and ceremonial activity. In 1874, when the government realized it needed to move these agencies north of the Nebraska territorial line, the Sicangu leader Spotted Tail selected the Buffalo Gap as the site for a new agency. He no doubt recommended this location because of its proximity to good hunting grounds, water supplies, and timber stands. Samuel Hinman, who led the commission to determine suitable locations for a new agency, however, did not concur on the grounds that the area was not suitable for the kinds of farming endeavors the government wanted the Lakotas to pursue. His assessment contradicted the opinions of other Americans, including his superior E. L. Smith, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who described this region and the Black Hills more generally as well suited to various kinds of farming and stock-raising (see Chapters Five and Seven).

In the summers of 1874 and 1875, when large exploratory expeditions entered the Black Hills under the command of U.S. military forces, few Lakotas, Cheyennes, or Arapahos were present in the Hills. Many of the observers who traveled with these expeditions concluded that local tribes did not occupy or use the Hills, even though E.S. Howard (29 Sept 1875:254), the agent at Spotted Tail, wrote in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that tribes were staying away from the area because of the large military presence there. For many different reasons, the conclusions these observers reached about tribal relationships to the Black Hills were misleading. They were heavily biased by their own desire to have the U.S. government seize the Hills for American use and occupation. Nonetheless, their writings set into motion a train of thought that would continue to cloud our understanding of tribal occupancy and use of the Hills and even to deny that tribes had any significant and meaningful cultural attachments to them before European Americans took control over the area (see Chapter Five).

V. COMPETING CLAIMS AND CONTESTED STORIES

From the time prospectors set foot in the Hills in 1874 to the present day, the Black Hills have been a site of contestation between European Americans and the three tribes who still claim legal title to them under the terms of the 1868 Fort Laramie treaties, namely the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos. The struggle over the Hills has been waged on the battlefield, in the courts, in Congress, and on the protest line, but it has also been fought in the popular media, in the writings of scholars, and in the written and oral discourse of local storytellers, Indian and white alike. The political and cultural arms of this struggle have worked in tandem, and therefore, they must be understood in relationship to each other.

On one side, many European Americans claim the Black Hills as the spoils of military conquest. They advance their claims on the grounds that Congress has the ultimate authority to abrogate or alter treaties with or without the consent of the tribes with whom they were made. Some even assert that the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos never had aboriginal property rights to the Hills since they never established permanent settlements in their interiors. Many more reason that these tribes had no right to the Hills because they did not use the resources to their best advantage, that is, for the commercial purposes European Americans deemed important.
Others presume that tribes feared the Hills on superstitious grounds, and therefore, never entered them. More recently, a few writers have argued that contemporary tribal religious attachments to the Hills are bogus, callously invented to claim a region that was never sacred to them in the first place (see Chapters Five and Fourteen).

On the other side, the Lakotas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes claim that the Black Hills were stolen from them, that they were illegally occupied and seized under the terms of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty [15 Stat. 635], and that subsequent congressional action under the 1877 Agreement circumvented the United States’ own treaty law. The Lakotas further maintain that the United States recognized them as the aboriginal occupants of this region under an earlier treaty at Fort Laramie in 1851, and that even without this treaty, there is ample evidence in the historic record and tribal oral traditions to demonstrate their aboriginal title to the area. The Cheyennes and Arapahos also assert their rights to the area, not only in terms of aboriginal
entitlement but also under the provisions of another 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty [15 Stat. 655] that permitted these tribes to locate themselves on what was then known as the Great Sioux Reservation. Moreover, all of these tribes claim the Hills as a homeland, a place that nourished and provisioned their peoples for many generations. The three tribes also believe the Hills are sacred, holding some of the primary sites of their spiritual origin and renewal (see Chapters Five and Fourteen).

Although the Lakota and Cheyennes’ (and probably Arapahos’) sacred attachments to the Black Hills encompass the entire area, there are specific locales and landscapes that are especially important. These include, among others, Inyan Kara Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte, Bear Butte, Reynolds, Slate, and Gilette prairies, Castle Rock, Harney Peak, Red and Craven canyons, the Hot Springs, the Buffalo Gap, the Race Track, and Wind Cave. The last two sit on park properties, and as pointed out in the last chapter, they are tied to important stories which tell of the origin of humankind, the nature of human relationships to the animals, and the gift of their most sacred ceremony, the Sun Dance. The stories connected with Wind Cave National Park and its environs are not new. Many of the motifs they contain can be traced back to Denig’s writings which refer to Lakota beliefs about the Black Hills in 1833, and which certainly resonate with some of the Lakota ideas that European Americans wrote about in the 1870s. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries that aspects of Cheyenne and Lakota cosmological understandings of the Black Hills would be recorded in ethnographic sources. From then until the 1960s, more writings based on tribal oral traditions would tie some of these stories in very explicit ways to sites in the Hills. When the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota peoples experienced a spiritual and cultural renaissance in the 1970s, they turned to the stories that had been part of their cultural heritage for centuries. While there is no question that many of these were used, and are still being used, for political ends to regain what the Lakotas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes perceive as their rightful ownership of the Hills, none of them are completely new. They all rest on ideas consistent with traditions that can be traced back to the nineteenth century (see Chapter Fourteen).

The lands on which Wind Cave National Park now sits have long played a role in the political and cultural struggles over the Black Hills. Beginning in 1874, the trail that entered the Hills at the Buffalo Gap, following Beaver Creek to its headwaters between present day Pringle and Custer, South Dakota, crossed park properties. This trail, which followed a well-trodden tribal pathway into the Hills’ interiors, was the site of many armed struggles between European American prospectors and the allied Lakotas and Cheyennes. It was also a trail that European American expeditionary and military forces followed during their travels through the Hills in 1875. From 1874 to 1877, the Hills were a battleground, a place where tribal warriors raided the roads and settlement areas taken over by whites. This was not a place to camp with children and the elderly, except perhaps during the winter months when the Lakotas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes traditionally settled there or in isolated locations removed from the settlements and heavily used roads of European Americans (see Chapter Six).

After 1877, when Congress authorized the illegal taking of the Black Hills, whites began to expand their settlements beyond the gold rush towns of Custer and Deadwood, moving into areas of the southeastern Hills where Wind Cave National Park is now located. Americans of many different origins and from many walks of life came to the southeastern Hills to make a new life for themselves, establishing farms and ranches along many of the region’s continuously flowing waterways, including the Fall River as well as Beaver, Highland, and Lame Johnny creeks. Until 1903, when Wind Cave National Park was established, European American settlers and teamsters still used the trails along Beaver and Cold Spring creeks that crossed park properties, but there was no longer much outside traffic along these routes. When Jesse and Tom Bingham came
across Wind Cave in 1881, much of the area was open range. It was a location where local settlers grazed their cattle and horses and where they hunted the wild game that still roamed the Race Track and the surrounding Foothills and Hogback. In fact, the Bingham brothers were hunting when they found the cave, as some claim, by accident. Again, it can be argued that this “discovery” may not have been entirely fortuitous. Since their brother Matthew lived, worked, and hunted with the Lakotas at this time, it would not be surprising to learn that Jesse and Tom may have had some prior knowledge of the cave’s existence but not its exact location (see Chapters Six and Seven).

When the family of Jesse McDonald squatted on lands around Wind Cave in 1888 and began to explore and develop the cave as a tourist attraction, the southeastern Hills were becoming a mecca for a flourishing cattle industry tied commercially to the town of Buffalo Gap. They were also drawing people to the popular spa industry centered at Hot Springs. Within a decade, the settlement near the thermal waters at Hot Springs moved from a cluster of log cabins and camping sites to a bustling town with hotels and businesses that catered to a wealthy, leisured class who now traveled to the area by train and tallyho coaches. The developers of Wind Cave took advantage of the tourist bonanza and entered into a partnership with John Stabler who financed the building of a hotel at the site. The blustery feud that engulfed the Stablers, McDonalds, and the South Dakota Mining Company, who owned the subsurface rights to the land, led the United States to reconvey the land to the public domain, paving the way for the establishment of Wind Cave National Park in 1903 (see Chapter Six). Meanwhile, other settlers were coming to the area to make a living from livestock and crops, establishing additional homesteads along Beaver and Highland creeks and other sites within the modern-day boundaries of the park (see Chapter Six and Seven).

After 1877 and through the years of Wind Cave’s early development, Lakotas from the Pine Ridge Reservation, and probably some of the Cheyennes who lived with them, were gradually returning to the southeastern Black Hills. Once the military’s policy of reservation confinement was relaxed, small groups started to enter the Hills with the permission of their government agents. In the late 1870s, the Hot Springs area was settled by a small group of non-Indian men (and men of mixed ancestry) with their Lakota wives and descendants. In the following decades, even at the height of the “Indian Scare” between 1889-1990, Lakotas were reported in the area bathing at the thermal waters of Minnekahta, trading with local merchants and ranchers, visiting friends, and even camping in the town over the entire summer. There are also references to them picking berries, digging turnips, and collecting medicinal herbs in the Hills (see Chapter Six). Although there are many accounts of a Lakota presence in the southeastern Hills at the end of the nineteenth century, only a few are specific to the area of Wind Cave National Park. These indicate that the Lakotas visited the cave, camped on park properties, and traveled through the park en route to the locations where they cut their lodgepoles or to attend celebrations in white communities. Whether or not they used these occasions to hunt, gather plants, or conduct religious observances is unknown. They probably did, but these activities could have easily gone unnoticed, especially in some of the more remote sections of the park. Given the historic importance of the Wind Cave area to the Lakotas and the religious significance they continued to attach to the area, it is highly probable that small parties of Lakotas returned to this area to carry on any of a variety of procurement activities (see Chapters Six, Seven, and Fifteen).

Other than some of the events that took place along the Beaver/Cold Spring trails, which prospectors and settlers traveled from the Buffalo Gap and Hot Springs region to Custer, and the stories of Wind Cave’s discovery, its development, and the feuds surrounding its property, there are very few events on park lands of great historic or cultural importance to European Americans. Indeed, much of what has been written about the park in popular regional travel writings and in
the park’s own promotional material focuses on the area’s non-human features -- the geology of its unique cave and the identities and habits of its wildlife. The history of most of its human inhabitants has been largely incidental to how the park has come to represent itself and also how others have come to see it. The human stories that have entered into park programming are few in number and selective in character. They highlight certain events over others. Most of the stories play predictably to European American cultural values and traditions. The drama of the feud surrounding Wind Cave between 1884 and 1901 is worthy of interest and well-publicized because it makes perfect grist for the legend-making mills that surround the wider history of the Black Hills and the American West more generally. It fits into the popular storylines of conflict, the battles between Indians and cowboys, stage robbers and lawmen, and cattle barons and small-scale ranchers. These are all stories of how the lawless and “wild” West was tamed and domesticated to make way for “civilization” and tourists from the East.

Also prevalent in park interpretive materials are stories of discovery and exploration, from the sighting of the cave by the Bingham brothers in 1881 to uncovering new terrain in the cave’s vast network of chambers and passageways by successive generations of spelunkers. These stories typically mark the milestones of discovery at the cave and some of the challenges spelunkers faced in their explorations. The stories take on a particular cast and follow a narrative construction prevalent in European American cultural traditions of the West, which is romantically envisioned as a wild land, a dangerous space where death is challenged by the courage and fortitude of heroic questers who search out, struggle against, and survive its perils. The questers secure their redemption and salvation by outwitting the wily forces of the West and its nature. Today, these kinds of heroic efforts are often associated with the popular leisure sport of rock climbers who scale the sides of difficult mountains, cliffs, and towers, but they can also be easily identified with the less visible recreational activity of spelunking. The “descent” stories of spelunkers at Wind Cave National Park provide an interesting point of contrast and comparison to the dominant “ascent” narratives at Devil’s Tower National Monument (Dorst 2000:307-310). In their own and very different ways, both celebrate the European American cultural theme of humans conquering “nature.”

Another set of stories that have found a place in park representational materials are those associated with the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corp camps at Wind Cave National Park in the 1930s. The stories feature the various improvements to park properties, including a new elevator, administration building, roads, bridges, and campsites underwritten by the federal Work Projects Administration. These also follow familiar narrative themes in European American cultural traditions that, historically, at least, have celebrated the “wonders” of technology and development. It is not surprising that all of the WPA projects were in operation precisely at the time Borglum was blasting presidential faces into the granite walls of Mount Rushmore (see Chapter Six).

Surprisingly, many other stories about Wind Cave National Park, especially ones that take place above ground, have not been part of the park’s historical self-representation, even though these play to many of the same cultural themes that cover the park’s underworld terrain. Paramount among the neglected stories are those that relate to the many interesting incidents that took place along the Sidney-Custer trail, which entered the Hills at the Buffalo Gap and crossed park properties along Beaver Creek and its tributaries, or the Cheyenne-Custer trail that follows the western boundaries of the park. These trails, which have significance to both European

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143 The author speaks from experience as a recreational spelunker in her youth, repelling into cave entrances, fording underground steams, and squeezing and crawling through miles of narrow passageways to reach some of the spectacular amphitheater-sized chambers of caves in southern Indiana.
Americans and American Indians, speak to a much wider but still local history that ties the park to the world beyond its boundaries.

Much of the land that now makes up Wind Cave National Park was developed for cattle raising. Beyond the homesites near the cave, a number of settlers squatted on and then homesteaded lands over a wide area of the park, especially near reliable sources of water. Here they built ranches and farms of varying character and complexity. Many of them also used public lands adjoining their homesteads for grazing stock, logging timber for domestic use, hunting wild game, gathering berries for food, and collecting herbal plants for medicines. Much of the property added to the park in later years was once homesteaded or served as open access land, on which local European American residents depended for their own livelihoods. As park policies changed and additional lands, private as well as public, were added to the park, many traditional forms of use and access were halted. Over time, ranchers’ relations with the Park Service and other federal land-holding agencies in the Black Hills became more antagonistic, and this only increased as the administration of public lands shifted from locals to outside professionals. In more recent years, the growing importance of the tourist, leisure, and recreation industries to the Black Hills has created another set of interest groups whose demands on public lands depart from and often conflict with those of traditional users (see Chapters Six and Seven). Nonetheless, there are many fascinating stories from the history and culture of local ranch life, including its dependence on open access to public lands and its conflicts with the agencies that administer them.

From the outset, the mission of Wind Cave National Park has been directed at preserving the unique features of its natural environment, especially its unique subterranean geology and its remaining as well as reintroduced wildlife. As is the case with other properties in the National Park system, where there is an emphasis on the pristine character of the lands under its stewardship, stories of prior human inhabitants and users tend to be disregarded perhaps because, as some scholars have recently argued, they undermine, or at the very least detract from, the larger mission of keeping park lands in their “original” state. This may be why so many national parks may also deemphasize or even deny earlier European American users, other than an occasional trapper and explorer.

Also of importance are the stories of how outside, and mostly urban interests, brought new kinds of cultural sensibilities to the area, and how these influenced park policy, especially after World War II. Both the cultures of rural ranch life and urban tourism deserve some place in park interpretive programming. Since 1903 much of the park’s role in regional culture and history, as it pertains to European Americans, has been tied to tourism, travel, and recreation. The early development of Wind Cave was largely stimulated by the development of the spa industry in Hot Springs. Outings to the cave offered an interesting destination for people who came to the area primarily for the health-giving properties of the nearby thermal waters. The cave became a popular recreational diversion for the locals too. After the collapse of Hot Springs’ spa industry, which pioneered the development of tourism in the Black Hills, sightseeing travel began to gain popularity. In time, Wind Cave became the most prominent site tourists visited in the Black Hills south of Custer. Indeed, it was probably the only attraction, until the mammoth exhibit was developed, to bring people to the southeastern Black Hills after Mount Rushmore was carved and roads were built leading tourists to the spectacular scenery of the Needles and Cathedral Spires. After the 1950s, the park’s importance to the economy of the southern Hills, especially the town of Hot Springs, grew as travel and leisure began to outpace the region’s traditionally dominant ranching and farming industries (see Chapters Six and Seven). The progression of tourism in the Black Hills and the cultural traditions associated with it offer another compelling way to represent Wind Cave’s history. In fact, in some ways, the twentieth century use of park lands parallels the situation two centuries earlier when two different kinds of groups used the area simultaneously:
one stayed much of the year within the shadows of the Hills and the other traveled long-distances to access its resources on a temporary seasonal basis.

Even more conspicuous by their absence are tribal stories about Wind Cave and the area in which it is located. This is not surprising, however, given the distance the National Park Service has historically kept between itself and the tribal nations on whose lands its properties were developed (Spence 1999). As a number of scholars and journalists (Keller and Turek 1998; Spence 1999; Burnham 2000) have taken great pains to demonstrate, National Park Service properties contain lands of considerable cultural and even sacred importance to the tribes from whom they were dispossessed. Wind Cave National Park is no exception in this regard. Over the past century, it has largely disregarded the significance of this area to the tribes who once lived or who still remain within its reach, especially the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos. Hardly anything about the cultural histories and traditions that these tribes associate with the area has ever appeared in park informational and promotional materials. From the park’s beginnings in 1903 until the 1970s, tribal peoples, including Lakotas and Cheyennes from the neighboring Pine Ridge Reservation, were not only ignored in the much of the park’s interpretive material, they were largely absent in park activities. Except for occasional visits and their participation in a few public events, there is little in the park’s own documents or other sources to identify any active tribal presence on the park lands. There is even less in park records and promotional literature that identifies the park with any significant tribal cultural affiliation other than William Campbell’s letter and a one-page promotional sheet based on this letter from the 1930s (see Chapters Six and Fourteen).

During this same period, however, a great deal was being recorded and eventually written about the significance of Wind Cave, the Race Track and the neighboring Buffalo Gap and Hot Springs to the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Taken together, the stories associated with the park and its environs tell of happenings in mythic and historic times of great cultural importance to these two tribes, events that created and stand at the foundation of their cosmological understandings of the universe (see Chapter Fourteen). Why none of this significant cultural material ever become a part of the way the park represented itself to the public is difficult to fathom, and especially so when the recognition of a tribal cultural presence was being widely promoted in other parts of the Black Hills. Notwithstanding the fact that tribal stories about other areas of the Hills were generic and often based on ersatz traditions, they at least acknowledged some sort of tribal cultural attachment to the area. Even at Mount Rushmore, there were active efforts to feature local Indians, especially the Lakotas. From the 1920s to the 1960s, the Lakotas from the Pine Ridge Reservation spent a great deal of time in the Black Hills, camping and traveling from one community celebration to another over extended periods of time during the summer months. They were hired at special attractions because of their ability to draw tourists. Not only did a host of venues develop that involved the Lakotas, but a number of books were written about the lore and legends of the Black Hills that featured tribal stories about many of the area’s most prominent landforms. Throughout this period, Wind Cave National Park was out of the proverbial loop, except for the brief attempt of one superintendent of the park, Edward Freeeland, to involve the Lakotas in park activities between 1937 and 1938, and their attendance at one of the park’s golden anniversary festivities in 1953 (see Chapter Six). The development of NPS policies that effectively kept tribal people out of the national parks or minimized their presence was part of a nationwide trend. Only in recent years, and with varying degrees of success, have national parks tried to involve local tribes in their management and interpretive activities (cf. Keller and Turek 1998; Spence 1999; Burnham 2000 for a more detailed discussion of this in relation to other national parks).
Until the 1970s, the Lakotas and Cheyennes, especially those living on the neighboring Pine Ridge Reservation, regularly visited places of cultural significance to them in the Black Hills. Even though much of their presence in the Hills took place in the setting of tourism, it can be suggested that this experience gave them a concrete context for retelling many of the traditional stories about the importance of the Hills and its various sacred sites, and this is certainly evident from the recollections of Nicholas Black Elk’s grandchildren. Spending time in the Hills might have also opened opportunities to visit isolated locations to conduct important but unobtrusive ceremonial observances connected with fasting and other prayerful observances and also to collect plants and stones used in healing. It was in the decades after the 1930s that the Cheyennes of Oklahoma and Montana began to return to the Hills to visit some of the places of sacred significance to them, including sites in the southeastern Hills (see Chapters Six and Fourteen). Unlike the last decades of the nineteenth century, when Lakotas and Cheyennes from Pine Ridge returned to the Hills to carry on traditional subsistence pursuits, their activity throughout much of the early half of the twentieth century was probably focused less on procurement, other than the collection of berries and medicinal plants, and more on making a living through performance. In both instances, the area that is the Black Hills continued to be understood as a source of sustenance, a place that provided people with a means of livelihood. But more significantly, the Black Hills was a place of return, an area which reminded tribal peoples of their culture, a landscape that continued to reveal and teach them some of the basic tenets of their cosmologies, and that rekindled and indeed became integrally tied to their own sense of identity as Indian people and members of particular tribal nations. In these years, the Lakotas and even the Cheyennes were reasserting their relationship to the Black Hills, even if, at times, it was on the terms of the people who had stolen this land from them (see Chapters Six and Seven).

The essential point is that the Lakotas and Cheyennes never abandoned the Black Hills. They continued to return to the area, even in the face of the racism and hostility of some of the white citizens who now claimed and dominated the area. In many of their own legendary stories about the Hills, whites portrayed themselves as heroes and heroines who had struggled to survive and establish a place for themselves against the incessant attacks of local tribes. Stories of the trails that the settlers followed to reach the Hills’ interiors frequently recount the battles that took place with local tribes along these routes. Whites were also not above inventing tales, some of which they attributed to local tribes, to justify their own dominance. The most famous of these, “The Legend of the Rose,” by Richard B. Hughes (1957), is a good example of a tale that justifies the European American occupation of the Hills. As the story goes, on their way to the Hills, a group of prospectors in search of gold came across a village of Indians dying from disease and miraculously cured them. Envious of the white men’s powers, an evil Indian medicine man organized an attack on the whites. This killing angered the Great Spirit, who stirred up his Thunders and Winds, blowing the ashes of the white men away from the spot where their remains had been cremated, frightening the Indians away from the Hills, and preventing them from ever entering their deep recesses. After his wrath had been appeased, the Great Spirit allowed his rains to return, and wherever they fell on the ashes of the “pale faces,” wild roses blossomed. Besides “explaining” why the Lakotas and other tribes feared and avoided the Hills, this story builds a case for the moral supremacy of the whites and their presence in the Hills on divine grounds.

The self-proclaimed superiority of European Americans around the conquest and occupation of the Hills and their efforts to dominate and exclude the region’s tribal inhabitants have never been absolute, however. There has always been room for slippage -- times or places where the press of a tribal presence on the landscape cannot be escaped or trivialized. The rich clusters of rock art sites, cairns, and tipi rings in the southern Hills make it hard not to acknowledge the preexistence of peoples with a much longer history in the area. Even when these have been defaced by the graffiti of the newcomers, they still reveal the presence of earlier peoples. But
when these sites are obliterated to make room for new construction, the stories they hold are lost and the evidence for reconstructing the tribal use and occupancy of the area seriously compromised. So much of the area around the entrance to Wind Cave has been transformed since the 1890s, and it is unlikely that archaeologists, even when given the opportunity, will ever be able to recover and identify the sorts of remains found, for example, at Medicine Creek Cave in the northwestern Hills, which reveal the long-standing spiritual importance of caves to tribes in the region (Sundstrom, L. 2002).

Some local whites also learned tribal stories about the area and its various sites, and a few used them to advertise ancient links to the Hills as a way to draw outside tourist audiences. From its beginnings, the town of Hot Springs drew on the tribal and naturopathic associations of its waters to promote its spa industry. Even though many of the stories were based on ersatz traditions, they still acknowledged a long-standing tribal connection to the area. Sitting Bull’s Crystal Caverns was another attraction where Indian cultural affiliations were promoted. It was here that Lakota people like Nicholas Black Elk tried to educate European Americans about the importance of his culture and its relation to the Hills. For a short period of time, one park superintendent at Wind Cave attempted to build good relations with local Lakotas and establish a context where European Americans might learn something about their traditional culture. Notwithstanding the fact that some of these efforts might be viewed today as exploitative, appropriating tribal cultural knowledge for commercial ends, they did establish small lines of communication between local whites and their Lakota neighbors in an otherwise conflicted and often hostile social environment (see Chapter Six).

In this regard, it should be said that despite some of the long-term and overarching tensions that have marked relationships between the Hills’ white inhabitants and neighboring tribespeople, there have been strong friendships between certain individuals and their families. Local town and county histories contain numerous examples of Lakotas/Cheyennes from the Pine Ridge Reservation trading with local European Americans, visiting and eating with them, and even staying on their lands for extended periods of time (see Chapter Six). Respectful and mutually beneficial relations appear to have existed, for example, with certain families in Hot Springs such as the Binghams, owners of some of the region’s tourist attractions like the Duhamel family, and a few administrators of public lands in the Hills including Edward Freeland of Wind Cave National Park.

Meanwhile, outside the Hills, the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos were attempting to push their claims for the Black Hills before Congress and the courts. The Cheyennes and Arapahos did not succeed in getting their claims heard by either the Indian Claims Commission or the U.S. Court of Claims, but the Lakotas were able to move their claims forward, although most of the decisions that came down before 1970 did not rule in their favor. Given some of the early court decisions, the white citizens of the Hills probably did not view the Sioux’s Black Hills claim as much of a threat. Confident that the law and its interpretation would be on their side, they appear to have seen the Sioux’s case more as nuisance rather than as a real danger to their properties and way of life. This all changed in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Civil Rights movement sparked the resurgence of political resistance in American Indian communities nationwide (see Chapter Eight).

The first protest in the Black Hills took place at Mount Rushmore in 1970, followed two years later by the armed confrontation in Custer over the murder of Wesley Bad Heart Bull at the Buffalo Gap and the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973. Once again, the Black Hills became the site of armed struggle and resistance. Some of the early protests of the Lakotas, which began as an alliance between traditional tribal elders of the Pine Ridge Reservation and urban Indian
youth associated with the American Indian Movement, focused on the injustices the Lakota experienced under the laws of the United States, from inequities in the handling of criminal cases to the illegalities of U.S. government actions in relation to tribal treaty rights. The politicization of the Lakotas in the 1970s stressed tribal sovereignty and the rights of tribal nations to define their own political, economic, and cultural destinies (Chapter Six). Racial tensions flared, and the Lakotas and other tribal people were no longer welcome in the Black Hills as participants in local celebrations, as performers in tourist attractions, or as casual visitors. It became uncomfortable, if not dangerous, for local Indian people to travel to the Hills subjected as they were to hostile forms of harassment (see Chapter Six).

In response to the political pressure of the 1970s, which brought about a dramatic resurgence of pride in tribal identity and culture, Congress began to enact a number of laws which gave tribes more power to protect and control their interests, including their religious rights to public lands. It also led the Lakotas to reconsider the path some of their leaders had taken to achieve justice for the illegal seizure of the Black Hills. Well before the Supreme Court awarded the Lakotas a substantial cash settlement for the illegal taking of the Black Hills, many Lakotas were moving towards strategies that would bring about the return of public lands in the Black Hills to tribal ownership. As the political winds changed direction, all of the Sioux tribes who were party to the claim refused to accept a cash settlement for the Hills. Instead they wanted the public lands in the Hills returned to them, including those within the boundaries of Wind Cave National Park (see Chapter Eight).

In the 1980s, the Lakotas began to reoccupy public lands in the Hills to bring their case to the attention of the American people. Lands under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service at Devil’s Tower National Monument and Wind Cave National Park were occupied for short periods of time in 1981, and in the same year, those under the care of the U.S. Forest Service at Victoria Creek, known as the Yellow Thunder Camp, were occupied and held for nearly eight years as legal cases over Lakota access rights wound their way through the courts. Besides the occupations, other Lakotas were using new federal policies and statues to gain permits and temporary access to public lands in the Black Hills to practice their ceremonial observances from pipe ceremonies and sweatlodges to Sun Dances. They were arguing their cases before federal administrators and district judges in federal and state courts to gain protections and restrictions for sacred sites in the Black Hills. In doing so, they met with failure as well as success (Chapters Six and Eight).

Court rulings on cases stemming from the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 were generally not friendly to tribal interests. Public agencies and their administrators varied greatly in their efforts to either oppose or support tribal interests (see Chapter Eight). While the U.S. National Forest Service generally resisted Lakota efforts to practice their religion on the lands under their jurisdiction, the U.S. Park Service was much more accommodating even in the face of court battles that ruled against park management policy. This was the case at Devil’s Tower National Monument where the interests of rock climbers collided with tribal religious users. Other than the brief politically motivated occupation at the park in 1981, Wind Cave National Park administrators appear to have attempted to find workable ways for local tribes to meet some of their religious obligations, from opening park lands to religious observances such as the Sun Dance to meeting requests for soils brought to the surface of the earth around prairie dog towns (Ron Terry 1999, Personal Communication). In the absence of resistance on the part of park staff and competing interest groups for the use of park properties, little attention or publicity has surrounded the tribal use of park lands for religious purposes since the late 1970s. Indeed, this use has such a low profile that it has not appeared, at least as yet, on the radar screens of journalists and scholars. This has probably served the interests of the park administrators, who do
not wish to attract unwanted attention, but also those of tribal religionists who value privacy in the conduct of their religious observances (see Chapter Twelve).

Besides the occupations and attempts to secure permits for religious activities, the Lakotas were pushing other strategies to reclaim the Black Hills. By the mid-1980s, they had secured backing from several congressional delegations to move bills through Congress that would support the return of sizable portions of public lands in the Black Hills. The first bill, known as the Bradley Bill, was heard before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs in 1985. Largely due to opposition from the South Dakota congressional legislation, it never reached the floor of the Senate for debate. Subsequent attempts at bringing other land reclamation bills before Congress failed and never even reached the hearing stage (see Chapter Eight).

While Lakotas and Cheyennes pressed their religious claims to the Hills, some European American scholars and journalists began to challenge the legitimacy of these claims. As writers had done a century earlier, the new critics argued that the Lakotas, at least, never had any significant spiritual attachments to the Hills. They advanced these claims either by trivializing the Lakotas’ contemporary ideas or by denying that these beliefs had any historical precedent. The work presented in this report should certainly lay to rest any doubts about the historical depth of tribal beliefs surrounding the landscape that makes up Wind Cave National Park (see Chapters Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen).

As to the idea that Lakotas were newcomers who had taken the Hills by force and had not occupied the area long enough to sanctify it, one point needs to be made. European Americans have long tried to cast the Lakotas’ occupation of the Hills in the reflection of their own conquest history. By viewing the Lakotas’ relationship to the Hills solely as the outcome of aggression and force, European Americans are able to legitimize their own occupation on the same “right of conquest” grounds. In this historical picture, Cheyenne and Arapaho rights and interests in the Hills are generally ignored. But this scenario is misleading because it tells only part of the much more complex story that this report has gone to great pains to document (see Section One and also Chapter Seven): that the Lakotas and the Cheyennes and the Arapahos before them established their rights to the Hills through peaceful partnerships as much as through war and conquest.

VII. RETURNING TO A COMMON GROUND

The history of the Black Hills from 1742 to 1877 was marked by peaceful forms of relationship among some of the tribes who lived in its reaches. These were relations of cooperation, cemented by ties of marriage, familial associations, and close friendships. They entailed territorial sharing, alliances against common enemies, collaboration in subsistence, and coparticipation in ceremonial and religious activity. Through these relationships, tribes exchanged ideas, contributing to the development of regional cultural traditions that included stories about the landscapes they lived in and shared (see Chapter Seven).

As pointed out many times before, today’s Lakotas are not the same people as the Lakotas of the seventeenth century. The peoples who make up the population of the Oglala Sioux tribe at Pine Ridge, for example, share strong and well-documented genealogical roots with the Arikaras, Poncas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes, all of whom lived and traveled in the Black Hills before the main body of Lakotas arrived and took up residence in the area during the early nineteenth century. Before their arrival, Arikaras, Poncas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes shared ancestries with the Apaches who lived here probably as early as the sixteenth century. Decades, indeed centuries, of intermarriage created strong and tight social networks within which sharing, cooperation,
and collaboration were not only possible but also encouraged across tribal boundaries. Although punctuated by periods of hostility, the Lakotas’ relations with the Arapahos and Cheyennes were especially strong and enduring. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, these three tribes lived together in peace and jointly defended the Hills against the incursions of other tribes, notably the Crows and Pawnees, and together, they attempted to thwart the advance of European Americans into their beloved Hills. Before these three tribes dominated the Hills, they were co-occupied by Kiowas, Plains Apaches, Comanches, and Crows who tried to keep the Lakotas and Shoshones at bay in the late eighteenth century. In these battles, the Arapahos and Cheyennes seem to have been caught in the middle with some aligning themselves on the side of the Kiowas, others with the Lakotas, with many more attempting to remain neutral (Chapters Three and Four).

When today’s Lakotas proclaim an ancestral connection to the Black Hills that stretches back to time immemorial, they are correct if we view their past in the light of a complex history of intertribal marriage and alliance and the cultural amalgamation that this history wrought. Seeing Lakota history from this perspective, however, has a major drawback for the purists who see tribes, including their own, as well-bounded and self-contained entities that conquered the territories they held by force and occupied them exclusively. Certainly the Lakotas’ entrance into the Hills entailed conflict and competition, but it also came about through marriage and cooperation. The Lakotas may have ultimately become the dominant population in the Black Hills but they were never their exclusive “owners.” In varying ways and degrees, their occupation of the Hills always took place in association with their Cheyenne and Arapaho allies, a fact that many of their respected leaders including Red Cloud, Black Hawk, and Nicholas Black Elk, among others, clearly recognized. Some European American and Native American commentators may choose to downplay, or even deny, this side of the historical record, but it serves little purpose other than an exclusionary diversion to allow some groups into the Hills and keep others out.

Many origin stories tied to the Hills, which assign the region and its various landforms a spiritual status, are not unique to single tribes (Sundstrom 1996, 1997). As is the case with the Buffalo Wife, Great Race, and Orphan Boy stories, which have particular applicability to the region of Wind Cave, they speak to a common stock of symbols and understandings about the significance of this place. To be sure, the stories vary in their details and in the weight of their importance from one tribe to another and even among divisions within the same tribe. People in the same tribe have even applied some of these stories to other places. Inconsistencies of this order have given some writers an excuse to challenge the credulity of the stories that tribes attach to their landscapes. While such inconsistency is often problematic in European American ways of thinking about the world, it is not troublesome to the people who tell the stories because they understand that their “truth” resides in the deeper meanings that these invoke about a place. The template of the Buffalo Wife story is a good example, one that has been applied to many separate places, but which nonetheless speaks to common experiences with and understandings of particular kinds of underground sites, notably caves. In other words, certain landforms evoke a particular class of stories, which get revised and reinterpreted according to the specific sites to which they are applied and the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the people who tell them.

There are also other narratives relating to significant and sacred landscapes that are fairly unique and specific to particular tribes and tribal divisions. The story cycle of George Sword, an Oglala intellectual at the turn of the twentieth century, is one of these; it tells about the birth of the Four Winds and the original emergence of humans, the Pte Oyate, from Wind Cave. Although the particular way this cycle is constructed, and its storylines woven together, is distinct, it nevertheless contains a common stock of symbols and understandings widespread in Lakota and Dakota traditions (Fletcher 1884d) and also familiar to other Siouan tribes, such as the Poncas and Omahas (Fletcher & LaFlesche 1972:1:63,119-121). Nor are the stories of Tokahe’s
travels, once he arrives on the earth’s surface, radically different from some of the narratives associated with the Cheyennes’ heroes, Sweet Medicine and Stands on the Ground.

Despite variations and inconsistencies in tribal stories about particular landscapes, many of them address fundamental and widely shared cosmological tenets about the nature of life and the character of the universe. When they do so, they evoke the sacred knowledge and spiritual understandings that are at the heart of the way each tribal nation and its people see themselves and interpret their presence in this world. The landscapes and the stories exist in a dynamic relationship to one another, feeding, but sometimes challenging, one another as people attempt to come to terms with their own time and place. In seeking this knowledge and understanding, the tribal nations of the plains have developed some common ways to approach that which is sacred. Ethnographers have long recognized that Cheyenne and Lakota Sun Dance observances, along with certain kinds of healing lodges, were woven out of a common and shared fabric, and that they are fundamentally different from the Sun Dances performed by other tribal nations of the Great Plains. As argued earlier, the inspiration for this dance was carved out of their mutual presence in and shared understanding of the place it began, namely the Black Hills and more specifically the places of Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap and Sundance Mountain/Bear Lodge Butte (see Chapters Twelve and Fourteen).

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos shared a common ground in and around the Black Hills that they jointly occupied and defended. It was an area where they shared access to the region’s rich resources and built a sense of community through marriage and collaboration in subsistence and trade. In the process of this sharing and community-building, they not only developed common understandings of the area but also enjoyed a common access to the sacred spots that revealed the centrality of the Black Hills in their lives. The loss of this land was deeply felt by all of the tribal nations who were attached to it. Their inability to come together politically in the twentieth century to reclaim it has engendered some bitterness. Yet, overriding some of their political differences is a profound and mutual sense of anger and frustration at being denied access to the Black Hills, particularly the public lands on which some of their most sacred sites rest.

When the United States seized the Black Hills from the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos in 1877, the federal government became the sovereign over the land. Yet, it wasn’t for another decade that government agents began the process of surveying its land and enforcing its proprietary laws. As it was under tribal control, the Black Hills and the areas surrounding it were public domain lands. Even though individual citizens logged the timber, staked claims on the minerals, ran cattle on the grasslands, and built dwellings and commercial businesses in the area, no one theoretically owned any of the Black Hills, except perhaps for mining claims, as a form of private property until the government transferred fee patents to the property under the terms of various homestead acts. Until then, it remained a common grounds, open to any party with an interest in using it and extracting its resources.

After surveying its land and validating private mining claims and squatters’ rights, the government set aside huge tracks of land in the Hills’ interiors for a national forest reserve, established in 1897 and opened much of the land between the Hogback and Cheyenne River to homesteading. Many extractive enterprises in the Hills were able to quickly capitalize because they did not have to invest in a substantial part of their means of production. The minerals, grasses, and timbers were part of an open commons, free to anyone with the interest and wherewithal to extract the resources. This situation contributed, in large part, to the early boom of the large-scale, investor-owned cattle operations in the Hills, many of which folded after the disastrous winter of 1886-1887.
Starting in 1880, the public commons was contained. Lands that settlers squatted on and improved were turned into homesteads, many of which were patented as private property. Unoccupied lands, or lands on which no improvements had been made, became subject to restrictions on their use, with fees charged and leases let for extracting certain resources from them, notably timber and grass. Even the land within the present-day borders of Wind Cave National Park was homesteaded and/or leased for grazing rights well into the twentieth century. Much of the land in the interior region of the Black Hills, which remained in the public domain, was open to multiple uses and users, but it was managed by federal agencies within the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior. Over time, these agencies began to selectively admit and exclude users to the commons. They prevented Lakotas from cutting their lodgepoles at the sites they customarily used for these purposes, and in general, they discouraged their presence in the commons. Federal agencies also restricted timber and grazing permits to ranchers whose homesteads bordered public lands, and they prevented small and local logging outfits from doing business in the Hills, preferring instead to let timber leases to large outside corporations. Few restrictions, however, were imposed on mineral extraction because of the liberal provisions of the 1864 Mining Act, many of which are still in place today. Although theoretically U.S. Forest Service lands, as one example, were publicly owned, multiple use areas, they increasingly became a reserve for a select and privileged group of users whose character shifted over time as local and national priorities for the forests changed. By the end of the twentieth century, however, many sections of the publicly owned land in the Black Hills had taken on some of the more restricted qualities of national park property with missions aimed at preserving the land for wildlife instead of stock (Geores 1990; see also, Chapter Seven).

When Wind Cave National Park was founded in 1903 and a wildlife reserve established on adjacent lands in 1912, its original eleven thousand acres gradually became off-limits to many of the extractive uses associated with national forest lands, although livestock grazing continued inside park borders until the early twentieth century. In keeping with its mission to preserve the originality and integrity of the landscapes over which it had jurisdiction, the NPS gradually prohibited this use also. Eventually, only recreational camping/hiking and the spectator sport of sightseeing were allowed to take place on the park’s lands. Over the next century, more lands would be transferred to park jurisdiction, including adjacent parcels of public land and private property holdings that bordered the park. Today, more than half of the lands now under park management have a history associated with some kind of extractive use, and even its original holdings, experienced some degree of development. Because of the park’s location, its original and acquired lands were marginally impacted, relatively speaking, by extractive developments, but they were not pristine and without a prior record of human history. One only needs to look at the large list of non-native plants that grow on park lands, many of which are Eurasian volunteers that typically seek disturbed and heavily grazed habitats, to confirm this (Pisarowicz 2001k; see also, Chapter Eleven and Appendix B). Including current efforts to restore the grasslands to a “native” state, the park is, and has always been, a historically altered environment. In this light, the questions of interest are not about how park lands constitute pristine and isolated islands of nature, but rather how the lands have dynamically changed in the course of a history with different waves of human occupation, and how their natural resources have been transformed in the process.

The history of the bison’s presence and absence on park lands, and its relationship to the changing human landscape of the Hills, the neighboring grasslands, and the nation at large is one of the park’s most compelling narratives especially when one adds tribal stories to the picture. After all in Lakota belief, this is Tachante Tatanka, the “Heart of the Bison Bull,” the Tatanka makalpeya, “the Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull,” and the abode of Waziya, the first Buffalo
Man, and his grandson, Waziyata, the North Wind. It is also the site of the Great Race where the very nature of the relationship between the bison and humanity was established. So much about Wind Cave National Park, its landscape, land forms, animals, plants, and minerals returns to the bison in local tribal traditions. Wind Cave is the home of the bison. In fact, the reason for establishing a wildlife reserve near the park in 1912 was predicated on the introduction and preservation of a small herd of bison donated by the National Bison Association. Before European Americans took control of the land that makes up the Black Hills and the Great Plains more generally, it was part of what some scholars have come to identify as the great “buffalo commons” (Binnema 2001). It was an area where vast herds of bison roamed, numbering in the millions, and where humans based much of their life on the animal’s habits, habitats, and movements. This was the bison’s country; they were the “chief of the animals” and the Black Hills, “the chief of the land,” was their home. No one owned this vast commons. Instead, tribal nations entered into social arrangements with each other to share access to the herds in the territories they lived and traveled. Tribes formed loose confederations with each other to defend and/or gain access to bison grounds (Ewers 1975; Albers and Kay 1987; Albers 1993, 1996; Binnema 2001). The Black Hills were the center of one of these grounds, and they were occupied by successive confederations of tribes who shared joint access rights and who fought together to acquire and to defend them from outside encroachment.

The Hills have always been a commons. Even after European Americans arrived, they still retained some of this character as an open access range. Only now the use was focused on the animals the newcomers brought with them – cattle. The newcomers, who owned the stock privately, ran them over lands jointly shared and managed through the formation of cattle associations and the institution of the roundup. By the 1880s, cattle had become the dominant ungulate of the commons, replacing and often standing in competition with native species. The habits of cattle led to the overgrazing of lands throughout the Black Hills and the destruction of grasslands and timbers that supported the remaining native ungulates, elk, deer, bighorn, and antelope. In time their numbers would be substantially diminished and another species, the elk, extirpated. This happened not only as a result of commercial, subsistence, and sports hunting but also because of grazing practices and the despoliation of the lands on which cattle were fed. In order to save many of the native species, game laws were instituted by the state of South Dakota, grazing leases were restricted by the forest service, and sections of public land in the Hills cordoned off to create spaces to reintroduce and protect wildlife at Wind Cave National Park and neighboring Custer State Park (see Chapters Six, Seven, and Ten). Wind Cave National Park’s first herd came from New York by way of Massachusetts and before that their origin has not been identified. To this original herd, animals were added from Yellowstone and wildlife reserves in Alberta, Canada. The pedigree of the herd at Custer State Park, however, is more local, and it includes animals from Scotty Phillips famous ranch whose progenitors were saved in 1881 by the rancher Frederick Dupree, who lived on the Cheyenne River Reservation north of the Black Hills in South Dakota. Some of these lines may also be present in the park’s herd because, in the past, it was not uncommon for some of the park’s herd to break through fences and roam among the herds of the state park (Bohi 1962).

Bison are now thriving on park lands in the Black Hills, and they are even being reintroduced on privately-owned lands, including some of those on the northeastern edge of the park (O’Brien 2002). As bison return to their former commons on public lands, private holdings, as well as tribally owned properties, their relations to humans are also changing. Throughout the plains and even in other areas of the United States, bison are becoming a form of stock raised and bred like cattle because of the growing popularity of their meat. Tribal nations in the region now own some of the larger herds, which are kept primarily for tribal use. Although some tribes have adopted practices akin to stock raising, others, such as the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, have
maintained a policy of keeping the animals as much as possible in a natural, open range habitat with minimal human intervention. With few exceptions, white ranchers are instituting more controlled stock techniques in the raising of their herds, and very soon, producers may be called upon to identify, as is the case with poultry and beef, whether their meat comes from “free range” stock or not. Bison and other game at Wind Cave National Park and Custer State Park are managed too, and the animals killed as a conservation measure with the meat donated, at least in the past, to local tribal and educational institutions (see Chapter Six). In relation to styles of management, the lines separating some of today’s bison herds owned and maintained by private enterprises for commercial ends and those under the care of public parks are nearly indistinguishable. What separates them are the purposes for which they are being kept, and in the case of the national parks, these are largely in the interests of species’ survivance and public spectatorship.

Today, Wind Cave National Park, like other parks in the national park system, remains a public commons, open to all citizens of this nation and foreign visitors, too, but for limited uses consistent with the mission of the park service to preserve its natural resources and to keep its landscapes in tact. These uses are largely restricted to viewing park lands along roads, trails, and waterways and at established campsites and other types of lodging. Camping in non-developed areas of parks, as typically practiced by backpackers, requires special permits, and in some areas, it may be prohibited because of fire risks and other dangers. Park users are generally prohibited from disturbing natural resources, for example, collecting plants and quarrying minerals, although they can fish in season and take wild fruits. Over their history, however, parks throughout the West have encouraged certain groups of users and discouraged others. Whether intentional or not, American Indian peoples have usually been excluded from making traditional use of public commons under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Under restrictive policies aimed at preserving a park’s natural resources, many traditional procurement activities were disallowed, including the gathering of plants and minerals for religious purposes. Until recent decades, the conduct of religious observances was prohibited as well, even when their impacts were negligible and less invasive than the construction, improvement, and maintenance of campsites, trails, and roads for tourists and recreationists. As a number of commentators have argued, it would have seemed, at least prior to 1970, that parks were open to everyone except American Indians who desired access for traditional reasons. Closely following this pattern, there was another form of exclusion, and that is the absence of a tribal viewpoint in the construction of informational and interpretive materials about park lands, even when these lands had been occupied and owned by tribal peoples for thousands of years.

Under criticism and political pressure, the national parks are now being asked to become more inclusive with respect to the use and interpretation of their lands. They are now being asked to develop policies that accommodate traditional tribal interests and uses in the management of park properties. Increasingly, tribal peoples are reestablishing a presence in the parks for these purposes. Some of their efforts have led to contestation and even litigation with other user groups, as in the battles between rock climbers and tribal religionists over access to Devil’s Tower National Park, but others have led to efforts at joint management, as is the case with Badlands National Park, or more modestly, collaborative efforts in interpretive programming as exists at Glacier National Park. These attempts have not always been successful, however. One only needs to witness the recent standoff at the Stronghold in the Badlands National Monument between members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the National Park Service, or the continuing legal battles over the boundary lands at Glacier National Park to see otherwise.

Since the 1970s, tribal religionists, most of whom are Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos, have returned to Wind Cave National Park to conduct their spiritual observances and to request
access to certain resources for use in religious contexts. Except for the Lakotas’ brief occupation (which also included some Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal members) of the park in 1981, park staff and administrators have accommodated some tribal needs without incident. For a longer period of time, Lakotas and other tribal peoples have come to the park as “visitors,” indistinguishable from the rest of the public who accompany the guided tours of its subterranean landscape. Today, school districts from the neighboring Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations regularly bring their children to the park on field trips. Both of these conform with standard forms of access available to the public. What has not happened, however, is any lasting and visible effort to include tribal viewpoints in the construction of narratives about the park’s subterranean and above ground landscapes, its history, and resources. If the park truly stands as common grounds, an inclusive space, then it must include the stories and perspectives of all the peoples who make up its history, especially the tribal peoples who think of this area as a very special, indeed a sacred, place in their world. In modern times, three tribes who still hold this knowledge and understanding are the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and probably the Arapahos.
Chapter Sixteen

RECOMMENDATIONS:
COMING FULL CIRCLE

O, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where Seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the Skies are not cloudy all day
(Brewster Highly, *Home on the Range*, 1873)

Brewster Highly’s immortal lyrics could well become a theme song for Wind Cave National Park (hereafter referred to as WCNP), which has long been considered by the Lakotas to be the home of the bison. In Native American traditions, it is stories primarily of bison that give coherency to the area where Wind Cave National Park now stands and to the features of the landscape that make up much of its property. Even though bison were largely extirpated from this area by the 1870s, local tribes continued to think about the general area as the “Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull,” or *Tatanka makalhpaya* in Lakota. When bison were reintroduced to the area in 1913, as a gift from the National Bison Association, and placed under the protection of a game refuge, WCNP became one of only seven places in the United States where bison roamed in a “natural” state. The story of the bison, its origin, history, decline, and reemergence at WCNP provides a powerful cultural focus for the park and a way to bring together the different and at times conflicting histories of the humans who used this area and/or made it their home since prehistoric times.

This year Wind Cave National Park celebrates its one-hundredth anniversary. Anniversaries are times that call for a remembrance of the past. They are opportunities to celebrate and honor former successes and achievements, but they are also moments of reflection to ponder how threads from the past, including undeveloped ones, can move towards new and better visions and forms of representation. Anniversaries are as much about the future as they are about the past. The park’s anniversary offers an opportunity to develop a stronger and more inclusive narrative of its history, one that acknowledges the importance of this place to tribal peoples and that includes some of their histories of living here and their cultural knowledge about its landscape, landforms, animals, plants, and minerals. This occasion also opens possibilities for producing new narratives about the park’s European American neighbors and their historic relations to the area.

As a way of concluding this report, recommendations are made pursuant to the traditional cultural affiliations that various populations have to the park. The word “tradition” is enveloped in a complex set of meanings, depending on the situation or group to which it is applied. American Indian people, on the one hand, are commonly associated with traditional cultures, which too often connote a way of life existing before extensive contact with European Americans or one that is frozen in time and divorced from the world as it exists today. European Americans, by contrast, are often represented as devoid of traditions or a cultural past that has some bearing on their modern existence. Every community of Americans has traditions, cultural heritages that bring their past into the present. In every culture, these traditions are not static. They are dynamic and vibrant, taking on new expressions and forms in the world in which they are experienced.
The traditional cultural practices of the Cheyennes, Lakotas, and Arapahos, for example, are not the same as they were a century ago any more than European American culture is identical to what it was in the past. Cultures always change, while drawing on a reservoir of traditions that make them unique and distinctive to the people who share and live by them. To say that cultures change is not to imply that contemporary cultural beliefs are any less authentic or true to the traditions from which they come. This holds true for American Indian and European American traditional cultural affiliations to the Black Hills and WCNP.

The authenticity of Lakota attachments to the Black Hills, however, has been challenged in recent years by a number of historians and journalists ill-informed about how cultural traditions recreate themselves over time in new and different ways. Today’s traditions may express themselves differently and appear in new contexts, but as argued in the previous section, the beliefs that contemporary Lakotas and Cheyennes hold about the Black Hills are faithful to traditions that stretch back countless generations and that, in some instances, they share with other tribal nations also known to have lived in the area, notably the Arapahos, Arikaras, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Poncas.

I. EUROPEAN AMERICAN CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS

Currently, much of the way the park represents itself follows the path of a history focused on European Americans and their presence in and connections to the area. It chronicles the history of European American explorations in and around the Hills, the story of the cave’s discovery and development, the establishment of the park’s game reserve, the improvements to its facilities during the years of the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC], and the management of park properties. There are three aspects of local European American history and cultural heritage, however, not well developed in park interpretive material.

A. Local Ranch Culture

First of all, little attention is given to the early history of ranching on the lands that now make up the park and those being proposed as an addition to the park (e.g., the Sanson Ranch). Portions of the park were homesteaded for ranches in the late nineteenth century, and much of the rest of its land was an open range where privately owned cattle and horses freely roamed. There are many interesting lessons that can be taught about the early history of the open range in the Black Hills and the relationship between private-property holdings and public lands. There are significant lessons about the environment of WCNP and the southern Hills more generally, especially the advantages these offered for the small-scale cattle enterprises that laid the foundation of traditional European American ranch culture in Fall River and Custer counties. Interesting stories also exist around the conflicts between local domestic users who historically laid claim to resources on federally managed lands in and around the park and other groups of public users, who desired to preserve them for aesthetic and recreational purposes. Many of these stories certainly encompass the many ways the park has attempted to rehabilitate its landscapes to support the survival of various animals, plants, and minerals for future generations to know and appreciate.

Previous research (Long 1992, Western History Research 1992) on park lands and homesteads offers an important set of data to begin building interpretive programs around the area’s early ranch cultures. A more systematic historical effort needs to take place, however, to match the names of some of the park’s land patentees with local family histories, published and unpublished. For some families, such as the McAdams, Sansons, and Stablers, their histories can be reconstructed fairly easily through extant and readily available historical documents. Others,
however, will require a more extensive survey of local records and newspapers as well as the collection of oral histories. Since the generation of people who lived on park lands, or whose parents occupied them, are now passing, it is imperative that oral histories get recorded before some of the details of living on these ranches is lost. It would also be important to support historical archaeological research and the excavation of the remains of some of the park’s homestead sites. This work could become part of an effort to reconstruct an early homestead in the vicinity of the park’s headquarters and to use it to educate the public about this important era in the park’s history and the Black Hills more generally.

B. The Culture of Regional Tourism

Second, only limited consideration is given to the culture of tourism in the Black Hills, and the important, indeed pioneering, role that WCNP played in its development. In recent years, tourism as a cultural and historical phenomenon has become a popular subject of academic study. There are many stories to tell of how WCNP developed in tandem with the growth of the spa industry in Hot Springs at the end of the nineteenth century, and how, in later years, it became more closely linked to the national culture of vacationing and sightseeing. The twentieth century forms of leisure travel tied the park to scenic and wildlife attractions farther north on the lands of the Black Hills National Forest and Custer State Park, especially the areas of Harney Peak, Sylvan Lake, the Needles, and the Cathedral Spires. Tourism is a feature of the European American experience that articulates with tribal histories in the area, especially between the years 1920 and 1970, and it is one where WCNP played some role, albeit for a very brief period of time in 1937 and 1938, when it involved local Lakotas in its interpretive programming. It is also one of the few areas where some degree of mutual interest and cooperation evolved between local whites and Indians. Notwithstanding some of the critical commentary on these relationships, especially their exploitative aspects, they do draw attention to one kind of interaction between local whites and Indians not dominated by conflict.

Again, this is an area of the park’s history that requires further research. Much of this could easily be put together through materials located in the park’s own library, through travel-oriented brochures and books archived in state, county, and city libraries, and through a more thorough search of articles in local newspapers from the Hot Springs Star, the Custer County Chronicle, and the Rapid City Journal, all of which are invaluable sources of information on local tourism. Oral history work would be valuable here as well, particularly interviews with older residents of the region involved in organizations like the Kiwanis Club and the Junior Chamber of Commerce that actively promoted the region’s travel, recreational, and leisure assets. Former rangers and staff at the park should also be sought out to share their recollections and vignettes of events happening at the park over the years that reveal how the park’s own history evolved in tandem with wider trends in the culture of tourism in the United States.

C. Trails and Travel

Another topic where the histories of European Americans and local tribal nations come together is also related to travel, but at a much earlier point in the history of park lands. Indeed, there are many parallels, albeit of very generalized nature, between the local and long-distance relationships of tribes to the Black Hills in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and those of European Americans in later times. From 1874 to the present, European Americans have
had very different kinds of cultural attachments to the Hills, depending on where they come from, and this is revealed in the contrasting relations of residents and tourists to the area.

The trails that first brought tribes, then European trappers, and later prospectors and settlers into the Hills’ interiors are the subject of a rich body of writing. One of these trails, a spur of the Sidney-Deadwood route to Custer, entered the Hills at the Buffalo Gap and crossed park properties along Beaver Creek and some of its tributaries. Members of the Jenney Expedition and forces under General Crooks’ forces used this trail. When the gold rush was over in Custer, the trail was no longer a major route for outsiders to access the Hills’ interiors, although it continued to play a role in the movement of local residents and their commercial traffic. Another, the Cheyenne-Deadwood trail, came through Red Canyon and followed either Pleasant Valley or Shirttail Canyon as alternate routes to Custer, South Dakota; it skirts the edge of the park’s water supply area. After exploring the South Fork of the Cheyenne River, the Black Hills Expedition of 1874 traveled through Shirttail Canyon on their return trip to the expedition’s main encampment on French Creek. Two years later, Samuel Hinman’s exploratory party may have used this trail too. Today, a modern highway follows portions of the trail. A third major trail, which follows the Red Valley or the Race Track, crosses the northern sections of park property, and today, it is the location for one of the park’s major roads. Historically, it was the site of a local wagon route and an area for homesteading. It was also very important to the Lakotas and Cheyennes not only as a thoroughfare and camping area, but also a site of one of their most significant stories about the area and the nature of animal-human relationships.

The use of these trails over time tells a lot about how the history of the Black Hills unfolded until the end of the nineteenth century, and how it evolved in the twentieth century too. The trails illustrate the diverse ways tribal peoples adapted to the Black Hills, and how they used different parts of the Hills on a seasonal basis before European Americans arrived in large numbers. They can also be used to reveal aspects of their twentieth century relationship to the Hills as well. When Lakotas returned to the Hills after 1877 to procure their lodgepoles and to participate in the summer celebrations of local white communities, they arrived by wagon or on horseback. Some traveled portions of the park’s old transportation grid to reach destinations in the Hills’ interiors, and they also camped here as well.

European Americans used these same trails for many decades. First, the trappers and traders who arrived in the area at the turn of the nineteenth century followed them to reach their trapping sites. Except for Jedediah Smith’s brigade, which probably crossed the Black Hills along Beaver Creek and the Race Track, there is little direct information on the presence of these early European Americans at WCNP. There is, however, a richer documentary record for areas immediately to the north in the neighborhood of French, Grace Coolidge and Battle creeks. The trails also reveal stories about later generations of European Americans, the challenges they faced in entering and eventually settling the Hills, including their hostile encounters with Lakotas and Cheyennes, who were trying to defend their own territories and rights of way along these routes. The early history of the Beaver Creek route is associated with a number of interesting events, and even though many of the more notable ones took place outside park properties near Pringle or the Buffalo Gap, they nonetheless reveal one of the roles that park lands played in the history of European American settlement and development in the Hills. Many of these trails continued to be used well into the twentieth century by local white residents to reach their homesteads, fields, pastures, and the lands on which they hunted, collected timber for fuel, and gathered plants for food and medicine.

Some of the Hills’ modern highways and access roads still follow the old trail system. Yet, portions of certain trails, including the Race Track and the Sidney-Deadwood spur to Custer,
remain undeveloped. The sections of the more important trails that cross park lands should be protected from further development and even possibly listed together on the National Register of Historic Places as part of an integrated trail system. The trails offer an important avenue to the above ground history of the park, which unfortunately still occupies a subordinate position in comparison with the narratives on its underground spaces. If nothing else, portions of the trails that pass over park properties should be carefully marked and surveyed by archaeologists because of their early importance to both tribal and European American occupation and use of the Hills.

II. TRIBAL TRADITIONS AND CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS

Tribal cultural attachments to WCNP have been downplayed historically in the park’s interpretive and promotional material, and these are the ones that are given the greatest attention here, not only because current federal legislation mandates their consideration, but also because these affiliations involve complex and often new areas of interpretation and management for park staff and administrators. The discussion is divided into four sections. The first focuses on identifying the tribal nations with historic affiliations to the park and singling out those that should be included in future consultations. The second gives consideration to specific sites in the park that have special significance to local tribes, along with some of the preservation and management issues that surround them. The second describes the traditional uses to which park properties were put and the kinds of requests that tribes are likely to make to gain access to park lands and resources that fall under the definition of “traditional cultural properties.” The fourth topic addresses areas of tribal cultures that might be included in park interpretive programming and the importance of involving local tribal nations in this activity.

A. The Circle of Consulting Nations

For many of the reasons, already enumerated upon, WCNP is not only an historically important area with diverse waves of human habitation from prehistoric to modern times, but it is also a culturally significant one. It represents an area long known as a source of faunal, floral, and mineral provisions, and a place imbued with many important sacred properties. These features alone recommend further consultation with a number of different tribes. The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that park properties sit on contested lands whose ownership continues to be the subject of considerable dispute and will likely remain so into the near future.

There is no hard and fast way to make recommendations on which of the tribes who historically occupied and/or used park lands should be contacted for further consultation. On cultural grounds, for example, the groups requiring consultation are either straightforward and simple, or subtle and complex, depending on the criteria one uses to define the nature of the cultural affiliation. In the broadest sense, the case could be made that any group with a known historically documented occupancy and/or use of the area in historic times is eligible. This could include as many as twenty-four different contemporary tribal nations. If narrower criteria are used in selecting tribes for consultation, the number of tribes included is considerably reduced, but the selection process is more complicated. Although many tribes are reported to have been present in this part of the Black Hills, only a few of them had any long-standing and enduring cultural attachment to the area. Indeed, the only extensive published documentation pertaining to a cultural awareness of and/or a sacred affiliation with park properties refers to the Cheyennes and Lakotas. This is not to say that any of the other tribes did not have, or continue to have, any cultural and/or spiritual ties to the area. It only means that there is no record in the huge body of source material we consulted that gives evidence of such an association. As a result, the possible
saliency of other tribal cultural affiliations to the park is much more difficult to gauge. The Arapahos are one tribe, for example, that maintain cultural attachments to the park not addressed in published sources. The Arapahos can be recommended for consultations on other grounds, notably their historic legal ties to the area, so the lack of any published record of a cultural affiliation should not exclude them. This tribe and others, including the Arikaras and Plains Apaches, whose cultural resource staff claim continuing interests in the park, traveled and stayed in the general region of the park at various points in their history, and they also had close alliances and patterns of intermarriage with the Lakotas and/or Cheyennes who do have important and documented cultural links to the park. Even though the Arikaras and Plains Apaches do not have any legal standing with respect to claims on the Black Hills, at least from the perspective of U.S. treaty making, they still retain memories of the area from earlier historical periods.

Except for the Lakotas and Cheyennes, there is no easy and formulaic way to determine which of the tribes with an historical affiliation to the park area should be included in consultations. In large part, their inclusion in the consultative process is a function of the purposes for which their advice is being sought. If the concerns are related primarily to the contemporary religious use of the area, then the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos are the primary groups to consult. If the issues revolve around protohistoric archaeological sites that come under NAGPRA guidelines, then Plains Apaches and Arikaras may need to be approached for consultation. If the questions have to do with the history of the area’s occupation and use in the late eighteenth century, then the entire roster of tribal nations with known affiliations to the region might be called in for advice.

In addition to the historical and cultural grounds for consulting various tribes, there are also certain legal considerations that need to be addressed. Of prime importance are the treaties that the federal government entered into with various tribal nations, which in one degree or another acknowledged their sovereignty over the Black Hills. Starting with the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, the entire Black Hills were recognized by the United States government to be part of the land holdings of the Sioux nation. The Sioux included in this treaty, which incidentally was never ratified by Congress, are the Lakota-speaking divisions: the Oglalas, Sicangus, Itazipcos, Miniconjous, Sicasapas, Hunkpapas, and Oehnonpas, the Dakota divisions of the Yanktons, and through a later addendum to the treaty, the Lower Yanktonnas. When another treaty was negotiated in 1868 to form the Great Sioux Reservation, representatives of the various Lakota divisions, some of the Yanktonai, and the Santee Dakotas of Nebraska, but not the Yankton, signed it. This treaty also recognized the presence and rights of other friendly tribes who resided in the midst of the Lakotas, namely, the Northern Arapahoes and the Northern Cheyennes. Another treaty in 1868 with the Northern Arapahos and Northern Cheyennes further affirmed their rights to remain on lands that made up the Great Sioux Reservation, which included the Black Hills and WCNP. All of these tribes were also represented by people who entered into the controversial agreement of 1876 that led to the passage of the Black Hills Act in 1877, under which tribal lands in the Black Hills were seized illegally by the United States.

The 1877 Act is at the heart of the legal and political controversies that still engulf the Black Hills and the lands on which WCNP now sits. Whether one takes the position that the legal status of the Hills has been settled or not, it is clear that the federal government has long recognized (at least since 1851) that various tribes of the Sioux Nation have historical entitlements to the Black Hills and that the Northern Cheyennes and Northern Arapahos have historical rights to the area as well by virtue of having jointly occupied the area with the consent of their Sioux friends and relatives. On these grounds alone, the modern day tribes whose ancestors were party to, or covered by, the two 1868 Fort Laramie treaties should be included among the tribes contacted for further consultation.
In recommending the tribes with whom further consultation is required, highest priority is
given to tribes with treaty ties as well as substantive historical and cultural connections to the area
of WCNP. In the second tier are groups who do not have affiliations on all three grounds, but,
nonetheless, either have strong historic or cultural claims to the area that merit their possible
consideration. Any decision to include them among consulting tribes, however, is more
contingent and tied to specific cultural or historic issues. The third and fourth tiers include tribes
with known historical ties to the area but for whom there are neither treaty ties nor apparent and
enduring cultural affiliations to the park area.

1. First Circle

The first circle includes tribal nations whose connections to the area were acknowledged in
treaties, who have strong cultural and historical attachments that are documented in the historical
and/or ethnographic record, and whose cultural preservation officers have indicated a cultural
interest in the park. All of them need to be included among the circle of consulting tribes.

a. The Lakotas

First and foremost among this group is the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Given the proximity of their
reservation to the southeastern Hills, this tribe has had the longest continuing cultural relationship
to the park in modern times. Most of the stories about Wind Cave or the Race Track come from
Lakotas and Cheyennes who are members of this tribe. Two bands identified with the Oglala
division, the Wazazi and Oyruxpe, were known to cover this area in the 1830s. The Oglalas are
also the Lakota division with the earliest record of occupancy in the Hills. Leaders from this divi-
sion of the Sioux Nation were among the first to challenge the legality of the 1877 Agreement
and to pursue the case in federal court. In more recent times, members of this tribe have been the
most active in staging protests and occupations over tribal treaty rights governing the Black Hills,
and they have been at the forefront in trying to bring various land recovery bills before Congress.
There is no question that this tribe needs to be consulted not only because they have some of the
strongest ties on historical, political, and cultural grounds to the area of WCNP, but also because
this is the tribe whose members are among the most likely to look to the park as a place to
conduct some of their religious observances. The cultural preservation officer with whom we
spoke indicated that the entire area of the park, but especially Wind Cave and the Race Track has
traditional cultural significance to the Oglalas.

A second Lakota population that has strong connections to the park represents the Lower
Brule and Rosebud Sioux tribes whose members are descendents of the Sicangu (Brule) people.
This population also arrived in the vicinity of the Black Hills at an early date, and some of their
bands were reported to establish their winter camps in areas within easy reach of what are now
dark properties. Their leader, Spotted Tail, wanted to have his agency established near the park at
the Buffalo Gap in 1874. Luther Standing Bear wrote about his tiospaye camping in this area
during the same period. Also, a number of the stories about Wind Cave and the area of the Black
Hills where it is located came from members of this tribe, especially those who live on the Rose-
bud Reservation, which was also the location for the settlement of a small number of Cheyennes.
Sicangu leaders were parties to the signing of the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties, and they
also played a role in future political and legal efforts to reclaim Sioux rights to the Hills. These
two tribes also need to be included in the consultative process. Members of the Rosebud Tribe
have already participated in archaeological research taking place at the park, and their cultural
resource officer is very interested in being involved in all future consultations because of the
importance of the area to the tribe in the conduct of some of their religious observances.
Three other tribes, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and Fort Peck Assiniboin-Sioux Tribe are made up of people descended from the northern or Soane divisions of Lakotas, namely, the Hunkpapas, Sihasapas, Oohenunpas, Minneconjous, and Itazipcos. These divisions were also represented in the signing of the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties, and their modern descendents took part in legal and congressional actions to regain their proprietary interests in the Hills. All of the Soane have strong connections to the Black Hills, but most of the evidence in the historic record and in their own oral traditions associates them with the northern reaches of the Hills. Some of the Minneconjous, however, were reported to have settled near the southeastern Hills during the 1850s and 1860s. All of these Lakotas hold significant cultural knowledge about Wind Cave, the Race Track, and the neighboring Buffalo Gap that has been recorded in historic and ethnographic sources, and therefore, they also need to be included among the consulting tribes. The cultural preservation officers of the Standing Rock, Fort Peck, and Cheyenne River tribes all expressed strong interest in participating in future consultations.

b. The Cheyennes

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana and the Southern Cheyenne Tribe of Oklahoma need to be included in the inner circle of consulting tribes as well. Northern Cheyenne bands associated with the Masikota, Totoimana, Omisis, Hisiometaneo, and Suhtao divisions of the tribe are known to have inhabited and/or used the Black Hills from the middle of the eighteenth century until 1877. The Masikota were probably the group of Cheyennes that Francis Parkman placed in the southern Black Hills on his 1849 map. After 1877, segments of the northern divisions of Cheyenne were widely dispersed. Some were settled with the Southern Cheyennes, after their forced removal to Oklahoma in 1878, but others returned north where they were eventually enrolled either among the Oglalas at Pine Ridge and the Sicangu at Rosebud or settled on their own reservation in Montana. The Cheyennes were not explicitly identified with the Black Hills in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, although they were recognized by Sioux leaders, including Red Cloud, and by government agents as part of the “Sioux Nation.” They also were not explicitly named in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty with the Sioux, but they were included in its provisions as members of “friendly tribes” who had a right to remain on the Great Sioux Reservation, which included the Black Hills and WCNP. Some of their members were also parties to another 1868 treaty at Fort Laramie, in which they were given a choice of joining other Cheyennes in Oklahoma or remaining among the Lakotas. Most of the Northern Cheyennes chose to stay in the north among their Lakota friends and relatives.

The Southern Cheyenne Tribe of Oklahoma is descended mostly from Cheyennes who lived in and around the Black Hills before 1835. The Wotapio division of the tribe lived along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River at the end of the eighteenth century, and other divisions lived at the Forks of the Cheyenne River until the 1820s when they began to move as a group to the Platte River. None of the original body of the Southern Cheyennes, however, was ever a party to treaties and agreements involving the Black Hills and WCNP. After 1878, members of some of the northern division of the Cheyenne nation who were parties to the treaties joined them. In particular, some of the Masikotas who remained in the area of WCNP until the 1870s were eventually enrolled with the Southern Cheyenne Tribe.

The strong cultural attachments of both the northern and southern divisions of the Cheyenne tribe to the Black Hills mostly refer, at least in the published literature, to the areas of Bear Butte and Bear Lodge Butte on the northern edge of the Hills, and these are the places to which the Cheyennes have traveled in the twentieth century from the considerable distances of their modern
communities in Oklahoma and Montana. The Cheyennes, however, have many stories about the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap and the origins of some of their ceremonies are associated with this area. They also retain a spiritual attachment to the thermal waters at Hot Springs, and they were reported to return to this area in the twentieth century. They have sacred stories about a cave in the southern Hills, and even though it is not explicitly identified as Wind Cave, there is a high degree of probability that this is the cave mentioned in one of their Sweet Medicine stories. Although the Cheyennes are not reported in published sources to have taken part in any active religious observances on park properties, the cultural preservation officers of both Cheyenne tribes indicate that they continue to fast and conduct other ceremonies in this area, and one of them also identified the southeastern Black Hills as a location for securing some of the plants used in their religious observances. The evidence in the published literature, combined with the strong continuing interests of the Southern Cheyennes and Northern Cheyennes, recommend that both Cheyenne tribes be included in the inner circle of consulting tribes.

c. The Arapahos

The Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming and the Southern Arapaho Tribe of Oklahoma are descended from peoples who settled territories along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River at locations in close proximity to the Buffalo Gap and WCNP in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After 1806, most of the Arapaho bands moved to locations on the western side of the Hills. While the Southern Arapahos moved south and eventually ended up on a reservation in Oklahoma, the Northern Arapaho remained in the north. Two of their bands were reported to continue to live and travel at locations on the western side of the Black Hills until 1877. Unlike the Cheyennes, the Arapahos are explicitly named in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty with the Sioux and in the Black Hills Act of 1877. Also, many members of the Northern Arapaho Tribe are intermarried with and closely related to people from the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Like the Cheyennes, they have significant cultural ties to the Black Hills, and they consider Bear Butte and Bear Lodge Butte sacred sites. There is no evidence in the historic and ethnographic literature to suggest any strong cultural traditions associated with the area of WCNP. Personal communication and correspondence with Loretta Fowler (2001) and Jeffery Anderson (2001), the two most prominent contemporary ethnographers of Arapaho culture, confirms the absence of specific evidence in the published literature. Both advise that this literature may not be a reliable indicator of extant cultural interests and affiliations, however. Representatives of the culture resource offices of both tribes claimed a cultural interest in the area. There are strong historic grounds for including the Arapahos among the first circle of consulting tribes, and there are also cultural ones that need to be established through further consultations with representatives of the two Arapaho tribes.

d. The Dakotas (Crow Creek and Santee Sioux Tribes)

The Crow Creek Tribe of South Dakota and the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska were also included in the signing of the 1868 Treaty at Fort Laramie, although there is no historic evidence that either of these tribes ever lived in or around the Black Hills. Some members of the Santee Sioux Tribe, however, did accompany the 1874 Black Hills Expedition as scouts. Historically, eastern Dakota peoples, which include the Yanktonnais who are members of the Crow Creek Tribe, lived east of the Missouri River and covered much of the country to the modern day border of Minnesota. The Dakotas who became members of the Santee Sioux Tribe lived in the eastern part of Minnesota along the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers until 1858, when they were settled on a reservation bordering the Minnesota River. After hostilities erupted between the Dakotas and their white neighbors in 1862, some of these Dakota were imprisoned and later moved to what is now known as the Santee Sioux Reservation in Nebraska. Although both of these tribes
claim rights to the Black Hills and WCNP by virtue of having signed the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and the 1876 Black Hills Agreement, and although both participated in the claims’ case and congressional actions to bring about a return of lands in the Black Hills, their historical connections to the Hills are more recent. The cultural resource officers of the Crow Creek and Santee Sioux tribes, who were party to the 1868 treaty, have expressed an interest in being consulted on Wind Cave National Park. Since these tribes were parties to treaties, agreements, and claims covering the Black Hills, they need to be included with the Lakotas in the first circle.

The cultural preservation offices with whom we spoke recommended different kinds of consultation models, however. Some of the representatives of the different Lakota/Dakota tribes with an interest in park properties suggested meeting as a group since the park is part of the cultural patrimony of the entire Sioux (Lakota/Dakota) Nation. This follows a culturally normative pattern of decision-making among the Lakotas where matters of widespread concern are handled by collectively constituted deliberative bodies. The Arapahos and Cheyennes indicated they are interested in consulting but as separate groups. Since disagreements currently exist over who has “rights” to the area, and since there have been tensions between tribes concerning various Black Hills claims, requests to hold separate and private consultations with the Cheyennes and Arapahos need to be honored and respected.

2. Second Circle

The second circle contains tribes with strong legal, historical, and/or cultural ties to the southeastern Hills, but among whom there are no published cultural traditions specifically tied to the area of WCNP.

a. The Dakotas (Yankton, Spirit Lake, Sisseton, Flandreau, & Minnesota Groups)

Most of the other Dakota tribes, the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, the Flandreau Sioux Tribe, the Yankton Sioux Tribe, and the four federally recognized Dakota communities in Minnesota, did not have strong and lasting historical associations with the area of the Black Hills where WCNP is located. Although some of the Yankton/Yanktonnais may have traveled to this area to hunt, and although some of the Sissetons, Wahpetons, Wahpekutes, and Mdewakantonks were known to have taken refuge in the Black Hills after the 1862 hostilities in Minnesota, their stay in the area was short-lived, and at best, it constituted a tertiary relationship to the area (see Chapter Seven). Furthermore, there is nothing in the ethnographic literature that suggests any older cultural attachment to the area where WCNP is now located. Present day members of these tribes, however, claim cultural connections based on a pan-Sioux identity and consider the area sacred. Through intermarriages and other close relations, many modern Dakotas have adopted many of the cultural beliefs of their Lakota relatives. The Spirit Lake and the Flandreau cultural resource officers did not indicate any interest, however, in being parties to consultations on WCNP, although individual members of these tribes do have knowledge of the area and consider it sacred. The cultural preservation officer of the Yankton Sioux Tribe deferred to the Oglala Sioux Tribe for advisory responsibilities on matters relating to WCNP. Generally speaking, the interests of these Dakota tribes are not as strong as the Lakotas, Cheyennes, or Arapahos, but they still must be respected because many of their members are descended from the Lakotas and some of the Dakota peoples who had historic ties to the region.
a. The Arikaras

The Arikaras have some of the oldest connections to the southeastern region of the Hills, probably extending back to prehistoric times. In the early historic era, they were known to have taken their bison hunts to the upper reaches of the Cheyenne, Bad, and White rivers in easy reach of the Buffalo Gap and the lands around WCNP. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, for reasons described at length elsewhere in this report, they no longer had easy access to the Black Hills, and by 1851, the Hills were considered enemy territory. The Arikaras have stories of locations in the Black Hills, but nothing about Wind Cave and the area that immediately surrounds it. None of their religious observances appear to be tied to the WCNP area either, nor have any other specific cultural connections been reported in the published literature. The Arikaras were not identified with this region of the Black Hills in treaties and agreements negotiated with the United States, although areas of the far northwestern Hills were considered part of their hunting territory in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Some of their scouts traveled with the Black Hills Expedition in 1874, and they were an important source of information about tribal beliefs surrounding the Hills. The Arikaras are now members of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, where they live with the Hidatsas and Mandans who also had early connections to the Black Hills but primarily in their northwestern reaches. In fact, the Mandans recently returned to Bear Butte to conduct a Buffalo Dance, according to the cultural preservation officer of the Three Affiliated Tribes. There is little basis for including the Arikaras within the inner circle of consulting tribes, but they certainly need to be consulted in a wider advisory circle especially on matters that come under the guidelines of NAGPRA. The cultural resource officer of the tribe indicated that all three tribes have connections to the Black Hills, and she expressed a strong interest in being involved in future consultations.

3. Third Circle

All of the remaining tribes with known historical connections to the area of WCNP area lived in this region in the eighteenth century and have been removed from it for more than two hundred years. These include the Comanches, Crows, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Poncas. The tribes who expressed interest in being involved in consultations are included in this circle, while those who do not wish to be consulted are listed later.

a. Kiowas

The Kiowas lived in the vicinity of WCNP for only a short period of time, from about 1760 to 1790. Although members of this tribe retained memories of their former occupation in this area of the Black Hills, their sacred stories refer primarily to places in the Hills’ northern reaches, notably Bear Butte and Bear Lodge Butte. There are no apparent and enduring cultural attachments to the lands that make up WCNP, at least as revealed in the ethnographic sources studied for this report. The tribe’s cultural preservation officer indicated that the tribe had important cultural interests in the Hills, but he needed to have more time to consult with his elders to determine whether any of these covered the region of Wind Cave National Park. He requested that the tribe remain on the consulting list until he could confirm whether or not the park had any importance to the tribe.

b. Plains Apaches

Some of the Plains Apaches also retained memories in the late nineteenth century of having lived near the southern Hills, and they also maintained detailed traditions of sacred sites in the
northern Hills, notably Bear Butte and Bear Lodge Butte. Along with the Arikaras, the Apaches have some of the oldest documented ties to the southern Hills. Apache-speaking peoples known as the Padoucas are commonly associated with the archaeological sites that are part of what is known as the Dismal River Complex. The remains of some of these sites, which are now inundated by the Angostura Reservoir, contained tools made from flint that came from Battle Mountain, indicating that these Apaches spent time in areas very close to WCNP. Other Apaches, who became known as the Plains Apaches, were reported in historic sources on the northern and western side of the Hills. They may have absorbed some of the Padoucas into their ranks when this population disappeared as an identifiable population in the late eighteenth century. While none of the Apaches have any on-going cultural connections, which would qualify them as candidates for intensive consultations with WCNP, they do have important cultural traditions about the Hills, including stories about the origin of their *Manitidae* Society, which may have originated somewhere in the southern Hills. They also have the sorts of demonstrable historical affiliations that require meeting with them on matters relating to protohistoric archaeological remains falling under NAGPRA guidelines. Although the Fort Sill Apaches at Lawton, Oklahoma have no interest in participating in any consultations dealing with the park, the Plains Apaches of Anadarko have expressed an interest in doing so because of their historic ties to the area.

c. The Poncas

The Poncas, and at times their close relatives among the Omahas, hunted along the upper reaches of the White River at the southeastern base of the Black Hills from 1740 to 1760. In their oral traditions, they retained memories of the Black Hills, recalled hunting there, and even had a name for Wind Cave, suggesting they had knowledge of it that probably stretches back to the early eighteenth century. There is no apparent evidence in the ethnographic record, however, of any storytelling traditions or religious observances associated with the cave and its immediate environment or the Black Hills more generally. After 1760, the Omahas had little connection to the Hills, although the Poncas retained some limited and episodic contact largely through their occasional alliances with the Sicangu Lakotas, with whom they intermarried in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, the Wazazi Lakotas were of mixed Lakota-Ponca ancestry, and they were closely associated with the southeastern area of the Black Hills in historic times. The Black Hills were not included in any of the treaties that the Poncas negotiated with the United States, nor were they among the lands that this tribe ceded. Today, the Poncas are members of two tribes: The Northern Ponca Tribe of Nebraska and the Southern Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. Other than an old name for Wind Cave and an historic presence in the region in the eighteenth century, there is no evidence in ethnographic sources for any continuing cultural attachment to the park. The cultural preservation officer of the Northern Ponca indicated that his tribe did not have any current cultural interest in the area, while the officer for the Southern Ponca knew the tribe had historic ties to the area, but is not certain about any further consultation with the park.

4. Outside the Circle

These are tribes with historic connections to the Black Hills and to the region of Wind Cave National Park but who do not have any current cultural interests in the area and who do not want to be involved in consultations.
a. Comanches

Some of the Comanches, perhaps with a few Utes and Shoshones in their ranks, were known to live and travel in reach of the southern Hills in the mid-eighteenth century and to have taken over areas once occupied by the Padouca Apaches. None of these tribes retained memories of this occupation in any of their oral traditions recorded in the published literature. Although the cultural resource officer of the Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma heard that Wind Cave was a location “spirits” frequented, he indicated that only those among his tribe who are descended from or intermarried with Sioux know of this tradition, and that the people at Standing Rock should be the ones involved in consultations with NPS.

b. Crows

The Crows know about the area, but much of their knowledge centers on the battles that took place here with the Lakotas as late as the 1820s. The Lakotas recorded these raids in their winter counts too. Small groups of Crow may have lived along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River in the late eighteenth century amidst bands of Arapaho and Kiowa, but the main body of the tribe occupied areas northwest of the Hills. The cultural resource officer of the Crow Tribe indicated that the park was beyond the boundaries of the geographic area in which they have any continuing and vested cultural interests.

B. The Identification of Culturally Significant Landscapes and Sites

For three tribal populations, the Lakotas, the Cheyennes, and the Arapahos, the area of WCNP is a place with important and enduring cultural meanings. There are two well-documented sites on park properties of sacred significance to one or more of these tribes, the Race Track and Wind Cave.

1. The Race Track

The Race Track is described in the sacred Cheyenne narrative, “The Great Race.” In their traditions, the story is associated with the origin of their Sun Dance, Oxheheom, and possibly their Animal Dance, Massaum. The Lakotas have similar versions of this story in their traditions, and like the Cheyennes, the story recounts an epic event that shaped the fundamental nature of human-animal relationships. The Lakotas also tie the Race Track to a circular constellation, whose stars historically marked tribal travels in and around the Black Hills for subsistence and the conduct of religious observances.

In some Cheyenne and Lakota versions of the Great Race story, the race begins at the Buffalo Gap, a location associated with the origins of other important institutions and with many stories of wondrous events in their histories and in the exploits of some of their culture heroes. The area of the Race Track inside the Buffalo Gap, including the segment that crosses WCNP, is part of what the Lakotas’ call Tatanka makalhpaya, the “Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull,” and it is an area associated especially with herbal medicines and healing. Today, the Lakotas still come to this area of the Hills to harvest the bearberry or kinnikinick and redosier dogwood for tobacco mixtures used on religious occasions. They also continue to hold a sacred pipe ceremony near this site around the the time of the vernal equinox.
The Race Track is highly significant to both tribes on cultural and religious grounds. Indeed, all locations along the Race Track are considered sacred. The Lakota cultural preservation officers with whom we spoke singled it out as a site of special importance and one that demands protection. The Cheyenne officers emphasized its cultural significance to their tribes as well, and one of them remarked that even though other parts of the Race Track had been developed, the portion that covers park properties should be protected from any further development. Another recommended that it should be listed on the register of National Historic Places, and we concur (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Since the arrival of European Americans, the Race Track has been developed, and from a tribal perspective, desecrated. Many portions of the Race Track were transformed in the early years of European American occupation of the Black Hills. Part of the town of Hot Springs and sections of I-90, as examples, were built on this track. Inside the borders of Wind Cave National Park, much of Race Track was homesteaded between the 1880s and 1920s before it was conveyed to the federal government and placed under the protection of WCNP. Today, one of the park’s unimproved public roads follows the track. Much of the Race Track, however, can still be protected from further development. The lands surrounding it should be maintained as much as possible in some semblance of their “original” state. The area of the park that covers the Race Track is relatively isolated and off the beaten path of the most heavily traveled tourist routes in the Black Hills, and it should remain so in the future. It should also be nominated to the National Historic Register and preserved as part of the original trail system in the Black Hills and as a place where the animals once raced against humans to determine who would be the hunters and the prey.

2. Wind Cave

The second site, Wind Cave, is one of the Lakotas’ most sacred sites. It is the subject of several different sacred story cycles, the Four Winds and Tokahe, Falling Star, and the Buffalo Wife. The last is also shared with the Cheyennes who tie it, however, to their narrative stories of the origin of the Race Track. In Lakota traditions, Wind Cave is the origin place of the Pte Oyate, the bison nation and their human relatives. It is connected to Tate, the Wind, and his sons, especially the North Wind, Waziyata and his grandfather, Waziya, the old man of winter. It is also the domicile of a Buffalo Woman, who appears to hunters and gifts them with bison, and in one story, possibly knowledge of the Sun Dance. There are other stories that associate the cave with additional spiritual figures, including a White Buffalo Bull (Tatanka), the Crazy Bull (Gnaskiyan), and Little People. Notwithstanding variations in the stories told about the cave and their different implications, all of them imbue the cave with sacred significance, and all of them speak to a wider set of beliefs about the vital relationships between caves, bison, regeneration, the wind, and the breath of life [ni or niya]. These beliefs are part of long-standing and widely shared cosmological traditions among the Lakotas, some of whose features are also shared with the Cheyennes and Arapahos. The Cheyennes and Arapahos have no particular published stories that can be linked, at least explicitly, to Wind Cave. Nonetheless, like the Lakotas, their cultural traditions equate caves, particularly those in the Black Hills, with the homes of animal spirits. They also view them as sites of emergence and rebirth. Some of the Cheyenne’s culture heroes, including Fallen Star and Mostoyef or Sweet Medicine, are associated with caves in the southern Hills and the origin of a sweatlodge that brought humans back to life.

Wind Cave is one of many caves located on park properties. While it is the one about which the most has been written, other caves are culturally significant too. Cheyennes believe all caves in the Black Hills hold the spirits of different animal species, and Lakotas take the position that
these caves are interconnected and form a labyrinth of passageways that lead to the underworld homes of the *Pte Oyate* and other animal nations. From a Lakota perspective, the entire area underneath the Hills’ limestone formation constitutes the home of the bison and other animals; it is the place where they remain in a spiritualized state before undergoing materialization and appearing on the earth’s surface. Any one of the openings to the subterranean world of the Black Hills is considered holy by the Cheyennes and the Lakotas, but the opening at Wind Cave is singled out, at least among the Lakotas, not only because of its strong *ni*, breath-like behavior, but also because of its proximity and connection to the Buffalo Gap, the Race Track, and the thermal waters at Hot Springs. Taken together, these sites form a highly sacred landscape to the Lakotas and the Cheyennes standing at the foundation of some of their most significant religious traditions and teachings.

Nothing appears in the published literature that specifically connects any of the Arapahos’ sacred stories with this particular part of the Black Hills. The Arapahos, however, have a number of sacred stories that refer to caves as origin sites for sacred knowledge. In general, they share many of the same beliefs with the Lakotas and Cheyennes about the relationship between caves, animals, rebirth, and the breath of life. Therefore, it would not be surprising to learn from their cultural resource staffs and other spiritually knowledgeable people that they hold similar ideas about this area of the Hills. The same holds true for the Arikaras.

Like the Race Track, the natural opening to Wind Cave and much of the surrounding area in Wind Cave Canyon has also undergone significant development. This area, however, was once a location rich in tipi rings and other archeological remains, many of which, according to Rufus Pilcher, an early park superintendent, were destroyed when the elevator to the cave was built. Some remains may still be present, and this area needs to be carefully surveyed by archaeologists. Surveys also need to be conducted around the openings to other caves in the park with special attention given to identifying cairns and other rock formations frequently used to mark the location of caves with probable spiritual significance in historic and/or prehistoric times. Although stone markers near the opening to Wind Cave are likely to have been destroyed, some of them may remain at locations near more remote cave openings in the park. Further consultations with local tribes also need to be held to determine whether other caves on park properties or other special sites in proximity to the opening of Wind Cave require protection.

### 3. The Landscape as a Whole

The importance of Wind Cave, the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and the Hot Springs is not about these sites as single landforms, separated from each other and isolated from the living world of which they are a part. Instead, their significance resides in their relationships to each other and to the wider universe that constitutes the entire Black Hills along with the animals, plants, and minerals that dwell there. Again, the whole area inside the Hogback, between the Buffalo Gap and Elk Mountain where Wind Cave is nested is sacred. This is an integrated landscape, whose sacredness derives from the relationships between the various living forms that inhabit the area. The Buffalo Gap and Hot Springs are located outside the park, but Wind Cave and part of the Race Track are within park boundaries.

The importance of this area and its landmarks to tribal peoples is often diminished and trivialized in European American writings with terms like “tales” and “legends,” implying that the stories associated with them are not to be taken seriously. This represents a serious misreading of the significance of these places and the stories that surround them, all of which speak to fundamental precepts about the workings of the cosmos in Lakota and/or Cheyenne traditions. In tribal perspectives, these landmarks and their associated stellar bearings reveal
systematic bodies of knowledge about universal life-giving and life-taking processes, which are akin to European American notions of “science.” The difference between the sciences of Lakotas/Cheyennes and European Americans resides not so much in the elements and processes they describe but in their underlying premises or assumptions about the basic nature of the relationship between spirituality and materiality. In Lakota and Cheyenne perspectives, it is impossible to separate these two dimensions. Consequently, all of the major sacred sites of these tribes attend simultaneously to what European Americans would identify separately as “religion” and “science.”

4. Other Possible Sites

At least in reference to what appears in published sources and other publicly accessible material we reviewed for this report, other more specific sites within park boundaries have not been identified in the literature on the historic tribes who occupied the area. One of the cultural resource officers, however, indicated the presence of a painting on a rock above the cave near the top of a mountain (probably, Elk Mountain), where he attended a sweat several years ago. Judging by the discussions we had with various cultural resource officers, all petroglyphs and pictographs in this area are sacred and need to be identified, preserved, and protected. Other than this site, no other locations in the park were singled out in the preliminary consultations we conducted. For reasons to be discussed momentarily, this should not imply that other sites do not exist. Indeed, it is highly likely that there are many sites within the boundaries of the park that are considered special but whose whereabouts is considered privileged information.

One of the most likely places for such sites is where springs are located, especially in connection with unusual rock outcroppings and overhangs. Springs, wherever they are situated, are considered “special” places and highly regarded by the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos (see Chapter Twelve for more details). Cold Springs Creek may be one such area, given the English names associated with some of its neighboring topographic features. Twin Sisters is the name of the local range where the park’s water supply is located. In Lakota traditions, this name is a euphemism for the Double-Woman, Winyan Nunpapika. A nearby spring off park properties is called Witch Springs, which may derive from an association with this figure, another double-spirit, the Two-Face, Anog-Ite, or her mother, Wakanka, who is often identified in early texts as a “witch.” In Cheyenne traditions, the cave in the southern Hills where Sweet Medicine performed his miraculous feat was the hideout of the Two-Faces. The Double Woman, the Two Face Woman, and Wakanka appear in a number of Lakota stories linked to the cave and/or the neighboring Hot Springs, and rock art related to the first figure has been identified at other nearby locations in the Black Hills (Sundstrom, L. 2002).

Springs, bluffs, and rocky outcroppings are also tied to Little People in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, and in fact, they are identified with these landforms in the traditions of many of the tribes known to have lived in this area of the Black Hills, including the Arapahos, Kiowas, and Poncas. These diminutive figures appear in Lakota stories about Wind Cave and the Hot Springs. They are well known for their capricious behavior, and people need to take special care when moving about the areas they are known to frequent. Offerings and prayers are often made to them. It is highly likely today, and certainly in the past, that springs and rock outcroppings on park properties hold links to Little People. All areas where springs are located on park properties should also be carefully surveyed by tribal consultants and archaeologists not only for evidence of occupation but equally important, for signs of spiritual activity. These areas are important in the culture history of the tribal peoples who occupied the area and also for some of the park’s early European American settlers. Of particular interest inside park boundaries are springs located on sections 11 and 14 of T5S R5E that belonged to Margaret Ferguson who formed the Siloam
Mineral Springs Company and tried to develop the hot springs on her property in 1904 (Western History Research 1992: 104). There is also a rich cluster of springs on the southwestern edge of the park, on and off park properties, marked on the old GLO maps.

Another striking topographic feature in the park, identified on an early GLO land map in Section 27 of T5SR6E, is a place called Giant’s Thumb, just west of the Race Track. This place name may very well be European American in origin, but if so, it is a curious coincidence, since much of the park area was once associated in Lakota traditions with the old man, Waziya, and his grandson, the North Wind, Waziyata, both of whom are often described as figures of gigantic stature.

Rankin Ridge is another location of special note. Narrow ridges of this order are often seen as culturally significant in Lakota/Dakota traditions and interpreted as the “backbone” of some spiritual figure or animal (Albers 1966-1976). Its location in the Black Hills corresponds with Lakota star maps and the relative geographic placement of Orion’s Belt known as Tayamni Cankahu (Backbone), which also make up another constellation in the form of a hand associated with a narrative where Fallen Star recovers the chief’s arm (Goodman 1992: 25-27). Although Charlotte Black Elk (1992: 50-51) claims that the stars of Orion’s Belt match the three famous prairies Slate, Reynolds, and Gilette in the center of the Hills on the Limestone Plateau, this identification doesn’t match the placement of the larger Tayamani [Animal] figure where the backbone is situated relative to the Race Track (see Goodman’s map 1992: 29). Even if Rankin Ridge is not coordinated with figures on Lakota star maps, it is the kind of landform commonly associated with sacred matters in local tribal traditions.

There are also burial sites in the area, one reported in the valley above the entrance to Wind Cave (Two Dogs in Parlow 1983a:6). Many Lakotas report that the Black Hills are an area people went to die, and a location where some of their ancestors were buried in historic times. Caves, as mentioned in earlier chapters, are portals between the world humans now live in and the world they enter and return from after death, and as result, there are likely to be burial grounds in their general vicinity. In fact, both the Lakotas and Cheyennes once buried their deceased in caves.

Also any areas of the park where certain animals, especially mule deer, bison, eagles, and elk, are known to frequent and feed may draw attention and require special respect, especially if these also coincide with unusual land forms or concentrations of significant plants (e.g., fetid marigold, bearberry, cowparnisp) and minerals, notably gypsum. Some of these areas may not draw attention on a tribal wide basis, but instead hold significance only to certain individuals and families who have spiritual attachments to these places.

Locations other than Wind Cave and the Race Track sacred to modern day Lakotas, Cheyennes, and/or Arapahos may not be easy to identify and rank as to their relative importance. Except for the locations associated with religious observances, such as Sun Dances, sweatlodges, and pipe ceremonies, which can be identified because they usually involve groups of people who need to occupy sites for an extended period and build temporary structures for which permits are required from the park service, other sorts of places are not likely to be known. Much religious observance among the Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and other tribal nations of the Plains takes place under solitary conditions. There are many different places to which people travel for fasting and other prayerful observances or to acquire plant and mineral material used medicinally and ceremonially. These sites are usually kept secret and are not as easily identified. They are also much more variable and cover a wider range of locations. Typically, these are places where certain individuals and families have special relationships because of dreams, visions, or other spiritual encounters. Some of them may be important but known only to these individuals and
their families and/or to certain spiritually knowledgeable people. It is difficult to determine the importance of such places over others because their significance varies widely from one person, family, or community to another. The specific locations where some of the more solitary fasting and prayerful observances take place are probably not clearly demarcated, and the signs of their use may not be obvious. They may not be associated, as argued in Chapter Twelve, with elaborate and visible offerings such as cloth banners and tobacco ties. Since this is the land of the bison, the offerings are more likely to be unobtrusive and buried in the ground where the bison come from. Yet, for those who use them, they need protection from development and outside traffic. Indeed, one Lakota cultural resource officer was very explicit about the fact that all tobacco ties should be left alone and that visitors to the park should be explicitly instructed not to pick them up. In their informational material, other National Park sites, including Devil’s Tower National Monument and Badlands National Monument, advise visitors not to tamper with these offerings. Wind Cave National Park should do so as well.

Again, it must be emphasized that the sanctity of an area is not necessarily correlated with intensive use. Certain places may be avoided out of respect and used only by persons who know how to spiritually approach them. Their whereabouts is kept secret out of respect for the spiritual presence that resides there. Developments of any kind at these sites would be viewed as defiling.

Also for many of the religious observances that Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos practice today, there is not a set place where most of them must be conducted. The location of many of the sweatlodges and pipe ceremonies run by spiritually gifted people may be held in any of variety of locations, depending on the advice a religious practitioner is given in communications with his/her spiritual partners. Similarly, fasting and prayer can take place in many different places. It is critical to understand that there may be many different areas of the park where people have chosen and will choose to make solitary religious observances or conduct group ceremonies. The places people select may be based on tradition or the preferences of the people who serve as their spiritual guides, but they may also be completely novel, inspired by a spiritual revelation to seek out a certain spot to pray and communicate with that which is sacred.

5. Cultural Sensitivities Surrounding Identification of Site Locations

The ways in which the Lakotas and Cheyennes have talked about and conceptualized the Black Hills and their various landscapes, including those located at WCNP, make it difficult to single out a series of discrete sites that can be identified, segregated, and ranked for purposes of cultural protection and management. Where other landscapes exist within the boundaries of the national park, they already possess some degree of protection from further destruction and desecration. While the park service may want other spots to be identified and segregated for purposes of protection and management, this is not always possible or even desirable, especially when the total landscape of the park, or at the very least, a significant portion of it is understood as culturally significant. Park officials need to be mindful of the fact that people may not wish to divulge sacred sites out of fear that unwanted attention will be drawn to them. In my nearly forty years of experience working and living in American Indian communities, one of the things I’ve heard consistently is that sacred places should be left alone out of respect for the spiritual presence that resides there and people shouldn’t “play around” or “mess around” with them unless they know how to approach them properly and with due respect. There is a general sense, not at all unwarranted, that in keeping the locations of these places secret, this will give them the solitude they require and deserve, at the same time, to afford them some degree of protection.

As Suzan Harjo (2002:A3), the highly respected Cheyenne-Creek director of the Morning Star Foundation and frequent columnist in Indian Country Today writes:
Many traditional religious matters cannot be discussed or revealed. Some Native traditional religious matters must remain private and confidential because disclosure would violate the tenets of the religions themselves. Other Native traditional matters must remain private because many Native leaders and practitioners still fear that such disclosures would lead to another federal Indian “civilization” era.

It has been the experience of Native Americans that disclosure about the location, nature or use of sacred places leads to assaults on them. Many of these places are fragile and have been destroyed by too many visitors or vehicles or activities.

With federal agencies, however, a delicate line must be walked because all information is ultimately accessible to the public under various Freedom of Information laws. A recent Executive Order 13007, however, contains a very important provision under Section 1. Part (a) that reads: “Where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of a site.” This provides for some confidentiality, but a question that still exists is how does one protect information on sites and locales about which tribal peoples do not wish the public to have general or even specific knowledge? Obviously there are different levels on which this information might be solicited and received in a way that could be used by park staff “on a need to know” basis without making it available to the general public in reports like this one. Knowledge about sacred sites is a trust, and it is not a subject to which many outsiders are made privy, no matter what their ethnic background. Importantly, if these sites are to be identified, it needs to be done in direct consultation with the concerned parties, namely the tribes and the NPS staff, who will be entrusted with stewarding the knowledge of these places and protecting them from desecration and unwanted tourist traffic.

Consultations on these matters are very delicate undertakings. “Fishing expedition” sorts of inquiries, including the preliminary consultations for this report, are not likely to be successful in uncovering information on specific sites in need of protection. The identity of additional sites may come to light by asking people “what sites are sacred, and where are these located?” Many more are likely to remain unidentified, however. The danger of this approach is that the results may be interpreted as exhaustive when they are not.

With tribes as large and internally diverse as the Cheyennes and the Lakotas, the two most likely to have cultural attachments to sites other than the Race Track and Wind Cave, there are differences on a family, community, divisional, and even tribal basis. For instance, the Sicangu Lakotas may have a sacred map of the park that is different from the Oglala Lakotas or the Northern Cheyennes. As another example, people from Kyle on Pine Ridge may have different traditions than those from White Clay. To get an adequate sense of all the sites and landscapes deserving special care and respect would be an enormous undertaking, requiring meetings with every district on each Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho reservation. In fact, the importance of certain sites may never come to light until they face development, at which point people may come forward and reveal their location to protect them. This should not be construed as individuals fabricating something to block development for political reasons, but rather as a strategy to keep things secret unless they are threatened and likely to be irreparably harmed. Importantly, park staff need to ask the general questions, but they also need to be cautious about the completeness of any responses they receive to their queries. Whenever the park plans to develop something, such as put in a new trail or campground, tribes need to be brought to the table to look at the locations in order to determine if these are areas to which the tribe in general or specific segments of the tribe have direct interests. Here very specific, onsite consultations are imperative.
The park needs to approach these matters in an open-ended manner, and it needs to develop policies that are broadly based, able to cover the contingent ways in which the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho people typically identify and approach sites of cultural and even sacred significance. It is important for park staff to have some understanding of the basic practices and tenets associated with the traditions of the tribes who have vested cultural interests in the area. Allowances need to be made for the presence of sacred sites and the observance of spiritual practices in a variety of different areas within park boundaries, not just those that happen to have been identified by accident or revealed in a few published sources or verbal communications. The park needs to adopt a flexible plan in which policy and practice can be adapted to many different contingencies. Having said this, what can the park do in order to acquire some of the information necessary to develop workable guidelines?

As a start, park personnel need to consult directly and on a regular basis with the cultural resource staff of the tribes who have cultural interests in the park to determine the proper way to handle this kind of sensitive information and also to find out the best way to get the most input on sites of significance that individuals who know the area may wish to talk about. Above all, the park should never preemptively close or restrict discussions to certain individuals over others. If the park limits its consultations to people who hold elected or appointed tribal offices, they may not get input from knowledgeable individuals not affiliated with tribal government. In general, sacred site identification is a vexatious issue for the managers of public lands and for the tribal peoples who want them protected and need to access them (Carroll 1993:16-21). They are vexatious precisely because of the cultural differences in the ways the two groups approach landscapes and the uses to which they put them (Greiser 1993 9-11; Othole and Anyon 1993:42-45). Tribal people are often not willing to divulge the whereabouts of significant sites because their locations need to be kept secret for any of a variety of cultural reasons. This secrecy makes it hard for administrators to inventory and rank the lands they manage with an eye to their protection and potential uses (Deloria and Stoffle 1998). There is no easy way to bridge this cultural gap, and we offer no facile schemes on how to approach the crossing. In this light, however, a few general recommendations can be made.

One thing we recommend is that the park first develop ways to involve tribes in interpretive programming on less sensitive cultural subjects (described in more detail later). A track record and positive history of dialogue between the park service and the concerned tribes has to happen before anyone is likely to entrust park staff with more specific information on matters of spiritual importance. A relationship of trust has to be developed, and this generally happens when tribes have long-term experience with individuals they know they can trust and rely upon. Unfortunately, this is sometimes difficult to achieve because park service professionals are frequently transferred and unable to remain at a site long enough to develop the kinds of relationships that instill trust and confidence. But even if this takes place and a good working rapport evolves, sites may still not be divulged for many of the reasons just described.

It must be remembered that besides its sacred significance, the area of WCNP has historic importance to the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos as a location where some of their bands lived and procured a livelihood before 1877, where some of their families traveled and/or camped in the summers until the early decades of the twentieth century, and where some of them fought and still struggle with European Americans and the United States government to maintain their access over a place that is a vital part of their cultural traditions and contemporary identities. Tribal elders from all of these tribes may know locations of historic culture value, including battle sites, camping spots, procurement areas, and trails traveled to reach other destinations in the Hills. Additional inquiries and oral history interviews should be conducted, perhaps in consultation with the culture and language teaching staffs of local tribal and state universities and directed at
learning about historic events and use patterns from times prior to as well as after this area of the Black Hills became a national park.

The park also needs to bring in archaeologists, such as Linea Sundstrom, with demonstrated experience in identifying rock art sites, cairns, alignments, and other physical features in the Black Hills associated with prehistoric spiritual activity. While a survey of this order may well identify cultural properties of importance in earlier times, these may not have any bearing on modern understandings of the area. When they are conducted, they should never be construed as exhaustive of the places where religious observances might have taken place or where they still occur in the present. Nonetheless, all sites of this order inside park properties need to be identified, preserved, and protected as part of the park’s rich cultural history.

This report and certainly all others that touch on matters of cultural significance should be shared with the tribes who have expressed an interest in the area, and indeed, most of the cultural officers with whom we spoke and who have any interest in WCNP want to have a copy of this report. In fact, a report such as this one offers a concrete way to open and advance dialogue. It can be used to get clarification on certain issues, correct inaccuracies, and determine which stories and bodies of information can be shared with a wider public in park interpretive programming. In this regard, it must be pointed out that this report is not infallible. It may very well contain errors in some of its representations and interpretations that need to be revised in consultation with culturally knowledgeable tribal advisors. Any research project like this one needs to be viewed as a work in progress. Based as it is on published sources and publicly accessible archival documents, it is only a starting point for a much richer and fuller body of knowledge derived from future consultations with tribes that have strong cultural affiliations to the area.

C. Tribal Access to the Park and Its Resources

Directly related to, and in some case indistinguishable from the issue of identifying sacred sites, is defining the kinds of access that tribal people may want to have to park properties. Over the past thirty years, Wind Cave National Park is an area to which Arapahos, Lakotas, and Cheyennes have come to conduct some of their traditional religious observances and where they have made requests for access to some of its resources.

1. Access for Religious Observances

Over the past thirty years, Lakotas have conducted many religious observances on park properties, including Sun Dances, pipe ceremonies, and sweatlodges. Cheyenne and Arapaho people have participated in some of these observances too or conducted separate and more private ones on park properties. Many of the observances important to contemporary Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho religious practice have specific connections to park properties, as in the origins of the Sun Dance, or through more broadly based associations derived from the more abstract connections of what happens spiritually in sweatlodges and what goes on in caves (see chapters in Section Four).

There is no question that all three of these tribes have legitimate traditional reasons to access the park for the conduct of any of a variety of ceremonies. The issue is where and when can these ceremonies be carried out. Many areas of the park where observances have taken place in the past are isolated, away from the heavily traveled areas around the opening to Wind Cave. Many park locations are not likely to generate serious conflicts of interest among competing user groups.
because they are rarely accessed. Their isolation may pose other problems for the park and its staff; for example, they may not be well-suited for some of these observances because they cannot be easily accessed for emergency and sanitation purposes or because they pose fire dangers and other risks. In relation to many of their ceremonial observances, Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos are likely to prefer some of the more solitary areas of the park with limited vehicle access. But there may be occasions when tribes, especially the Lakotas, may request access to some of the more populated areas of the park that do raise concerns about the competing interests of different user groups, paralleling some of the conflicts over access associated with Devil’s Tower National Monument (Hanson and Chirinos 1991; Chirinos 1991; Dorst 2000) and Bear Butte State Park (Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999).

The one area of the park where it will be most difficult to accommodate tribal access is the opening to the cave and the cave itself. Tribal people are (and have been) admitted to the cave through the normal course of group tours. Indeed, school districts from Pine Ridge and Rosebud bring their children here for educational purposes (Terry 1999, Personal Communication), and one cultural resource officer mentioned that the teachers and elders who accompany these field trips talk about the cave’s cultural importance to the tribe (Albers and Kittelson 2002). Lakotas and other tribes with an interest in the park do not appear to have been given any special access for the conduct of religious ceremonies inside the cave, although requests have been made in the past for such access. So far, requests to hold ceremonies inside the cave have been raised but not pressed (Terry 1999, Personal Communication).

There are a number of reasons why it is likely that many spiritually-minded Lakotas may not press the issue. On the one hand some Lakotas may believe that areas of the cave now open to tourist traffic have already been desecrated, and as a result, they have been abandoned by the spirits who are now retreating to more inaccessible locations within the vast one-hundred square miles of passageways which form Wind Cave and connect it, as the Lakotas believe, to other cavern formations underneath the Black Hills. Some Lakotas may very well take the position that the publicly accessible parts of the cave have lost their spiritual power, something voiced by Lakota people and recorded in published sources in relation to Harney Peak and Bear Butte. On the other hand some Lakotas may choose to avoid the cave precisely because it is the dwelling place of spirits and because it is “dangerous” to enter their sanctuary without taking respectful precautions, which they may either not know or not be prepared to undertake.

There is also the fact that no mention has been made in the published literature of ceremonies being conducted inside of caves, other than references to people being transported into the interiors of caves in dreams and visions. Even when people are reported to have used caves as places to fast and pray, it is not always clear whether they entered cave interiors or conducted their observances near their openings. The one reference (Stabler in Bohi 1962) to Lakotas touring the cave in the 1890s clearly describes their reverential and prayerful attitude towards this place. It is more likely that requests will continue to be made in the future for the use of surface locations where the cave is nested. Any of the more remote places in and around Elk Mountain where the cave is situated might be used for ceremonial purposes, and in fact, they have been so used in the past according to the culture resource officers of some Lakota tribes. Given native understandings of the interconnectedness of all caves in the Hills, it is also probable that requests will be made for the conduct of religious observances at some of the cave openings in more remote areas of park properties.

The park could be still pressed in the future to open the interiors of Wind Cave for religious observances outside the tour schedule. One culture resource officer indicated that some Lakota people would like to enter the cave privately to hear what the spirits are saying and to identify the
language they are speaking. Requests may very well be made for the conduct of prayerful observances that require the smoking of a pipe or smudging with cedar, sage, and/or sweegrass. Such access would certainly require some accommodation on the part of WCNP staff. The question park managers need to ask themselves: Is this activity any more intrusive than allowing a group of recreational spelunkers to explore the cave with their carbide lamps, ropes, knee pads, and other devices which permit them to safely navigate the cave’s underground passageways? The use is clearly different, but what needs to be weighed objectively is whether the impact on the cave and its fragile boxwork formations is qualitatively different. As a former spelunker, I would maintain that allowances could be made, in the short-term and long-run, for small Lakota, Cheyenne, and/or Arapaho groups to make prayerful observances privately because this activity is much less invasive than the throngs of tourists who wind their way through the cave everyday and no more intrusive than the activity of most spelunkers.

2. Access to Resources Used in Traditional Cultural Practices

Beyond the need for some Lakotas and Cheyennes to use the park to conduct their religious observances, requests have been made and are likely to be made in the future for securing herbs, soils, stones, and other resources for healing and ceremonial purposes (Terry 1999, Personal Communication). In this regard, the park has special importance because of Lakota and Cheyenne beliefs about the underground world as the home of the bison, an animal also connected to a variety of plants and minerals used in their healing and ceremonial traditions. Although discussed in some detail in previous chapters, the point needs to be made again that natural resources found on park properties are significant not because they are rare and don’t appear elsewhere, but because of the overall sacred character of the landscape where they are located. The animals, plants, soils, and stones associated with the places where humans and bison emerged to populate the earth’s surface or where they raced to determine the nature of their relationship are likely to be seen as especially sacred and potent.

Some of the plants found on park properties that Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos might request for use in traditional cultural contexts are discussed extensively in Chapter Eleven and in Appendix B, and this does not bear repeating here. Most of the Cheyenne and Lakota culture officers with whom we spoke associated the park with plants. Most of the plants that tribes require for traditional cultural purposes would not be threatened because they do not require any sort of intensive harvesting. A few tribal culture preservation officers singled out two of the plants important in the park, sage and kinnikinick, but most spoke about the area’s plants in general terms. One officer also mentioned that visitors to the park should be advised not to pick the sage in the area because of its sacred significance (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Soils used in building ceremonial altars, especially those brought to the surface of the earth through the actions of prairie dogs, voles, badgers, ants, and other burrowing animals, are believed to hold the purifying properties of the deep earth. Although none of the cultural resource officers with whom we spoke mentioned the soils, Lakotas have requested them from park staff in the past (Terry 1999, Personal Communication). As discussed in considerable length elsewhere (see Chapter Nine for further details), these soils are considered sacred and especially so because they come from ground that is the home of the bison. Such requests are certainly consistent with Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho historic and modern religious practice.

There are a number of stones and minerals found on park properties that are associated with traditional cultural functions. As described in greater depth in Chapter Eleven and Appendix C, one of these is gypsum. While the tribal cultural preservation officers with whom we spoke made no specific mention about the area in relation to minerals, there is one reference (Pilcher
1964) to the Lakotas making a request for stones in the past. Requests of this order also follow long-standing traditional cultural uses. Gypsum is essential to the conduct of many important religious ceremonies, and even though it can be found at many locations outside WCNP, the local outcroppings may have special importance because, once again, they come from the home of the bison or appear along the Race Track. Indeed, the very origin of gypsum deposits found along the Race Track is revealed in one of the Cheyenne stories about the Great Race (see Chapter Fifteen).

Nor did any of the tribal resource officers single out the park as a source of animal parts for traditional cultural purposes. Bison skulls, bladders, and other parts have been requested for these purposes in the past (Terry 1999, Personal Communication). Once again, these requests are perfectly appropriate and tied to traditional cultural ideas not only connected to particular animals (see Chapter Ten and Appendix A) but also linked to the park and its general environs. Indeed, with congressional approval, WCNP supplied local tribes with bison and other game meat for several decades. The park is closely associated with animal origins. Wind Cave is the home of the Pte Oyate, Buffalo Nation, in Lakota traditions. It is also integrally related to the establishment of the prevailing order of relations between animals and humans as revealed in the story of the Great Race that took place along the Race Track. It is also probably related to the Falling Star cycle, whose stories happen at locations in and around the Hills in both Lakota and Cheyenne traditions.

The scope, identities, and/or whereabouts of the plants, soils, minerals, and animal parts that Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos may need to access from park properties for traditional cultural uses requires further and more direct consultation. What needs to be determined through such consultation is whether there are any specific areas of the park where people need to collect plants, soils, and stones for traditional cultural purposes. As in the case of sacred sites, additional details on this subject may not be forthcoming because of the secretive nature of the information or the fear that once a location is divulged access to it will be prohibited. Here as well, WCNP staff need to devise an open-ended approach, one that takes into consideration the private and contingent nature of traditional utilization patterns associated with many of the plants, minerals, and soils found on park properties. Also, it bears repeating that significant individual, family, community, and tribal differences probably exist in identifying the location, nature, and significance of “natural” resources associated with traditional cultural uses. Once more, there is no simple or formulaic way to single out and rank these resources for purposes of protection and use.

D. Tribal Perspectives in Park Interpretive Programming

As mentioned before, the park could go a long way in establishing positive relationships with local tribes by involving them in the production of narratives for the park’s interpretive programs and literature. The park sits on lands that have had considerable cultural significance to the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos for many generations. The tribal side of the park’s natural and cultural history has remained conspicuously absent in various educational venues, and this ought to be changed.

In response to the issue of whether the park should include a tribal perspective, we have heard two sorts of informal responses on the matter. One, a minority view, is the park has no business involving itself in matters of cultural importance to local tribes. In the second perspective, representing the vast majority, people are disturbed that the park has not incorporated anything
specific about local tribes in its literature and programs. Some are offended by the failure of the park to acknowledge the rich tribal history associated with the region and especially the suggestion that Wind Cave was first “discovered” by European Americans. In more formal consultations, all of the cultural officers with whom we spoke believed the park should include tribal perspectives in its interpretive venues. The issue is not whether any attention should be given to tribal perspectives, but rather, what kinds of information can be legitimately included and who has the right to convey it. All of the cultural officers indicated that there were areas of cultural knowledge that could become part of the park’s interpretive programming and some even suggested that certain traditional stories about the area could be told as well, but only by people from the tribes where the stories originated. All were equally emphatic that certain kinds of information about beliefs and practices surrounding spiritual observances and ceremonies should not be included. Some also indicated that certain sacred narratives about the area and its landforms should not be shared with the public. This is an area where it is absolutely imperative for direct communication to take place between park staff and tribal cultural resource officers. Further and direct consultations need to take place around what aspects of traditional cultural belief and practice can become part of the park’s interpretive programming.

There are many cultural subjects relating to the park that offer valuable teachings without crossing the line into highly sensitive and sacred cultural material. As revealed elsewhere in this report (Section Three and Appendices A-C), there is a vast wealth of published cultural information on the animals, plants, and minerals found on park properties and some of the practical aspects of their utilization. In consultation with local tribes, it is possible to do culturally sensitive programming of the kind that took place at Glacier National Park with the Piegan Institute, where common plants and their uses were identified along one important park trail. The development of educational material that incorporates tribal perspectives could be focused geographically or topically.

As discussed earlier, some of WCNP’s historic trails along Beaver and Cold Spring creeks might serve as a focus for telling stories of historical events that happened along their routes at different points in time, for describing the different groups of peoples who used them and their modes of adaptation to the area, and finally, for identifying some of the natural resources they would have encountered along the route at different points in time. For example, the trails could be used as a vehicle for talking about the history of certain plants and animals from different cultural perspectives. Native plants, such as chokecherry and wild mint, might be identified and described from a European American botanical perspective and then discussed in terms of how they are named and understood in tribal botanies. Their common and utilitarian uses for both groups could be discussed in both historic and modern contexts. Information about when certain native plants became abundant in the area, when others disappeared, and when new plants, such as mullein, arrived could lead to fascinating stories about wider human-environmental adaptations to the region. Currently, there are a number of programs at local educational institutions, including Red Cloud High School, Sinte Gleska University, and the American Indian Studies program at Black Hills State College, where work is being conducted on identifying the native names and uses of plants in the region. The park could certainly work cooperatively with one or more of these institutions to develop interesting interpretive materials from a tribal perspective.

In devising interpretive programming around some of the park’s trail systems, it is imperative that the park not follow rhetorical structures where history begins with Indians and ends with whites. A persisting problem with the literature on the cultural history of the Black Hills is that it treats tribal traditions as relics from the past, not as vital and continuing bodies of knowledge. Every stage of history in the park’s development, both before and after it was established in 1903, should include a discussion of tribal affiliations and connections. To be sure, tribal relationships
are different today than in former times but so are those of the region’s European Americans. Above all, tribal connections to the park should not be sequestered and treated apart from the overall picture of the park’s history, nor should they be diminished and trivialized in the kinds of narrative structures which privilege European American perspectives.  

Interpretive programs might also be focused on some of the animals that make up the park’s landscape. In this regard, the natural and most significant focus for American Indians and European Americans is the bison. After all, this is the bison’s home, their stomping grounds, and the place where they first returned after being extirpated from the area in the 1880s. So much of the park’s identity in tribal traditions is connected to the bison, and in European American traditions, it remains a focus as well. Even in the years when cattle took over much of their traditional range, the bison were still present in the memories and stories of the people who once lived and traveled in the area and in the place names given to local landforms. How bison were historically taken in this area, how they were used, and also how they are thought of in traditional and contemporary belief systems are important subjects for the park’s cultural programming. These topics could be presented in conjunction with the presentation of materials on the wider history of bison in the Black Hills region, their changing place in the lives of the tribal peoples who originally settled this land and in the lives of the European Americans who came to settle the area in later years. There is a rich published literature on this subject. Much of what is written about the bison from a tribal perspective is based on the words of Lakotas and Cheyennes. The information is part of a public record that people, such as Luther Standing Bear, Nicholas Black Elk, John Stands in Timber, and Wesley Whiteman, wanted to be preserved and shared. Today, there are many tribal people among the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho nations who are knowledgeable about this subject and who could serve as advisors in developing innovative and culturally sensitive interpretive materials. It has already been done at a provincial park in southern Alberta, called, Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump. This World Heritage Site, which received international awards and acclaim, represents a joint effort between the provincial government of Alberta and the Blackfeet tribe, and it serves as a model for how an area can become a focus for conveying cultural and historic information in a setting where Indians and non-Indians cooperatively participate in its production. 

Other animals, from mule deer and elk to snowbirds and prairie dogs, might also be a focus for developing collaborative cultural materials. There are many plants, including wild turnip, box elder, ponderosa pine, the purple coneflower, and even sage, that might be described in collaborative ways without crossing sensitive cultural boundaries. The same holds true with certain minerals from flint and gypsum to sandstone and limestone. Whatever natural resources are selected for developing interpretive material, input from tribal cultural resource officers, educators at local tribal and state colleges, and knowledgeable tribal elders and spiritual leaders is necessary to determine what subjects and content are appropriate to share in public settings. Since it is hard sometimes to talk about tribal relationships with the natural world without touching upon spiritual issues, it is necessary to bring tribal people into the consultative process to determine where the lines need to be drawn. The very understanding of bison, for example, where they come from, and what they mean takes one into the realm of sacred knowledge and understanding in tribal perspectives. Since aspects of most knowledge about animals, plants, and minerals inevitably touch on sacred issues, it is imperative to get advice from local tribes on the cultural protocols here.

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144 Te Papa, the National Museum of New Zealand has done an excellent job of telling the natural and cultural histories of New Zealand from the two very different perspectives of the indigenous Maori tribes and the incoming Europeans [Pakahana].
The focus, or if one will the handle, for cultural programming might include specific landforms. Even highly sacred places, such as the Race Track and Wind Cave, are the subject of stories that have become part of the public record. Some aspects of these stories might be told. Certainly, Henry Black Elk and James La Pointe wanted their stories about Wind Cave known and told to the children. They were published in sources sponsored and supported by tribal educational institutions Sinte Gleska University and the Indian Historical Press, respectively, and so are many other stories about the cave and the Race Track. Here, the issue is not so much whether their versions or any other stories should be told, but who should do the telling. Two tribal cultural preservation officers were very emphatic that stories of this kind need to be told by members of the tribes who consider them part of their cultural patrimony. There is a thin line here, not only with respect to a tribe’s intellectual property rights but also in relation to the appropriateness of telling certain stories even when these have been published. Again, the tribes need to be consulted on what stories can be told, who can be entrusted with their telling, and how they should be framed.

It is also important to remember that there are many different stories and versions of the same narratives about these places. There is not, as discussed earlier, any single or “right” story about either Wind Cave or the Race Track. This diversity needs to be acknowledged and respected, and the visiting public needs to be made aware of this fact. Even if tribes do not wish to give their consent to having specific stories told about Wind Cave and the Race Track, there might be respectful ways the park service can allude to the fact that tribes hold important bodies of knowledge about these landforms. It might be possible, for instance, to talk about how the Cheyennes and Lakotas see caves as the spiritual homes of animals and the places where they come to the earth’s surface to undergo their materialization. Or, it might be appropriate, as another example, to alert park visitors to the fact that the park sits on land that is spiritually important to local tribes and that if they come across tobacco ties and other evidence of spiritual activity these should be left alone.

Above all, one thing that needs to be corrected is the false idea that local tribes lacked a sophisticated understanding of their environments. Tribal ideas about the Black Hills, their geological activity, astronomical phenomena, plant habitats, and animal life deserve to be treated with respect as different, but no less compelling ways of thinking about the workings of the universe. The Black Hills’ incredible natural diversity and their position as a confluence for all kinds of different life forms is well recognized in the knowledge banks of local tribes. The Black Hills are a powerful teacher in this regard, as the Lakotas and Cheyennes have long known, and it would behoove the park service to incorporate, where it is culturally appropriate and permissible to do so, some of the important teachings about the Hills and the area of Wind Cave National Park that come from the writings and oral traditions of the tribes familiar with this place.

Directly following, another thing in need of clarification is the misleading impression that local tribes lacked any knowledge of Wind Cave before European Americans arrived. It is hard to imagine how the cave’s presence would have gone undetected by peoples as intimately familiar with the region for hundreds of years as the Cheyennes, Lakotas, and Arapahos. It is a bit disingenuous to attribute the cave’s “discovery” to Jesse and Tom Bingham. Although the Binghams may have been the first European Americans to spot the cave, there can be no doubt that local tribes knew of its existence well before European Americans ever ventured into this area.
III. CONCLUSIONS

Part of developing sound management policies and making decisions about the park’s traditional cultural properties requires fostering and maintaining good collegial relations with the local populations whose own histories and traditions are represented in these resources. In the same way that parks are expected to maintain respectful ties with their European American neighbors and their state and local governments, so parks should approach local tribal people and their tribal governments in the same way. Politeness and good common sense can go a long way in building positive relationships where matters of common interest can be approached in mutually respectful and acceptable ways. Even though the terms of tribal interest and access to the park are likely to be substantially different from those of European Americans, these should be handled through the same kind of open dialogue typically associated with other impact and access issues.

In brief review, there are four major areas to which the park needs to direct its attention in regards to traditional cultural properties.

>1) First, it needs to acknowledge and respect the rich body of culture history and tradition that surrounds this place. There needs to be some level of recognition in park literature and programming of the importance of this region to the Lakotas, Arapahos, and Cheyennes, and the place it occupied earlier, and perhaps contemporaneously, for other tribes, including the Arikaras, Comanches, Poncas, Kiowas, and Plains Apaches. Minimally, the park should at least acknowledge the occupancy and probable use of its lands by these tribes, the kinds of adaptations they might have made to the area, and the importance of this in relation to the habits and habitats of the animals and other life forms located here. Ideally, the telling of this history and its associated traditions would take place from the viewpoints and perspectives of the people who were here over the last two centuries, which includes the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos. It would also include various groups of European Americans, especially those who occupied and made a living from the lands of Wind Cave National Park, but their story should be placed in perspective. It needs to complement, not dominate, the history of the area where the park is situated.

>2) Second, the park needs to work directly with tribal culture preservation officers to determine where additional but more solitary sacred sites might be located for fasting and other prayerful observances and to determine how these places need to be protected. In addition, it needs to find out how some of the more culturally sensitive information about these places might be respectfully collected and protected by park staff.

>3) Allowances and considerations regarding requests for the use of park properties for ceremonial observances need to be guided by flexible and open-ended management policies, ones that are informed by and respond to the diverse ways different tribes approach their religious observances. Sun Dances, sweatlodges, pipe ceremonies, fasting, and a host of solitary prayerful observances are all consistent with the sacred character of park properties. In all respects, permission to carry on religious observances in the park’s subterranean and surface spaces needs to be judged in terms of their potential impacts on the landscape and its resources, not because they represent styles of access different from those customarily undertaken by European Americans.

>4) Allowances and considerations might also be made for access to plants, soils, minerals, and animal parts used in traditional cultural contexts. Although this report has listed and described many of these in Section Four and in Appendices A, B, and C, the coverage is by no
means exhaustive or complete. Most of the traditional cultural resources that tribal people require from this area are important because of their association, at least in Lakota traditions, with the lands on which the bison originate. The fact that this land is their home and stomping grounds is very significant in relation to a host of traditional practices still carried on in Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho communities.

In order to develop a sensible policy, direct consultations need to take place with all interested tribal parties. The way in which the consultation is structured may vary from one tribe to another, according to local cultural norms and the preferences of the tribes’ culture preservation officers. As stated in Executive Order 13084, signed in May of 1998, all federal agencies are directed to work with tribes on a government-to-government basis to collaborate and consult on the formulation of federal regulatory policies and practices affecting tribal interests. Two years earlier, Executive Order 13007 was signed into law, directing federal agencies to provide accommodations to protect sacred sites and permit access to and uses of these sites by religious practitioners from federally-recognized tribes. Along with other legislation, including Public Laws 96-95 [ARPA], 101-601 [NAGPRA], 95-341 (ARFA), and the National Historic Preservation Act, there is now a body of laws and regulations requiring federal agencies to protect traditional cultural, historic, and/or sacred properties of interest to American Indian tribes and to afford these tribes’ access to and use of them. As we interpret these statutes and directives, the park must arrange its consultations through tribal governments, especially the cultural preservation offices that are delegated to deal with such matters.

In many cases, the park will need to solicit advice beyond the offices of tribal government and call on tribal educators and religious practitioners for information and direction. Above all, the park service should not rely on lone advisors and consultants. Wind Cave and the Race Track remain an important part of the cultural patrimony of all the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Individual members of these two tribes may be uncomfortable speaking on behalf of, much less offering advice on, matters that affect their entire nation. Whenever one is dealing with a cultural issue that affects an entire tribe, it is imperative that people representing the widest range of cultural interests come to the table to confer on an issue. What must not be done is to choose or identify specific people as “final” arbitrators and authorities on what is or is not significant about the park’s sites and landscapes. While there are certainly tribal people who know more about the area than others, and while there are those who are more qualified than others to talk about its spiritual standing, no one can speak for the entire Oglala tribe, much less the entire Lakota or Cheyenne nation. Because as soon as one person is identified as an “expert,” there are hundreds of others who will invalidate their view and disclaim any association with it. This is not to imply that any one consultant’s advice should not be taken seriously, but, rather, that there is a need to respect the fact that there are multiple perspectives. There are many different stories, sites, resources, and modes of access that define tribal affiliations with this area. At all times, this diversity must be acknowledged and respected.

It is also important to remember that most everything about the Black Hills is highly politicized. This makes consultation and consensus on various cultural matters all the more difficult. WCNP is contested land. It is part of the long-standing and from a Sioux perspective, still unresolved claims. It is also part of an area to which the Cheyennes and Arapahos lay claim. Although neither of these latter tribes was ever able to press their claims in federal court, they still have strong historical entitlements to this area. Notwithstanding the close ties of friendship and

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145 The expression “federally-recognized tribe” refers to a tribe that through treaty, executive order, or congressional agreement, has an established relationship with the federal government. As this applies in Executive Order 13007, only persons who are members of such tribes are in a position to consult on matters governing the protection of sacred sites on federal properties and to access and make use of them.
kinship that otherwise connect them, the inability of the Cheyenne and Arapaho to come together with the Lakotas in a united effort to reclaim the Hills has created some degree of resentment. All three of these tribes need to be included in consultations, and the Cheyennes, in particular, need to be involved in any decisions about areas of the park that cover the Race Track. On religious grounds and in terms of more general, traditional cultural affiliations, the Cheyennes have a significant cultural stake in this area. Although Cheyenne and Arapaho communities are located at some distance from WCNP, a fact that has clearly influenced the frequency and intensity of their visits to the park, they are still vital players in cultural consultations. Given some of the tensions that surround each of these tribe’s relationship to the Black Hills, each should be consulted separately, not as a mechanism for creating further divisiveness but out of respect for their differing cultural interests in the park.

Even among the tribes who make up the Sioux Nation, at least for the purposes of the Black Hills claims, there are going to be disagreements over who has the most legitimate right to speak on behalf of cultural interests pertaining to the park. Since all of these tribes are interrelated through close-knit webs of kinship and friendship, it is hard to say which ones stand in a more or less privileged relationship regarding their cultural concerns for the park. While it is true that the Oglala Sioux Tribe is the closest geographically and the one whose members probably have more occasion to visit the park, the Rosebud, Lower Brule, Cheyenne River, Fort Peck, and Standing Rock Sioux tribes also have vital interests and strong cultural traditions that are tied to this area of the Hills. In the case of the Sioux, as noted previously, many of the cultural preservation officers indicated a preference for consulting with park staff as a group. An advisory group made up of cultural preservation officers, Lakota language and culture instructors from tribal institutions of higher education (i.e., Sinte Gleska University), culturally knowledgeable tribal elders, and religious leaders from each of the tribes could offer a powerful and positive collective voice on matters of mutual interest to the park and the Lakota people. Organizing consultations in this manner not only insures wide representation, but it also avoids any appearance of preferential treatment.

However the consultations are organized, it is clear that all three tribes need to be represented when it comes to developing interpretive programming that incorporates tribal perspectives. All of them need to be featured in the stories that are told about the park’s history over the past two-hundred years. Their perspectives need to be included in the narratives about the park’s various life forms, their interests need to be considered relative to the location and protection of sacred sites, and their concerns need to be heard regarding access to the park for the conduct of religious observances and access to other traditional cultural properties necessary for the continuance of important cultural practices and beliefs.

It is also recommended that the park service develop venues where park service staff and researchers engaged in archaeological and ethnographic studies of neighboring parks have an opportunity to meet, share, and discuss issues of mutual interest. Since research conducted at Devil’s Tower National Monument, Badlands National Park, Scotts Bluff National Monument, and Agate Fossil Bed National Monument involve many of the same tribes whose histories and relationships to these areas intersect, there should be some opportunity to discuss possible directions for achieving consistency in the management policies surrounding sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and interpretive programming. Indeed, at some point in the future, it might be a good idea to create a special position for a cultural liaison to work with tribes in forming advisory bodies and in consulting on matters that pertain to all of them.

Notwithstanding the strong legal and moral claims that certain tribes hold to the area that makes up WCNP, it is not likely that park properties are going to be relinquished to the Lakotas
or any other tribe in the near or foreseeable future. This does not mean that tribal concerns should be dismissed. It is no longer possible, given current federal policy and law, not to attend to these concerns. Even without these mandates, the tribal presence and relationship to the park is simply too compelling and rich to ignore any longer. What park managers and staff need to determine is what role the park will play in bringing a more culturally complex appreciation of the places and resources it steward, and what it will do to protect traditional cultural properties and permit access to them in culturally appropriate ways.

In concluding, the stories that surround many places in the Black Hills have had an uncanny tendency to reproduce themselves over time and from one group of people to another. For many different reasons, the landscapes themselves appear to play a role in evoking and shaping the way people come to understand and approach them. Certainly the tribal nations who lived in this area, and whose knowledge about it has passed down to the present, held remarkably similar understandings of the area. Although European Americans initially approached the Black Hills and its varied landscapes with very different kinds of sensibilities, they too eventually adopted approaches, which quite curiously hold traces of the ways in which tribal peoples have related to the area. For example, except for a brief time between 1880-1930 when some of the land inside the borders of WCNP was parceled out and privatized, this area of the Hills has always been a commons.

Humans came to the lands of Wind Cave National Park and its surrounding areas for many different reasons and purposes, but, in the end, they have always been beholden, in one way or another, to its ultimate “owner,” the bison. In tribal traditions, most of the stories about this area focus on bison. Coincidentally, European American ties to this land have returned to the bison too. It is the bison whose presence (and even absence) has given this area of the Black Hills a distinct cultural definition throughout much of its human history. It is the bison that holds the key to building a foundation of cooperation in the creation of innovative narratives about the park and in reaching consensus about the management of its sites and resources. It is the bison that can bring together the different groups who have a cultural interest in the park and its resources. These remarks are not intended to be Pollyannaish, although they certainly can be construed in this way. Their aim is to find a realistic and workable way to approach, attend to, and represent the park’s interests in a manner that can incorporate the divergent and at times conflicting, interests of its various public constituencies. The park is already common ground, at least technically, but it also needs some kind of common denominator for reaching out to and drawing in the many different voices and perspectives that can reflect upon and contribute stories about its landscape, life forms, and history. In closing, and in keeping with much of the spirit in which this report is written, it is worthwhile to quote the words of a song, composed by Brave Buffalo, a Lakota from Standing Rock (in Densmore 1918:174).

Wa-hi-na-wa-pin kte.................I will appear
Wama’yanka yo........................behold me
tatan’ka wan.......................... a buffalo
 hema’kiya.................................said to me.
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APPENDIX A

THE ANIMALS OF THE BLACK HILLS AND WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK:
Their Cultural Uses & Meanings

The animals described in this appendix are organized into five major groups, following common European American taxonomic practice: 1) Mammals; 2) Birds; 3) Insects and Spiders; 4) Reptiles and Amphibians; and 5) Fish, Crustaceans, and Mollusks. Again, unless otherwise indicated, most references to animal species at Wind Cave National Park come from the park’s own web sites (Pisarowicz 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d).

Because of the enormous amount of ethnographic material on tribal relationships to animals, information was assembled mostly on the Cheyennes and Lakotas, the two tribal nations with the most intense and best documented use of the area that became Wind Cave National Park. While the material gathered together here is comprehensive, it is by no means inclusive of tribal knowledge and relationships to animals in traditional contexts. Sources for material on relations to animals among other tribal nations who lived in the Black Hills are vast. Some of the better and more accessible sources include: Arapahos (Kroeber 1902-07; Dorsey and Kroeber 1905); Arikaras (Curtis 1907-30:5; Tabeau in Abel 1939), Comanches (Wallace and Hoebel 1952), Crows (Lowie 1922, 1956), Hidatsas (Bowers 1963), Kiowas (Mishkin 1940; Mariott 1945; Nye 1962), Mandans (Bowers 1950), Plains Apaches (Schweinfurth 2002), and Poncas (Fletcher and LaFlesche 1972; Howard 1965).

I. Mammals

As a group, the mammals were the most important animals to the Lakotas and the Cheyennes as a source of food and material used in manufacture. They were also significant for spiritual protection and guidance.

Ungulates
[Artiodactyla]

For the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, the region near Wind Cave is most closely associated with animals represented by the ungulate order, especially bison. Although other species, including the coyote, wolf, snowbird, swifthawk, crow, and magpie, also play a role in stories associated with the Buffalo Gap, the Race Track, and the cave itself, the bison figures most prominently. Many of the stories that surround the region not only establish the nature of human and animal (specifically bison) relationships, but they also describe the origins of the bison and the dependence of humans on their beneficence.

All of the ungulate species located in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave were an important source of food and skins for the tribal nations who lived in the region during historic times. Although bison were clearly the most significant of these animals in practical and spiritual terms, pronghorn, elk,
deer, and bighorn were important too. Bison, however, occupied the most complex position in tribal cosmologies. They were the principal source of food and material well being, and as such, their spiritualized essence was represented and highlighted in nearly every major sacred text and ceremony.

Among the Cheyennes, Esceheman, the earth maiyun, and her daughter, Ehyophstah, not only appear in the image of a bison, but they are also the primary progenitors of the animal. The two major culture figures of the Cheyenne, Sweet Medicine and Stands on the Ground, were gifted with the power of the Sacred Arrows and Sacred Hat respectively to bring the bison and other game animals to the people. The stories that revolve around these figures are considered among the most sacred to the Cheyennes, and two of their major ceremonies, the Oxheheom [New Life Lodge] or Sun Dance and the Massaum or Animal Dance, recreate aspects of their most sacred stories. As told in these texts, the Cheyenne received some of their knowledge about the spiritual nature of animals at Bear Butte in the Black Hills (Kroeber 1900; Dorsey, G. 1905; Grinnell 1907,1910, 1926:242-243, 257-280, 1972:2:211-385;Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:11-41, 73-114; Schlesier 1987:4-9).

There is another highly sacred Cheyenne text that takes place at the Race Track, which covers a portion of the land at Wind Cave National Park. This story is known to the Lakotas and considered highly sacred to them as well. It tells of a great gathering of the animals and a race between them to determine who would be the hunted and the hunter. The central figure that humans run against is a buffalo in Cheyenne stories. Humans win the race through the help of certain carnivores and birds, notably, the magpie. As a reward for their victory, humans receive knowledge of the buffalo’s dance that is recreated in the Cheyennes' most revered ceremony, the Sun Dance. Some Lakotas and Cheyennes believe this took place at the Buffalo Gap (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:2:472-477; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:72).

The Lakotas also have other sacred stories that take place at Wind Cave, which is situated above and just to the west of the Race Track (Walker 1917, 1983; Koeller 1951; Herman in One Feather 1972; Red Cloud in Matson 1972; Black Elk in Thiez 1975:6-8; LaPointe 1976:79-84; Swift Bird in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:147-148; Charging Eagle and Zeilinger 1987). In their stories, the cave is the entrance to the subterranean home of the Pte Oyate [Buffalo Nation], and for some Lakotas, the origin place of humanity. Of all the animals, humans are most closely identified with bison. Like humans, bison stand apart from other major categorical groups of animals, hooves, claws, diggers, and builders, in Lakota origin stories (Walker 1983:273-274, 358-360). Whereas other game have a spiritualized essence and their own individual guardian animals, bison take precedence over all of them and play a controlling role in their destinies. Also, when Okaga hunts for Wohpe, she prepares the skins of pronghorn, bighorn, and deer (Walker 1983:67-70) for Waziyata, the North Wind, the direction of the bison.

The life-sustaining significance of game animals as a source of sustenance and general well-being continues to the present-day among the Lakotas and Cheyennes, remaining prominent in their religious life and symbolism and central to their cultural identities as well.

THE BOVID FAMILY

[BOVIDAE]

The family Bovidae contains two species that were closely associated with the Black Hills and the surrounding grasslands in historic times, the bison and the bighorn. Of these two species, the bison was the most abundant and the most important as a source of food and technology. It was also the most significant animal in tribal cosmologies. Bighorns, while prevalent in the area during the early nineteenth century, appear to have
been less important culturally. Their meat, skins, and horns were prized, and there were also spiritual connections to these animals, but very little information has survived about them.

**Bison**  
* [*Bison bison*]

Before the 1850s, and, for some tribes, up until the 1870s, bison were the mainstay of their economies. They were a major source of food, and they provided many basic materials for shelter, tools, medicine, and clothing (Densmore 1948:172). After the 1820s, their robes became important items of trade, exchanged for the wide assortment of foreign commodities that European American traders stocked. For most of the tribal nations who lived in reach of the Black Hills, bison occupied a pivotal place in their livelihood and cosmology. The Lakotas considered the bison the chief of all the animals and the penultimate metaphor for the workings of the cosmos (Black Elk in Brown 1992:13). Among the Cheyennes, where predatory mammals and birds occupied some of the highest spiritual positions in the cosmic order and stood in control over game animals (like pronghorn), bison were an exception because they were considered game animals and also powerful spirit beings (Schlesier 1987:8).

**Habitat and History**

In the early nineteenth century, the base of the Black Hills along the forks of the Cheyenne River was commonly described as a rich bison range where tribal nations who lived in villages along the Missouri River often took their fall hunts (Tabeau in Abel 1939:87). Over the next three decades, other observers would report on the abundance of bison on the grasslands surrounding the Black Hills, although occasional local shortages were observed as well (Clow 1995). As John Ewers (1938:12), one of the Smithsonian Institution’s most highly respected ethnologists, stated: “The Black Hills furnished the favorite winter home for the buffalo.”

In the 1840s, however, reports of bison herds dwindling on the plains east of the Hills start to appear and even accounts of shortages along the Platte River become more frequent. By the 1850s, statements about the declining herds at these locations were commonplace (Denig in Ewers 1961:22, 25; Hyde 1961:29; Parkman in Feltsgog 1969:200; Hurt 1974:242; Price, C. 1996:46-50). Although bison were still hunted near the Black Hills, as evidenced by Lt. G.K. Warren’s description (1875:15-16) of a Lakota bison hunt on the western side of the Hills near Inyan Kara Mountain in 1857 and General William F. Raynolds’ sighting of bison near the Hills in 1859 (Turner 1974:144), it is clear the Hills were no longer at the center of the best bison hunting ranges. Ferdinand V. Hayden (1862b:151) noted: “but there are certain parts of the country over which they formerly roamed in immense herds, but are never or rarely seen at the present time. The area over which the buffalo graze is annually contracting its geographical limits.” 1866, seven years later, is purportedly the last date when bison were sighted in the Black Hills (Turner 1974:144). Later dates, however, are reported for stragglers in the Hills in 1879, at Buffalo Gap in 1881, Hot Springs in 1882, and Custer in 1884 (McGillacuddy 1879; Clark 1927:22-23; Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70:221; Sundstrom, J. 1994:110). According to Turner (1974:144), when the military abandoned its posts along the North Platte in the 1860s, bison were still plentiful. However, by 1871, the herds were largely gone from eastern Wyoming. The Black Hills Expedition of 1874 did not sight any bison on their march from the Missouri to the Black Hills, even though a small number of stragglers still inhabited the country north of the Hills towards the Grand River (Turner 1974). George Grinnell (1875:79) reported sighting fresh skulls and a ritual arrangement of 60 painted skulls lined up in five rows all facing east. Large herds, however, still dominated territories along the
Tongue, Powder, and Yellowstone rivers, and they also remained plentiful along the Arkansas and Republican rivers until professional non-Indian buffalo hunters exterminated them in the late 1870s. It was to these regions that many of the Cheyennes, Lakotas, and Arapahos moved, often traveling from their winter camps along the White and Cheyenne rivers at the base of the Black Hills to do so (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:154-165).

After being extirpated from the Black Hills for nearly half a century, bison were returned to the area of Wind Cave National Park in 1913 as a gift from the National Bison Society. Seven bulls and seven cows were purchased from the New York Zoological Gardens from stock acquired a decade earlier at the Berkshire Hills Game Preserve in Massachusetts (Turner 1974: 144). Even though the Hills were restocked with imported bison, the first place they returned was the area of Wind Cave -- a symbolically significant fact that probably did not go unnoticed by the Lakotas who believe this cave is the home and origin place of the Pte Oyate or Buffalo Nation.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The significance of the bison in the lives of local tribes is evidenced by the multiplicity of names they assigned to this animal. In the Lakota language, for example, there are more than twenty different names for bison. The generic name for a cow is *pte* (Buechel 1970:448), and for the bull, it is *tatanka* (Ibid:483). Bison are further separated by age, as in the names *ptehincala* [calf] (Ibid:448), *he slusluta* [a three year old ‘slippery-horn’] (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:293), *hitobuye* [a four year old] (Buechel 1970: 178), *pte hayuktanla* [a heifer, ‘horns begin to bend’] (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:293), *hepola* [a yearling bull, ‘horns swell’] *hehihlogeca* [a bull two years of age, ‘hollow horn’] (Ibid.), and *he hutela* [an old bison whose horns are worn off and badly damaged] (Buechel 1970:171).

Cows were distinguished by the texture of their hair, the color of their skin, and by their size and weight as in: *ptehin sma* [thick, long haired buffalo] (Buechel 1970: 448), *hehihlogeca* [the rare horned cow] (Ibid: 172), *pte san* [the white buffalo cow] (Ibid: 449), *pte chepa* [fat cow] (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:293), *ptewin’kte* [the fat but sterile cow] (Buechel 1970:449), *pteta’maka* [a lean cow] (Ibid.), *hohetapte* [a lean cow whose fat is found at the time it’s killed] (Ibid:181), *pte cik’ala* [small cow] (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:293), and, *cehinka tapte* [a large cow] (Buechel 1970:129), Bulls were differentiated as follows: *tatanka heslusluta* [a bull with smooth horns] (Ibid:483), *tatanka winkte* [a bull with small testicles] (Ibid.), *tagica* [a lean bull], and *taguha* [an old bull] (Ibid:473).

The Cheyennes also had a similarly diverse set of names for bison (Hayden 1862b:291, 297; Petter 1913-15:193, 195, 312). *Esevon* is the name for a herd of bison (Petter 1913-15:193). *Hotova?* or *hotoa?*, *hotoao?* or *hotoaao?* are names for the bull (Petter 1913-15:193), while *mehe* is a cow (Ibid:195, 312). *Hetanevoska* refers to a male calf and *heevoksa* a female calf; these terms refer to their yellow coloration at this stage of their life cycle. A calf at one year of age is called *moxtavoksa* [black calf], while a two-year old heifer is known as *monscess*. *Hotoxpess* is the word used for a bull between one and three years old, *hoxtoxpoeva* is a scabby young bull, and *hoxtoxa* refers to bull around four years of age (Ibid:193). A fat bison cow is called *voesemehe*, a mysterious bison is called *Ma’heonemehe*, a lean cow is known as *mamehe*, and a young one *monemehe* (Ibid:193, 315). A cow that bears late in the fall is known as *ookoenemehe*, one with her first calf is called *zemohnosesz*, and one who bears when old is named *matamamehe*. *Vosta* is the name for the sacred white buffalo (Ibid:193).
Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

Much has been written in the ethnographic literature about the ways in which the tribal nations of the plains procured bison, but the best overall synthesis of their procurement strategies is George Arthur’s work (1975) An Introduction to the Ecology of Early Historic Communal Bison Hunting Among the Northern Plains Indians. In times before the adoption of horses, the Native peoples of the Plains drove bison over cliffs, into natural enclosures and snow banks, or into specially constructed corrals. A number of archaeological sites in the neighborhood of the Black Hills, including some on or near park properties, reveal these common practices. After the arrival of horses, bison were more commonly surrounded, or as some observers claimed, even “herded” (Seton 1929: 1:668) and hunted on horse-back with bows and arrows or with guns.

Although bison could be taken at any time of the year, the most common season to hunt them was during the late summer through the early fall months when they gathered on the open grasslands in large herds (Densmore 1918:437; Ewers 1938: 43-44; Hoebel 1960:53). This was the season when bands came together to conduct their large communal hunts, which among the Lakotas were called wani-sapa. One of the most comprehensive descriptions of this kind of bison hunting as practiced by the Lakotas is found in the work of James Walker (1982:74-94) based on information he secured at the end of the nineteenth century from tribal elders at Pine Ridge. According to his description, the hunt began with a ceremony to spiritually prepare the assembled parties for their collective undertaking. Simultaneously, a council was called together, comprised of leaders from participating tiospaye, to determine who among them would lead the hunt and select the warrior societies to serve as the hunt akicita or marshals. Once the marshals and their assistants were chosen, they took complete control over the policing of the camp, its movements, and the hunts. Anyone who disobeyed the orders of the akicita and the customary rules of a hunt encampment was subject to severe punishment. According to Thomas Tyon and John Blunt Horn’s description (in Walker 1982: 32), these rules included the following:

All must move together. No one must take advantage to get at the game before the others can profit by it. If anyone stampedes the game he must be punished. The meat gotten during a hunt must be fairly and equally divided among all members of the party. The marshals must direct the approach and attack on the game. Everyone in a hunting party must obey the directions of the marshals.

In the meantime, the hunters began to ready their horses and weapons, while women conducted an array of tasks in preparation for the camp’s journey to the bison grounds. Travel to favorable bison hunting ranges often involved journeys of several days at speeds of ten to twenty five miles per day (Ibid:80-83). Scouts were sent out ahead of the main body to be on the lookout for enemies and to determine the best locations to encamp and follow a herd (Ibid:84-85). Once a camping site was chosen, a spiritual intercessor, or shaman, performed ceremonies “to call the buffalo.” Games were played, including the Woskate Painyankapi [Game of Wands and Hoops], and races were held that were believed to bring a successful outcome to the hunt (Mekeer 1901b: 1-2; Walker 1905:278-283, 1982:89). People in the camp were admonished by the akicita to keep quiet, to quell the cries of their children and the barks of their dogs in order not to attract the attention of enemies or alarm nearby herds (Walker 1982:90). When the scouts located a herd to surround, they returned to the camp and announced this in a ritual manner with the use of a sacred pipe and a prayer to Taku Wakan (Ibid:90-91). After this, a herald went about the camp announcing the discovery of the bison and preparations were then made to begin the hunt the following morning at dawn (Ibid:91-92). The akicita lined up the hunters for the assault, and when the signal
was given to approach the herd, the hunters rode swiftly, surrounding and rushing on the herd and killing as many bison as possible (Ibid:92). While the hunt was in progress, the women, children, and elderly approached the hunting site to assist in butchering and transporting the meat and hides (Ibid:92-93). Besides this elaborate account, there are Royal B. Hassrick’s detailed descriptions (1964:174-178) of the surround method of hunting and the practice of driving bison over a cliff. Edward S. Curtis (1907-30:3-8-10) also writes about these different methods of hunting bison, and John Ewers (1938:42-44) presents an excellent summary of historical records that describe Lakota practices of impounding, driving animals over cliffs, surrounding them, and hunting them on snowshoes. Two historical sources also need to be singled out; Francis Parkman’s account (in Feltskog 1969) of a Lakota buffalo hunt on the Platte River plains and Lt. G. K. Warren’s famous report (1875:15-16) of Lakotas driving bison into a canyon near Inyan Kara mountain on the western side of the Black Hills. Lakota eyewitness recollections of bison hunts are given by Siyaka (in Densmore 1918:439-442), Luther Standing Bear (1975:49-53, 58-66), Henry Standing Bear (in DeMallie 1984:143-147), and Nicholas Black Elk (in Ibid:147-148).

As described by George Bird Grinnell (1972:1:262-263), the Cheyenne method of surrounding bison on horseback, using lances, bows and arrows, or rifles as weapons, was very similar to what Walker described for the Lakotas. The hunt and camp were placed under strict marshal law, and anyone who committed an infraction was severely punished. After the arrival of horses, the surround method surpassed most of the older techniques for hunting bison among the Cheyennes as it did among the Lakotas. In earlier times, probably pre-1820, various driving and impounding techniques, one of which included bringing the bison into the camp circle, were more common. According to Karl Schlesier (1987:53), these were the proper and most respectful to ways to kill bison. From Grinnell (1972:1:264-265) and Schlesier’s (1987:53-60) descriptions, pens or corrals for impounding bison were typically constructed under a “bluff or cutbank” with at least one wall serving as a side for the enclosure. The opposite side was constructed of brush and sticks. The two sides were fashioned into a v-shaped chute formation, with the opening of the enclosure facing the prairie. The bison were both enticed and driven into the enclosure with the participation of all members of the camp, men, women, children, and the elderly. Once the bison were in the enclosure, they were shot with arrows and killed. Many of the techniques used by the Cheyennes to impound bison were inspired by dreams, and White Hawk told Grinnell (1972:1:266-268) some of his. One dream involved a method whereby two elderly men beckoned the bison into the enclosure by waving large bird wings (Ibid:266). Another entailed the construction of the enclosure itself, as White Hawk (in Grinnell 1972:1:266) described it:

His dream said to him: ‘You shall take our people and have them make a large pen out of wood and brush, with a gap in one side, and a chute with diverging wings running far out on the prairie, fences which shall hide the people from the buffalo. Then you shall take certain men of the camp and go out with them on the prairie, and you can bring the buffalo into this pen.’

Where Cheyenne drove bison into pounds, they often left stacked piles of bison horns in a manner similar to the Arapaho practice of piling up elk horns. These piles appear to be connected to a widespread pattern of propitiating the spirits of slain animals common among many tribal nations in the Algonkian language family. Grinnell (1972:1:268) reported numerous piles of bison horn at locations west of the Hills when he traveled there with the Black Hills Expedition in 1874.

Another older form of Cheyenne bison hunting involved driving bison into snowdrifts with the help of dogs (Grinnell 1972:1:268). This practice was also reported for
the Lakotas (Ewers 1938:42; Hassrick 1964: 177-178). Like the Lakotas, all Cheyenne communal bison hunting was ritualized and under the stewardship of shamans, called Naotetaevan, who were spiritually partnered with the bison and able to beckon them to the locations where they were surrounded or driven into enclosures. These same shamans also performed rites at the end of the hunt to give thanks to the spirits of the bison for their assistance (Schlesier 1987: 53).

When bison were taken in the winter, families and bands were geographically dispersed into more informally organized hunting groups known among the Lakotas as tate (Hassrick 1964:166). These groups were the primary hunting units during the winter when the Lakotas encamped around the Black Hills. As late as the 1820s, solitary Lakota hunters were reported to take bison on foot, although the adoption of horses had overtaken this method (Ewers 1938:42-44). Before the widespread use of horses, bison were more commonly hunted in the late fall and early winter with the use of jumps or corrals (Binemma 2001:35, 37-54). The Cheyennes also took bison in small parties when their encampments were located near mountain ranges during the wintertime, but this was the usual time of the year for deer and elk hunting. However, if a solitary hunter or small hunting party came upon a large herd of bison, they could not chase them on their own. They had to make the herd’s presence known to the entire camp, so the leaders and their marshals could organize a formal surround (Grinnell 1972:1:262).

Food

Bison were also the Cheyennes' primary source of meat (Hoebel 1960:64; Grinnell 1972:1:255). The Cheyennes prized the tongue, gristles around the nostrils, the flesh from the hump, the raw liver soaked in gall, the pancreas, and the tripe, and they served these parts on ceremonial occasions (Grinnell 1972:1:255; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55). The Cheyennes used the small intestines for making sausages, and they also consumed the lungs and many other body parts (Grinnell 1972:1:255).

Bison meat was butchered and prepared in many different ways. Some of the internal organs were eaten raw, but most food parts were either boiled in soups or roasted over hot coals (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:386). Much of the meat from the loins and back of the animal was cut into long slices and dried in the sun on large racks, or it was smoked over hot coals inside the lodge. After being dried, it was usually pounded and combined with dried fruit and tallow in small cakes commonly called pemmican (Grinnell 1972: 1:255; Black Elk 1984:386). More exhaus-

There is also an excellent but unpublished description of these activities by Edward Freeland (1938), who invited a group of Oglalas from Pine Ridge to come to Wind Cave National Park in 1937 to demonstrate techniques of butchering, drying, and cooking bison for park visitors. Some of the Lakotas’ favorite cooked bison dishes, as reported in Ferdinand Hayden’s early writings (1862a, 1862b), included a boiled mixture of rosebuds, blood, brain, and raw hide scrapings, and another of wild turnips combined with the dried paunch of the bison.

In Art, Manufacture, and Ceremony

The dependence of the Lakotas and Cheyennes on the bison and the nearly exhaustive use of its parts for much of their food and many of their life necessities is widely reported in the literature. In the ceremony where they renewed their Sacred Arrows, the Cheyennes made a special point of fabricating every article with material drawn from the buffalo, including hide, glue, sinew, and blood (Dorsey, G. 1905:12). What follows is a sampling of the some of the diverse practical and ceremonial uses to which bison products were put.

Horns and hooves had many different applications. Horns were made into dishes, spoons, ladles, scrapers, and a wide variety of other utensils and tools (Curtis 1907-30:3:138; Densmore 1948:195, 303; Hoebel 1960:62; Grinnell 1972:1:64, 211; Standing Bear 1978:53-54; Walker 1982:74; Brown 1992:121). They also went into the manufacture of bows (Ewers 1938:37; Grinnell 1972:173; Brown 1992:12), and they were used medicinally in the treatment of blood diseases (Goose in Densmore 1918:251). They were worn on the headresses of officiates who conducted the Lakota Hunka and Pte San Lowanpi (Walker 1980:223, 246). Indeed, only men who held spiritual partnerships with bison were authorized to wear the horns of dead bison because these were believed to contain the “spiritual potency” of the animal (Walker 1982:103).

Hooves were used as hatchets for butchering (Densmore 1918:443), they were boiled to make glue (Standing Bear 1978:53-54), they were used in arrow-making (Grinnell 1972:1:183), and they were made into pendants, rattles, and decorative cylinders (Grinnell 1972:1:221; Brown 1992:122).

Bison bone went into the making of scrapers, needles, awls, and hoes (Densmore 1948:203; Brown 1992:121). Runners for sleds, toys, and game parts were fabricated from the rib and jaw (Vestal 1934:7; Grinnell 1972:314; Standing Bear 1978:53-54). Arrowpoints, arrow-straighteners, and knives were carved from shoulder blades and/or made from the dorsal spine (Curtis 1907-30:6:158; Bordeaux 1929:183-184; Densmore 1918:443; Grinnell 1972:185, 213-214). Finally, the Cheyennes made a specialized tool from the proximal end of the humerus to abrade the hide before tanning (Grinnell 1972:185, 213-214).

The skulls of bison had considerable spiritual significance and were used widely in ceremonial contexts. The Lakotas believed that the skulls held the “spiritual potency” of the bison and served as a sacred dwelling for Tatanka, the principle spiritual representative of the bison (Walker 1980:216, 224). Takes the Gun told Walker (1980:214) that in the Hunka ceremony:

…the spirit of the buffalo comes to its skull.

The spirit of Tatanka is pleased to see the

146 Raymond DeMallie (1980:379n), however, claims that Walker may have exaggerated the spiritual restrictions associated with the wearing of buffalo headdresses.
skull of a buffalo. The buffalo skull is at the ceremony because Tatanka is pleased.

Indeed, in most Lakota ceremonies for hunting, healing, celebrating a girl becoming a woman, and honoring an adoption, bison skulls were painted and their orifices filled with sage as an act of propitiation and respect for the spirit of the buffalo (Curtis 1907-30:3:75, 78, 82, 84, 86, 87, 94, 95, 98; Densmore 1918:72, 99, 122, 275; Walker 1980:179, 216, 224, 227-228, 238, 245, 247-248, 251, 255, 1982:74, 75-76). Similarly, the Cheyennes held the skull of the buffalo in high regard and filled its orifices with sage, sedge, and other sacred plants at their Sun Dance and Animal Dance (Dorsey, G. 1905:91; Hoebel 1960:13, 16; Grinnell 1972:1:82-83, 2:125, 223, 231, 235, 270, 291, 306; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:97; Schlesier 1987:6). When Grinnell (1875:79) came across a ritual arrangement of 60 painted skulls on the grasslands north of the Black Hills, lined up in five rows all facing east, this probably represented a spiritual act to petition the bison’s friend, the sun, to bring about the animal’s return.

Various organs from the bison were used in the making of bags and containers. The paunch or stomach of a buffalo was washed, cleaned, and suspended on sticks over a fire to serve as receptacle for boiling water and cooking meat (Curtis 1907-30:3:138, 6:156; Hassrick 1964:189; Grinnell 1972:1:170, 212; Standing Bear 1975:21; Brown 1992:122; Black Elk in DeMallie 1994:335, 386). The Cheyennes also made temporary cups from the paunch (Grinnell 1875:79) came across a ritual arrangement of 60 painted skulls on the grasslands north of the Black Hills, lined up in five rows all facing east, this probably represented a spiritual act to petition the bison’s friend, the sun, to bring about the animal’s return.

The dried aorta of the buffalo was sometimes used as a smoking pipe among the Cheyennes (Curtis 1907-30:6:108). The scrotum of the bull was dried and made into rattles used in various ceremonial performances (Curtis 1907-30:3:78, 79, 86; Grinnell 1972:1:203; Walker 1980:213, 1982:74; Brown 1992:213). The Lakotas attached the pericardium to many different objects to secure the patronage of Tatanka: they were tied on war clubs, on rods to beat the rawhide drum in the Sun Dance, and on switches used in sweatlodges. The tail was worn by the officiate of the Pte San Lowanpi (Densmore 1918:97-98; Walker 1980:179-180, 189, 246, 249, 1982:106; Brown 1992:122). The Cheyennes attached strips of buffalo tail or beard to the heels of men’s moccasins (Grinnell 1972:1:219). The tongue was another organ used by the Cheyenne; the rough skin at its tip was once fashioned into combs (Grinnell 1972:1:211). The Cheyennes also attached a bison windpipe to the headdress of the lodge-maker at their Sun Dance (Dorsey, G. 1905:95). The Lakotas made offerings of buffalo larynges in their spirit keeping ceremonies (Curtis 1907-30:3:106, 109, 110). Finally, the brains and liver of bison were mixed together and applied to skins and robes as a tanning solution (Hoebel 1960:62; Grinnell 1972:1:216; Standing Bear 1975:19).

The tendons, fat, and blood of the bison had many diverse uses too. The sinew from the buffalo’s hind legs was dried and cut into small arrowpoints, and sinew from the neck went into the construction and reinforcement of handles for needles, knives, and pipes (Densmore 1918:436; Grinnell 1972:1:208). Sinew from the bison’s dorsal spine was made into sewing thread, bowstrings, rope,
and cordage (Lyford 1940:38; Grinnell 1972:1:218; Walker 1982:74). Among the Cheyennes, bison sinew was handled ceremoniously during the Animal Dance and the Sun Dance, rolled into a ball and covered with red cloth (Grinnell 1972:2:240-241, 292). The Lakotas mixed bison fat with red clay and ash to make a paste, which functioned as skin cream and a cleanser (Standing Bear 1978:118). Bison fat was also the common medium for mixing paint pigments (Walker 1982:100). The fat from the heart was offered to the Sun Dance tree, and it was used to seal pipes smoked on ceremonial occasions (Sword in Deloria 1929:391; Black Elk in Brown 1971:88; Brown 1992:123). Bison blood was applied to arrows and mixed with paints; it was used in sealing pipes and in making glue (Densmore 1918:103, 439; Grinnell 1972:1:19; Brown 1992:123). Among the Cheyennes, tallow was used in salves and other medicinal application (Grinnell 1972:2:142).

Of all the different parts of the bison, the tanned skin, rawhide, and the detached fur or hair of the animal had the most versatile uses. There are a number of descriptions on the techniques of preparing and tanning bison hides for different purposes among the Lakotas and Cheyennes (Ewers 1938:50-51; Densmore 1948:172-174; Hoebel 1960:62; Hassrick 1964:182-183; Grinnell 1972:1:213-217; Standing Bear 1975:19-21), and generally speaking, there were three different ways to prepare them.

In one preparation, after the hair was removed, the green hide was dried in the sun until it became hard but still pliable. This was rawhide. It was used in the making of parfleches, the large rectangular envelopes in which dried food and other materials were stored. This hide also went into the fabrication of eating bowls, cooking containers, medicine pouches, knife sheaths, splints, and quiver cases (Wissler 1910:79-82; Densmore 1948:178; Grinnell 1972:1:244-245; Standing Bear 1978:53-54). Boats, mortars, and cradleboards were shaped out of dried hides and various kinds of horse gear were constructed out of this material too (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:88-89; Ewers 1938:33-35; Standing Bear 1978:3; Walker 1982:80; Brown 1992:121-122; Grinnell 1972:210-211). Saddles of wood and elk horn were covered with green hide, which was then dried in place. Various kinds of ropes and lariats were plaited with strips of rawhide (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:88-89; Ewers 1938:33-34; Grinnell 1972:2:197, 206-208; Walker 1982:81). The soles of moccasins were generally cut from dried buffalo hide (Wissler 1910; Ewers 1938:22; Grinnell 1972:1:219). Glue was produced from the boiled chippings of rawhide that came from the neck of a bull and from the shavings removed from hides when they were thinned (Grinnell 1972:1:175). The hide from a bison's head lined a hole in the ground where women pounded meat and berries for pemmican (Densmore 1948:174).

In another mode of preparation, the hair was removed and the hide softened and tanned. Many articles of everyday clothing, including dresses, leggings, moccasins, and loincloths, as well as bedding could be made from bison skin (Walker 1982:74; Brown 1992:121-122), although the Cheyennes and Lakotas tended to prefer the hides of other ungulates for these purposes. Among the Cheyennes, the dresses of older women and the leggings of older men were fabricated out of old and well-smoked tipi-liners (or dew cloths) made from buffalo cow skin (Grinnell 1972:1:217). At the other end of the life cycle, clothing for Lakota infants was typically made out of skins from unborn calves (Standing Bear 1978:4). Pouches for storing medicines, pipes, gambling stakes,
sewing equipment, and paints were also fabricated from soft-tanned bison skins (Ewers 1938:51, 53; Grinnell 1972:1:134). Probably the most well-known and widely reported use of soft-tanned bison hide was in the making of tipis and tipi-liners (Curtis 1907-30:3:23, 25, 6:156; Ewers 1938:56; Grinnell 1972:1:226-234; Standing Bear 1975:19-21). Grinnell (1972:1:226) notes that Cheyenne women preferred to make their tipis from the hides of cows that had just shed their winter coats in mid-spring because these were the easiest to dress. Depending on their use and size, Cheyenne lodges required anywhere from eleven to twenty-one hides to construct them (Hoebel 1960: 62; Grinnell 1972:1:226).

There were also more formal and ceremonial uses for soft-tanned hides. The Lakotas painted their winter-counts and war deeds on soft-tanned buffalo skins (Walker 1982:100-101); these skins were also hung on poles with scalp locks as war banners (Brown 1992:123). After a successful raid, Cheyenne war parties painted battle images on these skins too and displayed them as they made a victorious entry into their village (Grinnell 1972:2:18-19). The Cheyennes kept their Sacred Hat in a bag made of bison skin (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:75), and their Contraries kept their lances wrapped in bison hides (Grinnell 1972:2:81). Lakota Sun dancers and their leader wore bison skins (Brown 1992:123). Bison hides draped the shade of boughs surrounding the dance circle. The skin of a calf was consecrated and hung over the entrance of the Sun Dance sweatlodge and then removed and suspended from the sacred pole during the ceremony (Densmore 1918:118, 123; Walker 1980: 186).

In the third manner of preparation, the hair was left on the hide and only the underside tanned. Entire skins were used this way in making the robes worn as blankets or used as bedding in everyday settings (Grinnell 1972:1:221; Walker 1982:74; Brown 1992: 121-122). This was common practice when warm coverings were needed during the winter months; in the summer months, tanned robes with the hair removed were preferred as blankets and bed covers (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:82; Grinnell 1972:1: 87). Among the Cheyennes, sacks and sewing cases were also made from these skins (Grinnell 1972:218). Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:151) reported that every man, woman, and child needed one to three robes each year for their personal use.

Among the Lakotas, the robes with the fur still attached were also worn for special occasions, such as courtship trysts of young couples (Walker 1982:51) or for ceremonial events, such as the Hunka where female children wore robes made from the skin of a buffalo calf (Curtis 1907-30:3:76, 78, 80; Densmore 1918:77). These robes were also used as coverings and wrappings for the deceased (Curtis 1907-30:3:100-102), and carried by Sun dancers and their leaders (Ibid:3:95; Densmore 1918:125; Walker 1982:97-98). The lodge-makers, priests, and pledgers at Cheyenne Sun Dances also carried bison robes, and warriors donated valuable robes to cover the roof of the Sun Dance lodge (Dorsey, G. 1905:93; Hoebel 1960:15-16). Finally, some were embellished with elaborately painted or quilled designs to signify the prestige and honor of the wearer and worn on public occasions (Ewers 1938:22, 58; Hassrick 1964:191-193; Grinnell 1972:1:159-160).

Bison hair was also removed from the hide and used separately. Among the Lakotas, the hair was attached to the wrist and ankle bands of Sun dancers, and it was worn on the ankles of mothers whose children’s ears were pierced during the ceremony (Curtis 1907-30:3:95; Walker 1980:188, 190, 192). The leading officiate of this ceremony wore shed bison hair tied on his head to recall Pte San Winyan, the White Buffalo Calf Woman (Brown 1992:123). In the Hunka ceremony bunches of bison hair were also ritually used (Curtis 1907-30:3:72, 73, 86; Densmore 1918: 72). The umbilical cords of boys were wrapped in bison hair before being inserted into their lizard-shaped pouches (Densmore
1948:185; Standing Bear 1978:154), and balls used in the “Throwing the Ball Ceremony” were stuffed with bison hair (Curtis 1907-30:3:138; Brown 1992:122). The Cheyennes also incorporated bison hair in ritual ways during some of their ceremonies: the pipe bowls, stems, and tampers used in the Sun Dance were wrapped in bison hair and the ceremonial Massaum wheel had tufts of this hair tied to it (Dorsey, G. 1905:74; Grinnell 1972: 2:240-241, 314-315, 318-319).

Bison hair was employed in more practical ways to stuff moccasins, dolls, pillows, war shields, and balls used in games. It was also attached to warbonnets, belts, and horsegear and used to pad saddles and make paint brushes (Grinnell 1972:1:189; Walker 1982:74, 103; Brown 1992:122). The long hairs from a bull’s neck were spun and braided to make lariats and ropes (Walker 1982:74; Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:88-89). The Cheyennes took a bison’s beard hair and made brushes to sprinkle water during their sweatlodges (Grinnell 1972:2:133).

Before moving on, a few words need to be written about the special status and use of a white buffalo skin, a rarity and highly revered among the Cheyennes and Lakotas. Among both tribes, when these animals were killed, they could not be touched by the hunter but had to be handled ceremoniously by qualified men who had spiritual partnerships with bison (Densmore 1918:446; Grinnell 1972:2:202-204). Only those who dreamed of bison were allowed to eat the flesh of this animal (Densmore 1918:446). According to Densmore (Ibid.), “The skin was not treated like an ordinary buffalo hide.” The animal had to be skinned in a special way to prevent the spilling of blood, and only women with certain qualifications were allowed to dress it (Ibid.). This was also true for the Cheyennes whose women had to undertake a special ceremony in order to prepare a white buffalo hide (Grinnell 1972:2:202-204). The Lakotas kept the robes in special rawhide cases (Densmore 1918:446), and they displayed them on certain ceremonial occasions such as the place of honor in a spirit-keeping lodge or the altar of an adoption ceremony. Edward S. Curtis (1909-30:3:110) wrote that at the close of a spirit-keeping ceremony, a white buffalo skin was carried to the north or west and buried in a cave or hole as an offering to Wakan Tanka. The Cheyennes did not use these skins in their ceremonies, but they hung them up as offerings to the Sun, Heam-mawihio (Grinnell 1972:1:272, 2:201). In later years, according to Grinnell (1972:1:273), these hides were not treated with the same respect, sold to white traders and tanned by captive women.

Finally, dried bison dung, popularly known as “buffalo chips,” had important practical and ceremonial functions too. First and foremost, “buffalo chips,” according to Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:91), “in their natural chunks make good wood.” They were used as a popular and widely accessible form of fuel, and when pulverized, as tinder (Densmore 1918:436; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55). Because of their absorbent properties, buffalo chips were also used in lieu of diapers. As Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:379-380) describes this:

With diapers, if it is wet, you have to take it off and put on a clean one. But we used buffalo chips [dried dung]. The women packed them—the old [dried ] pieces—and used them for diapers. First they powdered them up and put the powder into the skin. Whenever they wanted to change it, they took out the buffalo chips, which had absorbed everything, and the baby was never wet. Of course we greased them, so they were not irritated. Later the women had cloth and would take it and made a little pad and put the powdered buffalo chips in it and use it in that way. Babies were never wet. They used the softest part of a buffalo hide for the diapers.

This practice is also reported for the Arapahos (Trenholm 1970:60). A similar application was described by Standing Bear (1978:118), who wrote that the talcum-like
powder made from buffalo chips was applied to the skin to treat irritations.

Among the Lakotas, buffalo-chips were widely used in ceremonial contexts whenever a pipe was being smoked. At ceremonial altars, pipes were customarily placed on a buffalo-chip for smoking in conjunction with vision seeking, during a communal bison hunt, at a spirit keeping lodge, in the Hunka, and during the Sun Dance (Curtis 1907-30:3:66; Densmore 1918:72, 79, 83, 441; Walker 1980:36-37, 76, 77, 103, 180; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:145). Dried and pulverized bison dung was mixed with tobacco to light a pipe, and it was also burned ceremoniously as incense (Curtis 1907-30:3:186). The Cheyennes used bison dung in a wide range of ceremonial contexts as well. The coloring of bison dung, according to John Moore (1974a:171), undergoes a change from bright green to white when exposed to the sun, and this mirrors the yearly transition between the green of summer and the white of winter. In healing ceremonies, pipes rested on a piece of buffalo-chip (Grinnell 1972:2:137). At the Sun Dance, pieces of dried dung were positioned at the points of the sacred root-digger and arrow as well as near the skull (Grinnell 1972:2:238, 245). During the Massaum, a piece of bison dung was wrapped in red flannel and placed at the altar next to the skull; the chips were used in other contexts of this ceremony too (Grinnell 1972:2:292, 295, 323, 333). Dried buffalo dung played a part in the ritual preparations for driving pronghorn into pits (Grinnell 1972:1:280). A mound of buffalo chips was placed outside the ceremonial lodge of the Fox Soldiers who ritually surrounded it each morning (Grinnell 1972:2:57). War parties burnt buffalo chips to celebrate a victory and to purify enemy scalps taken in battle (Grinnell 1972:2:32, 37). And finally, bison dung was used in healing to draw out snake venom (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Bison, as discussed in the text to this report, hold a much-revered place in the tribal cosmologies of the Cheyennes and the Lakotas.

Cosmological Traditions

In Lakota cosmology, there are two benevolent spiritual figures that are represented in the image of a buffalo, Tatanka [Bison Bull] and Pte San Winyan [White Buffalo Calf Woman]. There is also a dangerous figure, Gnaskinyan [Crazy Buffalo], and many lesser spiritual ones envisioned as bison who were part of the Pte Oyate [Buffalo Nation], including Waziya [Old Man] and Wakanka [Old Woman].

Tatanka is a member of the Tobtob, one of the sixteen most important figures in the pantheon of Lakota spiritual beings. In James Walker’s writings (1980:50-51, 94), he is ranked in a lesser class among the Wakan kuya [Lower Sacred] with the Bear, the Four Winds, and the Whirlwind, who all stand below the Wakan akanta [Superior Sacred] and the Wakan kolaya [Associate Sacred] but above the Wakanlapi [Similar to sacred] (Powers, W. 1977:54; Walker 1980:50-51). Tatanka represents the masculine spiritual presence most responsible for provisioning and prosperity and for insuring good health (Black Elk in Brown 1971:72; Little Wound in Walker 1980:67; Walker 1980:50, 225, 325). Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:121) said that he “presides” over virtue and industry too. Along with Tate and Takuskanskan, two of the other Tobtob, he rules over the hunt (Hassrick 1964:207, 214; Walker 1982:75, 76, 91); he is addressed and propitiated in all rituals associated with hunting. He is also considered to be the “chief of all the animals” (Black Elk in Brown 1992:13). Stanley Vestal, in his work (1932:18) on Sitting Bull’s life, described why the bull was so revered and admired. He wrote:

Thus, everyone knew that the buffalo was headstrong, stubborn creature, afraid of
nothing. It never turned back, never gave up, no matter what the obstacle, but always kept on going ahead, whatever the danger, whatever the weather. In winter, it moved against the wind, even in the bitterest blizzard, seeming to welcome opposition. Once it started in a given direction, nobody could head it off. It was all endurance, headstrong courage, persistence and strength.

*Tatanka* is also a figure of generosity and positive ceremonial outcomes (Hassrick 1964:207, 214; Little Wound in Walker 1980:67; Brown 1992:25). He and other bison figures are believed to be the closest spiritual relatives of humans (Black Elk in Brown 1971:117), and thus, they serve as models of kinship, parental duty, and domestic harmony (Walker 1982:75, 76, 91). *Tatanka* is one of the major spiritual figures addressed during the Lakota *Hunka* ceremony, and it is his spirit who resides in the skull at this and, indeed, all other major Lakota ceremonies. As Takes the Gun remarked (1980:214):

"The spirit of *Tatanka* cares for the family. It cares for the young man or the young woman who should live together. It cares for the woman who lives with a man. It cares for little children. It cares for the hunters. It cares for the growing things (vegetation). It cares for everything that has young."

*Tatanka* is linked to the fecundity of women and guards over their pregnancies and menstrual cycles (Hassrick 1964:207, 214; Bad Wound in Walker 1980:124), and he is the central spiritual figure appealed to at the *Pte San Lowanpi*, when a young girl enters into womanhood (Black Elk in Brown 1971:116-126; Walker 1980:249). He is also featured in the “Throwing the Ball” Ceremony, which is also connected to female fertility (Black Elk in Brown 1971:133-136). Consistent with this connection is the idea that the bison cow represents motherhood in sacred discourse (Powers, M. 1986:186). Finally, *Tatanka* is a symbol for cosmic regeneration and represents a major figure to whom appeals are made and offerings given during the Sun Dance (Densmore 1918:98-125). He is believed to share in the power of the whirlwind, which is evidenced by the dust formations he kicks up before battling another bull (Wissler 1905:258).

The feminine representation of the bison is a bit more complex. On one and probably an older level, there is a spiritual female bison whose home is under the earth. She controls the game and sometimes marries a human man so that the bison can come to his people. There are many stories in the oral and written traditions of the Lakotas that carry this theme, and they bear a remarkable resemblance to a number of Cheyenne, Arikara, and Kiowa sacred narratives. The Lakota tradition is not as well articulated as it is among these other tribal nations, but when it appears, as discussed elsewhere, it is usually connected to a female bison figure who lives underneath the Black Hills and guards the animals.

In Lakota traditions, a prominent female spiritual figure that comes closest to this understanding is *Wohpe* [Meteor]. In the Lakota creation story, as given to James Walker by George Sword, she is the daughter of *Skan*, the Sky, and comes to earth to live with *Tate*, the Wind, and his sons. She is a mediator and responsible for many creative outcomes, including the making of vegetation and other life forms (Walker 1983:229-244). Later in Lakota cosmological time, she is reincarnated as *Pte San Winyan*, the White Buffalo Calf Woman, who brings the sacred pipe to the Lakotas and advises them in the performance of their seven sacred rituals (Black Elk in Brown 1971:3-9). There are numerous renditions of how she appeared to the Lakotas (Densmore 1918:63-66; Hassrick 1964:217-219; Finger in Walker 1980:109; Black Elk in Brown 1992; Powers, W. 1977:54; Powers, M. 1986:43-49; Looking Horse 1987: 68-69; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:38-41), but today, as in the past, she remains a supremely important figure, a model of female generosity, nurturance, and everything else that represents the highest virtues of womanhood (Powers, M. 1986:70-72; St. Pierre and
Long Soldier 1995:41-42). She is one of the primary protectors and guardians of humans, and she is appealed to and propitiated in most major ceremonies including the most important of all, the Sun Dance. Walker (1980:232) made the observation: “The council lodge and a large robe with a buffalo cow painted on it signifies that one will be sufficiently esteemed to have an honorable place in the council of the camp and have a large relationship and following.”

Gnaskiyan (Crazy Buffalo), in his various forms, represents the spiritual antithesis to the giving and protective qualities of other bison figures in Lakota cosmology (Bad Wound in Walker 1980:124). From the conversation of No Flesh, George Sword, Bad Wound, and Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:94), Gnaskiyan is the most feared of the “evil” spiritual beings. He is the grand artist of deception, appearing in a benevolent guise and persuading the people to do terrible things (Little Wound in Walker 1980:67). In the sacred liturgy of the Pte San Lowanpi, he is mentioned as a danger to young women, tempting them to defile their chastity (Hassrick 1964:260). He appears throughout the Lakota creation cycle, deceiving the animals, the Pte Oyate, and even some of the higher order Tobtob (Walker 1983). In some stories, when the White Buffalo Calf Woman’s encounters two young men, his devious influence is believed to have caused the lustful emotions and subsequent death of one of them (Finger in Walker 1980:110). He is also implicated in Iron Shell’s winter count entry for 1871, the year a buffalo dreamer was fooled when he conducted a ceremony but no bison appeared (Hassrick 1964:310-311). Much like the North Wind, Waziyata, or his grandfather, Waziya, he is represented as pugnacious, selfish and stingy.

Besides these more personified spiritual images of buffalo, there are many more generalized ideas about the spiritual position of the bison. Notwithstanding variations of interpretation, the spiritualized essence of the bison was closely associated with the procreative powers of the earth (Short Bull in Walker 1980:144; Little Wound in Walker 1980:124; Brown 1992:25; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:110), especially Maka [Earth] and Inyan [Stone], both of whom rank among the four most sacred spiritual beings in the Lakota pantheon. This connection is made very explicit in the words of the intercessor at a Hunka ceremony (Walker 1980:229).


Bison are also closely associated with the Sun, who moves to the underworld at night where he visits with his close bison companion, Tatanka (Walker 1917:91; Little Wound in Walker 1980:67; Bad Wound in Walker 1980:124). More specifically, they are connected to the cave of Waziya, the Old Man (Walker 1917:91), which some Lakotas believe is Wind Cave.

Bison are also linked to the underworld: their “tipi” or home is located inside the earth and identified with caves (Bushoter in Dorsey, J. 1894:476-477; Little Wound in Walker 1980:67; Bad Wound in Walker 1980:124). More specifically, they are connected to the cave of Waziya, the Old Man (Walker 1917:91), which some Lakotas believe is Wind Cave.

147 An interesting sidenote is Sievert Young Bear’s interpretation of the word for a “woman” in Lakota, winyan, which he states has its etymological origins in the names of the sun, wi, and rock, inyan (Young...
is the one animal who stands metaphorically for the entire cosmos (Black Elk in Brown 1971:72). This is true because bison embody the ton of the four highest tobib, stone, earth, sun, and sky or motion (and its associate the wind).

The Pte Oyate (Buffalo Nation) are the spirits of bison who live under the world. It is worth quoting James Walker’s interpretation (1917:91) of them:

The Buffalo People...have the power to transmogrify and may appear on the world as animals or as mankind, and may mingle with the Lakota and become their spouses. They can transmogrify their spouses and take them to the regions under the world.

The offspring of a buffalo person and a Lakota has the powers of its buffalo parent and controls its other parent. A Lakota espoused to a buffalo person, or having buffalo children, can be freed from their control only by a Shaman whose fetish has the potency of the Buffalo God.

Some Lakotas believe that the original metamorphosis of buffalo people into humans happened at Wind Cave. Originally, the buffalo people were created to act as the messengers of the Lakotas’ higher sacred beings, the Earth, Maka, the Sky, Skan, the Stone, Inyan, and the Sun, Wi. They appear throughout the Lakota origin cycle after their creation (Walker 1983), and they are specifically referenced in the sacred liturgy of the Hunka as kinspeople who come from the underworld where they live in the midst of the Sun during the night (Walker 1980:229).

In Lakota traditions, Tatanka and the Pte Oyate are often represented in perpetual conflict with wolves and coyotes, animals also associated with breath and the direction of the North Wind (Tyon in Walker 1980:121). These two animals are depicted as dangerous to humans in sacred liturgical texts associated with fertility and making kin (Walker 1980:222, 229, 231-232, 242, 249). This stands in marked contrast to Cheyenne worldviews where wolves and coyotes are not only seen as companions and helpers to bison, but they also occupy some of the more exalted positions in the Cheyennes’ cosmological order.

In Cheyenne worldviews, the animals that come from zones beneath the earth typically occupy a lower spiritual status than the animals associated with the blue sky, notably golden eagles, magpies, and vultures. These and other birds are included among the supreme maiyun (Moore, J. 1974a, 1984). Although many animals of the earth are considered sacred and sources of beneficial cosmic power, only bison and wolves are appealed to and propitiated in the context of major Cheyenne ceremonies such as the Animal Dance or the Sun Dance as representatives of the Maiyun (thunder, sun, rain, and earth), the highest sacred forces in the universe. Indeed the maiyun representing the earth and the thunder generally reveal themselves either through wolf or bison impersonations (Dorsey, G. 1905; Grinnell 1972:2:211-336; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:91-114; Powell 1969:2:481-858; Schlesier 1987:43-109). Typically most of the spiritualized manifestations of bison appear in a feminized form.

Esceheman [Our Grandmother], the deep spirit of the earth, is associated with animals and is the protector of animal spirits (Powell 1969:2:437; Schlesier 1987:5, 8, 82). Along with the Sun, Thunder, and Rain, she is one of the four central maiyun or spiritual potencies of the Cheyenne created by Ma’heo, the spiritual power over all (Schlesier 1987:8). Her helpers and the ones through whom she often reveals herself are the badger, buffalo, bear, and wolf. She is the one represented as the white or yellow wolf, Eversev honche, at the Maussam ceremony (Schlesier 1987:6, 93-94, 98, 121), and she is the one who “grants” and instructs the ceremony (Schlesier 1987:76-80, 82-83, 89-109). She
is also believed to have gifted a sacred hat to the Cheyenne. The Is siwun, the Sacred Hat, one of the two most important sacred symbols of the Cheyenne (the other being the Sacred Arrows), is an embodiment of the female spiritual presence of Esceheman and the buffalo, or as Father Peter Powell (1969: 2:443) puts it, “the living symbol and source of female power.”

**Esceheman** is also embodied in the sacred buffalo skull at the Sun Dance (Powell 1969:2:335-336, 422, 425, 597) and in the one at the **Massaum** (Schlesier 1987:94-95). The “Sacred Woman” of the Sun Dance may also represent an impersonation of **Esceheman** (Powell 1969:2:448). In this ceremony, she is ritually impregnated by the ‘man power,’ represented in the image of the Thunder (Powell 1969:2:449-459). When a keeper of the Sacred Hat died, the corpse was placed on a hill and covered by stones surrounded by four buffalo skulls at each of the four cardinal directions. If this was not done, according to Grinnell (1910:567), “the buffalo would go away to the north -- where they originally came from -- and the range would be deserted. But, if this were done, there would always be plenty of buffalo in the country.”

Her daughter, **Ehyophstah** (Yellow Hair on Top Woman), comes from a union with the Thunder, **Nonoma** (represented as a coyote or wolf) (Schlesier 1987:78). She is represented as the figure in the story of Sweet Medicine and his friend’s journey to Bear Butte. She is the one who marries the friend and brings the buffalo to his people (Grinnell 1907; Schlesier 1987:76-79), and she is the patroness of one of the Cheyenne sweatlodges (Schlesier 1987:62). **Ehyophstah** is also an important figure in the **Massaum** where she represented the ‘Master of the Animals’ and the **Voh’kis ‘Blue Star,’ impersonated in the form of a Kit-Fox (Schlesier 1987:12, 84, 104-109). The timing of the **Massaum** was tied to the rising of the blue star of summer dawn, Rigel, that rose midway between Aldebran, representing **Ma’heone Honehe**, the Red Wolf or **Nonoma**, and **Sirius** signifying **Evevsev Honche**, the Horned Wolf or **Esceheman** (Schlesier 1987:82-83). The **maiyun** who stand for the Above Powers, the masculine spiritual essence, appear in the guise of birds. Since the **Maiyun** are represented in stars, female procreative figures such as **Esceheman** and **Ehyophstah** have a dual positioning and exist simultaneously as earth and celestial figures. Even though the Cheyennes symbolically represent bison in a predominately female form, it is the bison bull that “talked to them” (Grinnell 1972: 2:104). Whatever this means, and Grinnell doesn’t elaborate upon it, the bison is the supreme symbol of the family, fecundity, and regeneration as it is among the Lakotas. It is associated primarily with the subterranean world where the **maiyun** keep their home in a cave underneath Bear Butte, but it also has celestial linkages to other **Maiyun** including the Sun.

The Buffalo People representing the spiritualized component of the materialized bison were the ones against whom humans raced in the Black Hills, and they are often interchangeably identified with the Suhtao division of the Cheyenne nation and their culture hero, Stands on the Ground or Erect Horns, who is most closely associated with the origin of the Sun Dance. The Suhtao are also connected with an older, buffalo ceremony tied to healing and the sweatlodge (Grinnell 1919; Anderson 1956; Powell 1969:324-327, 341, 343, 344, 388, 408).

Finally, the Cheyennes have a figure remarkably similar to the Lakotas’ Crazy Buffalo, known as **Histowanini’hotu’a** [The Double-toothed bull] or **Hestovonenehota**, who was male and known to eat people (Petter 1913-15:193; Grinnell 1972:2:99). He was probably modeled after the actual behavior and pugnacity of bulls that are known to suddenly charge humans, especially during the rutting season in June and July (Grinnell 1972:1:269). In the Cheyennes’ **Massaum** Ceremony, the Black Buffalo impersonators often charge the Con-
traries in imitation of bison bull behavior (Grinnell 1972:2:330, 334).

**Bison Dreamers**

In both Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, men and women who were visited and gifted by bison were highly esteemed and often played important roles in their communities as successful hunters, highly revered healers, and respected officiates at major ceremonies (Hassrick 1964:237).

For the Lakotas, bison dreamers, *Tatanka Ihonblapi*, were among the most revered of those with spiritual partnerships with animals. Men, and sometimes women, who dreamed of bison once held special dance performances to demonstrate their powers (Wissler 1912:91). They painted targets on their backs which people shot at to reveal their spiritual power to deflect arrows or, if wounded, to demonstrate their healing skills (Wissler 1912:91; Hassrick 1964:239). Their ability to avoid being wounded was one of their trademarks (Densmore 1918:173-176). They wore bison skins with heads and horns attached, they lived in black painted tipis, and in their dances, they imitated the actions of bison (Curtis 1907-30:3:63, 139; Densmore 1918:285; Hassrick 1964:144, 239; Standing Bear 1978:141-142; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:7, 88-89, 240-241).

The Lakotas often tied success in hunting to dream and visionary encounters with bison (Little Wound in Walker 1980:68), and the men who had these experiences painted a red circle on the middle of their chest to signify this (Walker 1980:281). These men often served as “buffalo callers,” and they were the ones who presided over the *wana-sapi* [communal bison hunt] (Hassrick 1964: 187, 253, 310-311). Some of the men with dreams of bison formed special associations, one of which was called the *Tatanka Wah-pahun* [Buffalo Headdress] Society. Also known as the Big Bellies, its members wore buffalo hair caps with horns and special bison skins (Walker 1982:35). Joseph Eppes Brown (1992:25) speculates that when the men of this society sat in a circle, adorned in their buffalo robes and headdresses, they were imitating bison bulls that encircled calves when they were attacked by wolves. There was also another society associated with men who had dreamed of the White Buffalo. Known as the White Decorated Society or White Marked Society, the members of this group carried bows and arrows to feasts and dances where “they shot arrows into the sky and the earth” to defy the powers of *Inyan* [Stone] and *Wakinyan* [Thunder] (Sword in Walker 1980:101; Wissler 1912:34-36).

Among the Lakotas, there were strong associations between bison, herbal medicine, and healing. Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:153) that men who dreamed of buffalo “knew about the medicines and all other things for doctoring.” Indeed, James Walker (1980:62) claimed that these dreamers were considered to be the “most reputable” healers. Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:128-129) recounted one of his visions of the buffalo that reveals this connection:

As I looked down upon the people, there stood on the north side a man painted red all over his body and he had with him a lance (Indian spear) and he walked into the center of the sacred nation’s hoop and lay down and rolled himself on the ground and when he got up he was a buffalo standing right in the center of the nation’s hoop. The buffalo rolled and when he got up there was an herb there in his place…After the buffalo’s arrival the people looked better and then when the buffalo turned into an herb, the people all got up and seemed to be well. Even the horses got up and stretched themselves and neighed. Then a little breeze came from the north and I could see that the wind was in the form of a spirit and as it went over the people all the dead things came to life. All the horses pulled up their tails and neighed and began to prance around.

The spirit said: ‘Behold you have seen the powers of the north in the form of man, buffalo, herb and wind. The people shall follow the man’s steps; like him they shall
walk and like the buffalo they shall live and
with the herb they shall have knowledge.
They shall be like relatives to the wind.’
[From the man in the illustration they should
be healthy, from the buffalo they shall get
meat, from the herb they shall get
knowledge of diseases. The North wind will
give them strong endurance].

Women also received healing powers from

Among the Cheyennes, dreams of bison
gave men protection in war, assistance in
hunting, and/or the gift of healing (Grin
cnell 1919; Anderson 1956; Powell 1969:
1:324-327, 341, 343, 344, 388, 408; Grinnell
1972:1:196,151; Marquis and Lim
baugh 1973:34). Some of the shamans who
were able to call “game” and properly
propitiate them had partnerships with bison
spirits associated with Esceheman. The Von
haom, a sweatlodge, whose origin is tied to
bison, was largely run by buffalo dreamers
associated with the Suhtai division (Ander
son 1956; Powell 1969:1: 341-344; Grinnell
Cheyenne bison dreamers also exhibited
their powers in public, but they appear to
have done so in more solitary ways (Grinnell
1972:2:145). The two contexts that were
an exception to this were the ceremonies of
the Buffalo Society, Ottu-a-ta ’ni-o (Hayden
1862b:281; Anderson 1956) and the Mas-
saum where bison dreamers impersonated
the bison in the animal “hunt” (Grinnell

Ceremonial Observances

In both Lakota and Cheyenne traditions,
many of the people who had spiritual part-
nerships with bison also occupied important
positions in these nations’ ceremonial obser-
vances. Among the Lakotas, male shamans
who acted as the chief intercessors over

148 John Moore, J. (1974a:239) argues that the spiritual
power from bison only enabled its holders to locate
the animal not to kill them. Power to hunt came from
wolves and coyotes.

many major ceremonies were bison dream-
ers, and they were the ones who sang over
the participants or prayed on their behalf
(Hassrick 1964:253; Tyon in Walker 1980:
153; Walker 1980:249; Powers, W. 1986:
185). The Hunka Lowanpi [Making Rela-
tives Sing], the Pte San Lowanpi [White
Buffalo Sing] and the Tapawanka Yeyapi
[Throwing the Ball] are three of the cere-
monies where the bison is the most im-
portant spiritual benefactor, and all of these
are described in great length in a number of
other sources (Densmore 1918; Hassrick
1964; Walker 1980). Some bison dreamers
also presided over Spirit-Keeping rites, Wanagi cagapi (Densmore 1918: 77-83).

The Wiwanyan Wacipi, the Sun Dance, was
also usually led by men with spiritual
connections to bison. Men with bison power
were the ones who led the Buffalo Dance
and blessed the feast on the day the center
tree was felled (Hassrick 1964: 242). From
the nineteenth century to the present, the
Sun Dance remains the Lakotas’ holiest
religious observance, a major ceremony of
renewal and regeneration. Its conduct and
performance are written about at great
length in many different sources (Densmore
1918:84-151; Walker 1917, 1980; Mails
1978; Catches 1990), and this does not need
to be repeated other than to review some of
its major relations to bison.

The Sun Dance is held during the first full
moon of summer at the time Juneberries or
chokecherries are ripening and when the
sage is fresh and in full bloom (Densmore
1918:98). It is performed over a four day
period, which starts with the felling of the
sacred cottonwood tree that serves as a
center pole for the dance. Symbolically, the
capture of the tree mimics a battle where
scouts find it and warriors/hunters attack it.
After virgins cut it down, the tree is  taken to
the dance area in the center of the circle. A
hole is dug and offerings are put there before
the tree is erected (Catches 1990:112). West
of the sacred tree is an altar and behind this
is a bed of sage upon which the bison skull
containing the spirit of Tatanka rests. A
rawhide buffalo hangs on the center tree, indicating symbolically that humans have been given spiritual assistance to conquer this animal on whose behalf offerings are given and sacrifices are made during the dance. As Black Elk told Brown (1971:72) in regards to the bison bull:

He represents the people and the universe and should always be treated with respect, for was he not here before the two-legged peoples, and is he not generous in that he gives us our homes and our food? The buffalo is wise in many things, and, thus, we should learn from him and should always be as a relative with him.

A major focus of this ritual involves the propitiation of the bison, the central figure in Lakota cosmology that brings prosperity, harmony, and good health to the people.

This is also true in relation to the Cheyenne Sun Dance, the Otxheheom [The New Life Lodge], where offerings and propitiations are made to the spiritual presence of Esceheheman, whose spirit rests in the buffalo skull placed in the Lone Tipi (Dorsey, G. 1905: 91, 97; Hoebel 1960:13; Schlesier 1987:3). The Lone Tipi ceremonies are performed in preparation for the public phase of the ceremony. At these ceremonies, the assistant Chief Priest and the Lodge Maker smoke a sacred pipe to bring the bison to them (Dorsey, G. 1905:100), and other rituals are performed to symbolize their regeneration (Hoebel 1960:15; Powell 1969:2:614-645). After the sacred tree, representing the life of the people, is located, felled, and brought to the lodge, an altar is prepared which recreates the Cheyennes’ image of a prosperous universe with abundant bison and plants, the presence of sunshine, rainbows and good spirits, and a people with good health and the ability to vanquish their enemies (Hoebel 1960:14; Powell 1969:646-684). During the dance itself, the Cheyennes engage in acts of suffering and self-sacrifice, which includes inserting skewers into the back and shoulders to which rawhide ropes are tied and buffalo skulls hung. Men drag these skulls around the dance area or dance with them in place on their backs (Dorsey, G. 1905:176; Grinnell 1972:2:211). This and other acts of offering are intended to seek the spiritual benevolence necessary to renew the world and the lives of the people. The dance ends with a race to the four directions and the homes or pillars of the four sacred Ma’heyuno (Powell 1969:2:841-852). Although this ceremony is linked to bison and female generative powers, it is dedicated to Ma’heo who represents the supreme male spiritual figure in the Cheyenne cosmos (Moore, J. 1996a:225-226). There are many accounts of the Cheyenne Sun Dance. For further and more detailed descriptions of dances held at the turn of the twentieth century, the best sources are George Dorsey (1905) and George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:211-284). The best accounts of modern dances are found in Rev. Peter Powell (1969:2:611-855) and John Moore's works (1996a: 221-229).

A second major ceremony where bison symbolism played a prominent role is the Maussam, which Grinnell (1972:2:287) claimed was associated with the Cheyennes’ arrival on the plains in the country of the buffalo. This ceremony, which is no longer practiced, reveals the dual positioning of bison as game animals and spiritual beings in Cheyenne cosmology. In the dance, bison are represented among the animals that are symbolically hunted by the Contraries with the assistance of wolves and foxes. They are the “grass” and “black” buffalo who symbolize ordinary game animals, but they are also represented as a female generative force whose spiritual presence resides in the bison skull placed on the altar (Grinnell 1972:2:330-334). In this ceremony, which is described in greater detail in the discussion on wolves, the buffalo skull was placed in a bed dug in the ground because originally the bison came out of the earth. Grinnell (1972:2:296) states that this is a reference to the bison’s emergence after the visit of their two culture heroes to the old woman in the hill, Esceheman. More than that, according to Karl
Schlesier (1987:7), the ceremony reenacts the creation of the world and all of its life forms that lead up to the ritual hunt where humans slay the game on whose lives they depend.

In concluding, it cannot be emphasized enough how much the bison was revered by the Cheyennes and Lakotas, not only in a practical way as source of food, shelter, and medicine, but, spiritually, as a presence that embodied a good, healthy, and productive life. Even though bison disappeared as a principal source of food for the Cheyennes and Lakotas, they continued to be regarded as a pivotal part of their cultural traditions and identities and central to their religious life as well.

**Bighorn Sheep**  
*Ovis canadensis auduboni*

**Habitat and History**

Bighorns were closely associated with the Black Hills by early traders. In 1804, the French engage La Paige reported to Lewis and Clark that he had seen bighorn sheep in the Black Hills near the Little Missouri River (Moulton 1983-87:6:338), and the trader Jon Vallé also told them of their presence in the Hills (Ibid:3:133-135). Another engage, Gueneville, described how bighorns migrated annually from the Missouri River to their winter homes in the Black Hills (Ibid:3:179-180). Nearly thirty years later, Maximillian, Prince of Wied (in Thwaites 1966:2:346-347) noted that Hidatsas regularly traveled towards the Black Hills to hunt bighorns. And in the 1850s, Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:6) and Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:150) mentioned their presence in the Hills and neighboring badland regions. Although once a very abundant species in the Black Hills and adjoining grasslands, they declined precipitously during the last decades of the nineteenth century (Grinnell 1972:1:277; Seton 1929:2:535; Turner 1974:147), and only a few small herds survived in the area (Turner 1974:147-148). After they disappeared, they were reintroduced at Custer National Park from locales outside the region. They now occupy the more remote and higher elevation locations of this park, although sometimes they appear at Wind Cave National Park (Froiland 1978:145; Turner 1974:148).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Lakotas call bighorns *cinskayapi* [to make horn spoons] or *hecinskayapi* (Buechel 1970:132, 664). The Cheyennes know them as *kosa* or *kosane* (Petter 1913-15:131; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:98).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Bighorn sheep were highly valued as food and for their hides and horns (Bordeaux 1929:126; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Grinnell 1972:1:272, 277; Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9; Hoebel 1960:64; Brown 1997:17). Historically, bighorn were not only numerous, but, according to George Bird Grinnell (1972:1:272), docile enough to kill easily with arrows. Beyond this remark, little is recorded in the historic or ethnographic record about Lakota and Cheyenne methods for hunting them, although three sources (Vestal 1934:161-162; Grinnell 1972:1:277; Powell 1981:1:112;) mention that they were hunted in the Black Hills and around Bear Butte.

The hides of bighorn sheep were much in demand because of their fineness. They were used in making garments for men and women. Among the Cheyennes, their skins were used in making dresses and leggings for women and war shirts for men (Grinnell 1972:1:217,221).The Cheyennes also used their fleece to stuff pillows to sit on (Petter 1913-15:131). The Oglalas made the skins into articles of clothing, especially war shirts (White Bull in Vestal 1934:162). *Hanstaska* Society members wore shirts with the dew claws of these animals still attached.
The horns of the bighorn were highly valued by both tribes for making spoons and ladles (Petter 1913-15:131; Hoebel 1960:62; Grinnell 1972:1:211; Standing Bear 1975:22). Parkman (in Feltskog 1969:292) reported that some of the horn ladles were capable of holding as much as a quart of water. In addition, the Cheyennes used their horns in making bows and in manufacturing arrow-straighteners (Curtis 1907-30:6:156; Grinnell 1972:1:174,179; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:27). The Arikaras were also reported to have made bows from the horns as well (Bradbury 1966:159). Cheyenne Contraries ate and drank from special dishes carved out of the horns of these animals (Grinnell 1972:1:85).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Among the Lakotas, bighorn sheep were a source of visionary power and the people who dreamed of them, Hecinskayapi ihan-blapi, were believed to hold powerful war medicines (Wissler 1912:95; Powers, W. 1977:59). One Oglala told James Owen Dorsey (1894:497):

> Goats are very mysterious, as they walk on cliffs and other high places; and those who dream of goats or have revelations from them imitate their actions. Such men can find their way up and down cliffs, the rocks get soft under their feet, enabling them to maintain a foothold, but they close up behind them, leaving no trace.

A number of Lakotas were known to have dreamed of these sheep, but whether they gathered together for special ceremonial performances of the kind associated with elk and deer dreamers is unclear (Wissler 1912:95). The Cheyennes considered them “half mysterious,” and they were animals with which people might enter into spiritual partnerships (Petter 1913-15:131).

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149 Coincidentally, the word *wapiti* has a sensible translation in the Dakota and Lakota language; it means “to dwell with luck” (Riggs 1968:195, 467, 533; Beuchel 1970:548).

150 Red deer (*Cervus virginianus*) were commonly distinguished from whitetail deer (*Cervus leccres*) in the early writings of European Americans, and they were certainly separate in the zoological nomenclatures of local tribes. Although they are now considered to be of the same species, Grinnell (1875:78) reported that traders and hunters in the area noted that the whitetail found in the Black Hills were much smaller than those located along the Missouri River.
mule deer populations experienced a serious decline in their numbers. Only whitetail deer held their own in the face of private and market-oriented hunting (Turner 1974:136-140).

For the Lakotas and Cheyennes, the three species of *Cervidae* provided an important source of food and also skins for clothing. They were hunted primarily from the late fall through the early months of spring, and they were probably taken as much as bison during this time of the year (Densmore 1918:447; Hassrick 1964:154-155). Next to bison and pronghorn, elk and deer were major sources of meat for the Lakotas who lived near the Black Hills (Ewers 1938:17; Hassrick 1964:164).

**Elk or Wapati**  
*<i>Cervus canadensis canadensis</i>*

**Habitat and History**

Historically, elk were closely and specifically associated with the Black Hills. In fact, this was the location where local tribes were often reported to hunt the animal, with some traveling from locations as far away as the Missouri and Platte Rivers to do so (Moulton 1983-87:3:482; Denig in Ewers 1961:5-6; Maximilian in Thwaites 1966:22:346-347; Mallory 1987:117; Bettlelyoun and Wagonner 1988:21). Some explorers reported the hills were rich in elk (Dodge 1965:123; Progulske 1974:122; Curtis in Krause and Olson 1974:69), but by the end of the nineteenth century, they were hunted to extinction. An early settler in the area of Wind Cave National Park, Fannie McAdam (1973:17), recalled seeing lots of antlers in the area but not the animal itself. Elk were reintroduced at Custer State Park in 1914 and two years later in 1916 at Wind Cave National Park (Turner 1974:136).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In the Lakota language, the male elk is called *hehaka* and the female, *unpan* (Buechel 1970:171, 507). The Cheyenne name for elk is *mo?ehe* (Petter 1913-15:431; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:37).

**Modes of Procurement**  
**Preparation, and Use**

Elk meat was an important food for Lakotas and Cheyennes (Bordeaux 1929:126; Marquis 1931:90; Ewers 1938:17; Hoebel 1960:64; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:164; Grinnell 1972:1:257; Iron Teeth (in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9). Few details have been reported, however, on the Lakotas’ methods of securing them (Ewers 1938:45), although Stanley Vestal (1934:160-161) learned from White Bull that they were stalked and surrounded on foot. The Lakotas’ Cheyenne and Arapaho allies caught them in rawhide snares or drove them over cliffs and banks (Trenholm 1970:65; Grinnell 1972:1:273-276). In fact, at a location just west of the Black Hills, there is a cliff over which the Arapahos were known to drive elk (Grinnell 1972:1:276). Like other ruminant species, they tended to follow well-established trails, which made them easy to hunt with driving methods (Grinnell 1972:1:277; Turner 1974:137). According to George Grinnell (1972:1:277), it was the Arapahos’ “practice to carry the horns of the animals to a great pile of elk horns already heaped up and add them to it, so that at length there was an immense pile of these antlers.” In his journal from the Black Hills Expedition, William Ludlow (1875:17) made note of a one these piles near Reynold’s Prairie, also known as Elkhorn Prairie, and Grinnell (1875:78), who also accompanied the expedition as a naturalist, gave some details of its appearance when he wrote:

On Elkhorn Prairie we came upon a collection of horns gathered together by the Indians. Three lodge-poles had been set up in the ground so as to form a tripod, and supported by these was a pile of horns 8 to 10 feet high. The horns had all been shed and had apparently been collected from the surrounding prairie and heaped up here by the Indians.
As in the case of bison hunting, Lakota men played a game of chance, known as Woskate hehaka [Game of Elk] that involved the use of a hoop or cangleska and two players. The game was usually played while men were out hunting for this animal, and it was believed to bring success to the hunt (Walker 1905:286-287). Although hoop games were also played by the Cheyennes, they were not linked to any kind of hunting in ethnographic sources (Grinnell 1972:320-324). They are explicitly connected to this activity in some of their stories, however (Grinnell 1926).

Elk hides were highly valued for their durability and suppleness (Standing Bear 1988:59). After the hair was removed, elk skins were soft tanned by the Lakotas to make moccasins, breechclouts, shirts, leggings, belts, and gowns for everyday wear as well as garments worn on ceremonial occasions. The tanned hides also served as highly valued saddle skirts, shield covers, and receptacles for holding various objects and belongings (Walker 1982:101, 103, 104; Lyford 1940:33). The Lakotas also used elk skins for drumheads (Young Bear and Thiez 1995:47), and they made sashes from them worn by certain officers of the Miwatani society (Wissler 1912:46). The Arapahos and Cheyennes used elk hides for their garments and other purposes too (Trenholm 1970:65; Grinnell 1972:1:274).

Elk have two ivory canine teeth that were highly prized by the Lakotas and other tribes because they symbolized longevity. Shooter, a Lakota, told Francis Densmore (1992:176):

In observing the carcass of an elk it is found that the teeth remain after everything else has crumbled to dust. These teeth will last longer than the life of a man, and for that reason the elk tooth has become the emblem of long life. We desire long life for our friends and ourselves. When a child is born its parents desire long life for it, and for this reason an elk tooth is given to a child if its parents can afford the gift.

These teeth often decorated the deer or pronghorn skin bodices of Lakota women’s dresses (Standing Bear 1978:102, 188; Walker 1982:52). The Cheyenne also adorned women’s dresses with elk teeth, they fringed leggings with them and made necklaces out of them as well (Curtis 1907-30:6:156; Grinnell 1972:1:221, 223). So valuable were the teeth of the elk that the Cheyennes were willing to trade a good horse for one hundred of them (Grinnell 1972:1:224).

The Cheyennes and the Lakotas preferred elkhorn for making fleshers used to scrape hides (Grinnell 1972:1:213; Densmore 1948:173; Standing Bear 1975:19). Iron Teeth (in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:25), a Cheyenne woman, tells how valuable these were among her people:

This hide-scraper I have is made from the horn of an elk my husband killed just after we were married. He cut off the smaller prongs and polished the main shaft. The Indian men of the old times commonly made this kind of present to their young wives. Besides using them in tanning, the women made marks on them to keep track of the ages of their children. The five rows of notches on this one are the age-records of my five children. Each year I have added a notch to each row, for the living ones. Any time, I can count up the notches and know the age of any of my children. Throughout the seventy-four years it has always been a part of my most precious pack. There were times when I had not much else. I was carrying it in my hands when my husband was killed on the upper Powder River. It was tied to my saddle while we were in flight from Oklahoma. It was in my little pack when we broke out from the Fort Robinson prison. It has never been lost. Different white people have offered me money for it. I am very poor, but such money does not tempt me. When I die, this gift from my husband will be buried with me.

The Cheyennes used elkhorn to knap flint, and they made fleshers from the leg bones of elk (Curtis 1907-30:6:156). They sometimes made bows from elkhorn as well.
(Grinnell 1972:173-174; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:27), but there is no evidence of this use among the Lakotas. The Lakotas fashioned the porous portion of an elkhorn into implements for applying their paints (Walker 1982:100), and they made the pommels for their saddles from this horn (Densmore 1948:195). They also used fragments of elk bone in their remedies for treating broken and fractured bones (Densmore 1918:252-253; Bordeaux 1929:157). Finally, elk grease was mixed with skunk musk to treat colds and other respiratory disorders (Bordeaux 1929:109).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Lakotas held the elk in high regard and considered it among the most *wakan* of the animals (Walker 1980:101). Luther Standing Bear (1988:58) describes Lakota attitudes in this way:

> In his native state the elk has a very proud and independent manner. He walks about among his herd as if there is nothing in the sky nor on the earth that is his equal. And the others of the herd seem to think so too. Even when feeding, he never seems to forget his dignity. With every mouthful of food, up goes his head as he watches over his herd. The elk has a peculiar whistle, and whenever he wishes to get together a straying herd, he gives this whistle and all will run to him. When the herd is again clustered about him, he walks away contentedly, all the females jostling and pushing one another to get next to him. There is no doubt as to his position as leader of his herd.

The male elk was admired for its strength, endurance, and courage, but especially for its ability to attract and protect members of the opposite sex (Wissler 1905:261-266; Fire and Erdoes 1972:143; Brown 1992:16; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:110). Indeed, the *ton* of the elk is believed to preside over sexual relationship, passion, and desire (Blish 1964:199; Standing Bear 1978:216; Walker 1980:121; Walking Bull 1980:18-19). In understanding the elk’s qualities, it is worthwhile to quote Clark Wissler (1905:261), who said:

> The elk is taken as the incarnation of the power over females, the real (i.e., physical) elk is regarded only as the recipient of such power. The power itself is conceived of in the nature of an abstraction similar to our conception of force. The fact that the elk seems to act in conformity with the laws governing this power is taken as evidence of its existence. Then the idea of the Indian is that the elk possesses the knowledge necessary to the work of the power. Thus a mythical, or hypothetical elk, becomes the teacher of man.

Much of the symbolism associated with the elk represented the epitome of Lakota ideas of maleness and manhood, and as a result, the elk was a favorite animal for young men to emulate. As Shooter told Densmore (1918:176):

> The best part of a man’s life is between the ages of 18 and 33. Then he is at his best. He has the strength and ability to accomplish his aims. He is brave to defend himself and others and is free to do much good. He is kind to all, especially to the poor and needy. The tribe looks to him as a defender, and he is expected to shield the women. His physical strength is at its best. He is light on his feet and can reduce long distances to short ones. He is taught true politeness and is very gallant. What animal has these traits more than any other? It is the elk, which is the emblem of beauty, gallantry, and protection. The elk lives in the forest and is in harmony with all his beautiful surroundings. He goes easily through the thickets, notwith-standing his broad branching horns.

In many ways, the elk stood metaphorically as an embodiment of *Itokagata*, the South Wind, also connected with love and romance. Like *Itokagata*, the elk is associated with the flute, with the crane, and with the Whirlwind, *Yumni*, although in some visionary contexts the elk is linked to the East Wind too (Wissler 1905; Hassrick 1964:116, 146; Densmore 1918:176-178; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:119, 126, 218; Powers, W. 1986:139). In Brave Buffalo’s vision, the direction from which the elk is
revealed to him is southeast, symbolized simultaneously by the appearance of the crane and the crow (Densmore 1918:178). In Black Elk's visions, the elk is linked to the East, but it also stands on the same good road as bison, typically associated with the North (in DeMallie 1984:114-115, 119, 127, 218). In a **Yuwipi** song, a relationship is established with an elk in the direction of the East (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:163). It is also tied to the butterfly, which in some contexts is associated with the West and the Thunders (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:25-27). In **Yumni**, the Whirlwind, and it may be linked to what early naturalists called the elk’s “circle dance,” where elk are reported to rapidly trot behind each other in a circular formation, kicking up dust that appears like a “whirlwind” (Seton 1929:2:42).

Men who dreamed of elk painted their lodges yellow with designs that symbolized this animal (Hasrick 1964:187; Standing Bear 1978:216; Densmore 1918:176-178). These men received songs, playing special flute music to reveal their spiritual gifts (Densmore 1918:293-298; Hassrick 1964:116, 146; Young Bear & Thiez 1994:25-27). They had knowledge of plants, including **hehaka tojawote** (wild bergamot), used in treatments for various ailments including those that pertained to female illnesses but also applied as “love” potions to attract members of the opposite sex (Densmore 1918:178-179; Hassrick 1964:114, 116; Wissler 1912:88; Fire and Erdoes 1972:165; Standing Bear 1978:217; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:110; Young Bear and Theiz 1995:25). Their power, however, gave them an aversion to grasshoppers and the toenails of birds (Walker 1980:135-136). According to Densmore (1918:272), one of Sitting Bull’s spiritual partners was an elk, and it was also a helper to his nephew, White Bull (Vestal 1934:93-94).

The circle is emblematic of the elk: men who dreamed of elk wore a hair ornament consisting of a small hoop wound with porcupine quills and a downy white eagle feather suspended from the center (Densmore 1918:179). They also carried a sacred hoop on their shoulder that symbolized the rainbow (Densmore 1918:295-296). Elk dreamers, **Hehaka inhanblapi**, were obligated to carry out an elk ceremony reminding the people of “the source of life and the mystery of growing,“ impersonating their spiritual benefactors in public performances (Wissler 1912:86). They wore a black mask with hide antlers wrapped in otter skins (Standing Bear 1988: 216). The elk ceremony or **Hehaka kaga** and the groups of men who performed it have been described in a variety of sources, and these do not need to be detailed any further here (Wissler 1912: 85-88; Densmore 1918:293; Powers, W.1977:57-58,1986:184-185; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:242-244; Standing Bear 1988:216-217; Young Bear and Theiz 1994:25-27).

The Cheyennes also viewed the elk with considerable reverence, although its symbolic meanings are not as fully detailed in the ethnographic literature. Elk were seen to have a strong power, which like the deer’s had good as well as evil ends. They were greatly admired for their ability to endure and escape capture (Grinnell 1972:2:104; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55). Their antlers were considered highly sacred (Dorsey, G. 1905:19). Men who dreamt of elk found their spiritual gifts to be of great assistance (Grinnell 1972:2:104). The Cheyennes had a military society called the **Himoweyuhkis**, Elk-Scrapers, who carried a piece of elk horn in the image of a snake (Grinnell 1972:2:57-62). This created a sound capable of being transmitted over long distances, and it was used to attract game to camp when food was needed. The members of this society also carried rattles made of the elk’s dew claws (Dorsey, G. 1905:18-19). According to Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:56), the Elk-Scrapers were one of the three most important soldier

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151 The bergamot was mixed with extracts from various parts of the elk’s body (Fire and Erdoes 1972:165).
societies among the Cheyennes. In the Cheyenne Sun Dance, a pair of elk effigies, along with figures of bison, deer, and pronghorn, were fashioned by children out of mud and placed at the base of the Sun Dance’s center pole in remembrance of the Great Race story and the animals that Sweet Medicine and Erect Horns brought from the earth (Dorsey, G. 1905:49). At one time, the Cheyennes had a special Elk Ceremony, called Mo’hetanio, where their elk benefactors were impersonated, but this appears to have fallen into disuse (Hayden 1862b: 281). In later years, these impersonations were performed on the fifth day of the Cheyennes’ Massaum ceremony (Grinnell 1972:2:335-336). In the dance, the “animal” men representing all of the important species in the Cheyenne universe danced around and then entered an enclosure where they were “hunted” by members of the Bowstring Society (the Contrary Warriors) (Hoebel 1960:17). Also the Cheyennes did not link elk to romantic attraction in the same way the Lakotas did: many attributes the Lakotas associate with the elk, the Cheyennes identify with deer.

### Deer

**[Odocoileae spp.]**

**Blacktail**

*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*

**Whitetail**

*Odocoileus virginianus dacotensis*

**Habitat & History**

Two species of deer, mule (or blacktail) *Odocoileus hemionus hemionus* and whitetail *Odocoileus virginianus dacotensis* are found in the Black Hills. At the start of the nineteenth century, according to Tabreau (in Abel 1939:76, 87), deer were very common near the Black Hills along the upper reaches of the White and Cheyenne rivers. Mule deer remained abundant especially in the southern Hills in later decades, but they were nearly hunted to extinction at the end of the nineteenth century because of market demands for their hides (Progulske 1974: 122; Turner 1974:137). Eventually, South Dakota, like other states in the region passed game laws to limit their take, and even closed hunting in 1925 so that the local population could recover. In time, their numbers rebounded. Today, over-population is a major problem facing herds of mule deer in the Black Hills (Turner 1974).

As reported in various historical writings, whitetail deer were as numerous as mule deer in the late nineteenth century, especially in the more forested sections of the northeastern Hills. Indeed, large numbers of whitetail, also known as red deer because of their rusty coloration in the summer, were killed by the expeditionary parties traveling the region in the 1870s. Dodge’s party was estimated to have killed nearly a thousand deer for food while they traveled the Hills, and Custer’s forces reportedly killed one hundred in a single day (Progulske 1974: 122). In later years, miners feasted on the deer too, and in one report, over twenty carcasses were seen hanging at an isolated mining camp in the winter of 1876 (Parker, W. 1965:83, 149). Some even earned a livelihood from hunting and selling deer meat to fellow miners and commercial establishments (Ibid.). Early residents of the Wind Cave National Park region remembered deer as the only ungulates in the area at the end of the nineteenth century (McAdam 1973: 17; Smith, A. 1973:16). Even though settlers and miners heavily hunted whitetail deer, there is no evidence that they faced extermination like the mule deer (Turner 1974:139).

### Tribal Taxonomy

The Lakotas had many different names for deer which are not only sex and age specific, as in tabloka [buck] and tawiyela [doe], or tacincala [fawn], hekaza [a yearling deer with one horn], and tahejata [a two year old deer with two prongs] (Buechel 1970:172, 472, 473, 485) but also reflect a recognition of variability within and between species. Tahca is the generic name for deer (Ibid:...
with particular species distinguished as follows: the whitetail is known as sintehanska [long tail] (Ibid:454) or sinteluluyapi [red-tail which probably refers to the color of their coats in the summertime] (Ibid:455), and the blacktail or mule deer as sintesapela [black tail]. Two other terms sintewaksapi [bob tail] (Ibid:455) and tahca itopasapa [black faced] marked unique features of individual animals within these species. This last deer, which appears with a black streak across its face, is believed to be wakan (Ibid:474). Vaotseva [bob tail raised] is the generic name for deer in Cheyenne. Black-tail are called moktaevasevavaozeva and white (or yellow tail) are known as heovova-vaozeva (Petter1913-15:351;Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:31).

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

The Lakotas and Cheyennes hunted both the whitetail and the blacktail, and like the elk, the meat of these animals was probably as important as bison during the winter months (Bordeaux 1929:126; Hoebel 1960:64; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:154-155; Grinnell 1972:1:257). Deer flesh was the meat that the Lakotas favored most after bison, and they considered it especially healthy because of the fresh leaves and berries on which the animals fed (Brown 1992:16, 30). Studies of browse utilization by deer in the Black Hills confirms this: ground juniper, bur oak, ponderosa pine, hop hornbeam, Oregon grape, bearberry, choke-cherry, buffaloberry, blue aster, pussytoes, wild rose, and yucca are among the nutritious plants they consume (Turner 1974:140).

Deer were usually found in brush and rough topography (Wedel and Frison 2001:50), where they were typically hunted by small groups and by individuals alone or with a companion. In some techniques, a noose hidden on a well-traveled path snared them. In others, they were driven into pens at popular feeding spots. Finally, they were shot with arrows because they were docile and easy to approach and kill (Hassrick 1964:167; Grinnell 1972:1:272). Other techniques involved larger groups of hunters, surrounding and driving them into pounds where entire herds were killed. Samuel Hinman (1874:93) located one such corral near Cache Butte, forty miles due east of the Buffalo Gap. In 1874, Grinnell (1875:78) encountered some Lakotas hunting whitetail deer at the head of Elk Creek, and he reported that they waited for deer near this place because it was their “eat the ground” -- in other words a salt lick. Black Elk reported sighting deer near the Buffalo Gap in May of 1874 while hunting with his father (in DeMallie 1984:155-156), and he noted other instances of deer hunts in the region when he was young (Ibid:335, 342, 357, 369). Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:47-48) recounted an incident where a man was bitten by a snake while hunting deer in the Black Hills. Standing Bear (1988:55-56) provided a good description of Lakota methods of tracking deer when he wrote:

In tracking a deer we came to know that it is a very hard animal to follow, for it watches behind so closely. A deer will watch the top of the hill, which it has just crossed and a wise hunter will go around the base of the hill in order to, deceive the animal. If a deer is sure that it is being followed, it will run some distance, then lie down and watch for its pursuer and try to locate him before going on or before exposing itself on the brow of the next hill. When hunting, we watched the direction of the wind very closely. If we did not do this, it is very likely that our game would detect us before we did it.

There is also a good description (Hassrick 1964:187-188) of Lakota techniques for butchering deer.

Among the Lakota, deerskins were soft tanned after the hair was removed, and they were used for a wide variety of garments, receptacles, and as fringing on pipes (Curtis 1907-30:3:15, 27-29, 87, 94, 137; Lyford 1940:33; Walker 1982:52, 101). Men wore
deerskin aprons, *nite’iyapehe*, when they participated in the Sun Dance. A ball of sweetgrass was wrapped in a deerskin with long fringes and tied to the braids at marriage. Love medicine was kept in deerskin bags (Curtis 1907-30:3:19, 28-29, 95, 139; Densmore 1918:125; Walker 1982:52, 101). Soft-tanned deerskins were used in mortuary practice, and they were sewn into a special wrapping, *wi’caske*, to hold a spirit bundle and into a decorated case, *pan*, which held the gifts to be given away at a spirit-keeping ceremony (Curtis 1907-30:3:100, 102, 105; Densmore 1918:188), they served as ornamentation in armlets and necklaces (Brown 1992:16), and they were used as cuplike utensils to hold paint (Walker 1982:100). Rattles were also made out of deer claws (Densmore 1948:188). Deer sinew was employed in arrow-making and for sewing (Densmore 1918:438; Standing Bear 1988:23; Brown 1992:16), the bladder functioned as a nipple to feed broth to infants (Brown 1992), and the rawhide of mule deer went into the manufacture of drumheads (Brown 1992:16). The metatarsal bones were fashioned into dice (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:325), while the phalangeal bones were used in a cup and pin game (Densmore 1948:190-191). Deer livers were taken by the Lakotas to absorb the venom of snakes when making poison arrows (Bordeaux 1929:126).

The Lakotas also applied deer parts medicinally. The tails of mule deer were used to apply ointments in healings performed by bear doctors (Powers, W. 1986:187). Deer liver was considered a good medicine to keep an infant from continuously crying (Beckwith, M. 1930:390). Louise Plenty Holes told Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier (1995:83) how a deer tendon, *takan*, was used to tie off an umbilical cord.

The Cheyenne fabricated moccasins, women’s dresses and leggings out of deerskins, and they manufactured men’s ceremonial regalia and war shields out of this material as well (Grinnell 1972:1:58, 189, 217, 221). They also covered the shafts of lances and the handholds of bighorn sheep bows with deer hide. They made necklaces from deer teeth and tails (Grinnell 1972:1:175, 187, 223, 2:124) and arrowpoints from deer antler (Grinnell 1972:1:183). Deer udders were used to feed infants (Grinnell 1972:1:106). Deer hooves decorated the sheepskin shirts of leading men (Curtis 1907-30:6:156). Pipes were fashioned from the shank bones of deer (Grinnell 1972:2:208), and these were used in calling buffalo based on a tradition the Cheyennes learned from their culture hero, Sweet Medicine, when he returned from his journey to their Sacred Mountain, Bear Butte (Stands In Timber and Liberty 1967:38). Armlets made from the hooves and skins of whitetail deer were worn by Cheyennes for dances, medicine making, or war, and according to Grinnell (1972:2:123-124), they conveyed the power of the deer to the wearer, making him able to run swiftly. He also wrote about deer tails serving as a means of protection. Cheyenne Elk Soldiers carried rattles made from a deer’s dew claws (Dorsey, G. 1905:18) and so did members of the Arapahos' Dog Men Society (Trenholm 1970:79). Deer skins were displayed in the Sun Dance because the Cheyennes believed that this animal belonged to the ceremony, and the tails of deer were worn by the dancers (Grinnell 1972:2:232, 266-267).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Lakota attitudes towards deer were highly ambivalent (Brown 1992:29-30). They were understood as powerful spirit helpers and potentially dangerous too. In some contexts, they were associated with the North Wind (Dorsey, J. 1894:422), but, more often, they were associated with the East or the West winds. Blacktail deer were considered sacred messengers of the thunder beings and linked to war (Densmore 1918:195; Beckwith, M. 1930:12n2; Powers, W. 1977:139). Members of the Sacred Bow Society attached tails of the blacktail deer to the heels of
their moccasins and also painted the insoles with designs of the animal’s tracks (Blish 1934:185). These deer were associated with endurance and the ability to withstand thirst (Densmore 1918:125). As Standing Bear wrote (1988:56):

Among our tribe there is a superstition concerning the black-tail deer. It is said that if this deer becomes aware of the hunter who is about to aim at it, the animal can deflect the bullets of the hunter and save itself. Many times I heard this story, then one day I had an amazing experience with this animal that puzzled me as it had other hunters. A friend and myself were hunting on horseback. The wind being right, we came close upon a black-tail deer before it saw us. I quickly dismounted to shoot while my companion held the reins of my horse. The deer did not run, but stood looking at me as I aimed, wagging its tail steadily back and forth. With every assurance of getting my game I fired. To my astonishment, the deer stood still and looked intently at me. I was a good marksman, the animal was only a short distance from me, and fully exposed, yet my shot had gone astray. Seven times I shot at this animal, missing every time, the deer never moving. The seventh bullet was my last and I could shoot no more. My ammunition was gone, and there the deer and I stood looking at each other. So close were we that I could see its lips twitching.

Blacktail deer dreamers, much like elk dreamers, were able to capture the reflection of others through mirrors or their sacred hoops and strike people dead through their glance (Wissler 1912:90; Powers, W. 1977:58). They also received medicines for healing (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:137). Like elk dreamers, those who dreamed of black-tail deer held special ceremonies (Wissler 1912:90; Hassrick 1964:239; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:82). Unlike elk dreamers, deer dreamers used black rather than yellow pipes. Only young men seem to have performed these dances, although they also invited virgins to carry a pipe, hoop, and forked stick in their ceremonies (Wissler 1912:90).

Blacktail deer are also associated with the Double-Woman, Winyan Nupakapi, a figure who bestows on women the gift to excel at porcupine quill work, a skill that is considered highly wakan (Wissler 1912:92; Hassrick 1964:191, 230; Sundstrom, L. 2002). The dreams of this figure took on many different conventional forms (Wissler 1912:93). Women who had such dreams were believed to faint when a mirror was flashed upon them, but they were also known to be able to use mirrors to bring harm to others (Ibid:93-94). These women were imbued with power to make effective war shields and medicines (Wissler 1912:94). Today, blacktail deer also commonly appear in Yuwipi ceremonies conducted by women (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:30, 184, 185, 198).

Whitetail deer, on the other hand, were linked to the East Wind and sexual danger (Powers, M. 1987:39-40; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:51). They're specifically linked to the figure of the Deer Woman, Tahca winyan (apparently different from the Double-Woman deer), who appears first as a human female but then transforms herself into a deer and disappears. She is featured in a well-known story recorded by Ella Deloria (1978:74-76). Unwary men who encountered this woman subjected themselves to grave danger (Dorsey, J. 1994:450-451; Wissler 1912:94-95). Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:166-167) why this deer was considered wakan:

A man loves a woman and he is always thinking of her. Perhaps when he has gone to shoot deer, the very woman he loves is sitting in the forest, laughing and looking at him, they say. So the man goes to the woman and suddenly he touches her (Ipataka) they say. And finally they lie together, they say. Then when he finishes, the man stands up and the woman too begins to stand, they say. So the man looks at the woman. And then the woman says as follows, ‘I am a White-tailed Deer Woman (con tarc winyela, the female woods deer), but I make myself look like a woman and the man is deceived,’ they say.
From that time, the man loves her (teriyaku) they say. The man who lay down with the deer returns home. The holy man tries to cure him, they say. He is very deranged (knaxhinyan), they say. If the man is very strong (wakix’ake) he will be able to live they say. Some are not able to live and so they die, it is sad. Therefore, the white-tailed deer are very much feared.

More recently, Madonna Swan (in St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:52) gave a description of the beliefs surrounding this deer figure:

We believe that certain women can appear to men as deer. Sometimes this can be dangerous. If a man is out hunting alone and he sees a doe, he shouldn’t follow her. They can be tricky. She might be a spirit deer and try to fool him. She will smell very attractive and might even appear to him as a beautiful woman. She may make him follow her by using her Deer perfume.

He will follow her a long way, and when they stop to lie down together, she will turn back into a deer and run off. This will make him confused, crazy, and he could wander until he freezes or starves to death.

According to Clark Wissler (1912:94-95), the power of the Deer Woman resided in the perfume she carried in her hoof.

While sometimes feared, deer were revered and associated with the origins of a number of different objects and rituals. They were linked to the origin of the bow and arrow (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984: 310-311, 314). When Takohe [the First Man who some believed emerged from Wind Cave] makes a young man a hunka and calls him sunk, he explains the sacred stories and rituals that involve the use of deer hooves and skins. He shows the young man how to place deer skins on an altar and make them sacred, and he tells him that only certain people who have undertaken special deeds have the privilege to have their hands painted red (Walker 1983:377-378).

The Cheyennes also carried ambivalent attitudes towards deer, whose power could be used for good or evil. Wesley Whiteman (in Schwartz 1988:55) describes them as “tricky” because they can turn themselves into other forms. The mule deer was considered a great spirit helper but also dangerous because it could shoot disease arrows from the cavities under its eyes. Doctors who carried the tail of a mule deer were able to afflict others with illness if they so desired (Grinnell 1972: 2:104). Wooden Leg told Thomas Marquis (1931:52) that the Cheyennes believed all deer had “strong spirit powers,” and he also recounted an incident where a Cheyenne man named Black Wolf encountered two beautiful women on a cliff’s edge. These women summoned him, but as he approached, he could smell a deer odor. While looking in a pool, he saw their reflection as they turned instantaneously back into their deer form (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:49-50). The association of deer with water is also indicated by the symbolic markings of the deer dancer in the Cheyenne Sun Dance, who is not only painted with the markings of dragonflies, tadpoles, and hail but carries a mirror (Powell 1969:2:796, 834, 844). In contrast to the Lakotas who associated love medicine with elk, the Cheyennes connected this kind of power to the whitetail deer (Grinnell 1972:1:134, 2: 104). As in Lakota beliefs, the female of this species was believed to be able to bring madness on a man, and Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:50-51) describes such an incident. Cheyennes who experienced difficulty in love matters wore deer tails tied with medicine on their shoulder belts (Grinnell 1972:1:134). Grinnell (1972:2:135-137) wrote a long story about a man named Black Wolf (this may have been the same person Wooden Leg talked about in reference to blacktail deer), who came upon a lodge of deer and received medicine from them that made him irresistible to women when he put his medicine on a looking-glass. He was also known as a skilled flute maker. These attributes are more typically associated with elk in Lakota traditions.
Deer figured prominently in the Cheyennes' Massaum ceremony among the animals that were impersonated and enticed into the medicine enclosure where they were symbolically killed by the Contraries (Grinnell 1972:2:333-335). They are also represented in the Sun Dance by the mud figurines children made to place around the base of the center pole; they were imitated in the paintings of one group of Sun dancers; and they were physically manifested when their tails were worn by the dancers (Dorsey, G. 1905:49; Grinnell 1972:2:232, 266-267; Powell 1969:2:796, 832, 833, 834, 844). At one time, there was a special medicine society of deer dreamers similar to the Oglalas, but no information has been published on it (Anderson 1956:93). They also appear in some of the Cheyennes most sacred texts, representing the various animals that the culture heroes Sweet Medicine and Erect Horns brought up from underneath the earth (Dorsey, G. 1905:49).

**THE ANTELOPE FAMILY**

*(ANTILOCARPRIDAE)*

**Pronghorn**

*Antilocarpa americana americana*

**Habitat & History**

Only one species from this family, the pronghorn [*Antilocarpa american americana*], is found in North America. Historically, pronghorns were the ungulate species most closely associated with the long distance migrations of animals between the Black Hills and the surrounding grasslands. In 1803, Tabeau (Abel 1939:77) had this to say about the pronghorn:

> The skin of the antelope, however, would be a very important article, if it should acquire some value. The antelope is found on the prairies in numerous herds that leave the Black Hills in the spring and return in the autumn. Thus they cross the Missouri twice. It is at these crossings that the Savages and particularly the Ricaras kill as many as they wish.

A year later, in 1804, the *engage* Gueneville told Lewis and Clark that pronghorns migrated annually to their winter homes in the Black Hills, and later an Arikara man told Clark that other animals also wintered there (Moulton 1983-87:3:179-180). Clark witnessed these migratory movements (Ibid: 3:182, 222), and on 9 April 1805, he wrote:

> ...three miles above the mouth of this creek we passed a hunting camp of Minatrees who had repaired a park and were waiting the return of the Antelope; which usually pass the Missouri at this season of the year from the Black hills on the south side, to the open plains on the north side of the river; in like manner the Antelope repasses the Missouri from N. to South in the latter end of autumn, and winter in the black hills, where there is considerable body of woodland (Ibid:4: 16).

Later observers would confirm the migrations too. In 1862, Ferdinand V. Hayden (1862b:150) described these movements as follows:

> In the beginning of the winter they may be seen for days following each other in files (if not disturbed) on their way towards the Northwest, leaving the prairie for the more rugged portions of the country near the Black hills, or the foot of the mountains. In the spring, usually about March, they may be seen returning again, and distributing themselves over the open prairie.

In 1874, George Bird Grinnell (1875:164) also reported the same pattern, and many decades later, Ernest Thompson Seton (1929:2:421) wrote, “...those on the open country about the Black Hills flock thither from all points of the compass.” According to White Bull (Vestal 1934:161), pronghorn were found in such abundance that single herds could stretch over thirty miles. By the 1890s, pronghorn were scarce in the southeastern Black Hills, although Matthew Bingham apparently still hunted them and traded their skins to local Lakotas (Bingham 1973:...
6). Alice Smith (1973:16), reported that at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, pronghorn were no longer present on her family’s ranch near Wind Cave.

Other early writers did not describe their migrations, but they did report on some of the locations where these ruminants were hunted. In 1851, Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:17, 18) mentioned the Sicangus hunting them on the upper White River, and in the same area, near Cache Butte, Samuel Hinman (1874:93) described the remains of antelope at a large abandoned pit and corral. George Hyde (1961:19) also documented this area in his history of the Sicangu leader, Spotted Tail. Northwest of the Black Hills at the headwaters of the Little Missouri River near the outskirts of Belle Fourche, South Dakota, are two other pronghorn hunting locations commonly mentioned in the oral traditions of the Cheyennes (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:88; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:85; Grinnell 1972:1:277; Hassrick 1964:167, 176; Schlesier 1987:52-61; Sundstrom, L. 2000:119-124). Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:150) described a Sicangu Lakota pronghorn hunt on the upper reaches of the White River in 1863 as follows:

The animals, being surrounded by several hundred people are driven through some gap in the hills, beyond which is a perpendicular descent of many feet, enclosed around the base with logs and brush, raised to a sufficient height to prevent them from jumping over. The antelope, once through the gap or pass, cannot recede, and the pressure of those from behind forces those in front over the descent, the rear being followed up quickly by the pursuers.

Single hunters or small parties also stalked pronghorn, White Bull (Vestal 1934:161) reported hunting them this way, and Black Elk (DeMallie 1984:155-156) described his father taking down pronghorn at the Buffalo Gap in the spring of 1874.

Pronghorn skins were commonly soft-tanned and used in making women’s dresses and leggings, men’s breech clouts and war shirts, and the upper parts of moccasins by both the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Grinnell 1972:1:189-190; Walker 1980:101). The warriors of these two tribal nations used pronghorn skin to make their shield covers (Grinnell 1972:1:189-190; Walker 1980:101). In a warparty’s encounter with a spirit wolf near the Black Hills, the participants were told the Tokalas and Cante Tinza should use pronghorn skins to cover their tipi doors (Wissler 1912:72). Cheyenne and Arapaho men made straight pipes from the shank bone of the pronghorn (Trenholm 1970:67; Grinnell 1972:2:208), and they
manufactured rattles from pronghorn dew claws (Dorsey, G. 1905:18). The Cheyennes were reported to use pronghorn udders to nurse infants (Grinnell 1972:1:106). Lakotas made medicine bags out of pronghorn ears (Densmore 1948: 177), and the Hunkpapa leader Sitting Bull was known to have possessed one of these (Densmore 1918:252). Pronghorn livers were also employed to absorb snake venom and used in the manufacture of poison arrows (Bordeaux 1929: 126).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Among the Cheyennes, the pronghorn was highly revered. Dreams of pronghorn were well-received and interpreted as a sign of good fortune (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:152; Grinnell 1972:2:104). Antelope dreamers were healers who often imitated the sounds and actions of this animal (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:153). There were elaborate ceremonies connected with catching pronghorn, which some Cheyennes remembered being performed near Belle Fourche, South Dakota (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:85; Grinnell 1972:1:280-285; Schlesier 1987: 52-61; Sundstrom, L. 2001:121-124). The antelope shaman who conducted this ceremony received his power from the Maiyun in a series of dreams, and using this power, he was able to determine where the pronghorn would be located (Hoebel 1960:65). On the fourth day of the Massaum or Animal Dance, women built a symbolic pronghorn corral into which they guided the antelope dreamers dressed in the skins of this animal (Hoebel 1960:17). In the Sun Dance, figurines of pronghorn were molded by children and placed around the base of the center pole (Dorsey, G. 1905: 49).

There is little information on the sacred significance and ceremonial role of pronghorns in Lakota culture, however. Clark Wissler (1912:95) reported that he heard about the presence of a society of antelope dreamers but received no direct information on it. Pronghorns were represented by fea-

**Carnivores**

*Carnivora*

In early historic times, many of the large carnivores, especially bears and mountain lions, were closely associated with the Black Hills. Like the ungulates on whose lives they depended, many of these carnivores were either extirpated from the Hills or their populations considerably reduced as a result of the systematic eradication efforts of Euro-

**THE CANINE FAMILY**

*Candidae*
The animals that represent the canine family, which includes coyotes, wolves, and foxes, were closely connected in the cosmologies of the Lakotas and Cheyennes and sometimes played interchangeable roles in sacred stories, songs, and performances. Wolves and coyotes were often found together near the buffalo and pronghorn herds upon whose meat they also fed (Grinnell 1972:1:288). They stood, therefore, in competition with humans. At least among the Lakotas, this resulted in some ambivalence in their attitude towards them. This was not true for the Cheyennes, however, who revered and often identified them with the great Ma'iyun in their earthly as well as celestial manifestations (Schlesier 1987:9).

**The Coyote**

*[Canis latrans latrans]*

**Habitat & History**

The coyote is a common animal over the entire Black Hills. It is one of the carnivorous species that escaped the threat of extirpation, even though it was subject to bounties and various eradication measures (Turner 1974:123-124). One early European American observer, Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:141), described them as follows:

In the Prairie or Barking Wolf, or as called by the Indians, Medicine Wolf, there is but little variation in color or appearance. It is much more abundant on the Upper Missouri than the large wolf, and collects in larger bands, which seem to act in concert in taking their prey. They are said to station themselves, when in pursuit of the antelope, in such a manner, that when one becomes wearied, a fresh one appears and takes up the chase, until the antelope is captured. They are also said to be very expert in cutting the hamstrings of buffalo, deer, and not infrequently horses. They are great enemies of the prairie dog. Multitudes may be seen at all times in their villages, waiting patiently for the dogs to make their appearance.

Coyotes were certainly abundant in the Black Hills during the nineteenth century, but they were not reported in Grinnell or Dodge’s writings. Both observers, however, commented, on the presence of their relative, the wolf (Progulske 1974:122). The coyote is one of the carnivorous species still found at Wind Cave National Park. Some of the park’s early settlers remembered coyotes being numerous in the area in the late nineteenth century (McAdam 1973:18; Smith, A. 1973:16).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

Among the Lakotas, the coyote is known by many different names, some of which seem to be confined to ceremonial contexts or storytelling traditions. The common names are ma’sleca, maya’sleca or mi’yasleca (Buechel 1970:333, 334, 336). In certain situations, the coyote may also be addressed as sunkama’nitu (Ibid:469; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:370-371), mica (Walker 1980:121), or yasle, names also given to the wolf (Deloria 1932:29). The Cheyenne call the coyote o’kohome (Petter 1913-15: 312; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:28).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Coyotes are described as important prey of the Lakotas (Hassrick 1964:168); however, there is little mention of the uses to which they were put except that their skins were worn by Lakota Dog Soldiers and sometimes used for quivers (Wissler 1912:54; Lyford 1940:33). William Bordeaux (1929:126) emphatically stated that Lakotas only ate coyotes “when in sore need of nourishment.” Lakota children commonly kept coyote cubs as pets (Bordeaux 1929:172), and boys often trapped the animal in deadfalls (Vestal 1934:7). The Cheyennes are reported to have caught coyotes in deadfall traps similar to, but larger than, the ones used for foxes (Grinnell 1972:1:299). Young coyotes
were eaten by the Cheyennes just like puppies (Ibid:256), but George Grinnell (Ibid: 2:105) claims that in earlier times no one killed coyotes.

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Among the Cheyennes, the coyote was an animal the Great Spirit sent to wander over the earth, and it was one of the animals who could talk to people (Dorsey, G. 1905:20). Some men were able to interpret the coyote’s howl (Grinnell 1972:2:105). Grinnell (Ibid.) states that coyotes “have always been considered more sacred than wolves, possibly because they are more intelligent.”

The Cheyennes once prayed to coyotes, asking them to lead, guide and warn them of danger. The Cheyennes’ sacred arrows were wrapped up in the skin of a coyote (Ibid: 2:106). Women were not allowed to handle the skins of this animal (Ibid: 2:105).

Coyotes were one of the animals that assisted Cheyennes in doctoring. Spotted Wolf told George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:151) how he once shot himself and afterwards built two fires in his tipi. While he was sitting there, a coyote entered the tipi, sat on his left side, and advised him to make a horse dance so that he could become a healer. They were also associated with warfare because of their powers of endurance and cunning. One of the Cheyenne warrior societies derived its name from this animal and used its hide, which was considered sacred, in their dances. The leader of the society carried a coyote hide with the hair left on (Dorsey, G. 1905:19).

Lakota attitudes towards the coyote were ambivalent. The coyote was considered a cunning and sly animal whose howls and droppings revealed the presence of enemies (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:213-214, 217, 335-336). In war, members of the Dog Soldier society painted themselves like coyotes, and four of their members carried coyote skins into battle (Wissler 1912:52-53). They are described in one source as the symbol of singers (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:73), and in another (Curtis 1907-30:3:74) as bearers of good news. Joe Flying By (in Ingram 1989:190), a well known religious leader from Standing Rock, talked about them as follows:

The coyotes are part of the Sunka oyate, the Dog nation. Dogs, foxes, wolves, coyotes, prairie dogs -- these are all relatives in the Sunka oyate. They were the last of the sacred people who came to the world.

In Walker’s version (Walker 1983:350-351) of the Lakota genesis story, however, coyote’s voice is described as “disagreeable,” and he is said to be unable to sing.

Historically, coyotes were known to give information on the whereabouts of bison and the location of sacred plants in visions (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:208, 225). Today, they are considered a source of healing power (Smith, D. 1949:137; Fire and Erdoes 1972:135-136; Ingram 1989:189). According to one of James Walker’s (1980:136) consultants:

One who dreams of a coyote must wear a coyote’s skin until he gets the Spirit of the Buffalo. He must cover the skin with weeds, and paint it white on the inside. He must wear it like a coyote and crawl close to the buffalo. He must have a whistle made of the bone from an eagle’s wing. He must blow carefully on this whistle and low like a bull. He must carry his bow in his right hand. When he shoots the buffalo, the Spirit of the Buffalo will be with him. He must leave the meat of the liver of the buffalo for the coyote. He must paint red around his mouth and on his hands when he is doing this. When he kills a buffalo, he may throw away the coyote skin.

Although the coyote could serve as a guardian and provide people important gifts and knowledge, he was considered mischievous, associated with theft, cowardice, treachery, and other shameful behavior (Tyon in Walker 1980:121; Walker 1983:350-351). In two important Lakota ceremonies, the Hunka and the Pte San Lowampi, the officiates warned participants against befriending the
coyote who was associated with Waziya, the North Wind and/or the Old Man of Winter. Young men were warned that if they listened to the coyote they would become cowardly, lazy, and unable to find a woman who would remain loyal to them. Young women were told that they would be poor, miserly, and unable to find a man to provide for them (Walker 1980:231-232, 249). If parents did not advise their daughters on the proper care of their first menstrual flow, coyotes would devour these remains and gain power over a woman, compelling her to do “ridiculous or disgraceful things” (Walker 1980:242). According to Thomas Tyon (Walker 1980:121), the coyote was in continual conflict with the buffalo.

Among many tribal nations of the West, the coyote is their trickster figure. Ella Deloria (1978:29) noted that he played this role in certain Lakota stories too, including one she collected entitled, “The Coyote and the Bear,” (Deloria, E. 1978:27-29). In some of the stories James Walker (1983:137, 144, 145, 147, 149-151, 152) recorded, he plays a trickster too. When coyote is not performing the role of Inktomi, the Lakotas’ central trickster figure, he is often depicted as Inktomi’s companion. Coyote and wolf once entrapped Inktomi in his nefarious schemes, but eventually Inktomi made them his allies with the promise that “he would do nothing to make them ashamed” (Walker 1983:296). Indeed, Old Horse told Walker (1980:129) that “Iktomi rides wolves and coyotes.” He is sometimes depicted as the son of Iya, a glutinous monster who acts as an adversary of the bison bull, Tatanka (Tyon in Walker 1980:121, 147, Walker 1980:222, 231-232, Herman in Walker 1980:249).

Wolf
[Canis lupis irremotus]

Habitat & History

The grey wolf was once a common animal in the Black Hills and surrounding prairies, where according to Taber (in Abel 1939:78), it followed the herds of bison. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, grey wolves remained common, shadowing the great herds of ruminants (Hayden 1862b:141). Feltskog (in Parkman 1969:419) quotes an early Kansas trapper and hunter, J.R. Mead, who wrote:

Lobo, the mountain wolf, locally known as ‘big gray,’ were congeners and associates of the buffalo, and lived almost exclusively upon them. Each wolf would kill in the course of the year, it is fair to assume, a dozen buffalo, many of them calves; but they with equal facility, could kill the strongest bull, and did whenever appetite or circumstances made it most convenient.

Wolves were still common in the Black Hills during the 1870s, as reported by Grinnell (1875:75) and Dodge (1965:176). Indeed, Grinnell (1875:75) noted “that hardly a day passed without my seeing several.” They were commonly sighted by early European American settlers in the area of Wind Cave National Park as well (McAdam 1973:18; Smith, A. 1973:16). Yet, within half a century, the animal became extinct as a result of various private and state-sponsored eradication efforts (Turner 1974:125). The descendants of early European American settlers in eastern Custer County recalled the days when local ranchers and government hunters set out to eradicate wolves on private and public land (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70:253-254, 347, 676). According to Sven Froiland (1978:138), the last reported sighting of the grey wolf in the Black Hills took place in 1928. Since that date, no efforts have been made to reintroduce it to the area.
Tribal Taxonomy

In the Lakota language, there are many different names for the wolf, some of which also apply to the coyote, and they indicate that the two animals were understood as companions and closely related to each other. Some of the ascriptions probably identify species variations, but others appear to refer to alternate names used mostly in ceremonial contexts. Caksi, yak'e (Buechel 1970:115), huhatopa [four legged] (Ibid: 187), and sunkama'nitu tanka [large holy dog] (Ibid:469) are four of the Lakota names for wolf. Maca (generic) and its variants also refer to the coyote, ma’yaca or mi’yaca [denotes the prairie wolf, which is an old ascription for coyote], and ma’yasle [refers to a small species of wolf] (Ibid:327, 334, 336). The Cheyennes’ generic name for wolf is ho?nehe or ho?neheo’o, and then there are names that designate the coloration of a wolf’s hide, white, yellow, red, grey, or black. For example, Mo?ohtaaho?nehe is black wolf, and na?eho?nehe is red wolf (Petter 1913-15:115-116; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976: 122). There are also names in Cheyenne that distinguish other anatomical characteristics, like white faced wolf or that refer to a social status as in lone wolf (Petter 1913-15:115-116). The Cheyenne names reflect not only their high regard for this animal, but also the great variation within the species. Hayden (1862b: 141) wrote:

This animal varies so much in color that the traders on the Upper Missouri suppose that there are four or five species. I have seen them differing in color from an almost snowy whiteness to a dark brown or black, and was at first induced to attribute this difference to age and sex, but Mr. Zephyr, an intelligent trader, informed me that he had noticed the same variations of color in all ages.

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

Lakotas and Cheyennes hunted wolves regularly for their meat and skins (Bordeaux 1929:126; Hoebel 1960:64; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:168; Grinnell 1972:1:256, 2:198). Wolf pups were also kept as pets, and according to Black Elk (in DeMal-lie 1984:318), a Lakota named Moves Walking trained the wolves he reared to become pack dogs. Before and even after the arrival of horses, dogs were vital to the Lakotas as beasts of burden, a means of protection, and also in hunting (Hassrick 1964:156-159).

The Cheyennes hunted wolves for their meat and their skins as well (Hoebel 1960: 64; Grinnell 1972:1:256, 2:198). Some Cheyennes reported that wolf meat was desirable, but a few claimed otherwise. Wooden Leg (Marquis 1931:90) and Iron Teeth (in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9), for instance, reported that only the pups had palatable meat, and these were eaten only when other food was scarce. Wolves were trapped by the Cheyennes in deep holes, baited with meat and covered with leaves and twigs, although smaller wolves were sometimes caught in pens (Grinnell 1972: 297-299). They were also once hunted in the Black Hills area on horseback, according to the Cheyenne Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:7).

Among the Cheyennes and Arapahos, men wore wolf skins like ponchos on raiding and hunting forays (Grinnell 1972:1:300, 2:72; Trenholm 1970:66). The members of the Bow String society wore caps of wolf skin (Dorsey 1905:55), and strips of wolf fur were used to tie the antelope hunting pole to its hoop (Grinnell 1972:1:284). Wolf skins were attached to some of the vikuts that warriors used for carrying water (Grinnell 1972:2:24), and they were made into coverings on which wolf dreamers slept (Grinnell 1972:2:78). In another kind of vikut, the figure of a wolf was carved halfway down the staff, and the fork that carried the cup
was known as the “wolf’s road” (Grinnell 1972:2:78). Narrow strips of wolf skin were also used to tie a warrior’s hair in a top knot above his forehead, and also tied around his neck (Grinnell 1972:2:25). Wolf claws and teeth were affixed to shields for protection from enemies, and the hair of a yellow wolf was used in a treatment for women who experienced difficulty in childbirth (Moore, J. 1974a:176).

The Cheyennes would not allow women to handle wolf hides in earlier times, but in their more recent history, women underwent a special ceremony that enabled them to tan them without getting palsy (Grinnell 1972:1: 105, 2:198-200). The Lakotas insisted that only virgins tan wolf hides for ceremonial purposes (Walker 1982:95).

Lakota men who dreamed of the wolf had the right to carry or wear the skins of this animal and act as scouts on war parties (Wissler 1912:90-91; Walker 1982:95). The lances of the Blotanka Society, for example, were covered with wolf skin, and these had to be made by men who dreamed of the wolf. Wolf skin was used in this context because the “wolf knows everything” (Wissler 1912:57-58). In an encounter with a spirit wolf near the Black Hills, a war party is told that the Cante Tinza, the Brave Heart Society, should place a wolf skin at their tipi door (Ibid:72).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Lakotas and the Cheyennes envisioned the wolf as a scout or spy, who was able to communicate with humans in various ways, warning them of danger and death as well as predicting the direction of enemies and animals (Densmore 1918:180; Grinnell 1972:2:17-18, 106-107; Walker 1982:160, 1982:95; Powers, W. 1986:187). Cheyenne men, who were able to interpret the howling of wolves, turned back on a war party if a wolf was killed (Grinnell 1972:2:105). According to the Lakota Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980: 121), the wolf “presided over the chase and war parties.” Wolf dreamers were especially important to the Lakotas in helping to locate bison because wolves often traveled in the shadows of the herds. They also played an important role in guiding war parties (Tyon in Walker 1980:121). According to William Powers (1986:186): “In the old days warriors about to embark against the enemy employed the Sungmanitu Kaga to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy.” Members of the Hanskaska, Chief Society or Big Bellies, were also reported to receive special warnings and directions from wolves in military matters (Wissler 1912:38-39).

In the Sun Dances of the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, when the sacred cottonwood tree is cut down, a scout imitates the howls and actions of a wolf as he brings news of the “enemy” to the camp (Sword in Deloria 1929:394; Grinnell 1972: 2:229, 248; Standing Bear 1975:116; Tyon in Walker 1980: 178). The leader of a Hunka ceremony gave wolf howls when he searched for the children who were honored (Densmore 1918:74, 76). The act of making a wolf howl is called houya “to summon a voice” (Powers, W. 1986:186), but Pete Catches (1990:109) says this howling is called akisa [to shout or cheer on] (see also, Buechel 1970:75, 186).

Wolves were highly wakan to the Lakotas, and they were known as the messengers of Waziya (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, Sword, and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:101, Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:125, Tyon in Walker 1980:160) and able to produce wind or fog when they howled (Wissler 1912:91; Brown 1992:35). Warriors emulated wolves because they were hardy, fast, and agile (Densmore 1918:71; Wissler 1912:91). They were valued for their stealth and ability to come upon a camp unseen (Tyon in Walker 1980:160). Those who dreamed of wolves were given powers to create foggy weather conditions. A day of dense mist and fog was known as a “wolf”s day” (Wissler 1912:54, 91). Finally, wolves were considered wise and crafty (Wissler 1912:57-58; Brown 1992:36-37). As Charging Thunder Densmore (1918:183):
The old wolf said that by the aid of this pipe I would be able to outwit the wisest and craftiest of my enemies. I made the pipe as he directed and carried it on the warpath and had good success. It did not look any different from an ordinary pipe, but it had been ‘made sacred’ by a medicine man.

Wolf figures were highly respected as guardian spirits, especially by warriors (Densmore 1918:179-183; Hassrick 1964:84; Tyon in Walker 1980:160). The men who dreamed of wolves constituted an informal association, Sunkmanitou ihanblapi or Sunkmanitou kaga, whose members performed ceremonies to demonstrate their visionary powers (Dorsey, J. 1894: 480-481; Powers, W. 1977:58; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:82). They wore wolf skins on their backs, arms, and legs, and covered their head with a rawhide mask. Their bodies were painted white and their appendages red. Warriors conducted wolf performances before going on raids, and only men who dreamed of a wolf twice were eligible to participate. Wolf performers piped on grouse whistles inserted through their masks, and they carried a rope called the Zuzeca kaga, which they moved in imitation of the slithering motions of a snake (Densmore 1918:179; Wissler 1912:90-91; Powers, W. 1986:186; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:195). Wolf Society members were able to cure various sicknesses, but they were most well-known for preparing war medicines and making remedies to remove arrows (Powers, W. 1977:158; Sword in Walker 1980:90-91; Standing Bear 1988:103). Wolves are closely connected to the kinnikinick or bearberry plant, and it is through a wolf that the Lakotas learned of its use (Standing Bear 1988:103). Wolf dreamers also made highly effective protective wotawi (war amulets) and war shields (Wissler 1912:90-91; Walker 1982:95). According to Clark Wissler (1912: 52-53), the Dog Soldier military association may have been named at one time the Wolf Society because the mythical founder and patron of the group is a wolf.

In the Lakota scheme of things, the wolf was considered the leader of the animals classed as “diggers” (Walker 1983:271), but in the gathering of the animals, it travels with other carnivores (Walker 1983:349). Like the coyote, the wolf was seen as an important ally and partner of Inktomi (Thunder Bear in Walker 1980:129; Walker 1983:168-170, 173). Indeed, the wolf played a very important role in helping Inktomi entice the Pte Oyate to the surface of the world in the Tokahe story associated with Wind Cave (Walker 1917:181-182). Also, like coyotes, Lakota sentiments about wolves were often ambivalent. On the one hand, they could be associated with nefarious activities as servants of Anog Ite, the Double Face woman, or the helpers of Inktomi (Walker 1983:376). In the Hunka ceremony, an elder woman goes to the top of a hill where she wails a song to keep the wolf away from the camp. In this context, the wolf, which is considered a helper to the North Wind, is associated with misfortune and sorrow (Walker 1980:222). But on the other hand, the wolf could be represented as a guardian and protector of the people as in different renditions of the famous story of the Lakota woman who lived with the wolves (Deloria 1932:121-122; Hassrick 1964:138-139; Herman 1965b:6; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:115-117). In one of the stories of Piya (a Stone Boy figure), the wolf, along with the turtle and the meadowlark, offer protective powers to the protagonist (Walker 1983:127-128, 130). Or in another story, a female wolf refuses to cooperate with Inktomi by giving him meat, which she says is only for her little ones who are hungry (Walker 1983:349-350).

The Cheyenne held the wolf in high regard. They believed the wolf was the most tricky and cunning of all the animals and the friendliest one as well (Dorsey, G. 1905:34; Grinnell 1972:2:125). Wolves were much respected as spiritual guardians (Grinnell 1972:2:112-113), and it was considered an honor for wolves and coyotes to eat the flesh of dead warriors who were left on the prairie (Ibid:2:163). Wolves were strongly
associated with warfare, and while on a warparty, it was forbidden to point a knife in their direction (Ibid:2:125). The wolf served as a patron for the Bow String or Wolf Warrior Society (Ibid:2:72). In the origin story of this organization, it was told that Owl Friend once got caught in a blizzard and was rescued by wolves that brought him into their lodge. The wolves told Owl Friend that they are more cunning than any other animal and that they held the whole earth for their home. They blessed Owl Friend and spent four days teaching him the details of the warrior society he initiated (Dorsey 1905:28; Grinnell 1972:2:73-78). Wolves are also associated with romantic attraction, and Cheyenne love songs are often referred to as “wolf songs” (Moore, J. 1974a:176).

Although Lakotas revered wolves and coyotes, these animals did not occupy the same exalted status as they did among the Cheyennes who regarded them as one of the primary spiritual masters or game keepers of the animals (Grinnell 1972:1:334-336; Schlesier 1987:98). It was in the Cheyennes’ Massaum or Animal Dance that the wolf figured most prominently. This ceremony, which was historically practiced in the Black Hills, was the symbolic recreation of their origin story, in which the spirit of a male wolf saves the culture heroes of the Cheyenne, Mosteyev or Sweet Medicine, and the Suhtaiyo, Tomsi’vis or Erect Horns, and instructs them in the teachings of life (Grinnell 1972:2:285; Schlesier 1987:53-54, 76-80). The ceremony, which lasts five days, involves the making of a wolf lodge that represents the universe before creation and the home of the wolves and their assistants, the foxes, which represent the spirit masters of the animals released from heszevoxsz (the underworld). These spirit masters control the hunting of predators, including humans (Grinnell 1972:287-291; Schlesier 1987:80-83, 90-92, 98). On the second day, wolf and fox skins were brought into the lodge and laid down on the north side near the sacred buffalo skull (Grinnell 1972:291-296; Schlesier 1987:92-96). On the third day of the ceremony, Ehyophstah (Yellow Haired Woman) was reincarnated and prepared the skin of Maheone honehe, the sacred male red (or yellow) wolf who was the manifestation of Nonoma, the Thunder. Later, an elderly woman of the Young Wolf Society was called into the lodge and instructed to bring the two men who were selected to prepare the Evevsev honehe, the sacred white female wolf, a manifestation of Esceheman, the Earth, and the kit fox, Voh’kis, a representation of Ehyophstah who acted as a servant of the two wolves. The male wolf’s hide was carefully prepared, stretched, combed and painted with an elaborate cosmological design, and the skins of the female wolf and the assistant kit foxes were attended to ceremoniously as well (Grinnell 1972:296-300; Schlesier 1987:96-98). The preparations of the skins continued into the fourth day. In the evening, the wolves marked their trails and set the four directions outside the lodge where the elderly female, “Young Wolves,” built a sacred pound and where the lodges of other animals were erected outside its periphery (Grinnell 1972:2:300-309; Schlesier 1987:99-103). On the fifth and final day, the wolf skins were displayed on a travois outside the lodge where offerings were made to them by children. Later in the day, the wolf impersonators and their kit fox assistants led the other animal impersonators into the enclosure where they were symbolically consecrated, hunted, and killed. At the end of the ceremony, the sacred coyote appeared and made the food available for distribution to the people (Grinnell 1972:2:309-334; Schlesier 1987:104-106).

Grey Fox
(Urocyon cinereoargentus ocythous)

Red Fox
(Vulpis vulpes regalis)

Habitat & History

In 1803, Tabeau (in Abel 1939:81) wrote that the grey fox, Urocyon cinereoargentus
ocynthous, was very common in regions west of the Missouri River and that the red fox, while present, was not as common as its grey cousin. Sixty years later, Ferdinand V. Hayden (1962b:142) noted that the red fox, *Vulpis vulpes regalis*, was common to the area and that its fur was highly valued by local traders. Presently, the red fox is the only species reported in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park, although Lt. Richard Dodge (1965:123) saw both red and grey foxes in the area in 1875. The likelihood of the Swift Fox, also known as Kit Fox, *Vulpes velox herbes*, being in the Black Hills has been questioned by some writers (Froiland 1978:149). Nonetheless, Hayden (1862b) reported that it was very common near prairie dog villages at locations west of the Missouri River, and Decost Smith (1949:68) said it was one of the animals most affected by the poison baits Euro-americans used to kill predators in this area.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In Lakota, the fox goes by three different names, *sungila* (little dog, the fox generically), *tokala* (little enemy, specifically the small grey fox or kit fox), whose food is white and pink prairie clover, and *wicasihanhan* which refers to a small fox (Buchel 1970:468, 495, 577). In the Cheyenne language, the fox is called *ma?ohoohoe* or alternatively *vohkeso* or *vohkeseho* [crooked], referring to the crooked manner by which the fox travels (Petter 1913-15:500; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:43), while the kit fox or small grey fox is known as *wuhi'is* (Grinnell 1972:2:301).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

The Lakotas and Cheyennes hunted foxes for their furs using pens, deadfalls, and a variety of other trapping techniques (Vestal 1934:7; Hoebel 1960:64; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:167, 168; Grinnell 1972:2:298-299). Fox skins were stripped into pieces for a Lakota game known as “fox choking” (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:325). Fox skins were worn around the neck of Lakota Kit Fox soldiers and adorned the Tokala’s lances. Fox bones were also fastened to an otter skin and worn on the forehead, and rattles with fox skin guards were used by the Tokala too (Wissler 1912:15 16, 72). The wearing of these regalia came directly from the society’s origin story as told by Thomas Tyon to James Walker (1980:268-269). The whips of the Wic’iska (White Marked Society) had fox skin on their guards (Wissler 1912:35), and the wrist guards worn by members of the Hanskaska Society were made of fox skin too (Ibid:38).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The fox was much admired by the Lakotas for his persistent strength and courage, wily, clever, and cunning nature, as well as his gentleness, nimbleness, and swiftness (Wissler 1912:14; Standing Bear 1978:143, 215; Brown 1997:27). The fox was the symbol of one of the most important warrior societies among the Lakotas, the Tokala or Kit Foxes. This association has been reestablished among the Lakotas in recent years. In historic times, the society was formed to keep order and harmony in Lakota camps and to protect and oversee the movements of camps. Its members policed some of the hunts, and they went out against tribes who invaded Lakota lands (Wissler 1912:14-23; Standing Bear 1978:143-147; Walker 1980:193, 268). According to Luther Standing Bear (1978:143-147), the fox sacrificed himself so that men could wear his skin and acquire his qualities. Men who became kit foxes were expected to be reliable, active, and alert like foxes; they carried clubs rather than arrows. Their pipe bearer appealed to Waziyata for aid, suggesting that, like the coyote and the wolf, the fox was associated with the North Wind (Wissler 1912:19). Further details on the origins, functions, offices, ceremonies, and regalia of the Tokalas are found in James Walker (1980:260-263, 264-266, 268-270, 272-274), Clark Wissler (1912:14-23), and Royal B. Hassrick’s writings (1964:16, 18-21, 22-24, 133-34, 144).
The dances of the Tokalas were also believed to have healing effects because they induced rest and sleep among the participants. The men who dreamed of foxes, tokala inh-anblapi, played an important role in certain forms of curing, and they had knowledge of special herbs and roots too. As Standing Bear described this (1978:215):

The fox had knowledge of underground things hidden from human eyes, and this he shared with the dreamer telling him of roots and herbs that were healing and curing; then he shared his powers of swiftness and cleverness as well as gentleness. The fox would be holy to the dreamer who would wear in his ceremonies the skin of the animal, and the brotherhood being sworn, the Fox dreamer never hunted or killed the fox. He obtained the skin from those who did.

According to Francis Densmore (1918:314-316), the names for wolves, foxes, and coyotes were often interchangeable as were many of the ceremonial songs associated with these animals. Like other members of the canine family, the fox was regarded as highly wakan by the Lakotas (Walker 1980:101).

In the sacred stories of the Lakotas, the fox is often portrayed as one of the wisest animals. Fox asks the most important question concerning who should be appointed chief by Ksa, the Spirit of Wisdom in the Lakota genesis story (Walker 1983:278). He travels with the wolves, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, lynx, wild cats, and mountain lions to the gathering of the animals and presides over all the animals when the deception of Gmaski is revealed (Walker 1983:359, 362).

The fox also served as a symbol for one of the Cheyennes’ military societies, the Who-kesh’hetaniu, originally created by Sweet Medicine (Grinnell 1972:2:48, 374; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:60). According to John Stands in Timber (1967:60), “The Swift Fox is a beautiful animal, fleet of foot, who never lets his prey get away from him.” As among the Lakotas, Cheyenne Fox Soldiers, who dressed in fox skins, maintained their own lodge and ceremonies, and they were noted for their bravery (Grinnell 1972:2:56-57). They also played an important role in the Cheyenne Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:231, 249, 250, 344). Wooden Leg told Thomas Marquis (1931:56) that the foxes were one of the three most important soldier societies among the Cheyennes.

In the Cheyenne Animal Dance or Massaum, along with the wolf skins placed at the altar, a fox skin was laid on top of the buffalo skull that stood at its center. Two men who dreamed of foxes impersonated the animal, entering the lodge adorned in fox skins that were later painted yellow and blue; they danced towards the altar and around the circle inside the lodge. In the ceremony, the foxes were closely affiliated with those who represented the wolves, and like the birds who were painted in the story of the Great Race, they represented the hunters rather than prey (Grinnell 1972:2: 300-301, 323-334).

**THE FELINE FAMILY**

[FELIDAE]

**Bobcat**

*Lynx rufus pallescens*

**Lynx**

*Lynx canadensis canadensis*

**Mountain Lion**

*Felis conncolor hippoclestes*

**Habitat & History**

The feline family is represented by three species in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park: the bobcat [*Lynx rufus pallescens*], the mountain lion [*Felis conncolor hippoclestes*], and the lynx [*Lynx canadensis canadensis*] (Turner 1974: 133-134; Froiland 1978:148). Of these, the bobcat is very common in the Hills, while the mountain lion and the lynx are rare (Froiland
In the past, however, mountain lions were listed as one of the animals typically found in the Black Hills (Denig in Ewers 1961:6). In 1862, Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:140) made this observation about wild cats:

Though seldom seen by the traveller, this animal is not rare in any part of the country drained by the Missouri and its tributaries. It is very often caught in traps which the traders set for wolves. The flesh of the wild cat is not unfrequently used for food by the Indians and its skin for ornamental purposes. In the month of January, 1855, I attempted to cross the prairie from Pinnau’s spring to the Fur Company’s trading-houses near the forks of the Shyenne river, a distance of about thirty miles. Losing my course, I wandered for two days...on the third day came to a lodge of Sioux Indians who had separated from their band, and were subsisting on the products of each day’s hunt. The old chief offered me kindly the hospitality of his hut, which I gladly accepted, and on entering the lodge found the inmates quietly watching the carcass of a large wild cat, which was roasting before the fire. As soon as the meat was cooked, the Indians ate of it with keen relish, and placed a portion before me, and though almost famished with hunger, one mouthful was sufficient to satisfy me, and I gladly turned to the more palatable meat of Black-tailed Deer. These animals are caught every year to a greater or lesser extent at Fort Pierre...

In the 1870s, mountain lions and bobcats were still reported as common in the Hills, but lynx were said to be rare (Grinnell 1875:74; Progulske 1974:122; Turner 1974:133-134). After European American settlers homesteaded on lands in and around the western border of Wind Cave National Park in the 1890s, bobcats continued to be numerous in the area, but mountain lions, while sighted, were uncommon (McAdam 1973:17-18; Smith, A. 1973:16).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Lakotas call the bobcat *igmu gleska* or *igmu’ gleza* [spotted cat], the lynx, *igmu hota* [grey cat], and the mountain lion, *igmu’watogla* [wild or skiddish cat] (Buchel 1970:215). In Cheyenne, the lynx is named *moxkav* (Petter 1913-15:676) and the cougar, *nanose?hame* [he’s the best of all] (Petter 1913-15:794; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:63).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

George Bird Grinnell (1972:1:256) reported that the cubs of various wild cats were commonly eaten by the Cheyennes, but only in times of starvation. The Lakotas also hunted cats. White Bull (in Vestal 1934:162) remembered seeing them in the Black Hills, and another Lakota was reported in a winter count to have killed four mountain lions in the Hills during the year 1845 (Praus 1962:16). Some Lakotas were known to have eaten them too, as Hayden reported, but their consumption was considered very dangerous (Bordeaux 1929:126; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:168). Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:169):

> Whoever mutilates (wicayupxun) a mountain lion or a wild cat or even a house cat will have terrible things happen to him, it is said. That man’s hand or foot becomes completely dislocated (iataya nupxunpansun), it is said. Therefore, nobody eats cats, they believe. They are very afraid of them...

Royal B. Hassrick (1964:199) also reported that people had to take care when butchering wildcats and not tear their joints; otherwise, they would suffer joint pain. The Lakotas and Cheyennes valued the skins of wildcats for making quivers (Lyford 1940:33; Hassrick 1964; Grinnell 1972:184).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Although wildcats were known to possess spiritual power, with mountain lions considered to be especially *wakan* (Grinnell 1972; Walker 1980:101), there is hardly any information about them in ethnographic sources on the Lakotas or the Cheyennes.
John Moore (1974a:240) claims the Cheyennes classed felines and mustelids together because of the strong smell of their urine. Neither family of animals had any religious significance, even though their various species were considered powerful. In the Lakota genesis story, the bobcat, lynx, and mountain lion were linked together with wolves, raccoons, skunks, and coyotes as traveling companions to the great council of the animals in the Lakota genesis story (Walker 1983:359), and the lynx is also mentioned earlier in the story and classified with the category of animals who possess claws (Walker 1983:271-272).

THE BEAR FAMILY
[URSIDAE]

Black Bear
[Ursus americanus americanus]

Grizzly Bear
[Ursus arctos horribilis]

Habitat & History

Two species from the Ursidae family were associated historically with the Black Hills: these are the black bear [Ursus americanus americanus] and the grizzly bear [Ursus arctos horribilis]. William Clark wrote in 1804: “The Black hills is Said to abound in Bear of every kind...” (Moulton 1983-87:3:482). Tabeau (in Abel 1939:163) recounted a year earlier that black bears were common to this region. A half century later, Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961:6) also mentioned bears as common to the Hills and so did E. De Giradin (1936:62). Another Missouri River fur trader, Thaddeus Culbertson (1952:57), writing in 1851, stated:

Last night we had a good deal of talk around our fire about the Black Hills. Joe, an experienced hunter, tells me that they are covered with the finest pine timber so thick that a person on horseback cannot pass through it in some places. There is an abundance of fine water but no fish; plenty of other game. Grizzly bears are found there sometimes in bands like buffalo; they live on fruit, meat, and ants; to get to these they turn over the largest logs and eat them off the underside if there.

These reports, coming as they did from the vantage point of the Missouri River, or in the case of Culbertson, the outskirts of the Hills proper, might have been exaggerated. But even as late as the 1870s, Grinnell (1875:76) and Dodge (1965:132-133) described the populations of grizzly and black bear as common. By the late nineteenth century, the grizzly was no longer observed in the Hills (Turner 1974:127-128; Froiland 1978:138). The black bear survived but in considerably reduced numbers (Turner 1974:126-127). Today, the black bear has largely disappeared from the Hills and is no longer found at Wind Cave National Park (Turner 1974:126-127; Froiland 1978:139). At the turn of the twentieth century, Fannie McAdam (1973:17), who grew up on a nearby ranch reported that there were no bears in the Wind Cave area.

Tribal Taxonomy

In Lakota, the black bear is called mato and its cub is known as matocincala (Buechel 1970:334), while the grizzly is called by many names including mato hota [grey bear] and sake’hansa [long claw] (Ibid:334, 460). Waonze and waowescia are alternate names for the grizzly (Ibid:543). In the Lakotas’sacred language, the bear is addressed as Hu nunpa [two-legged] (Walker 1980:50, 94). Cheyennes have many names for the bear also. Their generic name is nahkohe or nahkohe’o, and then there are gender and age names as well as names that represent coloration, such as mato’otse-nahkohe [a brown colored black bear] and vohpahtse-nahkohe [white-mouthed bear or grizzly] (Petter 1913-15:99-101; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:6).
Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

Bears were hunted by the Lakotas and Cheyennes (Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Grinnell 1972:1:290), and at least among the Lakotas, they were typically captured in deadfalls (Hassrick 1964:167). Bear meat was eaten by the Cheyennes (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:90) and by the Lakotas (Bordeaux 1929:126; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:157). James Howard (1965:41) reported the Poncas remembered hunting bears in the Black Hills during the winter months, and White Bull (in Howard 1998:24) also recalled hunting bears in the area when he was younger.

Bear skins were considered very sacred by both tribes. The Lakotas prohibited menstruating women from tanning them less they get hairy or acquire scabs and black splotches on their faces and hands. It was only after menopause that women took on this task (Hassrick 1964:249; Walker 1980:159). Similarly, Cheyenne women were prohibited from dressing the hide of a bear. It was believed that the soles of a woman’s feet would crack or her face would become hairy like a bear’s should she engage in such activity. This task was done either by men or by women from other tribes (Grinnell 1972:1:198, 2:105).

Among the Lakotas, bear skins were worn only by bear dreamers, Mato ihanblapi, in their ceremonies and healing rites (Walker 1980:159; Powers, W. 1977:58). Bear guts, which have an iridescent quality, were cut into strips to tie eagle feathers on to the lower end of the bows used by members of the Oglala’s Sacred Bow Society (Blish 1934:183; Brown 1992:18). Among the Cheyennes, they were tied to the bows carried by the Contraries (Grinnell 1972:1:81). The Lakotas also used bear claws in association with warfare because they were believed to offer protection to the wearer (Densmore 1918:267; Bordeaux 1929:112; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:167, 178-179, 230, 278), and in connection with healing to clean wounds (Densmore 1918:253; Standing Bear 1978:215). The Cheyennes took the skins of the black bears, which they considered sacred, to cover their war shields. They also attached bear claws to these shields (Grinnell 1972:188, 193, 194, 198-199, 290, 2:74) and tied them on the head of the yellow-painted dancer in their Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:280). The Cheyennes also used the hind leg bones of bears to make fleshers (Curtis 1907-30:5:156).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Bears were highly revered by the Lakotas, who associated them with numerous qualities including strength, courage, and wisdom (Walker 1980:50-51, 53, 116, 121, 128, 227; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995: 109-110). The grizzly bear was considered the principal guardian of wisdom (Walker 1980:50-51, 94). With respect to courage, Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:53) had this to say: “The bear is not only a powerful animal in body but powerful in will also. He will stand and fight to the last. Though wounded he will not run but will die fighting.” The black bear, matosapa, was believed to preside over bravery, but also fun and mischief as well as the emotions of love and anger (No Flesh in Walker 1980:116; Tyon in Walker 1980:121). The bear was associated with success in warfare, and it was approached to insure the proper conduct of sacred ceremonies, including the Sun Dance and the Hunka (Walker 1980:227, 231, 232). Both species of bears, especially the grizzly, were closely linked to herbal medicine and healing (Dorsey, J. 1894:495). As Siyaka told Francis Densmore (1918:195):

The bear is quick-tempered and is fierce in many ways, and yet he pays attention to herbs which no other animal notices at all. The bear digs these for his own use. The bear is the only animal which eats roots from the earth and is also especially fond of acorns, june berries, and cherries. These three are frequently compounded with other herbs in making medicine, and if a person is fond of cherries we say he is like a bear. We consider the bear as chief of all animals in
regard to herb medicine, and therefore it is understood that if a man dreams of a bear he will be expert in the use of herbs for curing illness. The bear is regarded as an animal well acquainted with herbs because no other animal has such good claws for digging roots.

As a matter of practical observation, Standing Bear (1988:49-51) wrote about the bear as follows:

The bear is very sensitive to the presence of man or other creatures and relies upon his nose a great deal to warn him. Standing up on his hind legs, he will thrust his nose in the air and sniff in all directions. In this way he keeps apprised of the things about him. In the matter of food the bear eats everything that the Indian eats. He likes the wild turnip that we used to dig up for food. With his long claws he digs up this plant and enjoys it very much. All the wild fruit that we ate, he ate also. For meat he would catch small animals and deer. He has a very clever way of hiding if he wishes to surprise a deer. He selects a spot along the deer path and burrows into the ground a hole large enough to cover his body. He gets into the hole and carefully spreads himself with grass and leaves until he is hidden. Here he is until the deer comes along, and out he jumps with a swish and is upon the surprised deer. Always he strikes with the left paw, for he is left-handed.

In many ways he is so much like a human that he is interesting to watch. He has a large amount of human vanity and likes to look at himself. Before we had looking-glasses, we would look at ourselves in a clear pool of water. This the bear does, too, and I suppose he thinks, ‘Well, I’m not such a bad-looking fellow,’ for he walks away after an inspection of himself quite satisfied, and as for myself I do not see why he should not be. He is wise and clever and probably knows it. He likes to beautify himself by painting his face with earth mixed with water. He finds a clear pool in which he can plainly see himself, then takes some earth in his paw and mixes it with water until he has a paste. This he spreads on the left side of his face, never on the right side. Then he looks at himself in his mirror of water. If not satisfied with his first attempt at beautifying, he repeats his work until he has the side of his face fixed up as he should have it.

He hides himself away in some safe cave or hollow log and sleeps through the winter when other animals are braving the storms trying to get food enough to pull through until spring.

In Lakota cosmology, the bear was classed by James Walker (1980:50-51, Lone Bear in Densmore 1918:128) as a supreme spiritual figure among the Tobtob (4x4), standing in the third rank of subordinate gods, which included Tatanka, the Four Winds, and the Whirlwind. The bear was highly wakan (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, Sword, and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:101:101), and one of the messengers of the Thunders (Beckwith, M. 1930:12n412). The bear is another animal who embodies the power of the whirlwind (Wissler 1905:262). Although the bear is associated in some contexts with the Thunders and the West Wind, he is also mentioned as coming from the direction of the North Wind, Waziyata, in a healing song recorded by Francis Densmore (1918:197). As Lone Bear (in Walker 1980: 128) said of the bear’s sacredness:

Hunonp is the language of the shamans. It is the Spirit of the Bear who is of the Tobtob. He taught the shamans all their secrets. No one can talk with Hunonp without understanding the language of the shamans. The Bear knows all things about Tobtob. He knows all things about medicines. He took pity on the Sioux when the spirits were angry with them. The spirits were angry with the Sioux because they left the middle of the world.

This idea was reiterated by Two Shields (in Densmore 1918:195) who said:

The bear is the only animal which is dreamed of as offering to give herbs for the healing of man. The bear is not afraid of either animals or men and it is considered ill tempered, and yet it is the only animal which has shown us this kindness; therefore
the medicines received from the bear are supposed to be especially effective.

The Lakota who dreamed of bears were expected to become healers (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, Sword, and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:105). Establishing a spiritual relation with bears was highly regarded by the Lakotas because it allowed healers to treat “all ordinary diseases” (Tyon in Walker 1980:161). William Bordeaux (1929: 109) indicates that these healers had knowledge of roots to treat severe forms of pleurisy, and they had the ability to “suck” illnesses out of their patients. In addition, these healers were also able to treat the wounded (Wissler 1912:88; Walker 1980:90, 91; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:178-179, 278; Ingram 1989:182). Indeed, only people who received bear medicine were allowed to treat most kinds of wounds (Walker 1980:105, 161).


At the feast the medicines are displayed. Sometimes a shaman displays his abilities by suddenly hitting the earth upon which a turnip or a small cedar tree springs up. An informant heard of a shaman putting up a plum tree, a juneberry, or cherry tree, and when the singers were singing and beating the drum, he sat there with his face painted up wakan and suddenly shook the tree upon which the fruit fell to the ground.

He then went on to say:

Bear dreamers may dance at the time of their feast and parade around, often donning a bear skin. They may run about camp growling and chasing people. They may sit about like bears, and feeling around upon the ground, dig up a turnip and eat it with grunts like bears. They may even fall upon a dog, tear it to pieces, eat the liver and some of the flesh raw. Also in battle they may attempt to frighten the enemy by such actions (Wissler 1912:89).

Lakota men who dream of bears still practice their healing powers in modern times. Although some appear to do so independently, many use their spiritual talents in the context of making herbal remedies or conducting Yuwipi ceremonies (Fera 1963:40; Fire and Erdoes 1972:153-154; Lewis, T. 1990:108). Among the various plants that Fools Crow, the famous Lakota medicine man, used in his pharmacopeia was one associated with bears. Thomas Mails (1991: 165) wrote of this as follows:

A certain root bears used was ground up and made into a tea that relieved bowel pains. This one Fools Crow told me he learned about by watching bears, but I doubt that he had any way of knowing what their exact problem was. He must have tested the root, and found out what it would do.

In court testimony, Fools Crow had this to say about the relationship between bears and healing:

To all the different medicine men, or medicine powers, the bear is the most powerful. The bear holds the secret of the roots and herbs that can cure a lot of diseases the medicines [Euro-American pharmaceuticals] cannot. This is why Bear Butte is especially important and sacred for the medicine men who use herbs and roots
and other forms of plant life to cure diseases and who have to go to Bear Butte regularly to renew their power to cure diseases and sickness (quoted from Forbes-Boyte 1996:106).

The figure of the bear appears in many Lakota stories of Piya and the Stone Boy (Walker 1983:128-129, 137, 144-145,147, 148-151, 152). In the Lakota genesis cycle, the bear is placed in the class of those with claws, and because he foiled Inktomi’s plans at the great gathering, he was given leadership over all the animals (Walker 1983:269-274, 359-361). He is ranked with the tobiob, teaches the buffalo a dance that pleases higher order deities, like Taku Skanskan, and instructs the first man, Tokahe, on how to heal with herbs (Walker 1983:297-300, 350, 375).

More so than the Lakotas, who associated the bear mostly with healing, the Cheyennes appear to have placed equal emphasis on its relation to warfare. The bear’s strength and courage and its death-defying abilities were much admired by Cheyenne warriors who painted their shields with bear imagery and covered them with bear skins too (Grinnell 1972:1:188, 193). When their shields were wrapped in bear skins, offerings were made to the bear for protection in battle (Ibid:198-199), and when bears were killed, the Cheyenne counted coup on them (Ibid:2:30). Still, Cheyennes received medicine from bears for healing (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:152-153). The bear was believed to be a great medicine animal because it was not only able to heal itself but also heal other bears (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:105). Bears and their power were associated with the spiritual strengths of the earth and underworld, and as among the Lakotas, there was a spiritual bear figure, who was white and known as voxpenakao (Moore, J. 1974a:163, 239). Cheyenne Contraries were believed to receive their healing powers from grizzly bears (Powell 2002a:69). People with bear guardians took on some of the traits of a bear when they doctored (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:112), and, at one time, they participated in a dance called the Nako-yosuisto [Bear Dance] (Hayden 1862b:281). Wooden Leg told Thomas Marquis (1931:101) about a bear healer who used the tusks of the animal in his healings. Bear images were also sometimes carved onto the mouthpieces of Cheyenne flutes, suggesting an association with love and courting (Grinnell 1972:1:205). In general, the bear was considered to possess great spiritual power and was once represented in the Massaum ceremony (Grinnell 1972:2:334-335).

**THE MUSTELID FAMILY**

**[MUSTELIDAE]**

Several mustelid species, especially badgers and skunks, are very common in the Black Hills and in the area where Wind Cave National Park is located. Some of the species, notably badger and skunk, were reported as common in the 1870s too, although mink and other fur-bearing mustelids were not as numerous (Grinnell 1875:75; Progulske 1974:122). Most of the fur-bearers declined considerably in subsequent decades, and one, the black-footed ferret, has probably been extirpated from most areas of the Hills. Another species, the otter, was common on some of the larger waterways surrounding the Hills, but its historic presence at locations inside the Hogback is doubtful. With the exception of badgers and skunks, which were valued as food, most of the other mustelids were taken for their furs which were highly valued as adornment for various kinds of ceremonial regalia. Most of them were sacred and connected in varying degrees and ways to healing.

**Badger**

*(Taxidea taxus taxus)*

**Habitat & History**

While uncommon at the higher elevations of the Black Hills proper, the badger is very abundant in the lower elevation foothills and around the Race Track especially at Wind
Cave National Park (Turner 1974:132). It was also reported as abundant in the general region in earlier times (Hayden 1862b:143).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The badger is known as *hoka* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:195) and *ma?hahko?e* in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:82; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center: 5).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Badgers were hunted by the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, and their meat was considered good food (Bordeaux 1929:126; Beckwith 1930:381; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:169; Grinnell 1972:1:256). A common method of hunting was to trap them in specially made pens (Hassrick 1964, 168). According to Royal B. Hassrick (1964:169): “Some hunters were so nimble they could kill a badger by jumping on its back with both feet. Others never could do this, but instead landed on the badger’s chest, for badgers turn over quickly. These men got badly bitten.” Lakota boys also kept young badgers as pets (Ibid:172).

There is not much information on the use of badger skins, however, although an elderly Cheyenne woman, Iron Teeth, told Thomas Marquis (and Limbaugh 1973:7) that badger skins were used to carry dried berries. The Arapahos are reported to have offered a pack of badger skins to the center pole during their Sun Dance (Trenholm 1970:73). The Lakotas are known to have made medicine pouches out of badger paws (Densmore 1918:253), and Lame Deer (Fire and Erdoes 1972:133) noted the use of the animal’s pizzle as an awl.

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Badgers were regarded as very powerful by the Lakotas and the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:2:105; Tyon in Walker 1980:169). Iron Shell told Royal B. Hassrick (1964:168):

The badger is very strong. When a man kills a badger, if he turns it on its back, cuts open its chest and carefully removes its insides so that no blood is lost, when the blood thickens, by looking in the hunter can see his image. Should he see himself as he is, he knows he will die young. But if he sees himself as an old man with white hair, he cries, ‘Hye, hye,’ thanking the spirits. Now he knows he can risk getting many coup and will live long to die with a cane in his hand.

Lame Deer (Fire and Erdoes 1972:133) and Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:170) also reported how the Lakotas forecasted the future by reading a dead badger’s blood.

The same kind of divination practice was described for the Cheyennes (Petter 1913-15:74; Grinnell 1972:2:26-27; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:29). Petter (1913-15:74) writes about this divination as follows:

As with the Romans the Cheyenne priests would foetell future events by the state or position of the entrails of animals, foremost the badger; also by the images represented in his coagulating blood. The animal was cut in two halves while alive. The fur of the badger enwraps the sacred arrows of the Cheyenne and those are also used as omens for the tribe.

Among the Lakotas, badgers, like bears, were closely associated with herbs and healing. Eagle Shield told Francis Densmore (1918:266) whenever he dug for certain kinds of roots, he left some tobacco to the badger. The badger was especially connected with treatments for children. Its fat was used sometimes for treating baldness (Fire and Erdoes 1972:172) and also to heal scrofula (Tyon in Walker 1980:169-170). The Cheyennes used badger claws in making medicines, and they also used their skins in doctoring (Grinnell 1972:1:134, 146). Badgers also appeared as spiritual guardians to assist Cheyennes in healing (Grinnell 1972:2:151). The badger represented the feminine principle of the earth, and its skin once wrapped the Cheyennes' sacred arrows (Moore, J. 1974a:163). The
Cheyennes prayed and smoked to the badger, and they often offered a portion of their food to the animal. When a pipe was offered to the earth, it was thought that it was dedicated in part to the badger (Grinnell 1972:2:105).

The badger served as a spiritual guardian for Lakota and Cheyenne warriors as well (Grinnell 1972:114-115; Brown 1992). The Cheyennes believed that badgers cleansed the blood spots from their Sacred Arrows when they were renewed. They thought of the animal as a wise counselor (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55). This animal stood as the symbol of one of the Lakotas’ most important military societies, the Ihoka (Walker 1980:260, 265; Densmore 1992:325-326). Among its many roles, the society was entrusted with policing the communal buffalo hunts, supervising the distribution of meat, and keeping order in the larger hunting encampments (Hassrick 1964:16, 173,203; Walker 1982:32). Clark Wissler (1912:31-32) described some features of this society’s rituals, which were believed to have originated with the Crow tribe.

In the Lakota story in which the animals try to choose a chief the badger is linked to the community of diggers which includes wolves, prairie dogs, and gophers (Walker 1983:270-271), but in the story of the gathering of the animals, the badger is connected to the prairie dogs, gophers and rabbits but not to the wolves (Walker 1983:358-359). The badger is also one of the animals that punished Gnaski for his deceit; the badger’s weapons were his claws (Walker 1983:362).

Striped Skunk

[**Mephitis mephitis husonica**]

**Habitat & History**

The striped skunk is commonly found in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park, and in historic times it was reported as abundant on the plains west of the Missouri River (Hayden 1862b:143; Tabeau in Abel 1939:82; Progulske 1974:122).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The skunk is called **manka** in Lakota (Buechel 1970:328) and **xao?o** in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:978; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976: 102).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Skunks were hunted by the Lakotas, who considered their meat good for making people fat (Bordeaux 1929:126; Left Heron in Beckwith, M. 1930:380-381,420; Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964: 168). The Lakotas cut their fur into strips for neck decorations and used entire hides for pouches to keep tobacco (Standing Bear 1978:34). Young skunks were also kept as pets by children (Hassrick 1964:172). The Cheyenne considered skunk meat good food as well (Grinnell 1972:1:256), and women were reported to hunt them with clubs (Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9). The Cheyennes used skunk skins for a variety of different purposes:they were sewn into robes, their tails were tied to a horse’s tail in war, and warriors, known as the Dog Soldiers, wore belts made of four skunk skins prepared with the heads intact (Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9; Dorsey, G. 1905:21). Images of skunks were also painted on robes and lodges, and they were engraved on seeds that women used in a gambling game (Grinnell 1972:2:104).

The Lakotas kept the scent bags of skunks and smeared its musk on the body as a preventive medicine and also to treat colds. It was considered a good medicine (Bordeaux 1929:109; Beckwith, M. 1930: 420; Standing Bear 1978:34). The Cheyennes also believed that skunks possessed healing power (and put their medicine in bags made from the skins of skunks (Grinnell 1972:2:104) One Cheyenne healer was known to doctor with a skunk skin (Grinnell 1972:1: 146).
Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Although skunks were associated with both healing and war, there is little about them in the literatures on either the Cheyennes or the Lakotas. According to Joseph Eppes Brown (1992:34), the Lakotas associated the skunk with the earth in a manner similar to the badger because of his courage and “no-flight” qualities. In the Lakota genesis story, the skunk is not grouped and classified with other animals but stands by itself and battles against the porcupine during a general state of disharmony created by Inktomi and Gnaski (Walker 1983:269-272), although later in the genesis cycle, skunks travel with foxes, coyotes, wolves, wild cats, the lynx, mountain lions, and raccoons to the great gathering of the animals (Walker 1983:358-362).

Otter

[Lutra canadensis canadensis]

Habitat & History

There is some question whether otters were ever present in the Black Hills (Froiland 1978:149). Even in the early nineteenth century, otter were apparently rare, inhabiting only the larger watercourses like the Cheyenne River (Tabeau in Abel 1939:83). Although otters remained common in streams that flowed into the Missouri from the north in the 1860s, their skins were imported to the region every year to trade with local tribes who placed great value on them (Hayden 1862b:143).

Tribal Taxonomy

In Lakota, the otter goes by two names, ptan and hepan [word used for it in sacred discourse], and skeca (Buechel 1970:47, 464), and in Cheyenne, it is called naene (Petter 1913-15:780; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:77).

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

Otters were hunted by the Lakotas and Cheyennes largely for their furs which were favored for their thick and soft texture (Standing Bear 1988:60, 61). Cheyennes reported the meat was not good (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:90; Grinnell 1972:1:256), and at least one Lakota claimed they were never eaten (Bordeaux 1929:126). The Cheyennes often shot them as they came out of the water in the same way beavers were killed (Grinnell 1972:1:296).

Otterskins were wrapped around men’s hair braids, and they were highly valued for quivers (Standing Bear 1988:23,60, Curtis 1907-30:3:29, 105, 137; Hassrick 1964:199). The otter was a sacred animal to the Lakotas (Walker 1980:101), and its pelts adorned many different kinds of sacred implements and regalia. Indeed, otterskins were so powerful that women who touched them while they were menstruating were likely to become ill and even die (Walker 1980:168). Sun Dancers wore otterskin capes which signified the power of water and land (Walker 1980:177, 183). The Wic’iska (White Marked Society) used otterskin in their regalia and so did members of the Beaver Society (Wissler 1912:34-35; Walker 1980:277). The Tokala fastened fox bones to an otterskin which was worn on their forehead (Wissler 1912:15-16), and they wore wristlets and leg garters made of this pelt (Walker 1980:272, 274; Brown 1992:17). Miwatani members wore buffalo robes adorned with two strips of otterskin (Wissler 1912:47), while the Winyan tapika (Praiseworthy women) wore bands of otterskin around their forehead (Wissler 1912:76). The whips used by the Brave Hearts had guards made of otterskin (Wissler 1912:26), and their lances were wrapped with otterskin from instructions given by a wolf spirit to a war party near the Black Hills. Those of the Kangi yuha [Crow Owners] were similarly wrapped (Wissler 1912:24, 72; Walker 1980:280; Brown 1992:17). Hoops used in the Sun Dance were covered
with otterskin and represented the sun (Walker 1980:182), and medicine sacks were also made from this pelt (Brown 1992:17).

Cheyenne men also wrapped their braids in otterskin and prized the pelt as a covering for bow cases and quivers (Grinnell 1972:1:184, 196, 222). Otterskins were attached to some of the vikuts that Cheyenne warriors used for carrying water (Grinnell 1972:2:24), and the hohktasim’ or wheel lance’s shaft was covered with this fur (Grinnell 1972:1:187). The Cheyenne had no prohibitions against women preparing otterskins, although they did prevent them from processing beaver peltries (Grinnell 1972:2:104, 198).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Although the Lakotas and Cheyennes considered the otter sacred, there is little in the literature about the qualities that made this animal special. Decost Smith (1949:331) offered one possible explanation for its importance:

The otter is especially ‘medicine’ in that it is supposed, when under water to surround itself with a glistening mist or cloud, which makes it invisible to both prey and its enemies. This, of course, the Indians ascribe to the animal’s supernatural powers, but it probably refers to the film, or bubble of air which adheres to the dry fur, or feathers, of such diving creatures as the muskrat and grebe while swimming under water. The pressure of the water forces out the air contained in the fur, or feathers, to the surface of which it clings in a silvery film, so that the animal emerges from the water dry.

Standing Bear (1988:60) also made some general remarks about what he observed of this animal when he was a young boy:

We seldom saw the otter in the summer time, but in the winter he is out in considerable numbers and much more lively and playful than in the summer. He is not a fast runner, but has a way of combining running and sliding in order to make speed if he is being pursued. He can flip himself over on his back and slide over the snow at a good pace. In shape he has a long body and short legs. He is a good swimmer, but makes more speed on land, where he can throw himself on his back for a swift slide.

In the gathering of the animals described in the Lakota genesis story, the otter was placed with the beaver and other fur-bearing animals (Walker 1983:359, 360).

**Weasels and Associates**

**[Mustela]**

**Habitat & History**

Four different Mustela species are identified in the Black Hills: these are the ermine [Mustela erminea muricya], the long-tailed weasel [Mustela frenata allen], the black-footed ferret [Mustela nigripes], and the mink [Mustela vison letifer]. The ermine and weasel are largely confined to higher elevation locations in the Hills, while the weasel is common throughout the area in a wide variety of riparian environments. Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:142-143) described the weasel as common in the region and an animal whose fur was highly valued by local tribes. Mink were also present in the region in the 1870s, but they were not numerous (Progulske 1974:122); the same is true today. The black-footed ferret is an endangered species. Even though the park contains a habitat well-suited for its existence, including the presence of prairie dogs, its primary prey, the last reported sighting was in 1977 (Turner 1974:129-132; Farrell 2002 Personal Communication).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In the Lakota language, weasels and ermines are identified by the same name, (h)jitu-kasan, which refers to their tendency to show their teeth (Riggs 1968:148; Buechel 1970:178), while the black-footed ferret is called itopta sapa because of the black stripe across its face (Buechel 1970:272). Another name reported for it is pispiza etopta sapa [black-faced prairie dog], suggesting its
close relationship to the rodent (Clark 1975: 73). Its special food is the spurge, *Euphorbia margenta* or snow-on-the-mountain, which the Lakotas believe commonly grows in the neighborhood of the prairie dog towns that ferrets typically frequent (Buechel 1970:272). The mink is called *ikusan* [white chin] (Ibid:223). The Cheyennes call the weasel, ermine, and mink by the same name, *xaa?e* (Petter 1913-15:440). There is little substantive information on the use of these small animals or their place in Cheyenne cosmology, although Grinnell (1972: 2:122-123) reported that weasel tails were attached to special charms used in warfare, and Rudolphe Petter (1913-15:440) states that their name derives from their peculiar smell (this includes the skunk too). They appear, however, as characters in a number of Cheyenne stories (Grinnell 1926).

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

These small fur-bearing animals were never eaten by the Lakotas (Bordeaux 1929:126). They were highly valued, however, for their peltries. The Lakotas employed many different kinds of devices to trap them (Hassrick 1964:167). Weasel skins were used to wrap sacred bundles and amulets (Lewis 1990:110). Among the Lakotas, the skins of these small mustelids were worn only by special people, such as the *walowan* or singer, who conducted a *Hunka* or a *Pte San Lowanpi* ceremony (Walker 1980:223, 246). The sashes worn by the sash bearers of the *Miwatani* society were adorned with bits of weasel fur (Wissler 1912:46). Medicine bags were also made from the entire skins of minks, weasels, and ferrets (Densmore 1918:253, 1948:177; Smith, D. 1949:331). Outside of ceremonial contexts, ermine, mink, and weasel skins were sometimes cut into strips as decoration for men's shirts, dresses, and headdresses (Lyford 1940:33; Brown 1992:18). William Bordeaux (1929: 113) wrote that weasel skins were sewn on war shirts to protect their wearers from being wounded, and their tails were used in treating the sick. According to Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:168), however, the skins had to be handled and worn with great care. Men could not touch them after being with a woman, and women were not allowed to come near them while menstruating; if they did, they would suffer pain or serious illness.

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

In Lakota belief, weasels, ermines, and black-footed ferrets were considered highly *wakan* (Bordeaux 1929:113; Buechel 1970:242; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, Sword, and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980: 101; Tyon in Walker 1980:168). Indeed, Father Eugene Buechel (1970:242) reported that people did not kill ferrets because such an act would bring death to the killer. Mustelids were classed with beaver and muskrat in the story of the gathering of the animals (Walker 1983:359, 362). But other than this information, there is little about them in the ethnographic literature on the Lakotas. They apparently do not have any special religious significance among the Cheyennes (Moore, J. 1974a:240).

The Procyons

[**Procyonidae**]

Raccoon

[**Procyon lotor hirtus**]

Habitat & History

The only species of the *Procyonidae* family found in the Hills is the raccoon. Today, it is located throughout the area in riparian habitats (Turner 1974:128; Froland 1978:148). According to Ronald Turner (1974:128), the pelt of this species is still a marketable commodity, although he does not specify whether or not coon hunting remains an economic endeavor for any of the European Americans who live in the Hills. This species appears to have come to the Hills with the advance of the “American Frontier,” as its presence is not recorded in the accounts
of naturalists who were in the region from the 1850s to the 1870s (Grinnell 1875; Dodge 1965; Turner 1974:128), nor is it mentioned in an earlier account with exhaustive descriptions of the region’s faunal landscape (Tabeau in Abel 1939). Indeed, Ferdinand Hayden (1862:143) wrote that it was not observed beyond the mouth of the White River in the 1850s.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In the Lakota language, the raccoon is called *wica* or *wiciteglega* [spotted face] (Buechel 1970:576), while in Cheyenne, it is named *matseskome* (Petter 1913-15:881; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:88). There is hardly any mention of this animal other than its name in the ethnographic literature on the Cheyennes, although it does appear in a number of Cheyenne stories (Grinnell 1926). There is more about this species in writings on the Lakotas, but it is still small compared to what has been written about many of the other animals presently located in the Black Hills.

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

The Lakotas hunted raccoons for their meat as well as fur (Denig in Ewers 1961:6; Hassrick 1964:167; Standing Bear 1988:61). They were trapped in pens (Hassrick 1964:168) and caught in other ways too. According to Iron Shell (in Hassrick 1964:169):

In winter, if a man found raccoon tracks at the foot of a hollow tree, he would put hay and sticks in the hole, stuffing them in, set fire to it and wait. When smoke appears, either the raccoon will fall down through the fire, dead and half-cooked, or will climb out the upper hole and jump. When he lands, he can be killed with a club.

Raccoon fur was used in the making of hunting caps (Standing Bear 1978:34), and the tail of the raccoon was placed as a decoration around the necks of a ponies (Standing Bear 1988:61).

Standing Bear (1988:61) described some of the unusual habits of the raccoon:

If a coon happened to be making his home in a tree, it was rather easy to catch him, but he had another home where he was hard to reach. The entrance to this home was under water. From the bank under the stream he burrowed up above the water-line to his den. Foxes and other animals could not reach him here, so he was safe. The coon can do something that no other animal can do, and that is walk, trot, or gallop on the bed of a stream under water just as any other animal does on land. All other animals must swim when in the water....In the winter-time his tracks could be seen in the snow leading to the hole in the ice through which he went to his burrow in the river banks.

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

In the Lakota genesis saga, the raccoon is a central figure in a tale where it is likened to humans because, it often walks on two legs. In this story, it serves as the assistant and friend of *Iktomi* who adopts two of their babies but is unable to care for them. He tries to give them to *Anog Ite* who refuses to take them and in the process curses all women and little children with pain and fear. The babes are then taken to *Wakanka* who agrees to take them under her tutelage, but in the process tells *Iktomi* that the infants will grow up to be tricky like him and that they will be linked to the *Can Oti* [Tree Dwellers] and have no spirit (Walker 1983:287-289). Unlike many of the other animals, who consistently get put together in the same taxonomic classes, the raccoon is included along with the beaver, squirrel, and mouse among the animals known as the “builders” (Walker 1983:271). However, in another segment of the Lakotas’ creation story, it gets linked with the carnivores (Walker 1983:359). Other than this, there is little information about Lakota beliefs surrounding raccoons, and none that would suggest this animal was highly significant in spiritual or religious terms.
The members of the Lagomorpha order had practical and symbolic value for both tribes, although some of the meanings behind their uses in ceremonial contexts are not always well articulated in ethnographic sources.

**THE RABBIT FAMILY**

**[LEPORIDAE]**

**Habitat & History**

The *Leporidae* family is represented by four species native to the Black Hills, the desert cottontail [*Sylvilagus audubonii baileyi*], the eastern cottontail [*Sylvilagus foriyanus similis*], Nuttall’s cottontail [*Sylvilagus nuttallii grangeri*], and the white-tailed jack rabbit [*Lepus townsendii campanius*] (Turner 1974:59). The desert cottontail and the jackrabbit are the most common at Wind Cave National Park (Ibid:60), but eastern and Nuttall’s cottontail are also present here (Ibid:60-63). Since rabbits and hares are ubiquitous to the region, they were not singled out for special mention in many early historical reports or specifically linked to the Black Hills. Pierre Antoine Tabeau (in Abel 1939:81-82), however, does give a description of the jackrabbit, and Ferdinand V. Hayden (1862b:148) reported the distribution and habitat of three species in the area.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Lakotas call rabbits *mastinca, mastinka, or mastinsapela* (Buechel 1970:333-334) with the latter name probably referring to hares. In Cheyenne, they are known as *vohkoohe* (Petter 1913-15:881; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:87).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

All rabbits were commonly taken by the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, and they were considered a good source of food (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:90; Denig in Ewers 1961:13). They were an especially popular prey for Lakota boys in their formative years of hunting; their typical mode of hunting was to surround the animal and kill it with clubs (Hassrick 1964:168; Standing Bear 1988:13-15; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:158-159). Not surprisingly, they are often the prey of magical orphan boys, such as Falling Star and Stone Boy, who appear in tribal myth cycles (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:399). They were also commonly hunted by women (Hassrick 1964:168). The Cheyennes caught rabbits with baited hooks attached to horsehair lines, or by twisting them out of a hollow log with a forked stick (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:89).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Rabbits were respected for their industry and their ability to travel at night (Beckwith, M. 1930:380), and thus, they were sometimes associated with warfare. Clark Wissler (1912:95) mentions one Lakota who was noted for his war medicine having had dreams of a rabbit. Before the Sun Dance, a member of one of the the Cheyennes’ soldier societies kills a rabbit; this is believed to bring good fortune in counting a coup in his next battle (Grinnell 1972:1:218). The skins of jackrabbits are used in various contexts during the Cheyenne Sun Dance; for example, strips of their fur are tied to the Sun Dance leader’s robe because this animal is believed to “belong” to the dance (Ibid:1:218, 263, 2:232; Powell 1969:2:859). In Lakota Sun Dances, bands of rabbit fur are tied around the wrists and ankles of Sun dancers (Densmore 1918:125; Sword in Deloria 1929:391). As Black Elk (in Brown 1971:85) describes this use: “The men also put rabbit skins on their arms and legs, for the rabbit represents humility,
because he is quiet and soft and not self-asserting -- a quality which we must all possess when we go to the center of the world.” The Lakota Wic’iska (White Marked society) wore a headdress with strips of rabbit or eagle down (Wissler 1912:34), and the sash bearers of the Miwatani Society adorned their sashes with rabbit ears (Wissler 1912:46). The symbolic significance of these uses, however, was not identified. Also, the Cheyenne tied strips of rabbit skin around the hoop of an antelope hunting pole (Grinnell 1972:284). The soft fur of the rabbit was commonly used as a decorative ornamentation outside of ritual contexts (Lyford 1940:33).

Another symbolic association linked rabbits and twins, who were thought to ride a jack-rabbit as they searched for a mother (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:380). Twins were viewed as highly sacred by the Lakotas, and according to James Owen Dorsey (1894:482-483), they were believed to have a “superhuman origin” and strong spiritual powers. Like blacktail deer, rabbits carried qualities associated with pairing, mirrors, and reflections in water. Before birth, twins purportedly rode jackrabbits to the place where their prospective mother went for water (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:482).

**Rodents**

*Rodentia*

The Rodent Order, according to Ronald Turner (1974:63), is the largest order in the Black Hills both in reference to the number of its different species and in terms of the sheer size of the populations identified with these species.

**THE PORCUPINE FAMILY**

*Erethionidae*

The *Erethionidae* family of rodents is represented by one species in the Black Hills, the porcupine.

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**Porcupine**

*Erthizon dorsatum bruneiri*

**Habitat & History**

In reference to the porcupine, Tabeau (Abel 1939:82) remarked “The porcupine abounds on the banks of all the little wooded rivers; but this little animal, so delicious elsewhere, is not eatable here, so thin it is in every season.” This species remains very common today on the plains, in the Black Hills, and at Wind Cave National Park (Turner 1974:143, 144).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The porcupine is known as *pahin* in Lakota (Beuchel 1970:425) and as *heskovestse* [thorny-one] in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:842; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:83).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

The porcupine was widely hunted by the tribal nations of the northern plains for its meat and quills (Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Lyford 1940:42). John Ewers (1938:59) asserts that capturing porcupines was “men’s work.” Later ethnographic descriptions, however, reveal that both men and women hunted porcupines in gender specific ways. Women and men twisted and tangled their fur by using sticks and killed them with clubs after they were dragged from their dens (Ewers 1938:59; Hassrick 1964:168), but men appear to have been the only ones who pursued them with bows and arrows (Ewers 1938:59; Lyford 1940:42).

As Standing Bear (1975:16-17) wrote, referring to his childhood in the nineteenth century: “In those days we used to eat porcupine. Every portion of the body was used.” The Lakotas and the Cheyennes made combs and hairbrushes from the tail of a porcupine (Densmore 1948:177; Grinnell 1972:2:211,255, 310; Standing Bear 1975:
16-17, 1978:34, 188; Walker 1982:52), and they used the animal’s hair to make head roaches (Standing Bear 1975:16-17, 1978:34). But their most important application was the use of their quills in embellishing a wide range of material objects. Among the Lakotas, these included: moccasins, cradleboard covers, warshirts, armlets, hair ornaments, buffalo robes, moccasins, saddle bags and blankets, navel amulets, pipe bags, pipestems, bladder cases, knife cases, and gauntlets (Wissler 1904:234-235, 242-245, 250-251, 1910:235, 238, 242, 244, 252, 260, 265; Ewers 1938:61; Lyford 1940:14, 21, 27, 29, 41-55; Standing Bear 1975:16-17, 1978:3). Among the Cheyennes, quills ornamented dresses, warshirts, hair wrappings, robes, baby cradles, moccasins, saddles, lodges, backrests, flutes, buckskin bags, and pipestems (Grinnell 1972:1:56, 60, 99, 147, 161, 168, 204-205, 207, 224, 243, 245, 346).

Dyed porcupine quills also decorated sacred objects used in ceremonies. Among the Lakotas, for example, Sun Dancers wear a feather wrapped with red dyed porcupine quills (Sword in Deloria 1929:391; Walker 1980:179), and invitation wands for the Hunka are made of eagle feathers decorated with dyed porcupine quills (Walker 1980:221). The preparation of quills for embroidery and wrapping are described in Carrie Lyford’s work (1940:41-55), but there are other descriptions as well (Ewers 1938:59-61; Hassrick 1964:191-193; Grinnell 1972:164, 166-167, 218-220).

Cheyenne women formed a quilling society, the Me e no’ist st, which included only the most prolific and talented quillers. The society was divided into grades reflecting the quillers’ levels of accomplishment and difficulty. George Grinnell (1972:1:159-169) describes this society and the prestige it accorded to its members in great detail. Among the Cheyennes, the origin of quillwork came from the same man who married a buffalo woman and raced against his in-laws in the famous story of the Great Race (Grinnell 1972:1:163-164, 2:385-391). The buffalo woman story came from the Suhtaio division of the tribe, and, in some renditions (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:19-24; Powell 1969:472-480), it is related to the the Buffalo Gap.

Quillworkers or members of the Lakota Double-Woman Society, previously discussed in reference to the mule or blacktail deer, also derived great prestige for their talents and accomplishments in quilling. These women held quilling displays and contests where they exhibited their creations and competed with each other on the skill, productivity, and artistic excellence of their work. They kept counts of their accomplishments on robes and on the dew cloth of the Red Council Lodge (Wissler 1910:92-94; Hassrick 1964:42-43, 272). According to Royal B. Hassrick (1964:191), “quilling was probably the highest attainment in the female arts” and a primary area of female artistic contribution as well.

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Although porcupines appear throughout the storytelling traditions of the Lakotas, little has been written about their spiritual significance. The only information found on the Lakotas is the association of the porcupine with Yanpa, the East Wind (Walker 1983:354, 404 n72), and its connection to the Sun (Brown 1992:102, Sundstrom, L. 2002:108). Like the tail feathers of an eagle, porcupine quills were identified with the Sun’s rays (Brown 1992). Similarly, this animal is featured in many Cheyenne stories, but little about its spiritual significance is recorded in ethnographic sources (Grinnell 1926).
THE CASTOR FAMILY
[CASTORIDAE]

Beaver
[Castor canadensis missouriensis]

Habitat & History

Although native to the Black Hills, the beaver’s presence declined considerably as a result of commercial fur-trapping in the area (Froiland 1978:143). Some of the first European and American trappers who arrived in the Black Hills at the turn-of-the nineteenth century came in search of this animal, and many stream names in the area, notably French Creek and Beaver Creek, are evidence of their presence. The relative abundance of this fur-bearing animal in the Black Hills, however, was a subject of some debate in the early nineteenth century. Tabeaú (Abel 1939: 83-84), for one, was not very optimistic about the success of beaver trapping in the Hills when he wrote:

The Ricaras, to whom mice are mountains, say, of course, that in all the little rivers and on the land, which separates them from the Black Hills, the beaver is plentiful; but it is evident that, when asked to enter into details, they regard as an immense number dwellings which they meet with, scattered here and there, and that if they knew and wished to hunt there they would destroy in a year all those that exist in a circle of two hundred leagues (in Abel 1939:84).

Around the same period of time, Lewis and Clark were told by a trader named Jon Vallé, who wintered and spent considerable time in the area, that while there were few beaver on the Cheyenne River, many were to be found in the Black Hills (Moulton 1983-87:3:133). Whatever their supply, it is clear that a number of traders and their engages trapped in the Black Hills during the early half of the nineteenth century, and they did so along many of the waterways that flowed from the Hills. As late as the 1850s, these animals were trapped by European Americans on the streams of the Black Hills (Bettelyoun and Waggoner 1988:28-29). Even after the 1870s, beavers were still described as abundant along many of the streams that fed the Missouri River from the west, and during the same period, they were noted in the Black Hills by the members of several exploratory expeditions (Grinnell 1875:77; De Girardin 1936:62; Progulske 1974:122; Turner 1974:88). Indeed, Ferdinand Hayden (1862b:146) wrote: “The streams that issue from the Black hills are favorite resorts of them, and I have often known them to strip the streams of all the timber which skirted their borders.” At the dawn of the twentieth century, a new wave of European American commercial trappers led to the extreme decline of local beaver populations. Even local ranchers and their children trapped for extra cash in the early decades of the twentieth century (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70: 402, 419). In the 1930s, several streams in the region, including Cold Springs Creek at Wind Cave National Park, were restocked but with populations from outside locations (Turner 1974:88-89). By the 1950s, beaver had become so numerous that they were in danger of starvation, having denuded much of their riparian food base (Progulske 1974: 124).

Also under debate is the issue of how much trapping was conducted by the tribal nations who lived in the region. There is no question that the Cheyennes and Lakotas traded beaver and other peltries, many of which were probably acquired in the Black Hills, but it is also clear that this was largely a supplementary activity. In the late eighteenth century, Perrin du Lac described the Cheyennes as expert beaver hunters who traded their furs to the Lakotas. However, in the same time period, Truteau claimed that the Cheyenne did not take any furs (Grinnell 1972:1:297-298). The same was probably true for the Lakotas who ventured west of the Missouri, although their eastern Dakota-speaking relatives were active beaver trappers (Albers 2001:763-764). Whatever the case, most of the tribal populations in this part of the plains do not appear to have
developed a specialized trapping pattern characteristic of some of the Ojibwes who moved onto the Plains in regions farther north.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The beaver is called *capa* or *cap*’ in Lakota (Buechel 1970:127) and *homa?e* or *hom-a?ne* in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:103; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:7).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

According to George Grinnell (1972:1:296), the Cheyenne did not make any serious effort to trap beaver until this animal became valued as a trade item after white contact. Typically, the Cheyennes used dogs to drive them out of their dams, after which they clubbed or shot them (Grinnell 1972: 1:296). Lakotas smoked the animals from their holes and then clubbed them to death (Hassrick 1964: 168). According to Standing Bear (1978: 34), they were a common prey for older boys.

The meat and fur of the beaver was highly prized by both tribes (Bordeaux 1929:126; Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:90; Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9; Grinnell 1972:1:296). As Standing Bear (1988:63) wrote: “The meat of the beaver is quite good, the tail being entirely of fat. When cooked, this tail tastes something like cheese, and we ate it with our lean meat like bread.” The Cheyennes used beaver skins for clothing and ornamentation (Grinnell 1972:1:296). The Lakotas did so as well: for example, members of the White Badge Society carried a wand decorated with beaver fur (Walker 1980:262). Just like otterskins, beaver skins were worn as a wrapping on a Lakota man’s braids (Curtis 1907-30:3:137). Curiously, Cheyenne women were prohibited from dressing or handling beaver skins, a rule that did not apply to otterskins (Grinnell 1972:2:104, 198). There appears to have been no prohibitions of this kind among the Lakotas for whom the handling of otterskins by menstruating women was taboo.

Standing Bear (1988:61-63) describes Lakota knowledge of the beaver in some detail:

An animal that we observed a good deal was the beaver. We noticed that wherever there were beaver and turtles, there was plenty of water, and that if the beaver left a stream, it would not be long before the stream went dry. Little animals like this told us many things, so we watched them. The dams that the beaver builds are great things. They are built so perfectly that they do not wash away, as do the white man’s dams, which sometimes go to pieces and do lots of damage. The beaver starts his dam by cutting good-sized timbers and placing them deep in the mud like piles. Then limbs of trees are laced in and out, showing that the beaver puts in an immense amount of work on a single dam. Cutting down large trees and dragging them to the water is a dangerous job, but never does a workman get killed at his labor. Whatever their system, it is a good one. Sometimes we discovered that a beaver colony had moved to another creek, but we never saw a beaver on land, nor did we ever catch a colony of these animals on the march moving their town site. That was something of a mystery to us; also the fact that as sure as the beaver moved, the stream that they left would go dry.

We admired the beaver, for he is very industrious. Just the same he likes to play. They like to splash water over each other with their tails. Then they build slides of earth and mud, and carry water up on them with their tails until the slope is smooth and shiny. When the game is going big, even the old ones join the young ones, and everybody has a good time. I have seen many wild animals fight, but I have never seen one beaver battle with another one, so I take it that they are inclined to be peaceful. The beaver ponds were always beautiful spots, fresh and green, and we were sure to see many other kinds of animals lingering about that liked the water and the trees.
Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Beavers were considered sacred by the Lakotas (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:101), and they were believed to be guardians “of work, provision, and of domestic faithfulness” (Tyon in Walker 1980:121). They were also identified as messengers of the Thunders (Beckwith, M. 1930:12n412) and probably the West Wind. James Walker (1980:277) also refers to the existence of a Beaver Society, which would suggest an association of people who dreamed of this animal, but other than this reference, virtually nothing has been written about it in the literature.

There is some parallel evidence among the Cheyennes that in earlier times beaver may have been a source of spiritual power and a focus for some kind of ceremonial association, since certain individuals were known to have made beaver drums and some were able to make people sick by shooting beaver cuttings into their bodies (Grinnell 1972:145). Like the Lakotas, the Cheyennes considered the beaver to be highly industrious and intelligent, and they admired its ability to construct dams and build houses to live in (Grinnell 1972:2:104).

THE SCURID FAMILY
[SCIURIDAE]

In the Black Hills, the scurids include prairie dogs, yellow-bellied marmots, chipmunks, and a variety of squirrels. Of these animals, only the prairie dog and the squirrel appear to have carried much importance in the lives of the Lakotas and the Cheyennes.

Prairie Dog
[Cynomys ludovicianus ludovicianus]

Habitat & History

In 1803, Tabeau (in Abel 1939:82-83) indicated that there were “swarms” of this animal in the region in the early nineteenth century especially on the upland prairies east of the Black Hills, and during the 1850s, Ferdinand V. Hayden (1862b: 145) wrote about a prairie dog town north of the Cheyenne River near the Black Hills that covered an area of more than fifty square miles. This well-known inhabitant, and now popular tourist attraction, of the American West is found at many locations in the prairies, including at Wind Cave National Park. The earth thrown up by the prairie dogs around their towns favors the growth of certain forbs. The Lakotas recognized this fact and named one their more highly valued medicinal plants, the fetid marigold [Dysodia papposa], as pispiza ta’wote, “prairie dog food” (Buechel 1972:444).

Tribal Taxonomy

The black-tailed prairie dog is called pispiza in Lakota, which is the same name given to the ground squirrel (Buechel 1970:444). In Cheyenne, the animal is known as ononevoneske [taking off with teeth disappearing] (Petter 1913-15:847; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:84).

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, & Use

Prairie dogs were hunted by the Lakotas and typically shot with arrows (Hassrick 1964:168), although White Bull told Stanley Vestal (1934:7) that he snared the animals with a noose. Cheyenne women also hunted prairie dogs and considered their flesh good meat (Moore, J. 1974a:164). Iron Teeth (in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9) relayed the following:

I have caught lots of prairie dogs. they are wary and quick, so they are hard to catch. The best way is to hide beside a hole. If the hunter keeps very quiet and waits long enough the prairie dog finally will creep out from the hole. Then it may be grabbed and beaten to death.

William Bordeaux (1929:108, 113) indicates that the skins of prairie dogs were used
in the manufacture of medicine bags for keeping roots and herbs. Other than this application and their role as a supplementary food source, there is little information in the ethnographic literature about other practical uses for this animal.

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

According to Standing Bear (1988:158-159):

Prairie-dogs were known as 'little farmers,' for they cleared the ground about their dwelling places and soon after there began to grow a plant upon which they lived. Whether they had a system of planting or not we never found out, but it was noticeable that wherever these little animals took up their abode their food plants soon took the place of weeds. Neither did we ever see a prairie-dog ‘town’ in the process of changing location though it was done quite often. If these animals traveled overland they left no trails, though within their ‘towns’ the trails were numerous, so it was supposed that they dug tunnels through which they traveled in a body. Yet at that we were mystified when they moved their towns from one side of a stream to the other. The deserted towns of the prairie-dog seemed to be refertilized, no doubt on account of the air and water that got into the soil, for they soon were covered with grass that afforded excellent feed for our stock. These grassy places we traveled with care, for when the prairie-dogs moved out, the rattlesnakes moved in.

Standing Bear (1978:215) also notes that the clean soil found around their towns was used to heal wounds. William Powers (1982:13) explains that soils brought up from underneath the earth by prairie dogs and other burrowing animals contain the purifying properties of the underworld, and, as a result, these soils are considered especially efficacious for healing and religious activity. He also notes in another publication that animals who burrow in the earth are held sacred because they transverse the space between subterranean environments and the earth’s surface in a manner that mirrors the Lakotas’ own story of emergence from the underworld (Powers, W. 1986:113, 162).

Because of their burrowing habits, prairie dogs were considered especially *wakan* by the Lakotas (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear and Blunt Horn in Walker 1980:101). As one unidentified Lakota shaman put it, “Everything has a spirit. A prairie dog has a spirit. A prairie dog has two spirits: one the spirit like a tree and one the spirit like the breath of life, which is given by *Wakanskanskan*” (Walker 1980:118). This power of movement, which the prairie dog shared with the deer and the grouse, prevented hunters from hitting them (Standing Bear 1988:57). Prairie dogs were closely associated with herbal medicine, and according to William Bordeaux (1929:108), the people who dreamed of this animal possessed secret medical knowledge on the use of certain plants.

The Cheyennes associated prairie dogs with corn because both emerge from under the earth on small mounds. Corn kernals and prairie dog teeth were equated because of their yellow color. This same coloration is also linked to bison calves (Anderson 1958; Moore, J. 1974a:164).

**Yellow bellied marmot**

* [Marmota flaviventris dacota]

While the marmot is found throughout the Black Hills in rocky habitats, it is rare in comparison to many other rodent species (Turner 1974:68). It also appears to have been rare in the region in earlier times (Hayden 1862b:146). Native names for this animal have not been uncovered in the literatures on the Cheyennes or Lakotas. A closely related species, the ground hog or woodchuck, is called *seavoneske* [into-disappearing] in Cheyenne (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976: 122). Although no Lakota name was found for this animal, it is probably the same as the one for woodchucks in the Dakota dialect, *hankasa* (Riggs 1968:123). Woodchucks
were commonly hunted by Dakota women in regions east of the Missouri River (Landes 1968:191), but there is no evidence for this practice among the Lakotas.

**Squirrels**

*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus pallidus, etc.*

**Habitat & History**

Four species of squirrels are reported in the Black Hills, the thirteen-lined ground squirrel *[Spermophilus tridecemlineatus pallidus]*, the fox squirrel *[Sciurus niger rufiventris]*, the red squirrel, *[Tamiasciurus hudsonicus dakotensis]*, and the northern flying squirrel *[Glaucomys sabrinus bangsi]*. Of these, the first two are the most common in the southern Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Turner 1974:71,76). The red squirrel and the grey flying squirrel may be seen on rare occasions in the south, but they frequent the northern reaches of the Hills (Turner 1974:77, 81). Hayden (1862b :144) reported that he had seen red squirrels in abundance in the eastern neighborhoods of the Black Hills especially among stands of oak trees.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In Lakota, the stripped ground squirrel was called *tasnaheca* (Buechel 1970:483), the fox squirrel was known as *pispiza* (the same name given the prairie dog), (Buchel 1970 444), and the red squirrel was named *zica* or *zicahota* (Buechel 1970:658). The Cheyenne name for the squirrel is *no?kee?e*, *no?ee?e*, or *no?keeoh* (Petter 1913-15:1005; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:107).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, & Use**

Like rabbits, squirrels were a popular prey in the hunting forays of young Lakota boys who killed them with bows and arrows (DeMallie 1984:158-159; Standing Bear 1988:15). They were a favorite food of older Lakota women who boiled the meat until it was so tender it did not have to be chewed and who also tanned their hides to make small robes to sit on (Hassrick 1964:168).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Although squirrels are mentioned in Lakota storytelling traditions (Walker 1983:271, 371), no special symbolic or spiritual significance appears to have been attached to them in the sources we reviewed on the Lakotas. The same holds true for the Cheyennes.

**Least Chipmunk**

*Eutamias minimus pallidus*

The *pallidus* species is very common especially in the southern Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park, while the subspecies *silvaticus* is ubiquitous in the region (Turner 1974:63-64) and has been so since the 1870s (Progulske 1974:122). The Lakota call these chipmunks, *hetkala* (Buechel 1970:173), while the Cheyenne named them *neske?esta* or *nestse?esta* [perked ears] (Petter 1913-15:20). There are no reports in the literature on any use for them, nor are there any discussions of their spiritual significance. Among the Cheyennes, along with squirrels and mice, they are mentioned primarily in stories told to children (Grinnell 1972:1:149). Among the Lakotas, the same appears to be true. It is worthwhile mentioning, however, that they are one of the animals who stored their food in the cave in which Tokahe and his people sought shelter after coming to the earth’s surface (Walker 1983:371).
THE GEOMYID FAMILY
[GEOMYIDAE]

Pocket Gopher
[Thomomys talpides nebulosis]

Habitat & History
The northern pocket gopher is widespread and common throughout the Black Hills especially in open pastures, meadows, and parklands (Turner 1974:83). It was also abundant in the region during the nineteenth century (Hayden 1862b:146-147). This animal has long been considered a pest to European American farmers and ranchers because of their burrowing habits, and over the past century, there have been many different systematic attempts to eradicate them (Turner 1974:83). The pocket gopher is also not looked upon very favorably by the Lakotas and Cheyennes, who consider it a dangerous animal and a source of power.

Tribal Taxonomy
In Lakota, this animal is called itignila (Buechel 1970:240) and wahinheya [probably refers to the notion (see below) that it shoots people with its whiskers or a hairlike grass] (Buechel 1970:517). The word, wahin’ heya, was also applied to a species of milkweed the Lakota called wahcahca hu bloka, which they used as a treatment to cure swollen glands caused by gophers. Wahin’ heya opi [literally gopher shot] is the name for scrofulous swellings (Buechel 1970:517). The Cheyennes call this gopher heszema (Petter 1913-15:519), and, like the Lakotas, they believe it causes scrofula, and as a result, they avoid camping in areas near gopher hills.

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance
Pocket gophers are considered wakan and feared because they are believed to shoot people with the tip of a certain grass, causing scrofulous lesions to appear on the neck (Dorsey, J. 1894:496; Bordeaux 1929:113; Standing Bear 1978:62). As Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980: 169),

Men, women, boys, girls, and babies all get scrofula, which they believe is caused by gophers. For you know, where those gophers are, the earth is entirely pulverized. This is why people think about gophers as they do and why they so believe. Holy men doctor them and extract gophers’ whiskers from them Then they cure people. Some are not treated quickly so these develop scrofula of the throat, it is said. Hence no one goes near to where gophers burrow in the earth. They fear that perhaps the gopher will shoot them. Those who go to where gophers live hide their throats. They still believe in this custom.

Standing Bear (1988:62) also described the dangers of the gopher and noted:

The little pockets at the side of the gopher’s neck we called quivers, and in them the animal often carried pieces of dry grass an inch or so in length and sharply pointed at one end. These arrows the gopher shot at anyone coming near, and if the person chanced to be hit he was sure to become afflicted with wahinheyao which means ‘wounded by the gopher.’

Possibly related to this belief, the pocket gopher was also associated with warfare. The pulverized dirt found around gopher holes was used as a war medicine. Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:135 n25, 337, 340) reported that the famous Lakota medicine man Chips gave some of this dirt to Crazy Horse for protection in battle, and he also told about his own vision of a gopher that transformed itself into a herb used in war that was able to “destroy a nation” (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:135, 137). Cheyenne horse doctors, who sometimes were called upon to assist in battle and in horse races, reputedly used magical dirt from a gopher’s hole to cause an enemy or competitor’s horse to trip and fall (Grinnell 1972:1:140). The Cheyennes believe that the loose soil around the gopher’s hole is highly dangerous and capable of causing cancer and other diseases (Whiteman in Schwartz 1955:
The idea that the dirt around gopher hills is powerful is connected to a wider belief applied to other animals who burrow in the ground, discussed briefly in relation to prairie dogs.

**MICE AND ASSOCIATES**
**[CRICETIDAE, HETEROMYIDAE, AND ZAPIDAE]**

**Habitat & History**

A wide variety of the smallest rodent species are found in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park, but only a few of them have been differentiated in the faunal taxonomies of the Lakotas and Cheyennes -- a fact that may reflect their general insignificance symbolically and as a source of food.

The Zapodidae family includes the Jumping Mouse, *Zapus hudsonius campestris*, which is common in the Black Hills in rich riparian habitats, especially in their northern reaches, but apparently absent from much of the southern Hills. In general, they are more abundant along waterways that cut across the grasslands east of the Black Hills (Turner 1974:120).

The Cricetids are represented in the Hills by a wide range of different species, but only one of these, the muskrat [*Ondatra zibethicus cinnamominus*], was taken regularly as a source of food by local tribes. Although more typically associated with prairie drainages east of the Black Hills, it does occur in small numbers along many local streams (Turner 1974:118). Several species of voles (sometimes popularly referred to as moles) are reported in the Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Turner 1974:105-118). The Prairie vole, *Microtus ochrogaster haydenii*, is especially common in the park with its characteristic runways (Turner 1974:112), but the meadow vole, *Microtus pennsylvanicus insperatus*, is present too (Turner 1974: 114-116). Also in the Cricetid family are a number of species of mice that frequent the Black Hills, including the white-footed mouse [*Peromyscus leucopus aridulus*] and the one most common at Wind Cave, the deer mouse [*Peromyscus maniculatus nebrascensis*] (Turner 1974:94-102). Finally, the bushy-tailed wood rat [*Neotoma cinerea orolestes*] is a Cricetid species located in the Black Hills especially in their northern reaches (Turner 1974:103).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In Lakota and Cheyenne nomenclatures, there appears to be no distinctions between these families and the *Muridae* whose species were introduced to the Hills from Europe. The Jumping mouse is called by the same Lakota name as the grasshopper, *psipsicala* [jumping] or *hitunpsicala* (jumping mouse) (Buechel 1970:446). The muskrat was known as *sinkpe* in Lakota and *seavonsceo* in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:729). The Cheyennes named the vole *estsema?e* (Petter 1915:69), while Lakotas called it *hitunkala sapa* [black mouse] or *pangi gnakapi* [falls off artichokes] (Buchel 1970:178). In the Dakota dialect, voles were known as *napeheyatahedan* [little hands, far back] (Williamson 1970:109). In Cheyenne, voles are given the same name as gophers, *ezemae* (Petter 1913-15:715). All varieties of mice were given the generic name *hitunkala* by the Lakotas (Buechel 1970:178) and *hohkeehe* or *hotseehe* by the Cheyennes (Petter 1913-15:723; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:70). The Lakotas call rats *hitunktanka* or *itungtanka* (Buechel 1978:178), and the Cheyenne know them as *no?ketse* (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:89).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, & Use**

Muskrat were widely hunted by the Lakotas (Denig in Ewers 1961:13; Hassrick 1964:168). The skins of the species were fastened to the lances of the *Sotka Tanka* (Wissler 1912:61). Little else is written about the animal or its uses among the Lakotas,
however, and nothing appears in the sources surveyed on the Cheyennes. Other related families of cretids and rodents do not appear to have been taken by either tribe as source of food. Meadow voles, however, are known for their habit of caching large quantities of wild beans in their dens. Cheyenne and Lakota women often looked for these dens to get their own supplies, and they were careful to leave a gift in return so as not to offend the voles (Gilmore 1919:96; Ewers 1961:11; Hassrick 1964:179; Grinnell 1972:1:254; Standing Bear 1978:57). Indeed, there is a well-known story among the Lakotas, often told to children, about a woman who failed to gift these voles (Gilmore 1925:183-184). Only one manufacturing use has been reported, in which mice ribs were reported being taken to make fishing hooks (Bordeaux 1929:130).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Like prairie dogs and gophers, the earth around the burrows of voles and mice was revered because, as William Powers (1986:160) puts it, “the dirt brought to the surface of the earth by moles is regarded as sacred when used in curing ceremonies because it is untainted by humans and those who tread the earth’s surface.” Among the Lakotas, mice were located in the class of diggers and traveled together with the gophers, prairie dogs, and badgers to the great gathering of animals as told in one segment of their genesis story (Walker 1983:269-272, 358-362). Along with gophers, they were believed to eat away at the moon each month (Walker 1980:126). According to Royal B. Hassrick (1964:276), children were cured of bedwetting by threatening to feed them mice (Hassrick 1964:276). Mice could also be a source of spiritual assistance as told in a story of Julia Brave Eagle, who prayed to and received aid from the Ithunkala Oyate, the Mice Nation (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:117-118). No cultural information was uncovered on mice in the literature that was reviewed on the Cheyennes. Although some of the smallest rodents appear as background figures in Lakota and Cheyenne stories, many of the ones in which they appear are directed at children (Gilmore 1925:183-184; Hassrick 1964:139-140; Grinnell 1972:1:149; Deloria 1932:18-20).

Bats

[Chiroptera]

There are ten different species of bats in the Black Hills from the family Vesperitilionidae, and many of these are located at Wind Cave National Park. As Turner (1974:43) writes, the region holds many favorable locations for bats to retreat including ledges and caves. Notwithstanding the existence of numerous species, only one tribal name was found for them, and that is the Lakota word, hupa’kiglake (Buechel 1970:196). This word could mean “wing” [hupa] “that stands apart” [kiglake], but it could also refer to their behavior of returning to a roosting site as in the Lakota word that means “return home” (kiglake). Buechel (1970:196) suggests that the name refers to the part of a bird that is used as a wotawe or protective amulet. The bat was certainly linked in Lakota taxonomy with other animals who fly and not with mammals and other four-legged creatures. In particular, it was viewed as a “helper” of the West Wind and the Thunders (Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:125; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:111). Like other birds who are linked to these two spiritual forces, bats were associated with war and the warriors, who commonly wore them as wotawe when they entered battle. In Cheyenne, the bat was called mosiskanee-nona [the brown leather winged] (Petter 1913-15:93). George Grinnell (1972:1:120) reports that Cheyenne warriors sometimes tied the skins of bats in their hair when going to war to avoid detection and to ensure their safe travel at night. In battle, when an enemy shot at a warrior wearing a bat, he was not supposed to be shooting at the warrior in actuality but rather at the spiritual presence embodied in the amulet of the bat.
Insectivores  
(*Insectivora*)

The insectivore order is represented by the shrew family, *Soricidae*. Although shrews are found at Wind Cave National Park, throughout the Black Hills and the neighboring grasslands, they had little if any significance to the Lakotas and Cheyennes. There are no references to them in any of the sources studied for this report other than the name *wakiges’a* found in the closely related Dakota dialect of the Sioux language (Williamson 1970: 204).

II. Birds

More than two hundred species of birds have been identified in the Black Hills, and of these, 139 are reported as common in the region, appearing as permanent year-round residents or regular seasonal inhabitants (Froiland 1978:107). Eighty-seven species are listed as occasional in the reportings of experienced observers. Although the vast majority are western species, eastern and northern varieties are found here as well. As with plants, this is an area of hybridization for a number of species from different parts of the continent. The Hills are the western and eastern limits for a number of birds and also outlier zones for some boreal species that nest in the region (Ibid:106-107).

Many of the birds identified with the Hills have been sighted at Wind Cave National Park, but most of them are uncommon or rare in their appearance. Only forty-one species, or approximately twenty percent of the total number, are commonly sighted in the park (Pisarowicz 2001b). Here, again, unless otherwise indicated, all future references to bird populations in the park are based on information drawn from the park’s own website.

More than half of the birds found in the park are reported to have names in Lakota and Cheyenne ornithological nomenclatures, and nearly ninety percent of the common birds are so recorded. Some of the others may be represented by tribal names that have not been linked in a definitive way with any species identified in scientific nomenclatures. Many more may not carry any name at all. In reference to the Cheyennes, John Moore (1986) writes that several species of small birds went unnamed because they carried no functional use or symbolic meaning.

### BIRDS OF PREY

**Raptors**  
*Falconiformes*

**EAGLES AND HAWKS**  
*Accipitridae*

**Golden Eagle**  
*Aquila chrysaetos*

**Bald Eagle**  
*Haliacetus leucocephalus*

Of the raptors, the eagle was clearly the most significant bird to the Lakotas. It ranked as the “chief” of the “winged” because it “flies higher than all other birds’” and “moves through the skies in the sacred form of a circle” (Black Elk quoted in Brown 1992:42). According to Luther Standing Bear (1988:78), eagles symbolized “the greatest power.” Eagles ranked high among the birds in Cheyenne traditions too (Moore, J. 1986:182).

**Habitat and History**

Of the two species of eagles, the golden eagle is the most prevalent in the Black Hills. It is widespread throughout the region, occuring most frequently in the neighborhood of Wind Cave National Park and Custer State Park near rocky cliffs and over open prairies. It remains in the Hills over the entire year. In the summer, it is found most often at high elevations, but in fall and winter, it seeks lower elevations to feed on.
rabbits, prairie dogs, and gophers (Froiland 1978:109-110, 121; Melius 1995:31). Bald Eagles, on the other hand, are uncommon in the Hills. They stay in the Black Hills over the winter months near open waters where they are drawn to the fish and local waterfowl. They are especially prevalent in the bottoms of local river valleys with cottonwood groves (Froiland 1978:134; Melius 1995:31).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Lakotas call the golden eagle *wanbli gleska* and the bald eagle *anukasan* (Buechel 1970:82, 540), while the Cheyennes refer to them respectively as *meheonenevess* and *to?too?he* (*netse* was their generic name) (Petters 1915:35; Moore, J. 1986:182). As with bison, the Lakotas have many different names for eagles that not only separate them by species but also by their age and coloring, such as *huya* [mature golden eagle] and *anukiyan* [immature golden eagle or cross-breed] (Buechel 1970:82, 196; Powers, W. 1986:148-149; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:111). The Cheyennes have a complex naming system for eagles as well (Moore, J. 1986:183-185; Petter 1913-15:420). The golden eagle is referred to by seven different names: *moeoniz* [war eagle] indicates the juvenile stage and *enskiniz* [striped eagle] designates the immature phase, while *niz* [ordinary eagle], *heoveniz* [yellow eagle], *totoniz* [spotted eagle], and *maeniz* [red eagle] describe varieties of golden eagles in their mature stage (Moore, J. 1986:183). Another name, *Ma’heonenevess* [bird father], is also applied to the golden eagle.

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Of all the species of birds found in the area, eagles are the ones most consistently associated with the Black Hills in tribal cultural traditions. Historically, this area was a prime location to trap eagles. The Mandans and Hidatsas considered the Hills one of their favorite spots for eagle trapping (Bowers 1963:209-210). John Stands in Timber (and Liberty 1967:51-52) and Father Peter Powell (1969:415,427) reported that areas near Bear Butte were favored by the Cheyennes for this purpose, while Iron Shell (in Hassrick 1964:171-172) mentions the Hills as a general location for Lakota eagle trapping but does not cite specific sites for the activity. Two locations are referenced in the literature: the Coloff Winter Count (Powers 1963) describes the region of Bald Mountain as a place for eagle trapping, and Samuel Hinman (1875:93) noted the presence of numerous “pits” beyond the White River on the southeastern edge of the Hills.

No matter where Cheyenne eagle trapping took place, it was considered a sacred endeavor that was based on the teachings of their culture hero, Sweet Medicine (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:38). Among the Cheyennes, only certain spiritually gifted people were allowed to catch eagles (Grinnell 1972:1:299). Eagle trapping was typically practiced in the spring when the eagles first appeared and then in the fall when the eagles began to head south. Older men, who no longer went to war, were the ones who trapped eagles. These men were required to keep themselves ritually pure prior to trapping: they had to remain out of contact with other people, sleep alone, touch no one, and purify themselves in sweat lodges before pursuing an eagle (Ibid:1:299-300). Traditionally, an eagle catcher dug a pit large enough to sit down in and covered it with sticks and grass. He baited his trap with a wolf skin and a bit of rabbit, antelope, or deer meat (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1969:51-52; Grinnell 1972:1:301). Before sunrise, he entered the pit and awaited the arrival of an eagle. When the bird landed, he grabbed its feet and strangled it (Grinnell 1972:1:302). After the eagles were taken, the trapper conducted further acts of propitiation (Ibid:1:302-303). According to Grinnell (Ibid:1:300), eagles were the only birds which had a ceremony attached to their hunting. The Cheyenne also took eagle feathers from nests and from fledglings that they captured and raised in captivity (Ibid: 2:107). In later years, the Cheyenne built

Eagle feathers are associated with a complex language that symbolizes the valorous accomplishments of their wearers especially in warfare (Brown 1992:43). Luther Standing Bear (1975:85-88; 1988:84-88), James Walker (1980:232, 263, 270-272, 273, 274, 275-276, 277, 278, 280, 281, 1982:103-105), and Royal B. Hassrick (1964:90) describe in some detail how, historically, the number of eagle feathers and their positioning on the head marked different kinds of honors among the Lakotas. Eagle feathers stood for the killing of an enemy in battle, and therefore, they were worn primarily by men who achieved distinction in battle (Curtis 1907-30:3:23, 30; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:389-390). Only men with an exceptional record of war deeds were allowed to wear a warbonnet made with these feathers (Walker 1982:103). Luther Standing Bear (1988:89), however, claimed that anyone who was brave enough to capture eagles could make a headdress and wear it. Lakota Sun Dancers also wore eagle feathers and plumes (Walker 1982:98).

Among the Lakotas, only certain women are permitted to carry or wear eagle feathers. These include women whose kinsmen died in war. In fact, there was once a special society of Lakota women whose male relatives were lost in battle. In addition to the plume of an eagle, which these women wore upright at the back of their head as a badge of their membership in the society, they also wore the feathers their deceased kinsmen were entitled to wear (Walker 1982:63,106). Women for whom a Pte San Lowanpi ceremony was conducted were also allowed to wear eagle plumes in their hair (Standing Bear 1988:88).

The Cheyennes also place a high value on eagle feathers; the most prized feathers are those of the golden eagle (Grinnell 1972:2:107). Historically, they traded them to other tribes (Ibid:1:299). The straight quills from the tail were especially valued in adornment and commonly worn by older men who tied them to their hair at the base of the scalp lock (Ibid:1:222, 299). In the past, according to John Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:52-53, eagle feathers for a wide variety of other purposes as well. Eagle feathers are attached to war shields, pipes, lances, and staffs (Wissler 1912:15, 67-72; Blish 1934:183; Walker 1982:95; Standing Bear 1988:87-88). The wing feathers of eagles are still used in fans to whip the flames of ritual fires and to smudge sage, cedar, and other incenses during ceremonies (Bordeaux 1929:157; Standing Bear 1988:90; Brown 1992:43). Historically, the small feathers were used in making arrows (Densmore 1918:438-439), an application also practiced by the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:1:306). Today, as in the past, eagle plumes are attached to ceremonial equipment used in the Wiyanan wacipi, the Hunka, and the Pte San Lowanpi (Curtis 1907-30:3:74, 75, 78, 81, 82, 87, 94, 95; Densmore 1918:71, 72, 104, 125-126; Sword in Deloria 1929:398; Walker 1980:187, 190, 191, 202, 213, 217-218, 230-231, 234, 244, 245, 251-252). In making buffalo medicine, an eagle feather is symbolically equated with the bison (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:240-241). In the past, eagle feathers were also tied to the hoops carried by elk dreamers in their performances (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:242-243), and they were attached to Lakota horses to enhance their speed (Bordeaux 1929:113). The body of an outstretched eagle was placed on top of a bear skin when bear medicines were made (Ibid:179). Finally, eagle down was placed opposite the entrance of a tipi before a child was born and also when a boy reached manhood (Dorsey, J.1894:482). The down was used in other sacred contexts too (Bordeaux 1929:179).
were the insignia of the chiefs, and they were worn only by leaders and noted warriors. By the mid-twentieth century, however, everyone, even women, took to wearing them for dances and parades. War bonnets were gifted at marriage (Grinnell 1972:1:138, 2:27), consecrated and carried (or worn) into battle (Ibid:2:10, 121), and displayed at the funeral rites of a warrior (Ibid:2:161). The Cheyennes still use eagle feathers and plumes in a wide variety of different contexts during their Sun Dance (Ibid:2:215, 232, 233, 234, 243-244, 262, 263, 265, 267, 268). In preparing the plumes for the Sun Dancers’ whistles, coups are counted over them (Ibid:2:232-233). When embellishing the pins that surround the altar, they are said to stand as a symbol of the thunderbird (Ibid:2:263). Each Sun Dancer also wears a yellow painted eagle feather, which stands for the breath of life (Powell 1969: 2:796, 806, 833, 834, 844).

Eagle claws and bones are used for a wide range of purposes too. The wing bones of eagles are still made into whistles for the Lakota Sun Dance and other ceremonies, for warfare, and for healing (Curtis 1907-30:3:54, 91, 95, 97; Dorsey, G. 1905:124; Walker 1982:95, 98; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:237; Schlesier 1987:60; Standing Bear 1988:172; Brown 1992:42). Among the Lakotas, these whistles are said to symbolize the power of the thunders (Densmore 1918: 161; Blish 1934:185; Brown 1992:42). Historically, the wing bones were reportedly made into awls for sewing the buffalo hides that went into the construction of a Lakota tipi (Standing Bear 1975:21). Eagle claws were used by the Lakotas in medical treatments, and in one application, flakes were scratched from their surface and mixed in a decoction as a remedy for scrofulous sores (Densmore 1918:253). And finally, among the Cheyennes, eagle fat was used in making certain paints for the Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972: 2:262).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Eagles are considered highly sacred or wakan among the Lakotas (Swallow in Walker 1980:102). In some texts, the golden eagle is described as the “epitome of the powers of the north” (Buechel 1970:540) and the messenger of its wind, Waziyata (Curtis 1907-30:3:77), but in others, this bird is described as an akicita or soldier of the West Wind and the Wakinyan or Thunders (Swallow in Walker 1980:103). Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:122) that eagles presided over councils, hunters, war parties, and battles. The eagle was also represented as the akicita of the sun, and the sun’s tonwan (essence) is carried in the eagle’s tail quills (Walker 1980:230-231, 232; Brown 1992: 43). According to Francis Densmore (1918:111-112), the eagle was mentioned in the prayers of the Sun Dance leader before the center tree was felled because it is the “boldest of birds.” In the Hunka ceremony, the officiate equates the eagle with the buffalo and tells how it stands for virtue and integrity (Walker 1980:234). Similarly, in the puberty ceremony for a young girl, the use of an eagle plume symbolizes “constancy and virtue” (Walker 1980:217-218). Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier (1995:111) write that eagles serve as important spiritual messengers because “they can fly into the pure, rarefied air where the sacred can communicate with them away from the contaminating influences of earth.” Their feathers and plumes represent “the breath of the living being” (Brown 1992:43) and highly potent guardians and protectors against danger as revealed in many episodes of the Falling Star story cycle told by Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:397-398, 400, 407, 408-409).

The Cheyennes also believe that eagles possess great power and that they are the “strongest bird that flies” (Grinnell 1972:2: 107-108). Father Peter Powell (2002a:69) claims that the golden eagle is the holiest of the Northern Cheyennes’ birds. One group of dancers in the Northern Cheyennes’ Sun Dance represents the bald eagle, and they
are painted with designs signifying lightning (Powell 1969:1:79). Eagles are generally associated with the second highest level of the Southern Cheyenne cosmos, the Seto-voom, the near sky space (Moore, J. 1984:298), but there are some indications that they may have been included among the birds of the highest blue sky space too, the Otatavoom (Moore, J. 1986:182; Schlesier 1987:8).

The Cheyennes strongly associate eagles with protective powers relating to war (Grinnell 1972:2:108; Moore, J. 1986a:184-186). Only some individuals were able to make eagle medicine for protective purposes, however (Grinnell 1972:1:299). John Stands in Timber (and Liberty 1969:52) wrote: “They say an eagle can take in nearly the whole world with his eyes, and see it as clearly as a man looks at the ground by his feet.” This might have been why only leaders and warriors among the Cheyennes were able to don their feathers (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1969:52).


Hawks

[Buteo, Accipiter, spp.]

Habitat and History

Besides eagles, many other raptor species are resident in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park. Some of these species are rare or uncommon migrants, including the osprey [Pandion halisetus] and the marsh hawk a.k.a. Northern Harrier [Circus cyaneus], the rough-legged hawk [Buteo lagopus], and the ferruginous hawk [Buteo regalis] (Froiland 1978:132, 133, 134; Melius 1995:33, 35). Others are permanent residents but not often sighted: these include northern goshawks [Accipter gentilis], and Cooper’s hawks (also known as chicken hawks) [Accipter cooperii] (Froiland 1978:121, 125; Melius 1995:33). The red-tailed hawk [Buteo jamaicensis], the most frequently sighted hawk in the Hills, is a common summer resident of Wind Cave National Park.

Tribal Taxonomy

There are many different names for hawks in the Cheyenne language. John Moore (1986:185-186) claims that this diversity speaks to their importance in Cheyenne naming practices, and it also reflects the sexual dimorphism and changing color phases of these birds of prey. The Cheyennes include most hawks within their class of “great” birds, which is associated with predatory behavior, war, and certain kinds of healing (Moore, J. 1986:184). Some Cheyenne names for hawks include moehenoxe for the northern harrier, hoestom for red-tailed and ferruginous hawks, and tota-meneno for northern goshawks (Moore, J. 1986:183).

In Lakota, there are two generic names for hawks cetan and canska. Cetan is specifically applied to the chicken hawk or Cooper’s hawk, while cetan gleslega [spotted hawk] refers to the sharp-shinned hawk. Cetan sala [red like hawk] designates the
red-shouldered hawk (Buechel 1970:130, 531). Also included in the cetan taxon are two non-hawk species, the shrike, cetan watapela, and the evening grosbeak, cetan watapela zi (Buechel 1970:130). In the Lakota taxon canska, the rough-legged hawk, is the representative bird of the class. Other species included in this group are the red-tailed hawk, known as canska’unpig, and the osprey, canska hoyazela [fish eater hawk]. There are three other species in this taxon: canska gi [brown or grey hawk], canska sapila [little black hawk], and canska’wanblila [little eagle hawk], which have not been matched with species names in scientific taxonomies (Ibid: 123). Finally, the northern harrier is called ptegopec (Buechel 1970: 448).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

The ethnographic literature is largely silent when it comes to revealing how hawks were captured by the Lakotas and the Cheyennes. It does, however, describe the uses to which hawk feathers were put.

While the Lakotas used hawk feathers in their hunting arrows (Densmore 1918:438-439; Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992: 18), the Cheyennes put them on their ceremonial arrows. They were not attached to hunting and war arrows because the Cheyennes believed they were easily damaged by blood (Grinnell 1972:1:181). Hawk feathers decorated the lances of the Lakota Brave Hearts (Wissler 1912:72), and they adorned the war regalia and paraphernalia of other military societies too.

Among the Lakotas, hawk feathers were symbolically important in many ceremonial contexts. The wearing of hawk feathers, however, was restricted to persons with spiritual powers and entitled to conduct sacred performances (Walker 1980:223). The walowan, the one who sings over the initiates, in the Hunka ceremony wore a buffalo horn headdress adorned with hawk feathers and weasel skins, and the wicasa wakan who conducted the Pte San Lowanpi (The White Buffalo Calf Ceremony) wore a skin cap of hawk feathers and weasel skins (Walker 1980:246).

The Cheyennes adorned the lances they used to count coup with hawk feathers, and they hung them from the bows of the Contraries (Grinnell 1972:1:187,2:82,105). Hawk claws were used in war charms to inspire daring and courage (Ibid:2:124). Cheyenne healers fan their patients with hawk wings to cool them when they are treated, and they attach their feathers to the sage-wreath worn by the swifthawk dancer in the Sun Dance (Powell 1969:2:843). Hawk down is tied to the ceremonial request sticks used in the Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:131, 251).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Lakota believe that hawks bring luck, and that they rule over endurance and swiftness (Dorsey, J. 1984:500; Black Elk in Niehardt 1959:133-134; Tyon in Walker 1980: 122). They are considered the helpers, tonweyapi, of Wiyohpeyata or Yata (the West Wind), who dwells with the thunders on Harney Peak (Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:125; 1983:82). Although all hawks are respected because they are considered among the surest birds of prey (Densmore 1918:139), the northern groshawk was considered especially sacred (Sword in Walker 1980:102). As Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:317) remarked: “The life of an Indian is just like the wings of the air. That is why you notice the hawk knows how to get its prey. The Indian is like that. The hawk swoops down on its prey, so does the Indian.” At the Sun Dance, tobacco is placed in the pipe as an offering to the hawk “who makes life difficult for other winged peoples” (Black Elk in Brown 1971:78). Standing Bear (1988:89) also observed that hawks were “cruel” and feared by other birds. Hawks were among the birds associated with storms and thunder in the ceremonies of the Sacred Bow Society (Blish 1934:186).
Hawks are also prevalent figures in Lakota visions (Hassrick 1964:234; DeMallie 1984:228-229) that confer war power. They have important connections to Lakota healers and healing (Dorsey, J. 1894: 495; Bordeaux 1929:109), and they appear in many sacred Lakota stories including those about Falling Star, Stone Boy, and the Four Winds (DeMallie 1984:397, 400, 405, 409; Walker 1983:53, 82, 96, 378-379).

Among the Cheyennes, hawks are also associated with war powers (Grinnell 1972:2: 105). Cheyenne warriors, who received war powers from hawks, sometimes tied a hawk skin to their hair in battle, and Contrary warriors made their dance whistles from the wing bones of a hawk (Stands in Timber 1967:90; Grinnell 1972:2:120; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:44). The Lakota war leader Crazy Horse was reported to have done this (Standing Bear 1988:88-89).

**FALCONS [FALCONIDAE]**

Of the species in the falcon family, prairie falcons [*Falco mexicanus*], also known as swifthawks, are permanent residents in the Black Hills but not often sighted. The most frequently sighted member of the falcon family, the American Kestral or sparrow hawk [*Falco sparverius*], is a common summer resident of the Hills and Wind Cave National Park (Froiland 1978:109, 125; Melius 1995:35).

In Cheyenne, *siskeeno* is the generic name for falcons, while *aenohes* is the ascription for the American kestral or sparrow hawk (Moore, J. 1986:183). In the Lakota language, falcons are merged taxonomically with hawks: the American kestral is called *cetan tanka* (Buechel 1970:130). The names for other falcon species have not been identified by name in the sources we studied, even though the Lakotas often associated the prairie falcon with courage in battle (Hassrick 1964:200). Historically, among the Cheyennes, sparrow hawks, were linked with the thunders, bestowed powers of swiftness and agility, while other falcons conferred powers that kept warriors from being hit in battle (Grinnell 1972:2:108; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:44). The stuffed skins of prairie falcons were often worn by Cheyenne Contrary warriors, and their feathers adorned the lances of these warriors (Powell 2002a:69). The prairie falcon is one of the birds that plays an important role in the Great Race of the animals that took place on the Race Track, which crosses sections of Wind Cave National Park. It is also one of the birds represented symbolically in the Cheyennes’ Sun Dance (Powell 1969:1:79).

**VULTURES [CARTHARTIDAE]**

**Habitat and History**

The turkey vulture [*Cathartes aura*] is a common sight in the Black Hills, appearing over the entire area from early spring through mid-autumn. It ranges most commonly in open areas at low elevations and nests on steep rocky slopes and cliffs (Froiland 1978:108; Melius 1995:31). It is not a frequent summer visitor to the area around Wind Cave National Park, however.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Lakotas call the vulture *heca* [no translation given] (Buechel 1970:169), while the Cheyenne know it as *moxtavovetas* [black whirlwind] or *oo?he* [bare of feathers] (Moore, J. 1986:189).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Vulture feathers were once considered the best for fletching arrows because blood does not diminish their effectiveness (Densmore 1918:438-439; Grinnell 1972: 1:181; Brown 1992:18). Buzzard feathers, hung vertically, were worn by Lakota men as a sign for counting the fourth coup in battle (Hassrick 1964:90).
Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

The Lakotas believe the arrival of vultures means the end of winter. According to Lame Deer (Fire and Erdoes 1972:167), these birds can forecast the weather. Although the vulture is present in one of the stories from the Falling Star cycle and in an Inktomi tale (Beckwith, M. 1930: 431; DeMallie 1984: 397), it is not an especially significant figure in Lakota cosmology.

This stands in contrast to the Cheyennes who consider it a member of their most “holy” class of birds. Along with dragonflies and nighthawks, it moves in the fashion of a whirlwind, as evidenced by the funnel-shaped configurations it makes over cliff faces when it seeks thermals or circles carrion (Moore, J. 1986:189). The vulture is connected with death, twilight, and the west (Moore, J. 1986:182). Vultures are acknowledged symbolically in the Sun Dance as one of the “holy” birds. In the context of healing personal illnesses, however, they are identified with the class of “great birds” whose feathers are used to make fans for curing the sick (Moore, J. 1986:189). One incident where a vulture brought a person back to life was related by Grinnell (1972:2:153). Cheyennes once considered it a great honor to have eagles and vultures devour the corpses of their warriors left on the prairies (Grinnell 1972:2:163).

Owls

[Strigiformes]

Habitat and History

Although not typically identified as birds of prey, owls are predatory animals. Six different species of owls are reported as rarely seen residents of Wind Cave National Park, and all, except one, are present at the park year round.

Tribal Taxonomy

The generic name for owl in the Lakota language is hinhan (Buechel 1970:176), but there are many species specific names that are listed below. In Cheyenne culture, owls are called mestaa?e (Petters 1913-15:77). They are not considered natural birds. Instead, they are believed to be mista or night spooks, and in some cases, the ghosts of known persons (Moore, J. 1986:186). According to George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:100), Cheyennes who hear an owl hoot are sometimes able to tell whose ghost is speaking.

Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use

We found no information in the ethnographic literature on how owls were taken for their feathers. Owl feathers were important to both the Lakotas and Cheyennes, and they were used mostly in ceremonial contexts associated with healing and war.

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

The Lakota consider owls to be the helpers and messengers of the unktehi, water spirits, but they are also believed to be the aids of Wiyhiyanpa, the East Wind, because, like this wind, they are lazy and prefer to sleep during the day. The white owl, however, is the assistant of the north wind, Waziya (Beckwith, M. 1930:412n2; Walker 1980: 118, Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:125, 1983: 340, 344-345). The owl’s hoot forewarns of death and discontent, and as a result, it is sometimes feared (Red Rabbit 1980: 125; Walker 1983:340, 344; Brown 1992: 44). Owls are much respected by the Lakotas for their wisdom, courage, and gentleness, all of which are considered important character traits of a wicasa wakan or medicine man (Standing Bear 1988:72). Healers usually receive their powers from the owl in visions and use them in doctoring and conducting Yuwipi ceremonies (Brown 1992:44, 61; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:30, 31, 109,
One Lakota told Frances Densmore (1992, 181):

The owl moves at night when men are asleep. The medicine-man gets his power through dreams at night and believes that his dream is clear, like the owl’s sight. So he promises that he will never harm an owl. If he did so, his power would leave him. For this reason some medicine-men wear owl feathers. The medicine-man also regards the owl as having very soft, gentle ways, and when he begins to treat the sick persons he is supposed to treat them very gently. So in night wisdom and in the manner of carrying itself the owl is greatly respected by the medicine men of the tribe.

Two healing songs with owl motifs were also recorded by Francis Densmore (1918: 180, 186-187), including ones that Brave Buffalo and Siyaka received in visions. Among the Cheyennes, the owl was also considered an important medicine helper, and a number of stories mention their healing powers and their connections to lightning (Grinnell 1972:1:125; 2:109, 156).

In Lakota culture, owls were also associated with war. The Owl Society, Miwitani (also called the Hinhanshun Wapaha [Owl-feather Headdress], was a warrior association that did not perform as other akicita societies (Curtis 1907-30:3:139; Wissler 1912:41-42); its members were known to have keen eyesight like the owl and risked their lives to gather information on the whereabouts of the enemy, often traveling at night to obtain it (Walker 1980: 273; Standing Bear 1988:72). The leader of the Miwitani wore a cap of owl feathers and a scarf called Wanzi icaske, which was draped around his neck and hung down the back (Dorsey, J. 1894:463; Standing Bear 1988: 72). The members of this society also wore hats with owl feathers, they tied owl feathers to their whistles, and they wore an owl leg or foot on their robes for every wife they abandoned (Wissler 1912:47). Thunder Bear told James Walker (1980:273) about the war insignia of the members of this society, including the practice of painting dark rings around the eyes to indicate a willingness to perform deeds in the night. Other Lakota warrior societies used owl feathers too. The Wic’-iska (White Marked Society) whip bearers wore bunches of split owl feathers on their heads (Wissler 1912: 35), and the Iku sapa [Black Chins] made headdresses that contained owl feathers (Wissler 1912: 28). The lances of the Blotanka, the Sotka Tanka and the Cante Tinza were decorated with owl feathers as well (Wissler 1912:58, 61, 72).

The Cheyennes also linked owls with warfare (Grinnell 1972:2:105). Contrary Warriors carried bows to which owl feathers were attached, and they wore stuffed screech owls on top of their head. Their leaders wore caps with owl feathers (Dorsey, G. 1905:25; Grinnell 1972:2:89). When owl feathers were tied to a shield or worn on the head and arms, the owner received the owl’s power to see and move silently in the dark undetected (Grinnell 1972:1:188, 2:109).

The Lakotas and Cheyennes had more specific ideas about particular species of owls. The grey screech owl [Otus asio], known alternatively as osniko, popotka, or ungna-giacala in Lakota (Buechel 1970:445, 606) and megascop in Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:100), was able to foretell the coming of cold weather. As James Dorsey (1894: 500) wrote of the Lakotas: “When the night is very cold this owl cries out, so the Teton say, just as if a person’s teeth chattered. When its cry is heard, all the people wrap themselves in their thickest robes and put plenty of wood on the fires.” Lakota women imitate this owl in a certain dance, called the popotka, where they pagla hotonpi or wail “lililili.” (Buechel 1970: 445).

The Northern saw-whet owl [Aegolis acadicus], the smallest of the owls in the Black Hills, is called pagla or cehupa giagla in Lakota, but it also goes by the names ungna-giacala and popotka, a name used for the grey screech owl too (Buechel 1970: 423). When this owl arrives in the Hills in the spring, it is commonly heard but rarely
The Lakotas say that the evening call of this owl is the first to be heard in the spring and thus it is a sign of seasonal change (Buechel 1970). This owl is also associated with spiritual figures known as the “Little People” and specifically with stories that surround Castle Rock and Harney Peak in the Black Hills (Howard, J. 1955).

The short-eared owl [*Asio flammeus*] is one of the more common owls in the open habitats of the Black Hills and surrounding plains. It is a permanent but rare resident at Wind Cave National Park (Melius 1995:39). It goes by the name *sesemimista* [snake-eating owl] in Cheyenne, and it is the only owl in their three classes of birds (Moore, J. 1986:183, 186). Because this owl is diurnal and eats rattlesnakes, which are an object of interest for the Cheyennes, it holds a special position in their cosmology different from the other owls, which are not considered birds but spooks (Moore, J. 1986:186). The feathers of this owl were worn by Cheyenne Contraries to enhance their ability to move quietly and strike quickly (Powell 2002a:69). The Lakotas call this owl, *hinhangi*, but no special cultural information has been reported for it (Buechel 1970:76).

The burrowing owl [*Athene Cunicularia*] is commonly found around prairie dog towns where it makes its nest sites in burrows (Melius 1995:37). Although this owl appears at Wind Cave National Park, it is an uncommon summer visitor. The Lakota call it *hinhan makotila* [little earth owl] and know of its connection to prairie dogs (Buechel 1970:176). No other cultural knowledge about it was uncovered. Nor was any cultural information specific to the Lakotas found on the great horned owl [*Bubo virginianus*], *hinhan sa*, *hinhan hetonia*, or *hinhan tanka* (Ibid:176). The only reference to this owl in the Cheyenne literature indicates that it had protective powers (Grinnell 1972:2:109).

**WATERBIRDS AND SHOREBIRDS**

A great variety of waterbirds temporarily stop in the Black Hills during their annual migrations, but their appearance in the region of Wind Cave National Park is rare (Progulske 1974:123). Only a few of the waterbirds, including the mallard and northern pintail, are commonly sighted at the park. Similarly, many shorebirds visit the Black Hills at the time of their migrations, but only a few, notably the killdeer and upland plover, stay in the area for an extended season.

**Ducks, Geese, Swans, and Grebes**

[Anseriformes] and [Podicipediformes]

**History & Habitat**

The snow goose [*Chen caerulescens*], Canada goose [*Branta canadensis*], wood duck [*Aix sponsa*], northern shoveler [*Anas clypeata*], American wigeon [*Anas americana*], canvasback [*Aythya valisineria*], redhead [*Aythya americana*], ring-necked duck [*Aythya collaris*], lesser scaup [*Aythya affinis*], and bufflehead [*Bucephala albeola*] are among the migrating waterbirds sighted only rarely at Wind Cave National Park, while the gadwell [*Anas strepera*], and various varieties of teal [*Anas crecca* and *Anas discors*] and the Western grebe [*Aechmophorus occidentalis*] are reported as uncommon in their seasonal appearance. Only the mallard [*Anas platyrhynchos*] and northern pintail [*Anas acuta*] are commonly sighted migrants at the park.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

Many varieties of duck, geese, and grebe species are identified and distinguished in Lakota ornithological nomenclatures. The generic name for the duck is *si’yagla* (Buechel 1970:463) and for the goose it is *maga*
The swan, which is called *magaska*, and a variety of ducks, known generically as *magaksica*, are connected in Lakota naming systems: these include the gadwell [magasni-yanlahota], wigeon [magasniyanlapato], and various species of teal [magasniyanla navate to for the green-winged variety and magasniyanla istohlata ska for the blue-winged] (Ibid:327). Another Lakota taxon has the mallard duck, *pa-gon’ta*, as its chief representative: it also includes the shoveler [*pagon’ta pa to*], merganser [*pagon’ta navate ska*], northern pintail [*pagon’ta pa sapa*], and wood duck [*pagon’ta ista sa*] (Ibid:424). The western grebe is called *si’yaka* which is an alternate name given to the teal (Ibid:463).

Among the Cheyennes the generic name for duck is *se?se* (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:46), while other names for ducks are green-winged teal, *o-ha’mishish’* and blue-winged teal, *hamishish’* (Hayden 1862b: 291). Names for goose [*henæ*], swan [*voestaso*], mallard [*maaxta*], and flat billed [*paposeses*] are also recorded in Cheyenne dictionaries (Petter 1913-15:416, 519; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:46, 110).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Ducks and geese were a source of food for the Cheyennes and the Lakotas, but none of the standard ethnographic sources explain how they were taken. Ducks and their eggs were important in tribal diets too. At least among the Lakotas, goose eggs were avoided because they were believed by some to cause carbuncles (Hassrick 1964:170). A special arrow, called *wisinha yeyapi* [sending arrow], was made for bringing ducks and geese down from a great distance (Hassrick 1964:169).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Among the Lakotas, ducks and other waterfowl are associated with fertility and *Itokaga*, the South Wind (Curtis 1907-30:3:77; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127; Walker 1980:217-218, 252). They are considered a source of medicine (Standing Bear 1988:70-71), and the people who dream of them often became healers. According to Francis Densmore (1918 :274), Old Buffalo hung mallard feathers on the pipe he used in healing. As Luther Standing Bear (1988:71) reported:

> The duck is a bird that means a good deal to the Sioux people. I told you about the bear dreamer and how the bear helped the Sioux by telling the medicine men about a valuable herb that would cure the sick. So we have a duck dreamer. Long ago, while a medicine man fasted, the duck came to him in a vision and told him about a plant that grew only in the water. The root of this plant is good for those who have nervous troubles, and we all use it to this day. The duck also showed the Sioux how to dig for the lily roots that grow in ponds. The women of the tribe boil these roots, which are something like sweet potatoes and are very nourishing. In some of our most sacred and religious ceremonies we use the beautiful green breast of the duck in this way, showing our thankfulness to this bird. On the peace pipe there is a bit of the neck feathers, and in the confirmation ceremony a duck feather is worn with the eagle feather which is put on the head of the one being confirmed. The duck is considered very wise for his knowledge of the air and of the water as well.

Standing Bear (1988:71) also noted that ducks flying at night warned of the presence of enemies nearby.

Geese are also associated with healing and protective powers, and their directional bearing is north. They appeared in Black Elk’s most important vision, flying above the rider from the north (in DeMallie 1984:95, 98, 114), and they also came to him in other visions (in DeMallie 1984:109:137-138). They are a sign of hope, and they represent the end of a winter’s hardship when flying north in spring (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:117, 277-278).
Duck feathers were commonly used for making arrows (Standing Bear 1988:19), and they played many different symbolic roles for the Lakotas. The head feathers of the wood duck, for example, were known to be “wakan selececa” (Buechel 1970:424). The green feathers from the head of the mallard drake were also highly regarded; they were emblematic of generosity and hospitality and could be worn either by a man or a woman (Walker 1982:106). In a song from the Hunka [Making Relatives] ceremony, the drake’s feathers represent the South Wind, Itokaga (Walker 1980:234). The wand used in this ceremony was made from a rod of plum wood to which an ear of corn (symbol of the earth) was attached. An eagle plume and the largest quill of an eagle’s wing were hung from the rod, and the skin from the head of a mallard drake was wrapped around the quill (Curtis 1907-30:3:75; Densmore 1918:71,74; Walker 1980:234). A similar wand was used in the Pte San Lowampi, a girl’s coming of age ceremony, with an eagle plume and quill wrapped in a skin from the head of the mallard drake (Walker 1980:244). In this ceremony, the singer or walowan says “the spirit of the eagle and the duck will be with you. They will give you many children” (Walker 1980:252). Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:216-218) tells about a white goose wing carried by the virgin representing the north in the Horse Dance and about references to geese in the songs associated with this dance. The practice of seeking donations or “begging from house to house” was called “maga’ wa-pa’ha,” which refers to the wearing of a duck feather headdress (Buechel 1970:327). Ducks, geese, and swans played central roles in Cheyenne and Arapaho creation stories (Grinnell 1972:2:337; Harrod 2000:31; Trenholm 1970:3), but there is little published evidence on the significance of their feathers in sacred ceremonial contexts. George Dorsey (1905:95) mentions goose feathers in connection with the headdress worn by the Cheyenne Sun Dance leader, and John Moore (1986:187) points out that some of the brightly colored ducks like mallards, teals, and redheads have connections with war. Some Cheyenne courting flutes were carved in the image of a duck’s head, which suggests a symbolic association to fertility (Grinnell 1972:1:205). This is also true for the Lakotas. According to Moore (1986:184, 186, 187), ducks and geese are among the Cheyennes’ eatable and unmarked species included under the “ordinary” class of birds.

**Herons and Pelicans**

[Ciconiformes] and [Pelecaniformes]

A wide variety of other waterbirds and shorebirds appear in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park during their seasonal migrations but those in the heron and pelican orders are rare. Among the species reported at Wind Cave are the double-crested cormorant [Phalacrocorax auritus], the American white pelican [Pelecanus erythrorhynchos], and the blue heron [Ardea herodias]. The double-crested cormorant, called hunka in Lakota, was known to be able to release an arrow by diving and returning to the surface, repeating their calls as if they had never been injured (Buechel 1970:189). The lower jaws of pelicans, blo’za or ble’ga, were used by the Lakotas to make medicine bags and their feathers were considered among the best for fletching arrows (Densmore 1918:439; Buechel 1970:110). The Cheyennes called the pelican voa (Petter 1913-15:804).

**Cranes, Killdeers, and Sandpipers**

[Gruiformes] and [Charadriiformes]

Habitat and History

During their seasonal migrations, the American coot [Fulica americana], the sandhill crane [Grus canadensis], and the long-bill-
ed curlew [*Numenius americanus*] are sighted occasionally in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park. Killdeers [*Charadrius vociferus*], which return to the Black Hills in March, are widely seen in the summer, feeding on damp grasslands and meadows (Froiland 1978:125; Melius 1995:23). They are common summer residents of the park. Upland sandpipers [*Bartramia longicauda*] are also frequent at the park over the summer months.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

Of these birds, the crane has the greatest symbolic significance for the Lakotas and the Cheyennes. The crane is named *pehan* in Lakota, and the sandhill crane is called *pehan*gila (Buechel 1970:438). In Cheyenne, the sandhill crane is known as *ne?potatse* (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:28).

Other waterbirds and shorebirds are named in Cheyenne and Lakota taxonomies, but they appear to have little symbolic significance. Among the Cheyennes, most of these birds are considered a part of their “ordinary” class, which as Moore (1986:184) points out, means that they are birds in a stable state rather than full of energy and excitement. This class is further divided into three groups, one identified as “*mahpevekseo*” [water birds]. Within this group, the American coot (*oxcem*) is an example of a bird that paints and has symbolic value. The Cheyenne call the killdeer *tohtaanotovahe* (all around neck), and they are known to have a distinctive way of running along the ground. They are associated with rainfall too (Moore, J. 1986:184, 186).

For the Lakotas, many of their names for these species of birds are listed, but only a few are reported to have any specific cultural meanings or uses (Buechel 1970:182, 835). The Lakota associate the nocturnal flights of the upland sandpiper, *slo’slola*, with a rolling and forelorn sound (Buechel 1970:465), while the long-billed curlew, *ti’canica*, is said to call “*mni’swu, mni’swu*” [no translation given but possibly refers to small droplets of water] (Buechel 1970:489). The American coot is called *hin’hincala* or possibly *canti’pan*, but no special uses or meanings have been associated with it other than the observation that it is a “noisy” bird (Buechel 1970:125, 177, 799, 802). The killdeer is known as *pehin’cicila* or *ptehin’cicila* [curly calf] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:439, 438), and it is said to call “*Tiblo weve, tiblo weve*” [bloody elder brother, bloody elder brother], the meaning of which is not specified.

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

There is no indication in the literature whether the flesh of any of these birds was taken as food, although crane eggs were considered a delicacy by the Lakotas (Hassrick 1964:169).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Among the Lakotas, cranes are associated with the night, and they are considered messengers of the South Wind, *Itokagta* (Densmore 1918:139; Beckwith, M. 1930:402-403; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127; Walker 1983:243, 239, 273-274). Standing Bear (1978:158) wrote:

..the crane foretold wet weather by flying high in the air and coming down whistling all the way. These birds were not water birds but were prairie inhabitants having the common name of sandhill cranes. Their songs or whistled notes were quite soft and melodious and their bills were not the lance-like ones of the water heron. This bill was copied in the construction of the wooden love flutes of the Plains people.

Among the Cheyennes, the sandhill crane was considered an important medicine bird. Even though it was associated with the “ordinary” class of birds, it was probably connected to a much earlier symbolic com-
plex linked to the Massaum (Moore, J. 1986: 178,186). The Cheyennes believe that cranes possess strong protective powers especially in matters connected with lightning. They also believe that this bird takes pity on people (Grinnell 1972:2:109, 110). In the past, Cheyenne warriors sometimes attached the heads or feathers of sandhill cranes to their shields because this bird’s voice was alarming to its enemies (Grinnell 1972:2:195). War whistles were made from the wingbone of a sandhill crane because they were esteemed as powerful war helpers. It was considered a bird of great courage, and if wounded and unable to fly away, it would fight hard and even attack a man who approached it. Courage of this sort was greatly admired in a warrior (Grinnell 1972: 1:204). The crane’s voice was thought to alarm the enemy, and so the Cheyennes believed if a warrior imitated the cry of the crane in a fight, he would not be hit by a bullet (Grinnell 1972:2:109). The sandhill crane's courtship dance served as a model for some of the Cheyennes' public dances (Moore, J. 1986: 186).

The killdeer appears in a famous Lakota story about the blue jay (Beckwith, M. 1930:403), and many other waterbirds and shorebirds play roles in Lakota and Cheyenne stories too (Moore, J. 1986:186-187). However, there is little direct information available on their symbolic significance among either tribe.

**GAMEBIRDS**

Several different species of gamebirds are found in the Black Hills, although only three are reported for Wind Cave National Park: the ring neck pheasant (a naturalized immigrant from Asia), the sharp-tailed grouse, and the wild turkey. None of these birds, however, are common in the area.

**Fowl-Like Birds**

**[Galliformes]**

**Sharp-tailed grouse.**

* [Tymanuchus phasianellus]*

This grouse is an uncommonly sighted but permanent resident of the park. Although not reported in the Black Hills or at Wind Cave National Park, two other types of small game birds, quails and bobwhites, are listed in tribal ornithological nomenclatures

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In Lakota, the sharp-tailed grouse’s name is can siyo, while its close relative the spruce grouse is called wazi’ siyo and the prairie chicken is called siyo’ka (Buechel 1970: 123, 425, 463, 825). Grouse were called vakohease in Cheyenne, and they were members of the “ordinary” and unpainted class of birds, which could be taken for food. Other than serving as a source of food, this family of birds appears to have had little symbolic importance among the Cheyennes (Moore, J. 1986:184, 186). Names for specific varieties include: henenevahoas (sage grouse), sistatovahoas (ruffled grouse), and moxtavenevahoas (Franklin grouse), and (Petter 1913-15:526).

The Lakota classified the quail as a grouse and called it siyo cik’ala [little grouse] (Buechel 1970:267), while the Cheyenne named the quail koohkova?e [squatting down] (Petter 1913-15:155; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976: 86). The Lakotas call the bobwhite johotonia, which refers to the whistling sound it makes (Buechel 1970:463), and the Cheyennes know it by the same name as a quail (Petter 1913-15:155).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

Luther Standing Bear (1988:68) said of these birds:
They were fine to eat, and when we picked them, we saved the wing feathers for our arrows. These birds, began to travel south with the cold weather, but there were always a few that lingered behind until after snow fell. They would feed on buffalo berries and on the rosebuds that ripened in the fall.

He also describes how boys hunted them (Standing Bear 1988:15). William Bordeaux (1929:200) offers some additional details on Lakota methods of capturing fowls. Grouse meat and eggs were among the Lakotas’ favorite foods (Hassrick 1964:169), and in the testimony before the U.S. Senate (1904), the Black Hills were reported as a location for hunting these birds. Their feathers were valued for fletching arrows (Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992:18), and they adorned the lances carried by the officers of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society (Wissler 1912: 15). Their wing bones went into the making of whistles used by wolf dreamers and warriors (Wissler 1912:90-91; Densmore 1918:438-439; Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992:18), and they adorned the lances carried by the officers of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society (Wissler 1912: 15). Their wing bones went into the making of whistles used by wolf dreamers and warriors (Wissler 1912:90-91; Densmore 1918:438-439; Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992:18), and they adorned the lances carried by the officers of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society (Wissler 1912: 15). Their wing bones went into the making of whistles used by wolf dreamers and warriors (Wissler 1912:90-91; Densmore 1918:438-439; Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992:18), and they adorned the lances carried by the officers of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society (Wissler 1912: 15). Their wing bones went into the making of whistles used by wolf dreamers and warriors (Wissler 1912:90-91; Densmore 1918:438-439; Standing Bear 1988:19; Brown 1992:18), and they adorned the lances carried by the officers of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society (Wissler 1912: 15).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Standing Bear (1988:57, 60) describes how grouse inspired a certain style of dancing among the Lakotas, and he further notes that they have special powers which prevent hunters from hitting them. Furthermore, he writes they are one of the birds that make sounds that match Lakota words. Severt Young Bear (Theisz 1994:31-33) gave a lengthy description of how a Lakota man learned a particular kind of singing vocalization in a vision he received from a grouse in the Black Hills.

Wild turkey
[Meleagris gallopavo]

The wild turkey is also an uncommon but permanent resident of the park. It was first reported in the written record on September 17, 1804 by Lewis and Clark, who learned of its existence in the Black Hills from the trader Jon Vallé, who wintered in the area with the Cheyennes (Moutlon 1987:3:85, 482). Although it remained abundant in the Hills throughout the nineteenth century, its numbers gradually declined. The varieties now present in the region are not from the old eastern stock but represent a southwestern subspecies reintroduced to the region from 1948 to 1950 (Progulske 1974:124). In Lakota, the turkey is called wagle 'ksun (Buechel 1970:515). Standing Bear (1988:19) wrote that the Lakotas considered turkey feathers among the best for fletching arrows, but since they were hard to acquire, they were used only by adult warriors and hunters.

The Cheyenne call the wild turkey ma?xe?ne (Petter 1913-15:1071; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:115), and like the Lakotas, they valued the bird’s feathers for arrows because they were not damaged by blood (Curtis 1907-30: 6:156; Grinnell 1972:1:181). Turkey feathers were also attached to Cheyenne lances used in ceremonies or in battle to count coup (Grinnell 1972:1:187), and the bird’s beard was used in making certain medicines (Ibid:134). Like the grouse, the turkey is classed with ordinary birds, which are considered edible and thereby hunted for food by the Cheyennes (Moore, J. 1986: 186).

LAND BIRDS

This group includes a wide variety of different species, many of which are neither named nor symbolically marked in Lakota and Cheyenne ornithological nomenclatures. Among the Cheyenne, most of the birds in this category are included in the class of birds known as xamaeveskeo or “ordinary” birds, and in the subclasses vekseohe, which contains small birds who build tree nests and inhabit riparian forests, and hoevekseo, a name that refers largely to edible ground birds (Moore, J. 1986:184, 186). Among the Lakotas, where symbolically significant birds tend to be classified according to their affiliation with one of the four winds, only a few species of land birds are definitively identified in this way. For
the vast majority, their symbolic positions are not recorded in the published literature.

**Doves & Pigeons**  
* [Columbiformes]

**Mourning Dove**  
* [Zenaidura macroura]

The mourning dove is another common summer resident at Wind Cave National Park. The other member of the *Columbidae* family reported in the park, the rock dove *Columba livia*, is not common. The mourning dove is known as *wakin’yela* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:531), and given its name, it may very well be associated with the thunders. In Cheyenne, the dove is called *hemene* or *hemeneo?o* (Petter 1913-15:405; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:72). Lakotas believe that when the female of the species wails its song, she warns of the presence of ghosts in an area (Buechel 1970:531; Fire and Erdoes 1972:167). Other than this, no other reports on the cultural significance of doves have been found in the ethnographic literature on the Lakotas or the Cheyennes.

**Goatsuckers**  
* [Caprimulgiformes]

**Common Nighthawk**  
* [Chordeiles minor]

This member of the goatsucker order is a nocturnal summer resident in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park. At the end of the summer, nighthawks gather in large flocks for their annual migration (Froiland 1978:126; Melius 1995:43). Its name in Lakota is *pi’sko* (Buechel 1970:444). Like owls, it is considered a helper or *tonweyapi* of the East Wind, *Wiyhiyanpa* or *Yanpa* (Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:126), but in some sources (Hassrick 1964:214), it is identified with the Thunderbirds and the West Wind (Black Elk in Niehardt 1959: 133-134). Like the swallow and horned lark, it is a bird that appears in the dreams of the *Heyoka* or Contraries (Hassrick 1964:214). The bird is thought to bring news, and it is known as the last bird to return to the region in the spring when the buffalo grow fat and the grass is green. Its arrival signaled the time when the Lakotas made preparations for their large summer bison hunts. It was also known as the last to leave in the fall after the other birds migrated south (Dorsey, J. 1874:500; Buechel 1970: 444).

The Cheyennes classified the nighthawk with the vulture as a black whirlwind, *mox-tavetas*, a member of their highest and most “holy” class of birds, but its common name was *pe’e*. Like the vulture, it is associated with death, twilight, and the west (Moore, J. 1986:182-184). Because of the bird’s associations with the Thunders, its wing bones were once made into whistles that Cheyenne Contraries used in their dances (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:44).

**Whippoorwill**  
* [Caprimulgus vociferus]

The whippoorwill is also a common summer resident at Wind Cave National Park. The Lakota call it *pakọ’skala* (Buechel 1970:429). When the whippoorwills sing together at night “*Hohin, hohin,*” one says in reply, “No.” If the birds stop singing, it is a sign that the person listening will die soon; when they continue to sing, the person is predicted to live a long life (Dorsey, J. 1894:500). The whippoorwill’s song is associated with true love in a story in the Four Winds cycle where Uktomi tries to deceive *Itokagata*, the South Wind, by disguising himself as a whippoorwill (Walker 1983, 203, 345-347, 367). Whippoorwills were considered edible by the Lakotas, and they were caught by slowly approaching them with outstretched arms (Hassrick 1964:170). Except for their name, *ai’sto-mo-pi* (Hayden 1862b: 291), no information about them was uncovered in the literature on the Cheyennes.


**Kingfishers**

*Coraciiformes*

Many of the species in this order of birds occupied important symbolic positions in Lakota and Cheyenne ceremonies and healing practices.

**KINGFISHERS**

*Alcedinidae*

The belted kingfisher [*Megaceryle alcyon*] was called *hoya'zela cik'ala* [the little one who fishes with his mouth] (Buechel 1970: 186) in Lakota and *matsenestse* [eyes with matter in them] in Cheyenne (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:59). It is a common bird in the Black Hills (Froiland 1978:122), but it is a rare migrant in the area of Wind Cave National Park. The Lakotas and the Cheyennes associated this bird with warfare. Its fighting qualities were greatly admired, and it is one of the birds whose body parts were used as a *wotawe* or amulet. The *Heyoka* or Contraries, for example, used the bird’s cones in a *wotawe*, which they attached to the ends of their spears (Buechel 1970:186). Cheyenne warriors were known to use the kingfisher as a protective medicine, tying the skins of the bird into their hair when they went to war (Grinnell 1972:2:120).

The belted kingfisher was also an important spirit guardian for Lakotas who became healers (Tyon in Walker 1980: 161), and it appeared in this role in one of their Stone Boy stories (Walker 1983:96-97). Among the Cheyennes, the kingfisher, *nepotaz* (Petter 1913-15:634), was considered an important medicine bird (Moore, J. 1986:178). The Cheyennes believed that kingfisher feathers have the ability to treat wounds from bullets and arrows in the same way that water is able to heal (Moore, J. 1986:186). George Bird Grinnell (1972:2: 151) gave an example of doctoring with the assistance of a kingfisher.

**Woodpeckers**

*Picaformes*

**WOODPECKERS**

*Picidae*

Seven different species from the family, *Picidae*, are located in Wind Cave National Park and some of these birds are identified in the ornithological nomenclatures of the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Both tribes believed that woodpeckers possessed great powers, and as a result, their feathers were used in a variety of different ceremonial contexts.

**Red Headed Woodpecker**

*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

The red-headed woodpecker is an uncommon summer resident at Wind Cave National Park.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The common Cheyenne name for the redheaded woodpecker is *voo?kooma* [white blanket], and its sacred ascription is *mema-envecess* (Moore, J. 1986:182). The Lakotas address this bird as nephew and call him *wagnu'ka* (Buechel 1970:516, 670).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

For the Cheyennes, the red-headed woodpecker was a bird with great power, a symbol of the sun, and associated with male fertility and the agnatic side of the social structure (Moore, J. 1986:184). For the Lakotas, the bird was symbolic of holiness and sincerity (Walker 1982:106). It was associated with *Wiyhiyanpa*, the East Wind (Curtis 1907-30:3:77), and featured in many sacred stories (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984: 398; Walker 1983:274, 371).

Among the Cheyennes, the feathers of the red-headed woodpecker were worn as talismans, and they ornamented war clubs be-
cause of the bird’s spiritual power (Grinnell 1972:2:109). The Cheyennes associate this bird with their Sun Dance and use its skin and body parts throughout the ceremony (Ibid:109, 232-233, 265, 268). The willow wreaths are decorated with its feathers (Ibid:266), and the leader of the dance once wore a headdress adorned with the scalp of this bird (Dorsey, G. 1905:95).

Among the Lakotas, red feathers from the red-headed woodpecker were worn only by the wicasa wakan (holy men) (Walker 1982:106). The Lakotas attached the head feathers of this bird to a wide variety of implements used in their social dealings (Walker 1982:106). This followed the practice for the use of feathers from the pileated woodpecker, known as kanke’ca (Densmore 1918:70; Buechel 1970:284). The head of a red-headed woodpecker was placed on the hunkatacanunpa, the wooden staff and its feathers were hung from the wands used in the Hunka ceremony (Densmore 1918:70-71; Curtis 1907-30:3:75; Buechel 197:516). Densmore (1918:70-71) wrote this bird was important in the Hunka ceremony (also known as Alo’wanpi) because it was considered:

a simple, humble bird, which stays near its nest and is seldom seen. The bird seems to have been considered especially appropriate because children who underwent this ceremony were more closely guarded and protected than others. They usually belonged to well-to-do families, in which girls were seldom seen in public until they were grown up.

This woodpecker’s skin was also one of the objects placed in the bundle for the Sacred Pipe as instructed by the White Buffalo Calf woman (Curtis 1907-30:3:58), and it was one of the birds addressed in the Sun Dance (Sword in Deloria 1929:396-397; Black Elk in Brown 1971:78). It is known to have been a spiritual helper to the famous medicine man Frank Fools Crow (Brown 1992:61).

**Yellow and Red-Shafted Flickers**

[Colaptes, spp.]

The yellow-shafted (a.k.a. yellow hammer or northern) flicker [Colaptes auratus] and red-shafted flicker [Colaptes cafer] are also important symbolically to local tribes. Both are summer residents in the Black Hills. The yellow-shafted flicker is common at Wind Cave National Park. The red-shafted variety, while uncommon in the park, is the most numerous of the woodpeckers in the Black Hills where it is found in pine and deciduous forests at all elevations (Froiland 1978:126).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The yellow-shafted flicker, called sunzi’ ca by the Lakotas, is reported to say “anpetu waste, anpetu waste” [good day, good day], and it is one of the birds represented in the visionary drawings of the Lakota artist Black Hawk (Berlo 2000:140). The Cheyenne call the northern flicker ve?eeh,o or alternatively, ehoesetto [literally, lightning thing] (Moore, J. 1986:182-183).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Oglalas believe that when storms approach, the flicker gives a shrill call similar to an eagle bone whistle, and as a result, it is associated with the Thunders (Brown 1992:45). The bird is addressed in the prayers of the Sun Dance leader before the center pole is cut because, as Densmore (1919:111-112) wrote, this bird “cannot overcome its enemies in open flight but is expert in dogging them, darting from one side of the tree-trunk to another.” Its feathers adorn the eagle bone whistles used in the Sun Dance, helping the dancers communicate with the Thunders (Brown 1992:45). The Lakotas, who call the red-shafted variety sun’luta, believe it is a harbinger for the arrival of good weather (Buechel 1970:470). Unlike its yellow-shafted relative, no other symbolic connections have been reported in the literature on the Lakotas.
Flicker tail feathers are said by the Cheyennes to have been burned and painted by lightning, and they are used in the Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:232). More than any other bird, the flicker is associated with complex symbolism. The Cheyenne identify the yellow-shafted flicker with the moon because it has a crescent on its chest and because the wave-like patterns of its flight suggest the waxing and waning of this celestial body. The rich yellow color of its tail feathers signal fertility and the sharp black tips mark powers that can deflect illness and evil (Moore, J. 1986:182-183). Men who possessed strong spiritual power sometimes wore the feathers in their hair as protection. If the feathers were sent magically into another person’s body, they could cause a lingering illness and even death unless the afflicted individual secured relief through proper treatment (Grinnell 1972:2:145). Finally, its yellow-painted cheeks, representing ‘peace,’ are associated with female symbolism. The red-shafted flicker’s cheeks, by contrast, signify ‘blood paint’ and masculinity (Moore, J. 1986:182-183).

Songbirds
[Passeriformes]

Many songbirds are named in Cheyenne and Lakota nomenclatures, and several of them have important positions in tribal cosmologies.

Larks
[Alaudidae]

The horned lark, Eremophila alpestris, is a fairly common and permanent resident of grassland areas in the Black Hills, including Wind Cave National Park. In Lakota, it is called mastekola, which means “the friend that desires warm weather” (Buechel 1970:333). Whenever the horned lark soared straight up into the air singing masteko, “I like warm weather,” it forecasted the coming of good weather (Buechel ibid.; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:167). The people who dreamed of this bird became Heyoka or Contraries (Hassrick 1964:214). Like the swallow, it was associated with the Thunders (Black Elk in Niehardt 1959:133-134). It was the hero in a race narrative, very similar to the Race Track story, which explains how various animals were marked and painted (Walker 1917:219-221).

Corvids
[Corvidae]

The Corvid family contains two species, the crow [Corvus americanus] and the magpie [Pica pica], both of which occupy important symbolic positions in Lakota and Cheyenne cultures. Both are also ubiquitous residents of the Black Hills and Wind Cave National Park. The crow is most prevalent in spring and summer, transient in the fall, and less common in winter (Froiland 1978:123; Melius 1995:53). The magpie maintains a permanent residence in the area throughout the year, especially in open forest environments (Froiland 1978:123). Various species of jays are common and permanent residents
of the Black Hills and Wind Cave National Park, including the pinon jay \textit{[Gymnorhinus cyanoccephalus]}, the blue jay \textit{[Cyanocitta cristata]}, and grey jay \textit{[Perisoreus canadensis]}.

\textbf{Tribal Taxonomy}

The crow is called \textit{kangi} in Lakota (Buechel 1972:283) and \textit{okohke} in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:317; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:29). The crow was widely recognized by the Cheyennes as one of the brightest of the bird species. It symbolized freedom from oppression and obstruction (Petter 1913-15:3117). It was one of three bird species the Lakotas believed made sounds intelligible in their language (Standing Bear 1988:60), and it was often kept as a pet and taught to speak Lakota words (Hassrick 1964:172; Buechel 1970:283). According to Buechel (Ibid:283): “The crow cries out in the morning, ‘wakalya, wakalya’ (boil, boil, which refers to the boiling of coffee or any liquid). The Cheyennes also believe that crows can communicate with certain people (Grinnell 1972:1:256). Unlike the Lakotas, the Cheyennes never ate magpies, not even when facing hunger and starvation, because they were so highly respected (Grinnell 1972:1: 256). Crow feathers were commonly used by the Lakotas in making arrows for hunting and war (Standing Bear 1988:19).

\textbf{Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use}

The Lakotas sometimes took crows for food, and the Cheyennes did so as well but only in times of hunger and starvation (Hassrick 1964:172; Grinnell 1972:1:256). Lakota hunters trapped crows by hiding under pine boughs to which small pieces of fat were affixed (Hassrick ibid.). The Lakotas also trapped magpies for food in the same way they caught crows, and they also consumed their eggs (Hassrick 1964:172). Unlike the Lakotas, the Cheyennes never ate magpies, not even when facing hunger and starvation, because they were so highly respected (Grinnell 1972:1: 256). Crow feathers were commonly used by the Lakotas in making arrows for hunting and war (Standing Bear 1988:19).

\textbf{Symbolic and Spiritual Significance}

In the Great Race, the crow took the side of humans and so this bird is highly respected by the Cheyennes and the Lakotas (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:24). It was the magpie, however, who won the race for humans, and as a result, this bird is even more revered by the Cheyennes (Stands in Timber 1967:24; DeMallie 1984:397, 403-404). Images of both of these birds were beaded and quilled on Cheyenne footwear and buckskin coats. One Cheyenne reportedly wore one of these coats to Washington, D.C. in the nineteenth century to demonstrate the importance of his trip (Petters 1913-15:317). Lakota attitudes toward the magpie are more ambivalent. Nevertheless, the magpie and crow were honored by the Lakotas in their prayers at the Sun Dance (Black Elk in Brown 1971:78).

The magpie is known as \textit{halhate} or \textit{unkce’kiha} by the Lakota who say that it calls “\textit{halhata, halhata, hal, hal, hal}” (Beuchel 1970:507). Magpies are known as \textit{mo?e?ha} in Cheyenne, a name that refers to their wave-like flying pattern (Petter 1913-15:678; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:65).

In the Lakota language, the pinon jay is called \textit{zintka’to ipi’ska} and the blue and grey jays are both known as \textit{zintka’to gleglega} (Buechel 1970:658). The Cheyenne call the blue jay \textit{honehevecess} [wolf-man] (Petter 1913-15:134; Moore, J. 1986:184).
Crows also figure prominently in other sacred stories, including the Lakotas' Falling Star cycle and their *Inktomi* (Trickster) stories (Beckwith, M. 1930:388; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:397, 403-404, Walker 1983:173). In James Walker’s work (1980:125) crows are associated symbolically with the North Wind, *Waziyata*, but William Powers (1986:139-140) links them to *Wi-hiyanpa*, the East Wind. They are believed to have keen vision and the ability to forecast the future, often appearing in visions that gave warnings of future events. Today, their powers are closely connected to *Yuwipi* practitioners who are able to foretell the future (Walker 1982:43; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:385-386; Densmore 1918:186-188; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:111-112). Historically, camp sentinels fixed crow skins to a girdle worn behind their back or wore a crow skin split in two with the beak projecting from their forehead (Densmore 1918:71, 319).

Crow feathers hung from the war pipes carried by Lakota men who dreamed of the bird (Walker 1982:95). One of the Lakota *akicita* or soldier societies was known as the *Kangi yuha* (Crow Owners); its defining symbol was the crow (Blish 1924:87), and its members wore necklaces made from crowskins (Densmore 1948:183). Many of the functions of this society paralleled those of another warrior association, the Wolf Society (Brown 1992:43, Walker 1980:260, 1982: 32, 37). Crow feathers were connected to the actions of warriors in other societies as well: the members of the White Badger Society, for example, carried a wand decorated with a crow’s feathers (Walker 1980:262), crow skins were kept by the leaders of the Omaha Dance Society (Walker 1980:266), and members of the *Miwatanpi* Society wore a tanned buffalo skin with crow feathers attached on each side (Wissler 1912:46). Crow feathers were part of the bustle, called *kan’gi’ha mig-na’ka*, worn by Omaha dancers (Beuchel 1970:283). They were also tied to the lances carried by the officers of the Kit Fox Society or *Tokala*, by the *Blotonka*, and by the *Cante Tinza* (Wissler 1912:15, 58, 72).

Among the Cheyennes, crows were believed to possess powers concerning war. Their feathers were often attached to shields, and warriors sometimes tied their stuffed skins to scalp locks, believing the spirit embodied in the skins would warn them of danger (Grinnell 1972:2:105). One of the *vikuts* used by Cheyenne warriors to carry water had crow feathers tied to the end of its prongs (Ibid:23-24). The feathers of these birds were particularly important in the ceremonies and adornments of the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers (Moore, J. 1986:183). The Cheyenne believed that crows were able to locate bison. When bison were scarce, the direction hunters traveled to find them was often determined by the path a crow followed when it flew into a Cheyenne camp (Grinnell 1972:1:110). In their antelope hunting ceremonies, the Cheyennes used a pole-like implement called an antelope arrow to which a single crow feather was attached (Ibid:1:284). They also tied Crow feathers to the seams of their ceremonial rattles (Ibid:1:203).

The magpie was one of the major birds featured in the sacred stories of the Lakotas, but it occupies a very ambivalent cultural position in these texts (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:397, 403-404; Walker 1983:85, 127, 128, 273-274, 335-336, 354, 371). The magpie is regarded as the messenger of *Waziyata*, the North Wind (Powers, W. 1977:191; 1986:139-140). It is a much revered culture hero in its associations with war, but it is also considered a dirty, defiling bird (as the reference to defecation in one of its names suggests) and linked to the duplicitous behavior of the trickster, *Inktomi* (Beckwith, M. 1930:388, 434; Walker 1983:335-336). Magpie feathers were not widely used: they did decorate the lances carried by the officers of the Kit Fox Society or *Tokala*, however (Wissler 1912:15).

Among the Cheyennes, by contrast, magpies were included among the “holy” class of
birds along with the golden eagle, night-hawk, crow, flicker, and red-headed woodpecker (Moore, J. 1986:182-183). Moore (Ibid:181) writes: “The magpie is said to be a sacred messenger to the high god because it comes near to human habitation and overhears their conversations. It was a messenger to Sweet Medicine, the culture hero of the Cheyennes.” The Cheyennes believed that magpies, like their crow cousins, possessed great powers in matters of war. Their feathers frequently adorned the shields of Cheyenne warriors, and they decorated the bows of the Contraries (Dorsey, G. 1905:25; Grinnell 1972: 2:105). Stuffed magpies were sometimes tied to the headdresses of warriors for spiritual protection (Grinnell 1972: 2:124). When a magpie flew into the camp of a war party, the Cheyennes would watch the way the bird flew away to learn the direction from which their enemy would come (Ibid:2:110). The Cheyennes also attached magpie feathers to the seam of their rattles, and they tied them to the pole used in their pronghorn hunting ceremony (Ibid: 1:203, 284). The Cheyennes believed that, like crows, magpies were able to converse with some humans (Ibid:2:107).

None of the jays are reported to have had any special symbolic associations or uses, although the blue jay does appear in a popular and widespread story among the Lakotas and the Cheyennes (Kroeber 1905: 186-187; Beckwith, M. 1930:399-408).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

_Upi-jata_, which refers to a forked tail, is a generic ascription for the swallow, but there are many species-specific names in the Lakota language (Buechel 1970:508). The generic name is also used to denote swifts, which have forked tails, including the white-throated swift _[Aeronautes saxatalis]_, an uncommon summer resident at Wind Cave National Park. The bank swallow is called _hupucansakala_ (Ibid:190). Another swallow whose name has a common root is _hupu'-wanblila_, which Buechel (Ibid.) identifies as a swallow-tailed kite. The identification is unlikely since this kite is confined to the Gulf Coast. This is more likely the name for the cliff swallow, whose habitats and habits are closest to the bank swallow. The tree swallow is named _icapsinpsin-calaikpi ska_ and the barn swallow is known as _icapsinpsincaalaikpi sa_ (Ibid:202). The Cheyennes called the swallow _mesoke_ and include it among their ordinary class of birds (Petter 1913-15:1033; Moore, J. 1986:184).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

All species of swallow are considered very holy or _wakan_ by the Lakotas (Sword in Walker 1980:102; DeMallie 1984:84), and they are featured in many sacred stories, including ones associated with the Falling Star cycle, the Four Winds, and Iron Hawk (Beckwith, M. 1930:388; Walker 1983:81-82, 319-321, 328, 333, 353-354, 355-356, 357, 363; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:397-398, 407-408). They are admired for their swiftness in flight and their ability to escape harm from lightning and hail (Black Elk in Niehardt 1959:133-134). Standing Bear (1978:158) wrote about the swallow as follows:

> When the swallows, which were called _icapsinpsincela_, on account of their swift and bold darting here and there, came in flocks flying audaciously about, we knew a show was coming our way. While it rained...
we saw no swallows, but as soon as it had gone, again would come the swallows more hilarious than ever. There is no literal translation for the word *icapsinspincela*, but it was a war term used by the warriors in describing their quick movements and criss-crossing maneuvers in battle, which were similar to the flying of the swallow.

Here a connection is made between the swift movements of swallows and the actions of men and horses in warfare. As Lone Man told Densmore (1918:118) “what a warrior desires most for his horse is that it may be as swift as the swallow in dodging the enemy or in direct flight.”

Swallows are messengers of the Thunders, *Wakinyan*, and the West Wind (Densmore 1918:118; Hassrick 1964:214; Powers, W. 1977:192, 1986:139-140; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:101), and they are closely connected to the *Heyoka* or contraries, who once decorated their shields with swallow images to display their allegiance to the thunders (Vestal 1934:7; Hassrick 1964:214; Walker 1980:279). Swallows are symbolically connected with dragonflies and butterflies and believed to be companions of the blacktail deer (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:99; Powers, W. 1986:152). Swallows are observed to appear before the arrival of thunderstorms (Standing Bear 1978:158; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:157). Several Lakotas, including Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984: 84-85, 114, 130, 222, 228, 229), White Bull (in Vestal 1934:12-15), and Lone Man (in Densmore 1918:188), recounted visions where swallows appeared in advance of thunderstorms. Lone Man received a *wotawe* charm from the swallows or “riders in the cloud,” and he fastened the skin of the swallow on his head when storms approached, singing songs to ward off their danger (Densmore 1918:188). Historically, swallow designs were painted on the horses and bison robes of members of the Sacred Bow Society (Blish 1934:186). Certain kinds of medical treatments were under the guardianship of swallows (Bordeaux 1929:109).

There appears to have been little special symbolic attachment to them among the Cheyennes, although Grinnell (1972:1:201) reported that swallow images were painted on war shields. This suggests they may have been connected to the Thunders in this culture too.

**THRASHERS AND ASSOCIATES**

**[MIMIDAE]**

The *Mimidae* family is represented by six different species at Wind Cave National Park, and most of these are rare and uncommon residents or migrants. None of the species are associated with any special cultural functions or meanings, and only two are reported in tribal nomenclatures. The mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is called *haestoho?senehe* (one with many sounds) in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:714; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:69). The Lakota name for the brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) is *cehu?pagla*, which refers to the chattering sound of its teeth in cold weather (Buechel 1970:129, 799).

**ROBINS AND ASSOCIATES**

**[MUSCIPARIDAE]**

Six species from the *Musciparidae* family are found at Wind Cave National Park. The eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) and mountain bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) are summer residents, but only the latter is common in the park. Townsend’s solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) and the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) are common and permanent residents of the park, while the Veery (*Hylocichla fuscescens*) and Swainson’s thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata*) are rare to uncommon.

With the possible exception of the robin, none of the birds in this family appear to have had any special importance to either the Lakotas or the Cheyennes. The Cheyennes knew the bluebird as *ota?taveve?keso* (bluebird) (Petter 1913-15:134; North-
ern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:9). The Lakotas named the bluebird *zipata* (Buechel 1970:658). The Lakota artist Black Hawk painted a picture of the mountain bluebird, which is common in the Black Hills (Berlo 2000:136), and it is mentioned in an Iron Hawk story (Beckwith, M. 1930:388).

The Cheyennes named the robin *ma?e-seekonahe* (red breasted one) (Petter 1913-15:134; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:92), and the Lakotas called it *siso'ka* (Buechel 1970:463). The robin is also a figure in an Iron Hawk story (Beckwith, M. 1930:388), and it is one of the birds Lakotas prayed to during the Sun Dance (Sword in Deloria 1929:397; Black Elk in Brown 1971:78). The thrush is named *cangugu*ya *sa* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:116), and it also appears in the same Iron Hawk story as the robin (Beckwith, M. 1930:388).

**CHICKADEES [PARIDAE]**

The black-capped chickadee [Parus atricapillus] of the Paridae family is an abundant and permanent species of deciduous and coniferous forest habitats in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Froiland 1978:123). The bird is called *ski' pipi, ski' bibila*, and *wi'ya wala* by the Lakotas, who believe it has a cleft tongue that splits in seven stages from October until it heals in April. When the turkey vultures return, the bird is said to remain silent because the cold weather is gone (Buechel 1970:464). This bird appears in the travels of the culture heroes Iron Hawk and Stone Boy (Beckwith, M. 1930:389; Deloria 1978:33-34). Its Cheyenne name is not given in the literature, but George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:81) wrote that it was known to like the seeds of the hairy golden aster, *Chrysopsis foliosa*, which is called *mis'ka tsi* [chickadee plant]. The Cheyennes considered it a wise bird because it knew when summer came and told the people of its arrival (Ibid:110).

**NUTHATCHES [SITTADAE]**

**WRENS [TROGLODYTIDAE]**

Nuthatches, members of the Sittidae family, have not been reported in Lakota and Cheyenne bird taxonomies, although the Trogodytidae family of wrens is well-identified in Lakota nomenclatures. The rock wren [Salpinctes obsoletus], an uncommon summer resident at Wind Cave National Park, is known as *igu'gaotilia* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:805), while the more common house wren [Troglydotes aedon] is called *canhe'-yala* because of its loud voice (Ibid:116). Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:152) told about his first boyhood hunting experience, which involved shooting a bird that he identified as a wren. He also mentioned the wren in a Falling Star story and gave it the name “Holds the Buffalo Back” (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:407-408).

**FLYCATCHERS [TYRANNIDAE]**

Several different members of the flycatcher family, Tyrannidae, appear in Wind Cave National Park. Most of the species are rare or uncommon summer residents, but the eastern kingbird [Tyrannus tyrannus] is common in its appearance. The kingbird is referred to in the prayers of the Lakota Sun Dance leader before the center tree is felled because this bird “though small is feared by all of its enemies” (Densmore 1919:111-112; Black Elk in Brown 1971:78). It is also mentioned as a spiritual guardian (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:109) and as a figure in a Falling Star story (Ibid:307). Lakota call the eastern variety [Tyrannus tyrannus] *wasna'-ikpi ska* [needs red grease] and the western species [Tyrannus verticalis] *wasna'ikpi zi* [needs yellow grease] (Buechel 1970:550). The Cheyennes know it as *evecesseve* (Petter 1913-15:134).
The black-billed cuckoo [Coccyzus erythropthalmus], a member of the Cuculidae family, is a rare summer resident in the park. It is called *cepela tanka, soho 'tonla, or ico'-sapa* by the Lakotas, who described many of its habits to Buechel (1970:298, 804, 835). Its symbolic importance has not been recorded in the ethnographic literature, however.

**VIREOS**

[VIERONIDAE]

**SHRIKES**

[LANIIDAE]

**WAXWINGS**

[BOMBYCILLIDAE]

Various species of vireos, shrikes, and waxwings are also present at Wind Cave National Park. The warbling vireo [*Vireo gilvus*] is known as *zintka'zila* [little yellow bird] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:658). The loggerhead shrike [*Lanius ludovicianus*] is linked with hawks in Lakota taxonomies and known as *cetan watapala* (Buechel 1970:130).

**EMBERZIDS**

[EMBERIZIDAE]

The Emberzids are represented by a large group of highly varied species, which include sparrows, towhees, juncos, blackbirds, and tanagers. Many of the birds in this group are not named, nor do they appear to have any special symbolic significance. Some species, such as the meadowlark and tanger, hold a very significant cultural position in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions.

**BUNTINGS AND GROSBECKS**

[CAROLINAE]

The Lark bunting [*Calamospiza melanocorys*] is a rare summer resident at Wind Cave National Park; it is known *wa'bloska* [white wing blackbird], implying a link in Lakota taxonomy with blackbirds. As Buechel (1970:511), it sings "Ska, ska, ska; to, to; sa, sa, zi, zi, hol, hol, hol,, and while alighting wil, wil, wil."

The evening grosbeak [*Hesperiphona vespertina*], a rare but permanent resident of the park, is called *cetan watapela zi* in Lakota. Even though it feeds on seeds and berries, the Lakota observe that it goes after other birds like a hawk does, and therefore, they associate it with other birds classed as *cetan* (Buechel 1970:130).

**BLACKBIRDS AND ASSOCIATES**

[ICTERINAE]

Blackbirds, bobolinks, meadowlarks, grackles, and orioles are often linked together because of their pointed bills and the strong and direct character of their flight patterns. All of the species reported in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park are listed in either Lakota or Cheyenne nomenclatures.

**Blackbirds**

[Agelaius, Molothrus, and Xanthocephalus]

Except for the yellow-headed blackbird [*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*], which is a rare summer resident of the park, the other two species of blackbirds, the red wing [*Agelaius phoeniceus*] and Brewer’s [*Euphagus cyanocephalus*] are common.

The red-wing blackbird is called *wa'blosa* [red wing] in Lakota, and it is associated with a wide range of meaningful song patterns, which can be translated into Lakota words (Buechel 1970:511). The Cheyennes called it *heheenm* (Petter 1913-15:134). The yellow-headed variety is called *wa'pagica* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:544) and *he'heeno* (yellowhead) in the Cheyenne language (Moore 1986:184). The Brewer’s or common blackbird [*Euphagus cyanocephalus*] is called *wa'hpa tanka* in Lakota, a
name which refers to its larger size (Buechel 1970:520); it was one of the birds for whom prayers were offered at the Sun Dance (Black Elk in Brown 1971:78). Standing Bear (1975:10) wrote about the close relationship between blackbirds and Lakota horses. When horses moved about, they disturbed the grasshoppers, a prime food for the blackbirds, and as he put it: “It was a common sight to see several of the birds perched on a pony’s back at the same time.”

**Grackles**

*Quiscalus quiscula*

**Cowbirds**

*Molothrus ater*

The common grackle is a frequent summer resident of Wind Cave National Park. The cowbird *Molothrus ater* is typically sighted in the lower elevation pastures and fields of the Black Hills during its spring and fall migrations, but it is not reported at Wind Cave National Park (Froiland 1978:133).

The common grackle, who is called can’-wahpa tanka [large blackbird of the tree] is related in Lakota taxonomy to the blackbird; it is also one of the birds known to utter words in Lakota (Buechel 1970:126). The brownheaded cowbird is another species the Lakota link to blackbirds; they call it wahpa hota [grey blackbird] or pteya’hpa because of its association with bison (Buechel 1970:449; Brown 1992:25). These birds scavenge for parasites on the bodies of bison. The cowbird appears as a helper in a Lakota story entitled “The Gift of the Horse” (Deloria 1978:128-129).

**Bobolink**

*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

The bobolink, another rare summer resident of the park, is called maka zintkala (earth bird) and manka’owanke in Lakota because of the stripes covering its back (Buechel 1970:329). In Cheyenne, it is called kokoa, which is also the name for quail (Petter 1913-15:155). It does not appear to have had any special cultural connections for either the Lakotas or the Cheyennes.

**Orioles**

*Icterus*

The three species of orioles reported in the park are rare to uncommon summer residents. The Bullock’s or the northern oriole [Icterus bullockii] is called skelu’ta in Lakota, while the Baltimore oriole, now considered an eastern variety of the northern species, is named skelu’ta tanka (big oriole). The Orchard oriole [Icterus spurius] is known as skelu’ta cik’ala (small oriole). The skins of these birds were often used as knife shields, wape’gnaka (Buechel 1970:464). The Southern Cheyennes placed the stuffed skins of orioles on their thunder bows (Grinnell 1972:2:81; Powell 2002a: 69).

**Meadowlarks**

*Stunella neglecta*

The western meadowlark is a common summer resident of the Black Hills and Wind Cave National Park.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The Cheyenne name for the meadowlark is enoxeas (Moore, J. 1986:184), but no special cultural meanings or uses have been reported for it. It is an important bird for the Lakotas, however, who call her jialepa, tasi’yagnunpa, or winap’inla (Buechel 1970:267, 483, 835). She is closely connected with the red buffalo calf and the elk, and she is an important messenger of the South Wind, Itokagata (Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127; Powers, W. 1986:139-140, 1992:152). This bird is mentioned in several sacred stories (Beckwith, M. 1930:381-382; Deloria 1978:30-32; Buechel 1970:267; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:397; Walker 1983:127-128, 130, 347, 354, 364), and it is reported to have appeared to Sitting Bull in a vision (Vestal 1932:21-22).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Among the Lakotas, the meadowlark is associated with clarity, fidelity, courage, and the good things of the day (Brown 1992:44; Rice 1993:156-157). It occupied a major position in their adoption ceremony, the *Hunka* (Walker 1980:226). Walker (1917:129) wrote:

> To the Dakota, the meadow lark is the symbol of *fidelity*, just as among English-speaking people, the dove is the symbol of peace. By claiming relationship to the lark, the Shaman claimed *power to influence for fidelity*. By saying, ‘A voice in the air,’ he implied that the influence for fidelity pervaded the camp.

The meadowlark was also mentioned in the *Pte San Lowampi*, the Lakotas’ puberty ceremony for girls. In his description of this ceremony, Walker (1980:249) recorded the words that the shaman told the girl:

> The lark is cheerful. It brings the warm weather. It does not scold its people. It is always happy. If a brave man takes you for his woman you may sing his scalp song and you may dance his scalp dance. He will kill plenty of game so that you will have skins and robes. You will bear him many children and he will make you happy. There will always be a fire in your tipi and you will have food for your people.

In general, appeals are made to the meadowlark as the harbinger of cheer and good weather, as a symbol of fidelity between kin, and as a model of the pleasant dispositions admired in Lakota women. The meadowlark was capable of foretelling the future; leaders of war parties often asked the bird how their expeditions would turn out (Powers, W. 1986:28).

Finally, the meadowlark was connected to the Sun Dance because of the sunflower painted on its breast (Dorsey, J. 1889a:157; Rice 1993:158).

**Sparrows and Associates**

*Emberizinae*

Except for the House Sparrow of the *Passeridae* family, the other birds in this group are from the family *Emberizidae*. Many of them are named in Lakota or Cheyenne ornithological nomenclatures, but only a few have any cultural use or significance. Surprisingly, the tribal names for the three species of longspurs, which are rare migrants in the park, have not been recorded in the ethnographic literature, even though two of them, the Lapland longspur [*Calcarius lapponicus*] and the Chestnut-collared longspur [*Calcarius ornatus*], are fairly common on the surrounding prairies. This may be one of several birds with Lakota names, the *igugaotila* as one example, that Buechel (1970:215) was unable to match with a scientific name.

**Sparrows**

Sparrows are represented by fourteen different species at Wind Cave National Park. They are classified among the Cheyennes as ordinary birds. Indeed, the house sparrow [*Passer domesticus*], which is common and permanent everywhere in the Black Hills (Froiland 1978:124), carries the generic name for the Cheyenne class *xamaave’keso* [ordinary bird] (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:105). In Lakota, this bird is called *pa’cansihuta* or *ihu’haotila* (Buechel 1970:218, 422). The tree sparrow [*Spizella arborea*], which is referred to as *zingki’scila* in Lakota, is a common winter resident at Wind Cave National Park (Buechel 1970:658). The grasshopper
sparrow *Ammodramus savanarum*, a common summer resident of the park, is known as *pte’aglonica* or *zintka slila* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:658). Finally, the lark sparrow *Chondestes grammicus*, an uncommon summer resident of the park, is another bird whose feathers are glued to the tips of eagle feathers on Lakota warbonnets, and it is called *situpi an’ayetonpi* (Buechel 1970:455).

**Towhee**  
*Pipilo eythrophthalmus*

The spotted or rufus-sided towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* is a common summer resident of the park. The Lakota call it *can’gugu’ya gleska*, referring to its arboreal domain and its spotted, burnt-like appearance. The Lakota say it makes a smack with its lips and calls out “kiyo, kiyo, kiyo” (Buechel 1970:116).

**Junco**  
*Junco hyemalis*

There are two birds commonly called the “snowbird” in ornithological writings, the snowbunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* and the dark-eyed junco *Junco hyemalis*. The first is rare in the Black Hills and not listed at Wind Cave, although it is found on the surrounding prairies during the winter months (Grinnell 1875:85; Melius 1995:84). The junco, by contrast, is a common and permanent resident of Wind Cave National Park, and one variety, the white-winged, is known to breed in the Black Hills. Indeed, George Bird Grinnell (1875:84) described them in 1875 as “the most common bird in the more elevated portions of the Black Hills.” The Lakotas call this bird *cantku’ sa’ pela* [little black breast] (Buechel 1970:799), and the Cheyennes’ name for it is *sehe* (Petter 1913-15:987; Moore, J. 1986:184). The Lakota call the snow-bunting *hupu’-wanbilia*, which is also the name they use for the swallow-tailed kite (Buechel 1970:670); this bird often flies in large flocks, sometimes in the company of other birds such as horned larks. It is very difficult to know which of these two birds is being referenced in Lakota narratives as the “snowbird.” This was the bird that led the first man, *Tokahe*, and his followers to meet and safety when they emerged out of a cave, which many Lakota identify today as Wind Cave (Hassrick 1964:214; Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:101; Walker 1983:371). It has a high degree of symbolic significance, and at one time, it was an important source of food. According to Iron Shell:

To catch snow birds, we took several horse hairs with nooses at one end and tied them to a stick, about six inches apart. This we laid on a bare spot of earth from which the snow had blown away. Then from a distance we waited to watch a flock settle. When one little bird would fly up, he would get caught and as we approached the others would fly, but several would catch their feet in the tiny nooses. Snow birds were good boiled or roasted on coals (Hassrick 1964:169).

**FINCHES**  
*FRINGILLIDAE*

Nine different members of the *Fringillidae* family are associated with Wind Cave National Park. Only four of these have been identified with names in tribal ornithological listings, however, and none are linked with culturally significant functions or meanings.

**Finches**  
*Spinus pinus*

The pine siskin or pine finch *Spinus pinus*, an uncommon but permanent resident of the park, is called *wazi’zintkala* [pine bird] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:575); it appears in the Lakota Iron Hawk story cycle (Beckwith, M. 1930:388). The American goldfinch *Spinus tristis* is a common summer resident at the park. The Lakota know it as *wanbli’tahe’ya* [eagle follower] (Buechel 1970:541).
Crossbill
\[Loxia curvirostra\]

The red crossbill \[Loxia curvirostra\], another common and permanent resident of the park, is called \textit{pa’kaic’icuya} in Lakota. The Lakotas say it breeds in mid-winter (Buechel 1970:428).

Warblers
\[PAULINAE\]

Sixteen different species of warblers are identified as summer residents or migrants at Wind Cave National Park. Of these, three species, the Yellow-breasted chat \[Icteria virens\], the common yellow-throat \[Geothlypis trichas\], and the yellow rumped warbler \[Dendroica coronata\] are considered common in the area. The chat, \textit{w’ikpi zi} in Lakota, was known to sing its songs during the night (Buechel 1970:586). The yellow warbler \(Dendroica petchia\), which is an uncommon summer resident of the park, is called \textit{situpi’-wanblila} [little eagle tailfeathers] in Lakota because its small white feathers are also glued on the tips of the eagle feathers that decorate Lakota war-bonnets (Buechel 1970:455).

Another closely related species, the American redstart \[Steophaga ruticilla\], is a common summer resident in the Black Hills, but it is not listed in reference to Wind Cave National Park (Froiland 1978:130). The Lakota knew it by three different names, \textit{can’pisko} [tree night-hawk], \textit{kansu zintkala} [plum bird], and \textit{guguya sku} [burnt red]. The first name refers to its wooded habitat, the second to its special association with the plum tree, and the third to the burnt-like appearance of the male’s wing and tail feathers (Buechel 1970:123, 284).

Tanagers
\[THRAUPINAE\]

The scarlet tanager \[Piranga olivacea\] was known to the Lakotas because an image of this bird was drawn by Black Hawk in the late nineteenth century (Berlo 2000:136). Its name, however, has not been recorded in available source materials. Similarly, the Cheyennes’ name for this bird is not reported, although Grinnell (1972:1:81) noted that the feathers of the tanager were attached to the sacred bows, \textit{Hohnuhkawo}, of the Contraries. Powell (2002a:69) also writes that the heads of the tanager were tied on thunder bows. The red colors the Cheyennes painted on their person and clothing also represented this bird (Ibid.).

III. Insects and Spiders

As already reported, most species of insects were linked to birds and other winged species (i.e., bats) in the cosmologies and naming practices of the Cheyennes and Lakotas. Many insects have gone unnamed and unnoticed in published ethnographic sources. Only a few are identified and differentiated according to species, and of these, even fewer are singled out as culturally significant. Of the numerous species of insects located in the region, only ones that have importance in local tribal cosmologies are described here.

Butterflies, Moths, and Dragonflies

Tribal Taxonomy

The Cheyennes had many names for butterflies, indicating their importance in tribal cosmology. John Moore (1986:182) gives the following identifications:
heovehoze [yellow messenger] - monarch (Danaus plexippus)
otatahoze [blue messenger] - blue butterfly (Celastrina argiolus)
maehoze [red messenger] - the viceroy (Limenitis archippus)
voxpaehoze [white messenger] - white butterfly (Ganyra josephina)

The Lakotas call the butterfly kimimila. Although their scientific species names are not given, the Lakota also distinguish them by color as follows: --sapa [black], --ska [white], --sa [red], --to [blue], --zi [yellow], and --gleglega [speckled] (Buechel 1970:307). Kimimila ska is also the name given to the small moths that fly at night and are attracted to light (Ibid.). The miller moth is named Wanaqita-kimimila [ghost butterfly], and it is admired because it is brave and fearlessly drawn to firelight (Ibid:536; Powers, W. 1986:160).

In the Cheyenne language, the dragonfly was named after the whirlwind, hevovetaso (Petter 1913-15:407; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:34; Grinnell 1972:2:112). In Lakota, the dragonfly is known as tusweca, and, like the butterfly, it is distinguished by its color: --tanka zizi [large yellow], --sa [red], --to [blue], and --tanka gleglega [large speckled] (Buechel 1970:503).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Lakotas and the Cheyennes associate butterflies, moths, and dragonflies with whirlwinds because of their quick, erratic, and darting movements (Moore, J. 1986:178, 186; Powers, W. 1986:159-160). In fact, the Cheyennes considered the butterfly and the dragonfly to be types of birds in the class of their most “holy” animals known as “messengers” (Moore, J. 1986:178,182).

Since butterflies are often observed by the Cheyennes to swarm around sites where animals are butchered and to drink their blood, they are strongly associated with killing and warfare (Moore, J. 1986:182). According to George Grinnell (1972:1:96), they are often seen in association with a thunderstorm, and so the Cheyennes believe that when the thunders are angry, they shake themselves causing the butterflies, which are their parasites, to fall off them. Green mature dragonflies are associated with summer thunderstorms and green hailstones coming from the South; they are believed to warn people of enemies (Moore, J. 1974a: 157, 158). Immature blue dragonflies are associated with the West and the deep water of the earth, while the white coloration of dragonflies in the fall anticipates the dominance of the North in winter (Ibid:158) The Cheyennes frequently tied butterflies and dragonflies to the hair of their warriors as protective charms, and they also painted their images on shields and on their own bodies to emulate their light and active movements. This was done to help dodge bullets and arrows. Little Chief (also known as Roman Nose), a famous Cheyenne leader, had butterflies painted on the rawhide band that supported the feathers of his warbonnet (Grinnell 1972:2:111-112). Both of these insects were associated with many of the Cheyennes’ major ceremonies and were kept in medicine bundles (Moore, J. 1986:182). They were also used as medicines in doctoring (Moore, J.1986:178). Dragonflies, for example, are painted on the bodies of Sun Dancers to represent the whirlwind (Grinnell 1972:2:266; Dorsey, G. 1905:172; Powell 1969:2:844; Moore, J. 1974a:178), and their images are painted on the tipis where the Cheyennes’ Sacred Arrows and Sacred Hat were kept (Grinnell 1972:1:89).


The Oglala associated the fluttering, wind-making qualities of the moth’s wings with the underlying powers of the Whirlwind.
They noted that moths and butterflies proceed mysteriously from the confinement of the cocoon; so, this form itself took on special significance and, thus, appeared stylistically represented on a number of objects. The actual cocoon was often found, then wrapped in an eagle plume or down, and worn on the head. This was regarded as a perpetual prayer to the power of the Whirlwind. The sacred cocoon bundle apparently was conceived as being charged with potentiality.

In fact, the Lakota word for a cocoon or puppa, *wanmi’omni*, is derived from the word for whirlwind (Buechel 1970:536). According to Clark Wissler (1905:258), the Lakotas believe that the whirlwind originates in a cocoon formation.

Like the Cheyennes, the Lakotas believe that butterflies and dragonflies are able to escape injury by humans, animals, and even the thunders because of their rapid, whirlwind like movements (Wissler 1905:259). As Wissler (1905:258) described this power: “In the whirlwind somehow and somewhere resides the power to produce confusion of the mind, it became the prayer of the Indian that the minds of his enemies should be confused.” Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:195) also talks about the association of butterflies and dragonflies with whirlwinds and war. He tells of a song appealing to the butterfly and dragonfly that was used by a reknowned Heyoka to cure snowblindness. Black Elk himself received a vision of butterflies in which cocoons were placed on his arms to signify the power of fire and lightning (Ibid:139). In another dream a spotted eagle, a chicken hawk, and a black swallow appeared to him followed by swarms of butterflies and dragonflies as the Thunders and their horsemen approached him (Ibid:228-229). Members of the Lakotas’ Sacred Bow Society painted their robes with dragonfly designs (Blish 1934:185).

**Crickets, Grasshoppers, and Locusts**

In the 1870s, the Black Hills were reported to be a breeding grounds for grasshoppers, and a location from which they issued forth in great numbers (Progulske 1974:123). This conforms with the movements of other animals that the Lakotas and Cheyennes believed originated in the Hills in the winter months and migrated to surrounding prairies in the spring to feed.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The grasshopper goes by two names in the Lakota language: one ascription, *psipsicala*, refers its jumping actions (Buechel 1970:446) and the other denotes a large variety called *anpe’ tacagu* [day lungs] (Ibid:83). The Cheyennes call the grasshopper *hakota* (Petter 1913-15:522; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:29). The Cheyennes also identify another variety as *emaenasoszeo* because its wings turn red at a particular point in its life cycle (Petter 1913-15:895).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Use**

The Lakotas commonly used grasshoppers as fish bait (Hassrick 1964:172; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:156), and this insect was also reported as a source of food during times of starvation (Kelly1933:123-124).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

In a Lakota Falling Star story, the grasshopper protects the hero during his travels and gives him power to transform himself into a grasshopper that dies and is reborn (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:402, 405). Grasshoppers are another of the insects represented in the body paintings of Cheyenne Sun Dancers (Powell 1969:795, 833, 843; Grinnell 1972:2:264); more specifically, the imagery of its tracks are painted on the Swifthawk dancer because like the hawk it
is a “swift moving creature” (Powell 1969: 2:833). Figures of this insect mark the tipis where the Cheyennes’ Sacred Arrows and Sacred Hat are kept (Grinnell 1972:1:89). This suggests that grasshoopers may be linked in some way to dragonflies and the likely connection would be their common wind-power attributes.

In Lakota, another grasshopper without wings, whose scientific species identification is unreported, is named *ptewoyake*, which translates as “they tell a story of buffalo” (Buechel 1970:449). Robert Holy Elk (1937:44) reported how this insect once told the people where to find bison. A similar idea existed among the Cheyennes, who, according to Grinnell (1972:2:111), captured it to determine the bison’s direction. The captor held the insect in his hand and when it became quiet, the direction in which its antennae pointed was considered the direction where bison were located. However, if one antenna pointed backward, then the bison were not found in that direction.

The common cricket is called *heskosema* or *masiskot* in Cheyenne (Petter 1913-15:314-315) or *heskósema* (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:29). Among the Lakotas, the house cricket is known as a bug that makes a rolling sound in the house, *wabluska tiyoslo* or –*tiyoslola* (Buechel 1970:512).

The locust or cicada was called *mah’a’-wanglake* [watches over the earth or field] in Lakota because it does nothing but sing and watch the fields according to Buechel (1970: 328). This insect is associated with the cloud that descended on the young man who had lascivious thoughts about *Pte San Winyan*, the White Buffalo Calf Woman (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:40). In Cheyenne, it is known as *exa?ohovahe*, a term that refers to the role locusts play in helping berries ripen (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:21).

### Ants

#### Tribal Taxonomy

In Lakota, the ant is called *tajuska* or *tasuska*, and differentiated as follows: *tasu’ka kinyan* [flying ant], *tasu’ka sapa* [black ant], and *tasu’ka sasa* [red ant] (Buechel 1970:475, 483). In Cheyenne, it is given the name *azesc* (Petter 1913-15:45). Ants are known to afflict people with diseases (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995: 95), but they are also strongly associated with healing. Red ants, for example, were crushed and combined with other medicines to heal wounds when people were shot (Buchel 1970:483). The Cheyenne held a similar notion that eating ants could cure battle wounds (Grinnell 1972:2:138). An ant also appears in one of the Lakotas’ Falling Star stories and provides the hero protection in his travels (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984: 400, 405, 409).

#### Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Like other animals that burrow in the ground, ants are held sacred by the Lakotas because they constantly move between subterranean habitats and the earth’s surface, recreating the Lakotas’ own story of emergence from the underworld (Powers, W. 1986:113). The small stones, *tunkan*, that ants push out of their hills are commonly used in *Yuwipi* ceremonies and kept in small pouches (Ibid:160). At one time, they were also strung on necklaces (Densmore 1948: 200). These stones and the creatures who bring them to the surface are considered sacred because, as William Powers (1982: 13) writes:

A Yuwipi man will usually try to find such a stone near an anthill, where these industrious creatures have pushed it up to the surface. The Oglalas believe that the surface of the earth is contaminated, but that the earth beneath is clean. Thus the natural objects one finds around any burrow are particularly efficacious for religious purposes. Animals and insects that go back and forth between the surface of the earth and
the underground have knowledge of both worlds and themselves form a fraternity whose members may be called upon to aid the people. Thus spiders, ants, moles, prairie dogs, wolves, coyotes, and snakes, though different in anatomy and behavior, are linked in religious precepts because of their two-worldliness, and the earth and stones found around their holes are particularly efficacious for promoting personal security and welfare.

Cheyennes also used the quartz sand located near anthills; they melted the sand and fashioned it into the image of a small lizard (Grinnell 1972:1:223).

**Water Insects**

Another insect whose species is not identified is called maga’tasunpe; it is a long-legged black bug that travels on water (Buechel 1970:327). It is associated with healing among the Lakotas, and it is mentioned as one of the spiritual helpers of a Minneconjou female healer (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:171).

**Spiders**

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The spider is one of the most significant spiritual presences in Lakota cosmology and important to the Cheyennes as well. In Lakota, the generic name for spider is *unktomi* or *inktomi* (Buechel 1970:507), and in Cheyenne, it is *ve?ho?e* (Petter 1913-15: 999-1000; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:105). George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:88-89) argues that the name of the spider is related to their supreme deity, *Heammawihio*, the Wise one Above. *Vehoe* or *Wihio* embodies, as he puts it,

….the idea of mental ability of an order higher than common--superior intelligence. All its uses seem to refer to this mental power. The spider spins a web, and goes up and down, seemingly walking on nothing. It is more able than other insects: hence its name (Ibid:2:88).

Powell (1969:1:300n2), however, claims, based on his reading of Rudolphe Petter’s notes, that Grinnell confused the meaning of *vehoe*, which refers not to wisdom or a web but to trickery and the intricacy of a finely woven trap.

The origin and meaning of the Lakota word for spider is also elusive, but it is probably connected to *Unk*, a prefix for a class of water beings known as the *Unktehi*. *Inktomi* is the progeny of *Inyan*, the Stone, and *Wakinyan*, the Thunders, and he has a half brother *Iya*, the spiritual personification of gluttony and evil, who is descended from *Inyan* and *Unktehi* (Walker 1917:82; Powers, W. 1982:12). In this regard, it is worthwhile to mention too that *Inktomi* is simultaneously represented as an associate of the *Wakinyan* and their archrivals, the *Unktehi* (Dorsey, J. 1894:482; Walker 1980: 118:).

This is not surprising given the spider’s protrean qualities and its ability to move through all spaces of the cosmos.

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

No matter what the etymological origins of its name, the spider represents the spiritual figure of the trickster in both tribal traditions (Grinnell 1972:2:111; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:35). The trickster was seen, as Thomas Tyon (in Walker 1980:122) puts it, as the “presiding genius of pranks and practical jokes with power to work magic over persons and things.” Spider is the first animal of creation, the first to develop language, and thus the one to name all other animals. He is cunning yet hapless, deceitful yet naive, arrogant yet cowardly; he is a creator and a destroyer, a quintessential symbol of cosmic foible and contradiction (Brown 1992:47-48). The spider appears in a wide range of traditional stories, many of which were used to instruct children (Grinnell 1926; Deloria 1978). But he also appears among the Lakota as a central figure in
their creation narratives (Walker 1983). It is the spider that uses its guile and trickery to bring *Tokahe* and other humans to the earth’s surface from their home under the earth, which some Lakotas believe happened at Wind Cave.

In many ways, the spider defies easy categorization in tribal cosmologies and naming practices. As Joseph Eppes Brown (1992: 47) notes in reference to the Lakotas, “the spider is special because it transcends classification because it carries features that tie it to all categories of animals.” Spiders are described as mysterious and spiritually wise (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:101; Powers, W. 1986:155-156); they are among a select group of spiritual figures that are appealed to in most major Lakota ceremonies (Walker 1980:208). They are also widely associated with healing power. Their power comes from the fact that they are everywhere, able to travel across all the tiers of the Lakota cosmos from the underground to the sky (Powers, W. 1986:155-156). Luther Standing Bear (1978: 26-27) told a story that reflects the spider’s ubiquitous presence as follows:

A Lakota brave was once holding his vigil and fasting. In his vision there came to him a human figure all in black. The person in black handed to the brave a plant and said, ‘Wrap this plant in a piece of buckskin and hang it in your tipi. It will keep you in good health.’ When the brave asked who was speaking to him, the figure answered, ‘I can walk on the water and I can go beneath the water. I can walk on the earth, and I can go into the earth. Also I can fly in the air. I can do more work than any other creature, and my handiwork is everywhere yet no one knows how I work. I am Spider. Go home and tell your people that the Spider has spoken to you.’ This happened long ago, but the Lakotas still use the Spider’s medicine.

Among the Lakotas, spiders are closely connected to healing. According to Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier (1995:110-111): “Since the trap-door spider on the prairie was seen to burrow and seek the shelter of the rocks and earth, it is also closely associated with the powers of Mother Earth and is a particularly useful ally in doctoring the sick, and in various incarnations is a common helper of healers.” The spider is frequently addressed in modern *Yuwipi* songs (Powers, W. 1986:156-157; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:156), and it is also reported in association with the dreams of healers (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:171). Grinnell (1972:2:111) wrote that the spider was an animal the Cheyennes associated with medicine, but he did not specify the nature of the connection.

Another source of the spider’s power is its connection to the Thunders. Thomas Tyon told James Walker (180:170):

If a man is going to kill a spider, it is proper to say this first and then kill it, “Grandfather, *wakinyan* are killing you!” he says then he kills the spider. Then that man is never bitten by spiders, it is said. When someone does not say that before killing a spider then the spider is offended and spiders bite the man, it is said. So it is. Spiders are very *wakan*, the people believe. This is the end. This belongs to the spider (*Iktomi tawayelo*).

James Owens Dorsey (1894:479) also wrote about the dangerous consequences of killing spiders without offering them prayers. According to William Powers (1992:156), the Thunders are the only living beings that can attack spiders without fear of retaliation. Dora (Little Wound) Rocks expressed another novel connection to the Thunders (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:49):

The white people are descended from the spider people. They have learned to use electricity. That electricity once belonged only to the *Wakinyan* [Thunder Beings].

To do this they put up wires on poles. They send these wires all over. As electricity covers the earth, it creates a huge spider web. One day this spider web will cause a great fire. This will cause the buffalo to lose its last leg and fall to the earth. This will be the end of the world.
Historically at least, the Lakotas saw the spider’s web as indestructible, and they often imitated its design to ward off the dangers of the Thunders (Wissler 1904: 44). The design was also used to deflect other sorts of danger too (Powers, W. 1986:159). As Clark Wissler (1904:44) wrote:

The observed fact that a spider manufactures a web, and that this web is not destroyed by bullets or arrows (since they pass through it, leaving only a hole), is cited by some individuals as the basis for the conception that the spider has power to protect people from harm.

Generally speaking, the spider was appealed to and imitated in a wide variety of contexts where people required protection. For example, the warrior members of the Sacred Bow Society hung rawhide images of a spider from their eagle bone whistles (Wissler 1904:44; Blish 1934:185).

Besides the protective symbolism attached to the spider, which this animal also shared with lizards, turtles, and dragonflies (Powers, W. 1986:159,160), there were other symbolic associations, notably, its relationship with technology and industry. Oscar Howe (in Long Soldier and St. Pierre 1995: 49-50) told a story of how the spider design, tohokmu, came to the people. In this story, a young hunter, while searching for game, took shelter in a cave and fell asleep. When he awoke the next morning, he saw a beautiful web above his head. Because he admired it and did not bring harm to its maker, the spider gifted him with knowledge of a hill where stones for making arrowheads could be found. She also instructed him how to make arrowheads, a technology that the Lakotas believe was invented by spiders. In Lakota traditions, there is a fundamental connection between the spiritual powers of spiders and stones (Powers, W.1982:12-13). Arrowheads and stone clubs abandoned on the prairie are often attributed to the work of spiders (Smith, D. 1949:307; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:311n6; Brown 1992:47). In Yuwipi ceremonies, spiders and stones are often addressed simul-aneously and even interchangeably in prayer and song (Powers, W. 1986:156-157).

The industry of the spider was not only linked to the making of arrowheads but it was also associated with women’s work. In the buffalo sing for a young woman, the intercessor says, “A spider, a turtle, the voice of the lark, a brave man, children, a smoking tipi” (Walker 1980:249). According to Walker (1980:249), the spider served as a model for an industrious woman who provides adequate food and shelter for her children. Indeed, women who excel at quillwork often link their abilities to the spiritual influence of the spider (Sundstrom, L. 2002).

There is yet another symbolic association and that is the connection of the spider’s web to the Four Winds and the Whirlwind. Designs painted on the blankets of children often involved representations of a spider’s web (Densmore 1918:77), and according to Clark Wissler (1904:248-249), the design symbolized the homes of the winds at the four corners of the universe. This design and a web-like hammock the Lakotas made for their children were thought to bring good fortune (Wissler 1904:248-249; Brown 1992:49). The spider was also symbolically linked to the whirlwind, not only by way of its web, but also through the manner it wraps its eggs in a chrysalis-like pouch (Wissler 1904:44, Brown 1992:49). Like the whirlwind and its associates, the dragonfly and butterfly, the spider is understood to emerge from a cocoon that holds the power that gives rise to its own movement and life force. Cocoons and caves, in many ways, are symbolic equivalents insofar as both represent enclosed spaces where the breath of life incubates awaiting rebirth and regeneration (Brown 1992:49).

The spider’s web, tawogmunke, [ta = meat, wogmunke = trap] (Buechel 1970:485) [gmunke = trap] or tawokaske [wowokaske = to tie or imprison] (Powers, W. 1986:152), was associated with trickery and entrapment, especially in matters of romantic in-
terest. Like the hoop of the elk dreamer, the spider’s web had the power to attract and catch a member of the opposite sex (Brown 1992:49), and so the spider’s image was often painted on the lower corner of a courting blanket (Wissler 1905:267).

IV. Reptiles and Amphibians

Nearly twenty different species of reptiles and amphibians are reported at Wind Cave National Park, and again, the park’s website (Pisarowicz 2001) is the principle source of information. A much larger number, however, are identified for the Black Hills region as a whole.

In Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, some orders of reptiles and amphibians are able to cross different planes of the universe, and as a result, they occupied spiritually important positions. Frogs, lizards, and turtles, according to William Powers (1986:162), were considered sacred to the Lakota “because it was believed...that these species fell to the earth during rainstorms.” In fact, certain species of reptiles and amphibians were grouped together and identified by similar names based on their shared spiritual traits.

Frogs and Toads

One species of frog is abundant at Wind Cave National Park, the upland chorus [Pseudacris triserata], while another, the northern leopard [Rana pipiens], is not found in the park even though the habitat is well-suited to its presence. Two species of toads are also present: the woodhouse [Bufo woodhousei] and the great plains toad [Bufo Cognatus]. Another variety, the plains spadefoot [Scaphiopus bombifrons] is largely restricted to the open grassland areas of the park.

Tribal Taxonomy

In Lakota, the generic name for frog is gnaska (Buechel 1970:162), while the bullfrog is known as was’in (Buechel 1970:664). Gnaska canli [tobacco frog] designates a small tree frog with a loud voice, and gnaska wakan [holy frog] identifies a frog with a loud voice that sounds like the bray of a donkey (Ibid:162). Tadpoles were called honagila [little spirit voice] and honawitkala (Ibid:184). The toad is known variously as mata’piha (Ibid:334), or witapiha (Ibid:590). In Cheyenne, the frog is known as oonaha’e (Petter 1913-15: 504; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:39), and the toad is named popeeona (Petter 1913-15:504).

There are no specific references in the literature to frogs being taken as food either by the Lakotas or the Cheyennes. Indeed, Lone Man told Francis Densmore (1992:160):

They told me that the frog must not be harmed, as he watches everything in the water and has been given this peculiar power. They told me a great deal about the creatures that live in the water, saying they are taken care of, and water is sent them from the sky when they need it; therefore they should never be treated cruelly.

Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:152), however, claimed that his first use of a bow and arrow involved the killing of a frog.

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

According to Thomas Tyon (Walker 1980:122), frogs were closely associated with “occult powers.” They were viewed as the soldiers of the Thunders, Wakinyan (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear and Sword in Walker 1980:101). The Cheyennes also link frogs to the thunders, and like lizards, they are believed to fall with the rain from storm clouds (Moore, J. 1974a:157). Tadpoles are painted on the ankles of the blacktail deer dancers in their Sun Dance (Powell 1969:2:834). According to Powers (1986:162), the
Lakotas view frogs as mediators between earth and water, “hard to catch, therefore good to emulate.” Both tribes link them to certain forms of healing (Densmore 1948: 179; Grinnell 1972:2: 135; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995: 197). Toads were also directly associated with healing. Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:161) that people who dream of toads become sucking doctors. As he put it:

If a man dreams of a toad, he is a doctor (wapiya), it is said. Whatever these toads suck, they suck hard. So it is that man who dreams of a toad is very wakan, they believe. From the time of his dream, he doctors people using his mouth. He takes all the bad blood out of the body, it is said. Those men who become doctors, Indian doctors, do not do it intentionally. The dreams they have of animals are what cause them to believe they are doctors. Those who dream of the toad believe that it is their leader.

The Cheyennes connect toads, especially the horned variety, with the treatment of snake-bites because they are able to run over snakes without ever being harmed (Grinnell 1972:1:111,150-151).

Lizards, Newts, and Salamanders

At Wind Cave National Park, only the blotched tiger salamander [Ambystoma tigrinum], is reported; it is a common resident of the park. Observations of lizards have not been recorded at the park, but they may occur here because this area is situated within the geographic ranges they are known to cover.

Tribal Taxonomy

Although lizards and newts/salamanders are members of completely separate scientific groups, they are sometimes combined in tribal naming practices. For example, the name agleska [spotted on top] is the generic name for the lizard in Lakota (Buechel 1970:57), but among Dakota speakers, it identifies the newt (Williamson 1970:113). There are also two other names for lizard in Lakota: wanaki-paksa (Buechel 1970:542) and t’elanuwe, which refers to a small lizard found in hilly areas (Ibid:664). The Cheyenne name for the lizard is hao?taoheso (Petter 1913-15: 663; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:64), while the newt and salamander are called heo?ohtato (Petter 1913-15:934; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:120). The Cheyenne identified another lizard as amahao-hemen, which they described as a flying creature of the wooded canyons of the Southwest and an animal that inflicts disease (Petter 1913-15: 407).

Symbolic and Spiritual Significance

Among the Lakotas, lizards were the aki-cita of the Thunders, and according to James Walker (1982:104), they were associated with “increase, nourishment, and growth.” In some references, however, the lizard is considered the messenger of the Thunders’ enemy, the Unktehi, a class of water monsters (Walker 1980:118; Dorsey, J. 1894: 482). William Bordeaux (1929:113) indicated that the Lakotas admired the sand lizard because it could kill snakes and other reptiles. As he writes:

The Indians believed and have in fact witnessed sand lizards, Te-La-Ne-We-La, charming and killing snakes and reptiles. On discovering a snake, the lizard would run in a circle around the snake which was coiled up ready for attack or to strike. The lizard would stop, retrace its steps and go in the opposite direction. The object was to worry the snake as much as possible until finally the snake was compelled to uncoil and crawl away. Like a flash the lizard will start from the tail and run the full length of the snake, jumping off at the head and disappearing in the weeds. The snake is killed in this manner either by fright or poison, hence the Sioux Indians regard the sand lizard as a dangerous animal.
William Powers (1986:162) elaborates further on the symbolism associated with lizards as follows:

The lizard can disappear easily into small crevices and therefore represents not only areas above the earth and the earth’s surface but also places beneath the earth. The word ‘telanunwe’ means ‘almost dead’ and refers to the fact that the lizard can deceive enemies by holding itself very still. It is also regarded as capable of living to an old age which is also true of the other creatures in this category.

Some Lakota who encountered lizards in dreams became Heyoka or Contraries (Hassrick 1964:214), and others became specialized healers able to treat arthritis (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:183).

The Cheyenne viewed the small, quick moving lizards as spiritual helpers as well, and they were admired for their swift motion and ability to kill snakes (Grinnell 1972:2:110, 111). The Cheyennes did not kill lizards, and if they did so accidentally, they made offerings to them (Grinnell 1972:2:111). Lizards were considered powerful war charms, giving courage to their wearers and the power to move quickly and escape bullets and arrows (Grinnell 1972:2:110). Certain Cheyenne Sun Dancers paint a white lizard, head upward, on their arms and thighs (Grinnell 1972:2:266,279; Powell 1969:2:795,833), and they carry the figure of a lizard in their hands (Powell 1969:2:845). Figures of the lizard are carved into pipestems used at the Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:270), and they were also cut from rawhide as good luck charms. People who desired to make a vow or obtain power wore these figures (Grinnell 1972:2:110). In the distant past, the Cheyennes made small beads in the image of a lizard fashioned from the quartz sand located near anthills (Grinnell 1972:1:223). The Cheyennes believed that the power associated with lizards was a protection but a danger too, and certain doctors specialized in treating afflictions caused by this animal (Grinnell 1972:2:131). Newts and salamanders were also associated with healing; they were feared and not generally killed except when needed to treat leg pains (Grinnell 1972:2:111; Rockroads in Leman 1987:214; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:55).

The Cheyennes made pouches, shaped like a lizard or a salamander, to hold an infant’s umbilical cord (Grinnell 1972:2:110; Rockroads in Leman 1987:214). The Arapahos followed this practice too, and they made small paint bags in the likeness of lizards (Trenholm 1970:60,73). Pouches in the shape of a lizard were also made by the Lakotas to hold the umbilical cord of male infants to protect them from danger, especially the malevolent, Anog-Ite, the Two-Faced Woman who was seen as an enemy of the Wakinyan or Thunders (Walker 1982:104; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1985:112). Luther Standing Bear (1978:184) described these pouches as follows:

There was one charm, however, known as the cekpa almale, which every boy possessed and which he wore into his first battle with the hopes that it would bring him home safely. When a Lakota boy was born, a small piece of the umbilical cord was placed in a decorated buckskin bag made in the shape of a lizard. The bag was stuffed with buffalo wool in which was wrapped the piece of cord. The bag was sewed up and placed on the boy’s back and he wore it until he was six or seven years of age. The mother then kept it and gave it to him as a good-luck talisman when he started with his first war-party. The talisman was made in the shape of a lizard, because it can flatten itself on the ground and appear to be dead, whereas it is very much alive and able to run away speedily from its enemies. So the meaning of the talisman was Telanunwela, or ‘dead yet alive.’ If the boy returned in safety, the mother buried the cekpa aknake and it was never seen again.

Snakes

Ten different species of snake are found at Wind Cave National Park. The prairie rattlesnake [Crotalus viridis] is the most common and often located at the park’s
prairie dog towns, but the bullsnake [*Pituophis melanoleucus*] and the wandering garter [*Thamnophis elegans*] are also abundant. The red-sided garter [*Thamnophis sirtalis*] and the eastern yellow-bellied racer [*Coluber constrictor*] are common, while the western plains garter [*Thamnophis radix*], the Black Hills red-bellied snake [*Storeria occipitomaculata*], the plains western hognose [*Heterodon nasicus*], the pale milk snake [*Lampropeltis triangulum*], and the smooth green snake [*Opheodrys vernalis*] are rare.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

The generic ascription in Lakota for snake is *zuzeca* (Buechel 1970:659), but there are also several species-specific names. The rattlesnake is called, *sintehla* [rattle tail] (Ibid: 54), the garter snake is known as *wagleza* (Ibid:515), and the bull is known as *wangle-glega* or *zuzeca luzahan* [fast snake] (Ibid:5 41, 659). Buechel only gives the name for the blue racer, *wanto* (Ibid:542), so the yellow variety might have been called *wanzi*. The *zuzeca blaska* [fast snake] was a flat looking snake, possibly the western hognose, while *zuzeca kinyanpi* referred to a flying snake (Ibid:659). And finally, the water snake was known as *mini’mahel* [inside the water] (Ibid:336). Several different names are given for snakes in Cheyenne: *se?se-novotse*, the generic name (Petter 1913-15:986; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:102), *xamaase?-senovotse*, the rattlesnake (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:89), *maatameo*, the blue racer, *niee*, bull snake, and *sasooveta*, *saseskoveta* or *saskoveta*, the water snake (Petter 1913-15:986, 1095; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:120).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

Unlike other reptiles, which were highly valued by the Lakotas, snakes were generally feared and avoided (Brown 1992:40; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:113). Snakes were seen as sly and deceitful (Walker 1980:122), and dreams of them portended death and disaster (Dorsey, J. 1894:479-480). They were considered the messengers of the much reviled water creatures, the *Unktehi* (Walker 1980:118). Indeed, Good Seat (Ibid:71) even claimed that the spirits of this bad animal did not move on to the spirit world. In some versions of the White Buffalo Calf woman story, they were the animals that devoured the young man who lusted after *Pte San Winyan* (Walker 1980:149; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:40). In a Falling Star story, a snake is asked to raise the boy, but he declines, saying: “No, I am the most unliked and most pitiful animal of all. I have no legs and have to crawl on my stomach and I eat dirt and can’t get around much. I am not liked and I am not fit to raise him” (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:397). Not surprisingly, snakes were believed to cause serious illnesses that required treatment from powerful healers (Walker 1980:91; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:57-58). In spite of the overall negative attitude towards snakes, they were known as the originating power behind the Lakotas’ sacred Bow Society (Blish 1934:183), and their skins were tied around the bows and sometimes used as protection against danger (Blish 1934:183; Powers, W. 1986:160). Snake venom was used by the Lakotas to make poison arrows (Bordeaux 1929:157-158).

The Cheyennes, like the Arapahos, held the snake in much higher regard than the Lakotas. In the Arapaho creation story, the garter snake sacrificed itself by becoming the circumference of the universe. The outer rim of the Arapahos' sacred Wheel has one end tapered like the tail of a snake and the other fashioned into its head (Trenholm 1970:56; Harrod 1987:51). The Cheyenne believed the blue racer, which came from the sun, was a snake with great power (Grinnell 1972:1:150). The Cheyennes carved some of their flutes in the image of a snake (Grinnell 1972:1:205), their Elk Soldiers carried elkhorn instruments carved in the image of a snake (Grinnell 1972:2:58), and their Sun Dance priests used
pipistems with snake carvings (Ibid:270). These snake images probably represented the much-revered blue racers. Rattlesnakes, on the other hand, were greatly feared by the Cheyennes. Only a few of their healers were able to treat this snake’s venomous bites (Ibid:148-150).

**Turtles**

Two turtles are reported at Wind Cave. The snapping turtle [*Chelydra serpentina*] is commonly found along streambeds, while the western painted turtle [*Chrysemys picta*] is located near shallow water and at soft muddy locations.

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In the Lakota language, the generic name for turtles is *ke* or *keya* (Buechel 1970:297). Many varieties are differentiated by species-specific names in Lakota as well, although Buechel never identified any of them with scientific taxonomies. There was a species of turtle associated with trees, *ke can’h’a*, another variety that was spotted and lived on land, *ke glezela*, and one that was soft-shelled, *ke nununja* (Ibid: 297). There was a small water turtle known as *patkasa*, *patkasala*, or *ta*tka’sa* (Ibid:436, 827) and two additional ones, the *ke skokpa*, a large turtle, and the *ke s’samna*, a stink turtle (Ibid:665). The Cheyennes named the turtle *ma?eno*, which is the same word for fog. The Cheyennes connect this animal to the creation of the world when it still existed in a primal mist (Petter 1913-15:489,1072; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:116). They also see it as a symbol of the womb (Petter 1913-15:1072).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Practical Use**

Turtles and their eggs were eaten and considered delicacies by both the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Bordeaux 1929:200; Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:90; Hassrick 1964:173; Grinnell 1972:1:256). Adults and child-
after they departed. The turtle’s simultaneous link with earth and water imbued it with feminine and procreative symbolism in Lakota cosmology (Meeker 1901a:163; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:112). The Lakota believed that the turtle spirit was a wise protector of life. Women often wore small beaded turtles as fertility charms on their belts (Densmore 1948: 193). Its shield protected it from being wounded, and thus, it was also associated with powers over surgery, accidents, conception, birth, infants, and illnesses specific to women (Walker 1917:147, 1980:122, 249). In the Pte San Lowanpi, a coming of age ceremony for young women, the turtle was held up as an animal to emulate because “it hears many things and does not tell anything” (Walker 1980:249).

Turtles appeared in visions (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:121-122; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:109), and women who received power from them often cured infertility and other female reproductive complications (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:112,113). They played an important role in Lakota healing, not only in giving doctors spiritual guidance (Powers, W. 1986:162), but also as a remedy for specific illnesses. Eating the heart of a turtle, for example, treated infertility and menstrual disorders, (Walker 1917: 147; Wissler 1904:241-242).

Pouches to hold an infant’s umbilical cord were also made in the shape of a turtle (Wissler 1904:241; Red Shirt 2002:114). Turtle designs appeared on cradleboards and women’s leggings. The U-shaped designs beaded on the bodice and wing-like arm extensions of a Lakota woman’s buckskin dress represented the breast and shells of turtles respectively. These were often placed against solid blue backgrounds that represented the water in “both the seen and unseen world” (Wissler 1904:240).

The Cheyennes also considered the turtle to be a sacred animal because it was difficult to kill (Marriott and Rachlin 1975:78; Grinnell 1972:1:193). Like the Lakotas, the Chey- ennes placed an infant’s umbilical cord in pouches made in the form of a turtle (Grinnell 1972:2:110). Cheyenne doctors appealed to turtles in some of their healing treatments (Ibid:1:146), and warriors often carried their shells so that they would recover when wounded (Ibid:1:193). Turtles are also carved onto the stem of the pipes used in the Cheyenne Sun Dance (Ibid:2:232, 270).

V. Fish, Crustaceans, and Mollusks

Fish

The northern plains region is not typically associated with fish, and at least historically, some observers claimed that many local tribes were loathe to eat them. Although fishing was not a major subsistence pursuit for most of the tribes in the region, it was a routine activity that supplemented and added variety to the diets of the Lakotas and Cheyennes (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:89; Hoebel 1960:64; Hassrick 1964:173; Grinnell 1972:1:114; Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9). John Moore (1974a: 208) argues, however, that fish was not a preferred food and considered a sign of poverty. Fishing was a common occupation for young boys among the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:1:114) and among the Lakotas. Standing Bear (1988:65-66) and Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:156-157,161) fondly recalled fishing in the streams of the Black Hills during their childhood years.

History & Habitat

Only a few varieties of fish are native to the waterways of the Black Hills and the larger rivers surrounding them. In 1875, Lt. Richard Dodge (1965:126) reported seeing suckers and dace in some of the Hills’ streams and catfish in surrounding waterways. Today, some of these species or closely related ones are being restocked in streams managed by federal agencies. In the waterways that cross Wind Cave National Park, including Beaver, Highland,
and Cold Spring Creeks, six species are reported: brook trout \([S\text{alvelinus} \text{fontinalis}]\), white sucker \([C\text{atostomus commersoni}]\), mountain sucker \([C\text{atostomus platrychius}]\), longnose dace \([R\text{hinichthys cataractae}]\), creek chub \([S\text{emotilus} \text{astromaculatus}]\), and fathead minnow \([P\text{imephales} \text{promelas}]\) (Pisarowicz 2001d).

**Tribal Taxonomy**

In the Lakota language, fish are generically known as \(h\text{ogan}\), and minnows are called \(h\text{ogansanla}\) or \(h\text{oganscila}\) (Buechel 1970:180-181). Lakota names for fish species include: \(h\text{oiwotka}\), or \(h\text{osan}\) [carp] (Ibid:182), \(h\text{owasapa}\) [catfish] (Ibid:186), \(h\text{oka or} \text{zezecahogan}\) (eel [fish snake]) (Ibid:182, 659), \(h\text{ogleglega}\) [trout] and \(h\text{olaska}\) or \(h\text{oblaska}\) [chad] (Ibid:181). In Cheyenne, the generic name for fish is \(n\text{oma?he}\) or \(n\text{oma?ne}\) (Petter 1913-15:482; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:39), while the catfish is called \(a\text{xeohova}\) [water monster-animal] (Petter 1913-15:482; Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:18).

**Modes of Procurement, Preparation, and Practical Use**

The Lakotas and Cheyennes fished for suckers, catfish, and redfins, and they used a variety of different techniques in their fishing pursuits. In one, fish were speared (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:156-157, 161; Hassrick 1964:173). According to one of Royal B. Hassrick’s consultants:

Suckers never bit when we fished for them, so we used spears. These were made from forked poles about six feet long, with four barbed-like notches on the inside of each sharpened prong. If you missed the fish with the prong, it was certain to be caught by the center barbs. We also caught suckers in another way by attaching a noose of rawhide to the end of a pole. Then putting the loop in the water, we carefully slipped it over the fish’s head past his gills. By jerking very rapidly, we often caught a sucker (Hassrick 1964:173).

Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:156-157) elaborated upon this in relation to “calling fish” as follows:

We have a boy who \(\text{calls the fish and catches them and}\) puts the fish on a stick with a fork on the end so that it will not fall off and then he kisses it. If you don’t kiss the fish, you don’t get any. They should all be very quiet except the fisherman...There was another boy \(\text{[the caller]}\) who, when he say this line to the fish, he would pull them out one after the other. We got about thirty fish on two sticks, and went home with them. Whenever we caught a small fish that is no good, we would kiss it and throw it back in the water, meaning that he should tell the bigger fish to come along. The reason we talk to fish was that we should be like relatives to all animals as I had seen in my vision. We were ready to go home and the bait we had left we offered to the fish in payment for the fish we had gotten. The next time we went fishing we would be lucky.

Other popular techniques entailed seining fish upriver toward a waterfall (Hassrick 1969:173) or catching them with a bone hook attached to a long line of sinew and a willow pole (Standing Buffalo 1988:66-67). The Cheyennes caught fish with lines made from buffalo sinew to which meat was attached (Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:9), and they also made lines from horsehair (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:89). Among the Lakotas, lines were made from horsehair and hooks from the rib of a mouse (Bordeaux 1929:130). Grasshoppers were a popular bait, and bits of venison pancreas were commonly used too (Hassrick 1964:172; DeMallie 1984:156). Standing Bear (1988:66) described other kinds of bait as follows:

For bait we used buffalo meat. Fish will not notice cooked meat, so, of course our bait was raw. Also fish are attracted to red, so we gathered along our way some red berries, perhaps the buds of the wild rose. By throwing these into the water, we would
soon find out if there were any fish there.
We tested for fish in this way until we found
a spot where the fish were before using our buffalo meet.

The Lakotas baked their fish in a small pit lined with leaves, or they parboiled them (Hassrick 1964:173).

The Cheyennes used seining techniques as well (Grinnell 1972:2:48, 308), but more typically, they caught fish in a pen made of willow saplings, which was built under the supervision of a medicine man. Once the fish were trapped, a small opening was made in the pen and an appointed man pulled the fish out with his hands. Such traps were commonly used to capture suckers and whitefish (Curtis 1907-30:6: 156; Grinnell 1972:1:311). Before metal was introduced to the Cheyennes in trade, spines were taken from the side of the head of a large catfish to make awls (Grinnell 1972:1:218). And before beads were acquired from European American traders, necklaces were fashioned from the vertebrae of fish (Grinnell 1972:1:223).

**Symbolic and Spiritual Significance**

The Lakotas considered fish *wakan*, a “patron of abolition,” and a source of healing power connected to water (Tyon, Garnett, Thunder Bear, and Sword in Walker 1980:101, Walker 1980:122; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:139). Those who dreamed of fish became healers (Walker 1980:161; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:171), and Black Elk was one of the people who received healing powers from fish (in DeMallie 1984:139.). Today, fish are sometimes served in ceremonies because they are a favorite food of bear and eagle spirits (St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:171). The Cheyennes also linked fish to healing, and George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:151) presents an example of this when Spotted Wolf is wounded and dives into the water to retrieve a fish upon instructions he receives from a kingfisher.

**Crustaceans and Mollusks**

Historically, many of the rivers and streams in the central Plains were well stocked with mussels and snails (Hayden 1862b:179-182). Ferdinand Hayden (Ibid: 179) found few living shells in the Black Hills in 1857, but he did observe that many of the little streams were filled with land and freshwater shells. Shells were used for spoons, paint pots, incense containers, and scrapers (Densmore 1918:399, 1948:172, 195; Wedel and Frison 2001: 52). Snails went by several different names in Lakota: *mniwamnuh’a* (Buechel 1970:339), *tunsila*, a name also used for leeches (Ibid:502), and *wahacan kakic’in* [one who carries a shield on their back] (Ibid:517). Their shells served as ornamentation (Buechel 1970:339; Densmore 1948:200). Clams were called *tuki* and the shell without the animal, *tuki’ ha* (Buechel 1970:501). Another word for shell was *kanpe’ska* or *panke’ska*, after which the Platte River, *Panke’sha Wakpa*, is named (Riggs 1968:259; Buechel 1970:430).

The Cheyennes knew the clam or mussel as *hexovo* (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:21) and the snail as *nimac* (Petter 1913-15:986). They sometimes decorated the fringe of their leggings with these shells (Grinnell 1972:1:221). Mussel shells are related to the West direction and the moon, which is also tied to the claws of carnivores and horns of ruminants (Moore, J. 1974a:152).

Local tribes also procured a variety of crustaceans for food and manufacture. In Lakota, crayfish are called *matu’gna*, and crawfish are known as *matuska* (Buechel 1970:334). The Lakotas boiled and fried crustaceans. The claws of the crayfish were boiled, and when they turned red, they were treated with grease and used as ornaments on clothing (Bordeaux 1929:131). The Cheyenne knew them as *hetoxte* (Petter 1913-15:313).
APPENDIX B

PLANTS OF THE BLACK HILLS AND WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK:
Their Cultural Uses & Meanings

The plants described in this appendix are organized into four major groups: 1) Non-Vascular Plants: Fungi, Lichens, and Moss; 2) Vascular Plants: Flowering Forbs; 3) Vascular Plants: Grasses, Sedges, Rushes, and Horsetails; and 4) Woody Plants. Again, all references to plant species at Wind Cave National Park come from the park’s websites (Pisarowicz 2001f, 2001g, 2001h, 2001i, 2001j, and 2001k, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

This listing is not inclusive of the plants located in the Black Hills, nor does it cover all the names and uses of plants among the tribes known to have occupied the area in historic times. Some of the scientific and common plant names listed by ethno-graphers do not correspond with new scientific nomenclatures. An asterisk is placed next to all plant names that have not been matched with listings on the USDA’s plant database (http://plants.usda.gov/tools_html).

I. NON-VASCULAR PLANTS: FUNGI, LICHENS, & MOSS

A wide variety of non-vascular plants were used by the tribal nations of the northern Plains for food and other purposes, although many of them have not been identified and correlated with indigenous nomenclatures. These are found throughout the Black Hills growing on trees, rocks, and soils common to the region.

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:169; Hart 1981:2, 3, 4)

e ov’ a a oh’a [yellow heat]  
Letharia vulpina*

alternate: me?hasetoew [no translation given]  
hehpano [no translation given]  
Lycoperdon [puffball]  
me e mi’a tun [incense smoke fragrance]  
Polytrichum juniperinum*

Kiowa [Vestal and Schultes 1939:12]  
ai-pee-o-pa [puffball]  
Lycoperdon [puffball]  

can nakpa [tree ears]  
Polystictus versicolor [bracket fungi]  
can wiziye [wood to dye something yellow]  
Parmelia borei [beard lichen]  
hoksi’ cekpa [boy’s navel]  
Lycoperdon [puffball]  
peji hinkpila [short hair grass]  
[applied to an unidentified moss]  
peta yuhala [one with a small fire]  
[will o’whisp or touchwood]  
zitkala ipatapi [bird ornament]  
[refers to a lichen or moss growing on rocks]  
alternates: zitkala wipatapi [bird quillwork]  
zitkala waksupi [bird’s beadwork]  
inyan waksupi [rock beadwork]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:136)  
nobi.zi.s [earth’s wart]  
Lycoperdon [puffball]  
alternate: daze abi ð e.ci [coyote’s penis]

Ponca [Gilmore 1919:63]  
mikai hthi [star sore]  
Lycoperdon [puffball]

Habitat: There are numerous species of lichen at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002a). Since many of the tribal names that apply to lichen are not linked to specific species, it is difficult to determine whether any
of these match some of the varieties found at the park.

**Uses:** A wide variety of non-vascular plants were used for food and medicine but also in art and manufacturing.

[food] The tribal nations who lived in the Black Hills region ate certain fungi. Melvin Gilmore (1919:61-62) observed Lakota women gathering elm cap *Pleurotus ulmarius* for food from decayed areas of box elder and elm trees. Luther Standing Bear (1978:58) and Christina Little Horse (in Lewis 1980:253) describe this as well. The Lakotas also gathered bracket fungi for food from young ash trees (Standing Bear 1978:62). The Poncas boiled and ate puff-balls, and the Cheyennes consumed another large fungus of unknown origin that grows on cottonwood trees (Grinnell 1972:2:168). Many northern plains tribes found puffballs *Lycoperdon* to be a palatable food (Gilmore 1919:63; Vestal and Schultes 1939:12).


[symbolic & ceremonial] The Kiowas also mixed lichens in their tobacco mixtures for ceremonial smoking (Vestal and Schultes 1939:12). Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:177), a Lakota medicine man, reported that stones with lichens are preferred for burning in sweatlodges because they don’t crack or burst. In Lakota origin stories, Wohpe is the one who creates puffballs (Walker 1983:365-366).

[art & manufacture] Some lichens were also used to make yellow dyes for porcupine quills (Gilmore 1919:63; Buechel 1970:5, 93).

**II. VASCULAR PLANTS: FLOWERING FORBS**

There are more than 300 different species of flowering forbs described in Larson and Johnson’s book (1999) on the plants of the Black Hills. Of these, nearly half are documented in ethnographies and ethnobotanies for the tribal nations who lived in the region during historic times. And more than three-quarters of the plants reported at Wind Cave National Park have names and/or traditional uses among the tribes who lived historically in the region. A few other species, which are not reported in Larson and Johnson’s work (1999), are included here as well, not only because they were used by local tribal nations but also because they are commonly found in the grassland or sagebrush steppe habitats surrounding the Hills.

**Agavaceae**

**Agave Family**

**Yucca glauca**

[soapweed] Also known as soapweed, *Yucca glauca* [yucca] is the only member of the agave family reported in the Black Hills. Widespread in the high plains area of the United States, it is a plant for which resi-dent American Indian populations had many uses. The plant’s capacity to produce high levels of saponins, steroid derivatives, may very well account for its popularity in native and Euroamerican hygienic and medicinal practices (Kindscher 1987:224-227, 1992: 219-223).
Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:12; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53)
hestahpano?e [no translation provided]
alternate: hestapano [soap weed]

Comanche [Carlson and Jones 1939:524]
mu:mutsi [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultz 1939:17)
kaw-izee-a-tzo-tee-a [no translations given]
alternates: ol-po-on-a
kee-aw-gee-tzot-ha 'a'

Lakota (Buechel 1970:190; Rogers 1980:30; Walker 1980:93)
hupe'stola [sharp pointed stem]
alternates: icahpuh pejuta [medicine that grows in a bunch or cluster]
pesto'stola [sharp pointed stem]
tazi-yazan pejuta [stomachache medicine]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:54)
da o ig o a [appears whitish]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:71)
duwadowa-hi [no translation provided]

Habitat: Soapweed is widely found throughout the high plains in sandy blowouts and hillsides from Montana to Texas, and it is a species common to the grassland foothills of the Black Hills including those located at Wind Cave National Park (Kindscher 1987:225; Larson and Johnson 1999:44; Pisarowicz 2001h:1).

Uses: This is one of the most versatile plants in the northern Plains because its flowers, stalks, fruits, leaves, and roots were used for food, medicinal, hygienic, and/or manufacturing purposes (Kindscher 1987: 225-226).

[food] In the northern areas of the Plains, this plant is rarely listed as an important source of food, although the Kiowas and Plains Apaches who once resided in the region of the Black Hills ate the flower stalks and called them “Indian cabbage” in English (Vestal and Schultz 1939:17; Jordan 1965:54; Kindscher 1987:226). The Chey-ennes considered the seedpods edible (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53). The native peoples of the Southwest commonly ate the fruits and flower pistils (Larson and Johnson 1999:44), but there is no published evidence for this practice among the tribes of the Black Hills.

[medicinal] According to Reverend Eugene Buechel (1970:190), the Lakotas had two major medicinal uses for this plant. In one, the plant was mixed in tepid water and used as a tea to treat stomachaches, and in the other, it was combined with prickly pear cactus roots in a medicinal solution to aid birthing. He also points out, however, that it was known to have dangerous side effects when used obstetrically because it could cause a fetus to be aborted. As the Lakota medicine man, Archie Fire a.k.a. Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172) said, “This medicine is lila wakan -- very sacred, working two ways.” Another Lakota, George Sword (in Walker 1980:93), reported that powders were made from the plant and mixed with water to treat swellings and stomachaches. The Chey-ennes pulverized the root to make a powder to apply to sores, rashes, and other skin ailments (Hart 1981:12). Melvin Gilmore (1919:71) noted that the Poncas and Omahas burned the root as a medicinal remedy for unidentified medical conditions. The Plains Apaches used strips of yucca leaves to wrap and tie poultices around an injury (Jordan 1965:54). 1981:12). European Americans of the Plains and Intermountain West were known to use this plant in making remedies for the treatment of arthritis, and it is still popular for this purpose among herbalists today (Kindscher 1992:221-22; Tilford 1997:172).

[cosmetic & hygienic] Among the Lakotas, the sudsy lather produced from the roots was used to make soap for cleaning hair, and it served as a tonic to treat lice infestation. Along with the Cheyennes, the Lakotas believed the plant was able to promote hair growth (Gilmore 1913b:358; Buechel 1970:190; Rogers 1980:30; Fire and Erdoes 1972:172; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53; Suka Sni Win n.d.:15). Luther Standing Bear (1978:65) wrote:

The pride of both Lakota men and women was a splendid head of hair, and especial attention
was given to its care as a mark of good breeding. The women were especially proud of long hair and brushed and smoothed their long braids to keep them from breaking. Frequent washings in hupestola kept the hair glossy. Every morning a married woman had her hair brushed and her face painted for the day by her husband. This was a mark of respect that every Lakota brave paid his spouse.

Among the Cheyennes, Comanches, Kio-was, and Plains Apaches, the root was used to clean hair as well and to treat dandruff and baldness (Carlson and Jones 1939:524; Vestal and Schultes 1939:19; Jordan 1965: 150; Hart 1981:12; Kindscher 1987:226). The Plains Apaches and Arapahos also used it to wash clothes and blankets (Nickerson 1966:47; Jordan 1965:151).

[veterinary] The Lakotas believed that yucca had “wakan” or sacred qualities when smoke from its burning roots were used to control horses (Buechel 1970). As Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172) put it, “Let these animals smell its smoke and they slow up, quiet down enough for you to catch them.”

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas bundled the sharp pointed leaves to use as fire drills. They employed the roots in solutions to tan hides (Gilmore 1913b:358; Kindscher 1992: 226). The Lakotas and the Plains Apaches used the sharp point as a needle and made thread from the leaves (Gilmore 1919:71; Rogers 1980:28; Jordan 1965:90). The Cheyennes used yucca leaves in their bas-ketry for a game called ko koe has in e ya (Grinnell 1972:1:246, 332), and the Plains Apaches made them into a puzzle game (Jordan 1965:89-90).

[fuel] The Cheyennes made punks out of dry, rotten yucca roots to transport fire (Grinnell 1972:2:543), and the Lakotas used yucca as a fire-starter and as a means of transporting it (Mallery 1886:291; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:311).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Lakota spiritual leader Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:311) describes how the Lakotas attributed to the origins of fire to the yucca plant.

Alismataceae
Water Plantain Family

Two plants in the Water Plantain Family, Sagittaria cuneata [arumleaf arrowhead], described below, and Alisma plantago [water plantain], which is found largely in regions east of the Black Hills, are named in the botanical nomenclatures of the tribal nations who resided in this area. In Lakota, water plantain is called wakinyanla pahli’ hu [small thunder stick in the ground stem] (Buechel 1970:531; Rogers 1980:25). It is one of the plants mentioned in the Lakota creation story (Walker 1983:234).

Sagittaria cuneata or latifolia [arumleaf arrowhead]

Also known as Duck potato, this is the most common sagittaria species found in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:46).

Names:


Lakota (Buechel 1970:176, 447; Rogers 1980:26) hinhan tahanpe [ refers to the shape of its leaves alternate: psto’la hu [bead plant]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:65) sin [no translation given]

Habitat: In the Black Hills, this plant is generally located at the margins of low elevation ponds and streams (Larson and Johnson 1999:46).

Uses: The tubers were a valued source of food especially for tribal nations located in the prairies east of the Black Hills.

[food] The Cheyennes ate the stalk below the blossom raw (Grinnell 1972:2:170), and the Arapahos consumed them fresh as well
Lakota women and men gathered arrowhead tubers from local waters (Hassrick 1964:179; Standing Bear 1978:58). They were prepared for consumption through boiling or roasting (Buechel 1970: 176; Gilmore 1913a:358; Gilmore 1919:65). Christina Little Horse (in Lewis, L. 1980:251) recollected her grandmother gathering these and said:

When she would go out to pick the berries and wild food she had been used to eating, she would take me along. Usually the first place we’d go would be the creek. There was a plant growing there she called “spetola.” That word meant beads. She’d take the plant out of the muddy, slushy water where the leaves would be floating on top of the water. She’d reach into the water with her hands and dig around and she would come up with a white, cordlike root with little bumps on it from about the size of a walnut down to the size of small beans. The root and the bumps together looked just like a string of beads. She would take all those beadlike things off the cordlike root and wash them in water. Then she’d boil them and they tasted just like mashed potatoes. She said they were Indian beans.

[medicinal] The Lakotas were known to have used the tubers for unspecified medicinal purposes (Gilmore 1919:65; Buechel 1970:176), and the Cheyennes combined the leaves in an herbal mixture whose applications are not reported (Hart 1981:7).


Amaranth Family

Two species from this family are reported in Wind Cave National Park, *Amarantha retroflexus* [rough pigweed or redroot amaranth] and *A. albus* [prostrate pigweed] (Pisarowicz 2001k:4); both grow in ravine environments.

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bear medicine], a high elevation plant found over much of the Rocky Mountain West (Albers and Lowry 1995:55).

**Cicuta**

*water hemlock*

The Lakotas named this plant *yajopi hu cik' ala* [small flute stem]. In spite of the fact that this is a highly poisonous plant, it was used to treat stomach ailments (Buechel 1970:622; Rogers 1980:33). The Lakota name for it has nothing to do with making a musical sound, but rather, according to Dilwyn Rogers (1980:33), it was similar in appearance to a parsnip that was relied upon for this purpose. Water hemlock is widely found in the Black Hills in moist habitats from low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:46).

**Conium maculatum**

*poison hemlock*

Abundant in many locations throughout the Hills and found at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:48; Pisarowicz 2001k:3), poison hemlock was called *yajopi hu* [flute stem] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:622; Rogers 1980:33). Its stem was not used to make a musical instrument, however (see above).

**Daucus carota**

*Queen Anne’s lace*

This plant of the northern and central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:48) has no documented ethnobotanical uses for either the Plains Indians or European Americans who lived in the region. It grows at Wind Cave National Park.

**Heracleum maximum**

*cowparsnip*

Cowparsnip is one of a number of plants that are not readily found in the prairie regions east of the Black Hills, and as a result, the Hills would have been a good place for local tribal nations to find it.

**Names:**

Arapaho (Nickerson 1966:49)

*nee-a-tat* [no translation given]

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:40)

*hetahpenon?estse* [his flute plant]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:622; Rogers 1980:33)

*yajopi hu* [flute stem]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:107)

*zhaba-makan* [beaver medicine]

**Habitat:** Cowparsnip is occasionally found in moist habitats along streams or in woods and thickets at low to mid elevations in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:50). It is located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:2).

**Uses:** Most of the tribal nations in the Black Hills region used cowparsnip for medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1992:254-255).

[food] This plant’s leaves and stems are edible (Tilford 1997:42; Larson and Johnson 1999:50), but only the Shoshones and Arapahos are reported to have taken them as a source of food (Nickerson 1966:49).

[medicinal] The Poncas boiled the root for intestinal pain (Gilmore 1919:107), and the Lakotas also used the root in decoctions to treat stomach ailments (Buechel 1970:622). The Shoshones and Arapahos considered this one of their main plants for making medicines, and they used it in the treatment of colds and flu. They also administered it as a medicinal wash and applied the pounded root in massage therapies (Nickerson 1966:49). European American settlers relied on it for healing remedies as well (Kindscher 1992:255; Tilford 1997:42).

[art & manufacture] The Cheyennes made courting whistles from the hollow stems of the cowparsnip (Hart 1981:40), while the Lakotas
made whistles for children (Buechel 1970:622).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Poncas placed it in the hole where their ceremonial pole was planted (Gilmore 1919:107), and the Arapahos combined the dried root with Bull Durham for use in social smoking (Nickerson 1966:49).

**Ligusticum Porteri**  
*[Osha or Porter's Lovage or licorice-root]*

Also known as Porter’s Lovage, the root of this plant is a popular medicine, known among many American Indian tribal nations as “bear’s root.” Although neither this plant nor the closely related species known as *Angelica* are reported in the Black Hills, it is mentioned here because it represents an important medicinal and ceremonial plant for many of the tribal nations who live in the Black Hills region. It has a spicy celery like odor and bears a strong resemblance to the poisonous water hemlock, but osha usually grows at elevations (above 5000 feet), higher than the poisonous hemlock (Tilford 1997:178, 204).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:182)  
*nahko hes tam oka*  [bear’s food]

Lakota (Lewis, T. 1990:47)  
*canli icaahiye*  [tobacco leaf]

**Uses:** This has been a very important ceremonial and medicinal plant for Euro-american and American Indian populations in the region. Today, it is widely traded among tribal nations in the northern Plains, although interestingly the exact botanical identity of the plant as used among the Lakotas, the Cheyennes, and the Utes has only been confirmed in published sources in recent years (Lewis, T. 1990:47; Black Elk and Lyon 1990:191).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes brew a tea from the root to treat diarrhea (Grinnell 1972:2:102). The Lakotas use it to treat bronchitis and other respiratory ailments, and they apply it as a salve to heal facial sores (Lewis, T. 1990:134). The Blackfeet and tribal nations in the Northwest employ it for respiratory distress, fevers, and stomach-aches. European American herbalists rely on osha for a variety of respiratory complaints (Tilford 1997:204), and they prescribe angelica, as do Chinese herbalists, to relieve female reproductive ailments (Tilford 1997:198).

[cosmetic & hygienic] The Lakotas believe that the smell of the root prevents snakes from entering a house (Lewis, T. 1990:134).


**Lomatium foeniculaceum**  
*[desert biscuitroot]*

Also known as Prairie parsley or Wild parsley, this and the closely related *L. orientale* [Northern Idaho biscuitroot], and *L. dissectum* [fernleaf biscuitroot] were im-portant food and medicinal plants for tribal nations in the northern Plains (Kindscher 1987:147-48; 1992:260-261). Larson and Johnson (1999) list only the desert biscuit root in their ethnobotanical survey of the Black Hills. Some of the other Lomatium species may exist in the region but are infer-quent in their occurrence.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:182; Hart 1981:40)  
motsin’s tahm  [no translation given]

*L. dissectum*  
alternates: motsenostoste  
*nahko hes tam oka*  [bear food]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:460; Rogers 1980:33)  
*sahi yela tatin psinka* (Cheyenne turnip)  
*L. orientale*  
*sahi yela tatin psinka hazizi*  [Cheyenne turnip with yellow stem]

*L. nuttali*  
alternate: wahcazi iyawicaska [yellow flower that sticks to a person]
**Habitat:** Often found in heavy clay soils on the dry plains and foothills, the desert biscuitroot is fairly common throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:50).

**Uses:** The various species of *Lomatium* had important culinary and medicinal uses for the tribal nations of the region.


[medicinal] Shoshone and Bannock populations considered desert biscuitroot “the Big Medicine,” and used it for many different medicinal treatments (Kindscher 1992:260). The Cheyennes pulverized the root of *L. dissectum* and brewed it in a tea for chest pains and other internal ailments, and they also made an infusion from the root that was applied externally to reduce swellings. The powdered leaves and roots of *L. orientale* were made into a tea used in the treatment of bowel pain and diarrhea (Grinnell 1972:2:181).

*Osmorhiza spp.*

**[sweetcicely or sweetroot]**

Several varieties of *Osmorhiza*, including *O. depauperata* [bluntseed sweet root]* and *O. berteroi* [sweetcicely], were used by many of the tribal nations who lived in the Black Hills region.

**Names:**

*ma ta mbao e* (spiny infusion by heat)
alternate: *mahtamahaa*ehe(o?)* [old lady]

Lakota (Gilmore 1919:107)
*cha-pezhuta* [wood root]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:107)
*shanga-makan* [horse medicine]

**Habitat:** *Osmorhiza* species are restricted to the moist environments of the low to mid elevation regions of the central and northern Black Hills, where their appearance is occasional (Rogers & Johnson 1999:52).

**Uses:** *Sweetcicely* appears to have been used primarily for medicinal purposes among the tribal nations of the region.

[medicinal] The Cheyennes pulverized the leaves, stems, and roots and combined them in an infusion to treat stomach bloating and other abdominal complaints. An infusion was also made from the roots to treat kidney disorders. In addition, the Cheyennes chewed the roots and brewed a tea from the leaves to treat colds (Grinnell 1972:2:181-82; Hart 1981:40). The Poncas made a poultice out of the roots to doctor boils, and their Omaha cousins used the roots in healing wounds (Gilmore 1919:107; Fletcher & La Flesche 1972:2:487). Although this plant is becoming popular among modern herbalists, there is no evidence it was widely used by European American settlers for medicinal purposes (Tilford 1997:142).

[veterinary] The Poncas report that horses were especially fond of the roots, and as a result, they were used to catch them (Gilmore 1919:107).

**Periderida gairdneri**

**[vampa]**

Also known as wild carrot, this edible species is widely distributed in the grass meadows of mountain ranges throughout the Intermountain West.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:81; Hart 1981:41)
*an’o niv i i tis* [four grow together]
alternate: *ano-neve-e?tose*

**Habitat:** Yampa is occasionally found in the northern Black Hills at high elevations in meadows and open deciduous forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:54).

**Uses:** Yampa was not commonly gathered by tribal nations on the eastern peripheries of the Black Hills, but it was a very important food for many of the Numic speaking populations who once occupied lands on the western side.
of the Hills (Garner & Hawley 1950:324; Larson and Johnson 1999:54). It was probably significant to the Comanches when they lived near the southwestern edge of the Black Hills. Yampirika [eaters of wild carrots] is an old band name for the Comanches and also the Utes. Of the other tribal nations living in the vicinity of the Black Hills, only the Cheyennes have recorded uses for this plant.

[f] Cheyenne women gathered the roots in May and June at the peak of their greatest nutritional value. These were eaten fresh and dried for winter use. When rehydrated, they were prepared as a mush (Grinnell 1972:2181). This was and remains an im-portant food source for the Utes, Shoshones, and Arapahos (Nickerson 1966:49; Smith 1974:271).

[m] This root was also a valued ingredient in various Cheyenne medicinal compounds (Grinnell 1972:2; Hart 1981:41), and it has a wide variety of medicinal uses for European Americans as well (Tilford 1997:166).

Sanicula marilandica
[Maryland sanicule]*

Also known as Black snakeroot, it is found frequently in the Black Hills in moist and forested habitats at low to mid elevations. Larson and Johnson (1999:54) report that it has a variety of medicinal uses among American Indians, although none of these were found for any of the tribes who lived in the region historically.

Zizia aptera
[heartleaf Alexanders]

Zizia species are largely located in the moist environments of the eastern woodlands and Pacific Coast, and therefore exist as outliers in the more humid central and northern reaches of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:54). Again, even though they are used by tribal nations outside the area, there are no reports of their use for tribes living near the Hills (Kindscher 1992:288-289).

Apocynaceae
The Dogbane Family

Two species in this family are reported in the region, but only one is documented in ethnobotanical sources.

Apocynum spp.
[Indian hemp]

Two species of dogbane are reported in the Black Hills, Apocynum androsaemifolium [spreading dogbane] and A. cannabinum [Indian hemp] (Larson and Johnson 1999:54-56). Indian hemp is also found at Wind Cave National Park.

Names:

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:47)
gho-la  [no translation given]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:353; Rogers 1980:34)
nape’olektyapi  [to burn in the hand]

A. cannabinum
*so called because the wooly seeds burned rapidly in people’s hands

Habitat: Spreading dogbane is located throughout the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in dry, rocky meadows, wood-lands, and forest openings and edges, while Indian hemp is most commonly found at low elevations in moist habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:54-56).

Uses: An indigenous name and documented use for this plant has been found only for the Kiowas and Lakotas.

[f] The Kiowas allowed the plant’s sap to harden and used it as a chewing gum (Vestal and Schultes 1939:47).
[medicinal] Spreading dogbane is reported as an American Indian medicinal plant for the treatment of venereal diseases and wart removal (Larson and Johnson 1999:54), but there is no confirmation of this use in the ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills in historic times. Indian hemp also has medicinal uses in European American folk medicine and for tribal nations outside the region, but again, nothing has been uncovered for native populations historically associated with the Hills (Kindscher 1992:41-45; Tilford 1997:196).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas and other tribal nations of the region used the stems for cordage (Nickerson 1966:49; Rogers 1980:4).

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**Araceae**  
The Arum Family

No plants in this family are reported for the Black Hills in Larson and Johnson’s work (1999). One plant, which is an eastern Woodlands plant and located outside the region, however, deserves mention, and this is *Acorus calamus* [sweet flag]. Known as *sinkpe tawote* [muskrat food] or *hohwa* [refers to the consumption of the plants stalks] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:182, 454; Rogers 1980:26) and *wi ukh is e’ev* [bitter medicine] in Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:171), it was an important medicine for tribes throughout the region. According to Melvin Gilmore (1919:70), it was considered a “panacea” and used to reduce fevers, tooth-aches, sore throats, muscle cramping, and anxiety. In more recent times, it is taken by Dakotas and Lakotas to treat diabetes, tooth-aches, and sore throats (Albers 1966-1976; Lewis, T. 1990:135; Kindscher 1992:25). Even though it does not typically grow on the High Plains, the tribal nations who live in this region still secure the plant’s roots through long-distance trade connections with Sisseton Dakota who occupy areas in Minnesota and South Dakota where this plant remains plentiful (Albers 1966-1976; Grinnell 1972:2:171).

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**Araliaceae**  
The Ginseng Family

*Aralia nudicaulis* [wild sarsaparilla] is the only member of the Ginseng family reported in Larson and Johnson’s botanical inventory of plants in the Black Hills. Common at low to mid elevations in the central and northern Black Hills, it is found in the understory of coniferous and deciduous forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:58). This is another plant that has important medicinal uses among tribal nations in the eastern regions of the United States, but one that has not been documented for the tribes who occupied the Hills in historic times. *Panax quinquefolius* [American Ginseng], however, is known to the Cheyenne as *vanov* [rainbow medicine]; it is considered one of their strongest medi-cines and commonly used as a stimulant (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53). This may be the plant the Lakotas called *ta’to* or *pejuta to*; it was used in treatments for anemia, stomach bloating, and muscle pain (Buechel 1970:484, 824; Sword in Walker 1980:93).

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**Asclepiadaceae**  
The Milkweed Family

Most species in this family, known for their production of a milky sap, have many different documented medicinal uses (Kindscher 1992:54-59). The Lakotas, for example, are reported to have eleven names for seven different species in the milkweed family (Gilmore 1919:109; Rogers 1980:34). *A. speciosa* [showy milkweed], which is found on the eastern margins of the Plains and at Wind Cave National Park, is the most com-monly used milkweed in the region. *A. in-carnata* [swamp milkweed], *A. pumila* [plains milkweed], *A. verticillata* [whorled milkweed], and *A. viridiflora* [green milk-weed] are only documented in sources on the Lakotas.
Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:183; Hart 1981:14)
ma tan ai mahkst [ milky wood pieces] A. speciosa
alternates: matanaa-yo?estse [milk plant]
matanaa-maxestse [milk wood]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:47)
zap-yadaw [no translation provided]
*generic name for Asclepia species

Lakota (Gilmore 1913b:363, 1919:57; Buechel 1970:130, 192, 440, 517, 519, 520; Rogers 1980:34)
cesloslo pejuta [diarrhea root] denotes
A. pumila
alternate: hante?iye-ceca [like juniper]
pezi swula cikala [small fine herb]
hu? ciska [spoon-shaped stem]

A. viridiflora
A. stenophylla
pan nunpala [two little workbags of women]
A. speciosa
alternate: wahcahca [flower blossom or flowery flower]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:104)
ize licowe [yellow medicine]
A. tuberosa

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:109)
makan saka [raw medicine]
A. tuberosa
wahtha [no translation given]
A. syriaca
wahtha [no translation given]
A. exaltata

Habitat: A. incarnata [swamp milkweed] is common in the Black Hills and found along low elevation streams especially in the southern areas. Also located at low elevations is A. pumila, which is associated primarily with the Hogback and Red Valley. A. speciosa [showy milkweed] is the species of milkweed most frequently found in the Plains, and in the Black Hills, where it is generally located in meadows and prairies at low elevations. A. Viridiflora appears occa-sionally at low elevations, especially in the Red Valley and at various limestone, grass-land, and open forest sites. While A. verti-cillata [whorled milkweed] appears frequently in adjacent grasslands, it is uncom-mon in the Hills and restricted to the grass-land margins (Larson and Johnson 1999:60-64). A. incarnata, A. speciosa, and A. verticillata are reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2, 2001j:2).

Uses: Except for A. speciosa, which was a food source for many tribal nations in the region, most of the other milkweeds were taken primarily for medicinal purposes.

[food] The flowers of A. speciosa were collected by the Lakotas to thicken soups and also as a preserve (Bordeaux 1929:131; Buechel 1970:519). The Crows boiled the flowers and ate the seeds raw (Kindscher 1987:56), and the Cheyennes boiled them with meat and in soups (Hart 1981:14, 1992: 66). The Cheyennes also ate the inner layer of the stalks when the fruit was still green, and they used the dry milk as a chewing gum (Grinnell 1972:2:183). The Kiowas and Plains Apaches ate the young pods of many different milkweed species, and often refer-red to them in English as “Indian pickles” (Vestal and Schultes 1939:48; Jordan 1965: 27). Lakotas, Poncas and Pawnees ate the young sprouts of A. syriaca (most commonly found in areas east of the Black Hills) in spring and boiled the bud clusters in the summer like cabbage (Gilmore 1913b:363; Gilmore 1919:109-110).

[medicinal] The Lakotas used most milk- weeds for medicinal purposes. They pre- pared a salve from the roots of A. incarnata to treat swollen glands, which in Lakota beliefs are caused by encounters with go- phers. Lakota children were admonished to keep away from gopher mounds, or they would come down with scrofulous swellings in their neck (Buechel 1970:517; Rogers 1980:27, 34). Like cedar, A. pumila was brewed in a tea primarily for the treatment of childhood diarrhea (Buechel 1970:130, 192, 440), while its close relative, A. verti-cillata was prepared to promote milk pro-duction in nursing women
The roots of *A. viridiflora* and *A. stenophylla* (not reported in the Black Hills) treated a loss of appetite in children (Buechel 1970:489, 520) and childhood diarrhea (Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:171-172). *A. speciosa* was taken for unspecified medicinal purposes (Buechel 1970:431).

Other tribal nations also used various milkweed species medicinally. The Cheyennes prepared a medicine from *A. speciosa* for the treatment of various forms of blindness (Hart 1981:15, 1992:66), and the Plains Apaches employed it for relieving stomach complaints, fevers, and snakebites (Jordan 1965:104). The Poncas relied on many different species of milkweed for a wide range of medicinal purposes including pulmonary and intestinal complaints (Gilmore 1919: 109-110). European Americans depended on *A. speciosa* and other western milkweed species to eliminate warts and skin parasites, and the roots of milkweeds were relied on to cure a range of ailments from asthma to kidney stones (Moore 1979:106-107; Tilford 1997:97).

**Asteraceae**

**The Aster Family**

Also known as the Composite family, this is the largest family of flowering plants found in the Black Hills with more than 80 different species described in the Larson and Johnson volume (1999:64).

**Achillea millefolium**

**[common yarrow]**

Known by many other names, including wild tansy, sneezewort, bloodwort, and milfoil, this plant is very common throughout the northern plains. It is a plant for which resident American Indian populations and early European American settlers had multiple medicinal uses. The plant contains more than 120 different compounds, many with recognized therapeutic value (Kindscher 1992:17, 20-22).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1917:2:189; Hart 1981:17; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53)

*i ha i se e yo* [cough medicine]

alternate: *hehaa-heeseeo?otse*

*hesta-besez* [heart medicine]

Lakota (Densmore 1918:254; Buechel 1970:192; Rogers 1980:35)

*hante canhlogan* [cedar weed]

alternate: *taopi pejuta* [wound medicine]

**Habitat:** Common yarrow is ubiquitous in the Black Hills and located at all elevations in dry meadows, grasslands, and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:68). It is also present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170-171) said that this plant was most frequently found among the prehistoric dinosaur bones located in the Badlands.

**Uses:** All parts of the plant were employed, but the leaves and tops had the greatest importance (Kindscher 1992:17). Its use is reported for tribal nations throughout the high plains and intermountain deserts, and interestingly, many of its most common applications are similar to those followed by European Americans.

**[medicinal]** The Cheyennes brewed a tea from the plant to stimulate sweating and alleviate cold symptoms and other respiratory problems, and they also used it to treat heart trouble, chest pains, and nose bleeds (Grinnell 1917:1:89; Hart 1981:17-18; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53). The Lakotas are also reported to have made a tea to treat colds and coughs (Buechel 1970:192), and they applied it as a poultice to treat wounds (Densmore 1918; 254; Erdoes 1988:171-172). The Crows used it to make poultices to heal burns, boils, and open sores (Hart 1992:7). The Shoshones and Arapa-hos mixed it in poultices for sores,
and they made a laxative tea from it (Nickerson 1966:50). It was widely recognized among European Americans and used as a tea or infusion to treat coughs, sore throats, and earaches. It is reputed to have mild laxative properties as well (Kindscher 1992:20-21; Tilford 1997:166; Larson and Johnson 1999: 68).

[art & manufacture] The Shoshones and Arapahos used the leaves in a green dye (Nickerson 1966).

**Agoseris glauca**
[**pale agoseris or false dandelion**]

Commonly found in the low to mid elevation meadows and grasslands of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:68), the False dandelion (goat chicory) was called *yapi’zapi iyeececa* [like a mouth organ] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:626; Rogers 1980: 35). It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). Although Larson and Johnson (1999:68) report that American Indians chewed the sap of the plant to clean their teeth, this has not been confirmed in ethnobotanical sources specific to the tribal nations who historically lived around the Black Hills.

**Ambrosia spp.**
[**ragweed**]

Various varieties of ragweed are widespread in the northern plains. Commonly found near disturbed pasture, roadside, and stream bank habitats, it is an important medicinal plant for many tribal nations in the region (Kindscher 1992:33).

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:188; Hart 1981:18)
  *mohk tah’ wanost* [black sage]
  alternate: *mo?ot?ta-vano?tse*

- **Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:520)
  *w>anatsu* [no translation given]

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:55)
  *ko-’khad-la tzan-go-pan-ya* [horse worm plant]
  alternate: *a’sahe* [green plant]

- **Lakota** (Gilmore 1913b:369; Buechel 1970:117, 445, 624; Rogers 1980:35)
  *canhlogan panspanjela* [bulky weed]
  *A. trifida*
  alternate: *yanmu’nnuga iyeececa* [grating with teeth]
  *canhlogan wastemna* [sweet smelling weed]
  *A. artemisiifolia*
  alternates: *canhlogan onzipakinte* [rear wipe stem]
  *poipiye* [to doctor swellings]
  *pejuta pa* [bitter medicine]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:97)
  *‘o’di.ci.hi* [bitter grass]

**Habitat:** Ragweed is found throughout the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in grassland, open forest, and disturbed sites (Larson and Johnson 1999:70). Western ragweed is reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** The leaves, top, root, and even the entire plant were employed by tribal nations throughout the area for a variety of different medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1992:33).

[**medicinal**] Many tribes relied on this plant to treat intestinal disorders. The Cheyennes used the stem and leaves to concoct a tea as a remedy for constipation, bowel cramps, and bloody stools (Grinnell 1972:2:188; Hart 1981:18), while the Dakota took the plant’s top and leaves to relieve vomiting (Gilmore 1913b:369). The Lakotas made a tea from the leaves of *A.artemisiifolia* for swellings (Buechel 1970:117), and the Cheyennes did so to treat colds (Grinnell 1972:2:188). The Kiowas relied on ragweed leaves to heal sores (Vestal and Schultes 1939:55), and the Plains Apaches also applied them to sores but considered the treatment too strong for persistent use (Jordan 1965:97).

[**veterinary**] The Kiowas also gave the tea they made for themselves to their horses to doctor skin disease and sores (Vestal and Schultes 1939:55), and the Plains Apaches made a juice specifically to treat screw-worms in horse wounds and also to heal sores on dogs (Jordan 1965:97).
The Kiowas sometimes combined ragweed with various sages for smudges in their sweatlodge (Ves-tal and Schultes 1939:55).

**Anaphalis margaritacea**

This plant is found occasionally at mid to high elevations in the central and northern regions of the Black Hills, and it also appears at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:70; Pisarowicz 2001h:3). The Cheyennes knew this plant as **sihy’a-ino eisse’eo** [strong medicine] or **tsexehaae-no?heseeo?otse** (Grinnell 1972:2:187; Hart 1981:18). Although the plant has known antihistamine properties and was taken by tribal nations in the eastern woodlands and the Pacific Northwest for respiratory dis-orders, only the Cheyennes are reported to have used it (Tilford 1997:108). The Chey-ennes put the plant on the hooves of their horses to make them endure, and its powder was blown between the animals’ ears to make them long-winded (Grinnell 1972:2:187; Hart 1981:18). They also gave this plant as a gift to their spirits. According to George Bird Grinnell (1972:2:188), “in one of his little medicine bundles, each man carries some of the dried and powdered flowers of this plant; and formerly, when going into battle, he chewed a little of it and rubbed it over his arms, legs, and body, for the purpose of imparting strength, energy, and dash, and thus protecting him from danger.” Women were not allowed to touch men who had this medicine on their body because this would nullify its effects.

**Antennaria spp.**

*Antennaria* grow over much of the United States, and several varieties are reported in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). Only the Lakotas have documented uses and names for them, even though they are widely reported to have medicinal applications for tribal nations in other regions (Kindscher 1992: 227-228).

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117,178, 445, 474; Rogers 1980:35)

- **canhlogan hu wanjila** [weed with one stem]
- **A. parviflora**
  - alternates: **hitunkalanakpala** [mouse ear]
  - **poipiye** [to treat swellings]
  - **tahca nakpala** [deer ear]

**Habitat:** *A.microphylla* is commonly found in a wide variety of Black Hills habitats at mid to high elevations, while *A.neglecta* and *A.parvifolia*, also frequent in occurrence, are associated with low to mid elevation environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:72-74).

**Uses:** Of the three varieties of *Antennaria* found in the Hills, only *A.parviflora* has been identified in the ethno-botanical nomen-clatures of the tribal nations who used the area. The Lakotas have four names for *An-tenaria*, but only one has been definitively identified with the *A.parviflora* species.

**[medicinal]** Lakotas relied on *Antennaria* for unspecified medicinal purposes (Buechel 1970:178), although one of its names sug-gests it was used to treat swellings (Buechel 1970:445).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Shoshones and Arapahos dried the tiny leaves to put in their tobacco mixtures (Nickerson 1966:50).

**Arcticum minus**

[burdock]

This aster species is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1), but nothing has been found on it in the ethno-botanical literature covering the tribal na-tions who lived in the Black Hills.

**Arnica spp.**

[arnicas]

Three varieties of arnica are found occasionally at mid to high elevations in the northern and central regions of the Black Hills.
None of the varieties have been associated with names or uses in the ethnographic and ethnobotanical literatures for the tribal nations who lived in the area in historic times. They are used, however, by European American herbalists in muscle liniments to treat sprains and bruises (Tilford 1997:180).

**Artemisia spp.**

Numerous species, subspecies, and varieties of sage are found in the western United States, and according to Kelly Kindscher (1992:48), all of them probably had some form of medicinal use. The Lakotas alone have names for seven different species of wild sage. Nearly all of the *Artemisia* species, including the woody varieties covered in another section, were used by the tribal nations of the northern and central Plains, although it is sometimes difficult to determine which species are associated with particular applications since generic names are often given in the sources on native nomenclatures.

**Names:**

**Arapaho** (Nickerson 1966:50)

*na-ko-ha-sait* [no translation given]

*A. frigida*

**Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:18)

*he?e-vano?/sete* [woman’s sage]

*A. frigida*

*hetane-vano?/setse* [man sage]

*A. ludoviciana*

**Comanche** (Carlson & Johnson 1939:520)

*pehebiv* [no translation given]

*A. ludoviciana*

*pasiwonepehebiv* [no translation given]

*A. filifolia*

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:56)

*ta-a* [no translation provided]

*A. ludoviciana*


*canhlogan wastenma* [sweet smelling weed]

*A. campestris* & *A. frigida*

*mako site peji hota* [gray grass of the badlands]

*A. longifolia*

*nasula jazanpi ipije* [no appetite cure]

*A. frigida*

alternate: *wahcozi suta* [hard yellow flower]

*wia ta pezhishuta* [woman’s medicine]

*peji ho’ta* [grey herb]

*A. ludoviciana*

alternate: *peji ho’ta ape’ blaska’ ska* [grey herb with flat leaf]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:99)

*’eldilge.de* [burning stick]

*A. ludoviciana*

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:134)

*pezhe-hota* [grey medicine]

*A. ludoviciana*

*pezhe hota zhinga* [little grey herb]

*A. frigida*

*thasata-hi* [no translation given]

*A. dracunculus*

**Habitat:** *Artemisia compestris* [western sagewort] is a very common plant in the central Plains region with many different varieties; members of the subspecies *candata* and *borealis* being the most common in the Black Hills. It appears occasionally in dry, sandy, or rocky soils throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:78-79).

*Artemisia dracunculus* [green sagewort or tarragon] is found only occasionally at low to mid elevations in dry grassland, sagebrush steppe, and open forest areas over the entire Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:80).

*Artemisia frigida* [fringed sagewort] is located in many of the same habitats as green sagewort, but it is much more common in the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:80). It appears at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

*Artemisia ludoviciana* (gnaphalodes) [cudweed sagewort], also commonly known as white sage, wormwood, or mugwort, is widely distributed in the northern Plains, and in the Black Hills, where it typically appears at low to mid elevations in dry grassland, sagebrush steppe, meadows, and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:82). It is also common at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

**Uses:** The Lakotas are the only tribal nation with any recorded use for *A. compestris*, while
the Poncas are the only one with any documented applications for *A. dracunculus*. *A. frigida* is described in association with the Cheyennes, the Lakotas, and the Poncas. *A. ludoviciiana* has reported applications for nearly all tribes in the northern Plains. Scientific research has demonstrated that Artemisia species contain several components with potent pharmacological effects (Kindscher 1992:47-52).

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas brewed a tea from the roots of *A. campestris* to treat the inability to urinate, constipation, and difficulty in childbirth (Buechel 1970:177; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172). The pulverized roots were also used to promote sound sleep, with the suggestion that it could make men sleep soundly so their horses could be stolen (Buechel 1970:118; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172).

The Poncas used *A. dracunculus* in a smoke treatment for unspecified illnesses (Gilmore 1919:134).

The Lakotas employed *A. frigida* for a variety of medicinal purposes. A smudge made from the dried and powdered root was sprinkled on hot coals and the fumes inhaled to treat headaches (Densmore 1918:259). The Cheyennes and the Lakotas made a decoction with this herb that was taken internally to treat menstrual irregularities (Gilmore 1919:134; 1930:80; Hart 1992:45). The Cheyennes also wove a braid from it and wore it around the head to treat nosebleeds (Hart 1981:18). The Arapahos and Shoshones depended on this species to stop hemorrhages (Nickerson 1966:50).

The Kiowas had multiple medicinal uses for *A. ludoviciiana*, including the treatment of various respiratory and digestive complaints (Vestal and Schultz 1939:56). The Cheyennes crushed the leaves into a snuff as a remedy for sinus problems and headaches (Hart 1981:19; 1992:44-45), and the Oma-has had similar applications (Gilmore 1919:135). The Crows made an astringent tea as a deodorant and antiperspirant for feet and underarms (Hart 1992:45), and the Kiowas used this sage as a towel in bathing (Vestal and Schultz 1939:56).

**[art & manufacture]** The Comanches made mattresses for childbirth from *A. frigida* and cushions for their tips (Carlson and Jones 1939:520). The Shoshones and Arapahos used the leaves in a green dye (Nickerson 1966:50). The stems of *A. frigida* were woven into mats and fans, but again the tribal origins of these practices remain un-identified and probably do not refer to tribes in the area of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:80).

**[fuel]** The Cheyennes relied on the dried leaves of *A. ludoviciiana* as tinder for starting their fires (Hart 1981:19).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Cheyennes are reported to have used the root of *A. frigida* in
the Sun Dance in association with the role of their sacred woman (Hart 1981:18), and the Lakotas employed it extensively in the *Pte San Lowampi*, the White Buffalo Calf ceremony for pubescent women (Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172; Walker 1980:244, 247-248, 250-251). The Arapahos and Shoshones also used *A.frigida* in many of their ceremonies (Nicker-son 1966:50).

According to Melvin Gilmore (1913b:369), the ton (immaterial essence) of *artemisia* is repugnant to malevolent forces. Lakota men used *A. ludoviciana* as a smudge to drive away evil influences and also in purifications to counteract the effects of spiritual transgressions (Gilmore 1919:135; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170). They employed it extensively in their Sun Dances, not only in the arm and ankle bracelets of the dancers but also to smudge the dance ground and altar (Dorsey, J. 1894: 454; Densmore 1918:93,122; Buechel 1970: 439; Rogers 1980:36; Walker 1980:176-177, 184, 187-188, 190-192). They burned it as incense in the sweatlodge and in the *Hunka* ceremony (Buechel 1970; Walker 1980:94, 197, 214, 224), and they placed it on the altar in Elk Dances (Fletcher 1887a: 284).

Jeffery Hart (1981:18-19; 1992:44-55) writes that *A.ludoviciana* was probably the most important ceremonial plant for the Chey-ennes, who used it extensively in the Sun Dance and most other major ceremonies as a ritual border. They also drew on it as an in-cense to ward off malevolent influences, and their Contrary warriors purified themselves and their horses and lances with it. This was known as their “man sage” (Moore 1974a: 174). The Kiowas and Plains Apaches de-pended on this variety of sage in their sweat-lodges and on other ceremonial occasions (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 56; Jordan 1965: 99). The Arikaras placed a wisp of *A. ludoviciana* in placenta bundles that were hung on fruit trees as an offering to ward off diseases in their children (Gilmore 1930:75).

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**Balsamorhiza sagittata**  
[arrowleaf balsamroot]

This and a related species of balsamroot, *B. hookeri*  
[Hairy balsamroot], which is not reported for the Black Hills, are important primarily to tribal nations living west of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:90). Only the Cheyenne are reported to have had a name for it, *hetone?e-heseeo?otse* [black medicine]. They employed many parts of this plant for medicinal purposes. The roots were used to ease childbirth. A tea made from the leaves, roots, and stems treated stomachaches and colds, and a steaming in-fusion cured headaches (Grinnell 1972:2: 183; Hart 1981:20). The Cheyenne also tied this plant to the lances of the Bowstring Society members during their ceremonial dances (Grinnell 1972:2:78). The Utes and other tribal nations of the Intermountain west ate the seeds of balsamroot (Albers and Lowry 1995:52), and the Lakotas are reported to have done so as well (Brown 1992:12). A variety of other uses are connected to this plant, but many of them are not confirmed in the ethnobotanical literatures for the tribal nations who lived around the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:90). Some European American herbalists use the root as a mild expectorant (Tilford 1997:16).

**Bidens cernua**  
[nodding beggartick]

Beggar’s tick is located occasionally, and in certain locations abundantly, at low elevations along stream banks and lakeshores throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:90). The Lakotas call the *B. glaucescens* variety *minio’huta aglagla wahcazi* [yellow flower growing by water], but no uses for it have been reported (Buechel 1970:336; Rogers 1980:36).
**Brickellia (Kuhnia) eupatoriodes**  
([false boneset])

The False boneset is located over the entire Black Hills in low to mid elevation meadows, open forests, and grasslands especially along the Hogback and Red Valley (Larson and Johnson 1999:122). It is also present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). Only the Lakotas are reported to have a name and possible use for this plant. They called it *poowaste* [good for swelling] or *wakpe ‘pa* [bitter leaf] (Buechel 1970:445, 520; Rogers 1980:38). One of these Lakota names implies that it may have been used to treat inflammations.

**Carduus nutans**  
([musk thistle or nodding plumeless thistle])

The Lakotas call this plant *tokahu* [enemy stem] (Buechel 1970:494; Rogers 1980:36). Luther Standing Bear (1988:101) reported that it was used to make a yellow dye. It is typically found in the northern Black Hills but may appear elsewhere at low to mid elevations along roadsides and in pastures and meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999:92). It has also been identified at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:5).

**Centaurea biebersteinii or maculosa**  
([spotted knapweed])

Found mostly in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:92) but also reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002k:3), the spotted knapweed has no reported uses in the ethnobotanical literature for local tribes.

**Heterotheca camporum/ Chrysopsis villosa**  
([lemonfalse or hairy goldenaster])

The Hairy Golden aster plant covers the entire Black Hills, from low to high elevations, where it is found in dry grasslands, meadows, and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:94). Only the Cheyennes are known to have named and used it; they called it *mis katsi* [chickadee plant]. A drink was made from the plant top and leaves to help a person sleep. It was also employed to exorcise evil influences (Grinnell 1972:2:81; Hart 1981:20).

**Cirsium spp.**  
([thistles])

Five different *Cirsium* species are reported in the Black Hills, but only one of these has any name or use reported in ethnobotanical sources for the tribes who once lived in the area. Two of them, *C.arvensis* and *C.und-ulatum*, are found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). Several of the tribal nations who lived in the area have names and/or uses for thistles commonly found in the general area of the Black Hills (Kindscher 1987:85-87, 1992:234-235), but not listed in Larson and Johnson’s volume (1999).

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:20)  
  *heshko-vo?estse* [thorny plant]  
  *C. edule*

- **Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)  
  *tsen* [no translation given]  
  *C. undulatum*

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:85)  
  *sengts-on* [thistle]  
  *C. ochrocentrum*

**Habitat:** All of the *Cirsium* are frequent at low to mid elevations in dry habitats over the entire Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 96-100).

**Uses:** Again, many uses are associated with thistles but not for species listed in the Black Hills by Larson and Johnson (1999), although one, *C. undulatum*, which is reported as common in western South Dakota, does have a documented use (Johnson and Larson 1999:108).
Some of the thistle species found in the Black Hills are edible and have a taste that resembles artichokes but others are very bitter (Tilford 1997:144). The Cheyennes ate the inner stem of *C. edule* raw and considered this a prized food (Hart 1981:20), while the Comanches consumed *C. undulatum* and the Kiowas *C. ochrocentrum* (Carlson and Jones 1939:521; Vestal and Schultes 1939:85).

The Comanches used *C. undulatum* to treat gonorrhea (Carlson and Jones 1931:521), while the Kiowas made a tea from the blossoms of *C. ochrocentrum* to treat burns and wounds (Vestal & Schultes 1939:85).

*C. edule* was served as food in the Cheyenne Sun Dance (Hart 1981:20).

**Conyza Canadensis**

[Canadian horseweed]

This tall annual herb with abundant leaves is ubiquitous in North America (Kindscher 1992:236) and very common in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:100), but only the Lakota name and use for it have been reported in the ethnobotanical literatures for the tribal nations of this region. Another related species, *C. ramoses-sma* [spreading fleabane], is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3). *Canhlogan wakaljapi* [boiling weed] alternate: *lak olwak aliyapi* [Lakota boiled drink] are the names for it in the Lakota language (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:37; Lewis, T. 1990:134).

**Coreopsis tinctoria**

[plains coreopsis or golden tickseed]

Also called golden tickseed, this is another common roadside plant in the plains region that contains many medicinally therapeutic properties (Kindscher 1999:238). It is not listed in Larson and Johnson (1999), even though it is very common in regions surrounding the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999b:112).

**Names:**

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:37; Lewis, T. 1990:134)

*canhlogan wakaljapi* [boiling weed] alternate: *lak olwak aliyapi* [Lakota boiled drink]

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:59)

*tza-agudl* [no translation given]

**Habitat:** If this plant was present in the Black Hills, it would likely be located in low elevation roadside ditches with sandy soils.

**Uses:** The plant tops and flowers are used for culinary and medicinal purposes.

**[food]** The Lakotas prepared a culinary tea from the plant (Buechel 1970:117) as did the Kiowas (Vestal and Schultes 1939:59).

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas made another tea from the plant that is reported to have blood-strengthening properties. It was also used in treatments for diarrhea, gallbladder, and kidney ailments (Lewis, T. 1990:134). It is known as a remedy in European American folk medicine as well (Kindscher 1992:238).

**Dyssodia papposa**

[fetid marigold]

Fetid Marigold is eaten by prairie dogs and commonly found near their towns (Gilmore 1919:133), and thus, its Lakota and Dakota name *Pispiza tawote* or prairie dog food.

**Names:**

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:444; Rogers 1980:37)
pispiza tawote [Prairie dog food]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:132)
pezhe piazhe [Bad smelling weed]

Habitat: This plant is frequent at low elevations over the entire Black Hills, but it is particularly common in the dry grassland and open forest habitats in the southern regions (Larson and Johnson 1999:102). It is found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

Uses: This plant had important medicinal applications for humans and animals.

[medicinal] The Lakotas and the Poncas powdered and administered the plant for respiratory ailments and inhaled it for head-aches (Gilmore 1919:132; Buechel 1970: 444; Lane Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972: 171). The Plains Apaches probably used the crumbled flowers of this flower as an inha-lant too (Jordan 1965:135). The Euro-pan Americans were also known to use the plant for different medicinal purposes, from treating diarrhea to the relief of stomach-aches and vomiting (Kindscher 1992:241).

[veterinary] This was one of the plants that the Lakotas used to treat coughs in their horses (Gilmore 1913b:369, 1919:132).

**Echinacea angustifolia**
[purple coneflower]

This is probably the region’s most well known herbal plant. Today, it is sold com-mercially as a popular antidote and remedy for colds. Recent scientific research has documented many of its medicinally active components. It also stands as one of the most significant herbal plants in the pharma-copias of tribal nations who lived in the Plains (Kindscher 1992:84-93).

Names:

mohk ta ‘wi se’ e yo [black root]
alternates: mo?ohta-heseeo?o?e
moxta-vessoee [black peppermint]

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)
dakunenatsi [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes1939:57)
dain-pai-a [no translation given]
alternative: awall-son-a

Lakota (Buechel 1970:200, 397; Rogers 1980:37; Lewis, T. 1990:135)
icahpe hu [a thing used to knock something down a.k.a. whip stem]-
*Applied to plants growing in the hills.
on’glakcapi [hair comb]
*Applied plants found at lower elevations.

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:110)
čo.hicise ‘ize [tooth gum medicine]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 131)
mika-hi [comb plant]
alternate: inshtogahte-hi [plant to wash eyes]

Habitat: This is a very common plant in dry upland prairies of the high Plains. It is also found throughout the Black Hills in the mixed grass prairie, sagebrush steppe, and open pine forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:102). It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

Uses: The root is the most commonly used, but other parts of the plant may be employed for medicinal purposes as well (Kindscher 1992:86).

perspiration (Densmore 1918:270, 389; Buechel 1970:397). The Lakotas also ingested the plant to help endure extreme heat in their sweatlodges, and they applied the juices to treat burns (Gilmore 1913b: 368). Standing Bear (1978:60) said of this plant: “The long, slender black root of this plant, which grew abundantly on the plain, was chewed and applied to the injured place. Though not pleasant to taste, it eased pain and almost magically cured cuts and bruises.” The plant was also used an antidote for venomous bites, to treat hydrophobia, and to heal wounds that had putrefied (Smith, H. 1928:212; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972: 171). The Cheyennes made a salve out of it to treat a wide variety of external injuries and swellings (Hart 1981: 20; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53). The Omahas and Poncas mixed it in a solution to treat sore eyes (Gilmore 1919:31). The Crows, Kiowas, and Cheyennes treated colds with teas made from the roots and/or leaves (Hart 1981:20; Vestal and Schultes 1939:71). Additionally, Cheyennes brewed a tea to treat rheumatism, arthritis, mumps, and measles, and they combined the roots with other herbs to treat boils and smallpox (Hart 1981:20). Early travelers and settlers to the Plains quickly learned the medicinal value of the purple coneflower and applied it widely as a folk remedy (Kindscher 1992: 88-89; Tilford 1997:52-53).

[cosmetic & hygienic] The Kiowas used the dried inflorescence to comb and brush their hair (Vestal and Schultes 1939:71), and the Lakotas and Poncas probably did so as well given one of the names they use for the plant (Gilmore 1919:31; Buechel 1970:397).

[veterinary] The Lakotas treated distemper in their horses with it (Buechel 1970:200).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas also mixed the petals of this flower in solutions to make yellow dyes (Lyford 1940:42).


**Erigeron spp. [fleabanes]**

In the Plains region, American Indians used a number of different varieties of flea bane. Three of the varieties reported in the Black Hills, *E. Annus* [daisy fleabane], *E. pumilus* [low or shaggy fleabane], and *E. Philadelphicus* (Philadelphia fleabane) have documented uses in Native and European American folk remedies.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972 2:187; Hart 1981:21)  
ma hom a uts is se’e ao [pink medicine]  
*E.* *salsuginosus*  
alternate: ma?oma?ohtse-heseec’totse  
Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:60)  
a-kent-ein (white flower plant)  
*E.* *divergens* [spreading fleabane]  
Lakota (Buechel 1970:116, 118, 399; Rogers 1980:37)  
canhlogan hu ptepecela [short stem weed]  
*E.* *pumilus*

**Habitat:** In the Black Hills, the *E. annus* variety is sporadic at low elevations on the eastern side of the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:104-108). *E. pumilus* is the most widespread and common species of *Erigeron*, and it is located in environments similar to *E. canus*. Spreading, Philadelphia, three-nerve, and smooth fleabanes are reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001:j:3).

**Uses:** *Erigeron* are widely distributed in North America and used by tribal nations throughout the area (Kindscher 1992:95-98).

[medicinal] The Lakotas brewed a tea from *E. Annus* as a remedy for sore mouths in children and also as a treatment for urinary problems, and from *E. pumilus* came a treat-ment for rheumatism and stomach disorders (Densmore 1918:389). Cheyennes relied on the species *E. salsuginosus* in steam treat-ments, in teas to treat drowsiness and dizzi-ness, and in a liquid...
solution applied to sore backs (Grinnell 1972:2:187).

[cosmetic & hygienic] European Americans burned fleabane to smudge their homes to rid them of gnats, fleas, and other small insects (Kindscher 1999:97).

[art & manufacture] The blossoms of *E. pumilus* were combined with brains, gall and spleen to produce a substance that bleached hides in tanning (Buechel 1970:399).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Kiowas brought fleabane into their homes as an omen of good fortune (Vestal and Schultes 1939:60).

**Eupatorium maculatum**

[spotted joe pyreweed]

Spotted joe pyre weed, which is found at Wind Cave National Park, is a common plant in the Black Hills where it is typically located in wet habitats at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:110; Pisarowicz 2001j:3). In Lakota, it is called *wahca pepe’la* [prickly flower]. No use has been reported for it (Buechel 1970:519; Rogers 1980:37).

**Euthamia graminifolia**

[flattop goldenrod]

This goldenrod is most common at low elevations in the southern regions of the Black Hills where it is found in moist locations such as wet meadows and stream banks (Larson and Johnson 1999:112). The Lakota name for it is *cannunga hu pte-pticela* [bison calf’s lumpy stem] (Buechel 1970:121).

**Gaillardia aestivalis or aaristata**

[blanketflower]

Blanketflower is found occasionally in the Black Hills at low to high elevations in a variety of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:112), but its native uses are reported only for tribal nations who lived historically outside the region (Kindscher 1992:246-247).

**Grindelia squarrosa**

[curlycup gumweed]

This plant is native to the western regions of North America where it is commonly found in pastures and along roadsides and railroads (Kindscher 1992:119).

Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:21)

ho?eitokkonah [no translation given]

Lakota (Gilmore 1919:133; Buechel 1970:448; Rogers 1980:37)

*pte ichi yuha* [buffalo cows follow one another] alternate: *pteiciyuha unma* [buffalo cows curl around each other]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:133)

*pezh-wasek* [strong herb]

Habitat: Curlycup gumweed is found in dry grasslands, pastures, and roadsides at low to mid elevations over the entire Black Hills including Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:114; Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

Uses: This plant was widely used by tribal nations in the northern Plains for its many medicinal properties (Kindscher 1992:120-121). Its resin can be used as a chewing gum, but this has not been reported for any of the tribes in the Plains (Kindscher 1987:243).

[medicinal] The flowering tops were used by Cheyennes in treatments for skin dis-orders and eye inflammations (Hart 1981: 21), while the Crows employed it in treat-ments for respiratory disorders (Hart 1992: 32) The Lakotas made a remedy out of the plant to treat colic in infants and to stop the spitting of blood, while the Poncas and La-kotas took it as a medicine for consumption (Gilmore 1913b:368, 1919:133; Buechel 1970: 444). The Lakotas also relied on it to treat breathing complications and skin in-flammations from contact with poison ivy (Red Cloud High School 2001). Early Euro-pean American settlers drew on this plant to treat asthma, bronchitis, colds, and pneu-monia and applied its resin to poison ivy rashes to relieve itching.
Machaeranthera pinnatifida/
Haplopappus spinulosus
[lacy tansyasteer/iron plant]

This plant, which the Lakotas called wahcazi wastemna [sweet smelling yellow flower] (Buechel 1970:519), is one of many composite species found at Wind Cave National Park, but no use is reported for it.

Helenium autumnale
[common sneezeweed]

Although not reported for the Black Hills, sneezeweed is widespread in North America where it grows in moist, low elevation prairie habitats (Kindscher 1992:252-253). According to Johnson and Larson 1999b: 120), this plant is most prevalent east of the Missouri River, but it does occur sporadically in regions west of the river. The Comanches are the only tribal nation who once lived in the general region to have had a documented use for this plant. They inhaled the flowers to induce sneezing to clear the nasal passages and also during childbirth to induce the expulsion of the afterbirth. In addition, the stems of the plant were soaked in water and the solution was applied to a patient to reduce fever (Carlson and Jones 1939:532-534). Other tribal nations with known uses for the plant are located in the eastern Woodlands (Kindscher 1992:252-253).

Helianthella quinquenervis
[fivenerve helianthella]
[false sunflower]

Mostly found in the western and northern parts of the Black Hills, the false sunflower is not associated with any names or uses among the tribal nations who historically lived in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:115).

Helianthus spp.
[sunflower]

Sunflowers are among the most abundant and conspicuous wild plants in the northern and central Plains where they are common in pastures and grasslands and along roadsides and railway tracks (Johnson and Larson 1999:116). Nine different species are reported in the Black Hills. Of these, *H. annus* [annual sunflower] is the most widely used by the tribes who lived in the area, but *H. maximiliani* [Maxmillian's sunflower] is also identified in native botanical nomenclatures. Although *H. tuberosus* [Jerusalem artichoke] is not listed as local to the Black Hills proper, it was very common on the prairies, immediately to the north and east of the Hills, where it grows along stream banks, in prairies, and open wood wetlands (Kindscher 1987:130).

Names:

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:189; Hart 1981:21)
ho?e-noono [earth bulb, tuber]
*H. annus*

hohinon [brought back by scouts]

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:60)
ho-son-a [looking at you]
*H. annus*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:430, 519; Rogers 1980:38)
pangi [no translation given]
*H. tuberosus*

wahca zi [yellow flower]
generic term for *Helianthus* species

wahca zi tanka (big yellow flower)
*H. maximiliani*

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:66)
datizil [no translation given]
*H. annus*

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:130-131)
pangi [artichoke]
*H. tuberosus*

zha-zi [yellow weed]
*H. annus*

**Habitat:** *H. annus* and *H. pauciflora* are very common from low to mid elevations over the entire region of the Black Hills especially in grassland environments and along roadsides. *H. maximiliani* is especially prevalent in moist
Red Valley locations, while *H.nuttali* occurs only occasionally near moist habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:116-118). *H.annus* is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

**Uses:** *H.annus* was once cultivated by several tribal nations in the region, and many tribes gathered the wild variety (Kind-scher 1992:253-254). The Plains Apaches are the only tribe who apparently did not consume them (Jordan 1965).

**[food]** The seeds of *H.annus* were eaten raw, prepared by roasting and cooking, or dried and ground into a meal (Kindscher 1987:124). Lewis and Clark reported that the ground seeds were used to thicken soups and also made into breads (in Kindscher 1987:124-125). The Lakotas ate the stalks too (Buechel 1970:38). Although some tribes, such as the Hidatsas, cultivated sun-flowers, they preferred the wild varieties for making oils (Wilson 1917:18-19). The La-kotas, Poncas, and Cheyennes ate the tubers of *H. tuberosus*, but they did not cultivate it. (Gilmore 1919:130; Standing Bear 1978:57; Walker 1982:128).

**[medicinal]** *H.annus* heads were used medicinally by the Lakotas to treat pulmonary ailments and fevers (Buechel 1970: 519; Gilmore 1913b:369; 1919:130; Red Cloud High School 2001). The Kiowas chewed the coagulated sap to diminish thirst (Vestal and Schultes 1939:60).

**[cosmetic & hygienic]** Among its many uses, the Hidatsas applied the oil of *H. annus* as a hairdressing and skin lotion (Wilson 1917:18-19).

**[art & manufacture]** The Plains Apaches occasionally made windbreaks from tall sunflower stalks, and they also used them as tender for starting fires (Jordan 1965: 66,157). The flower petals went into the making of a yellow dye among the Lakotas (Red Cloud High School 2001).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Cheyennes used the flower heads of *H.annus* in their Massaum ceremony (Hart 1981:21), and Luther Standing Bear (1975:120) reports that the Lakota used sunflowers in the Sun Dance because “it is the only flower that follows the sun as it moves on its orbit, always facing it.” The Lakotas also believed that when the sunflowers were ripe the buffalo were fat and their meat was good (Gilmore 1919:130).

**Hieracium canadense**

**[Canadian hawkweed]**

In the Black Hills, this plant’s distribution is restricted to the central and northern regions (Larson and Johnson 1999:120). There are no reported uses for it in any of the ethno-graphic and ethnobotanical sources on the tribal nations who once occupied the Hills and its immediate environs.

**Hymenopappus filifolius**

**[fineleaf hymenopappus]**

The closely related *H.tenifolius* [wooly white hymenopappus] was used by the La-kotas, who named it *sunkhu’stipije* [horse hoof cure] (Buechel 1970:469; Rogers 1980: 38). This variety is found only on the open grasslands outside the Black Hills, but it is very similar to the *H.filifolius* species found in the Black Hills and located occasionally on the dry ridges and hillsides of the Hog-back and Red Valley (Larson and Johnson 1999:120). Since the two species are very similar, both of them may have been used by the Lakotas to make a tea and salve to treat lame horses (Buechel 1970: 469).

**Lactuca spp.**

**[wild lettuce]**

*L.loblongifolia* and *L.pulchella* are frequently found in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in moist and open habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:124). *L.serriola* [prickly lettuce], an import from Europe, is widely found in disturbed sites throughout the West (Tilford 1997:116); it is reported in Wind Cave
National Park (Pisarowicz 2001:j:3). All species found in the Black Hills are edible, and their roots yield latex that can be used as a chewing gum (Larson and Johnson 1999:124; Tilford 1997:116). Notwithstanding this, there are no reports of any food use for tribal nations in the vicinity of the Black Hills. The Lakotas are the only tribal nation reported to have had any name and use for wild lettuce. They had at least three names for the plant: azun’tka yazan’pi on’piyapi [kidney pain treatment] refers to L.pulchella, wabluska hinsma iyececa [like a hairy insect] designates to L.oblongifolia, and wahpe inkpa jiji [fuzzy white end leaf] denotes L.serriola (Densmore 1918:262; Buechel 1970:512; Rogers 1980:38). The Lakotas made the leaves of native varieties into a decoction that was used for kidney ailments (Densmore 1918:262-263).

**Leucanthemum vulgare / Chrysanthemum lecantenemum**

*Oxeye daisy*

Oxeye daisy is very common in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and John-son 1999:94), but it is not named nor is it associated with any uses in the ethno-botanical literature for the tribal nations who lived in the region. Modern European American herbalists, however, use it for its diuretic and homeostatic properties (Tilford 1997:106).

**Liatris spp.**

*Gayfeathers*

Two Liatris species are reported for the Black Hills, L.ligulistylis [Rocky Mountain gayfeather] and L.punctata [Dotted Blazing Star or gayfeather]. Both of them are named in the ethnobotanical nomenclatures of the tribal nations who historically lived in the region, although L.punctata was the one most frequently used as food and medicine. It is also the one reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

**Names:**

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:522)

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:61)  
*h-kon-a* [no translation provided]  
*L. punctata*

Lakota (Buechel 1970:484, 574; Rogers 1980:38)  
tate’can nunga [wind swollen wood]  
*L. punctata*  
*can nunga* is a certain type of tree mushroom according to Buechel (1970:121)  
tat’e can nunga huiyececa [like the wind swollen wood]  
*L. lingulistylis*  
alternate: wazimninkpa iyececa [like the meadow rue]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:34)  
'izetalzi.bize e. [crow food]  
*L. punctata*

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:133)  
aotashe [medicine]  
*L. aspera*  
alternate: makan-sagi

**Habitat:** L.ligulistylis is found only occasionally in the Black Hills at mid to high elevations in open forest and moist meadow environments, while L.punctata frequently appears at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairie, sagebrush steppe, and open pine forest habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:124-126).

**Uses:** The various species of Liatrus, which are distributed throughout the central prairie and plains regions of North America, were commonly used as a food and for medicinal purposes by the tribal nations who occupied the area (Kindscher 1987:142-45, 1992:136-140).

[**food**] The Kiowas and Plains Apaches ate the bulb-like root of L.punctata, which they reported had a carrot-like flavor (Vestal and Schultes 1939:61; Jordan 1965:34). This was true for the Lakotas as well but only as an emergency source of food (Red Cloud High School 2001).

[**medicinal**] L.punctata was dried and powdered by the Lakotas to treat heart pain (Densmore 1918:389; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170). The pulverized roots, which
the Lakotas claimed were hardened like the intestinal contents of a deer, were taken to strengthen the appetite (Buechel 1970:484). The Plains Apaches treated cuts with a decoction made from the roots of L. punctata (Jordan 1965:118), and the Comanches (Carlson and Jones 1939:522) treated swollen testes with a juice extracted from its roots. L.aspera, which was more commonly used by the Poncas, was applied in a medicinal remedy for childhood diarrhea (Gilmore 1919:133-134). European Americans used L. punctata as a diuretic among other medicinal uses (Moore, M. 1979:49).

[veterinary] The Lakotas also dried and powdered a mixture from L. punctata for a horse medicine (Densmore 1918:389), and the Poncas relied on L.aspera to strengthen their horses (Gilmore 1919:134).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Melvin Gilmore (1926:14) noted that when gayfeather came into bloom, the buffalo hunting tribal nations took this as a sign to travel to the Arikara villages because the corn would be ready to trade.

Lygodesmia juncea  
[rush skeletonplant]

This is a plant of the plains, open forests, and sagebrush steppes of the West, and historically, it was used by many tribal nations in the region (Kindscher 1992:261-262).

Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:22)  
ma?sepeseoo?ote [big medicine]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:116,329; Rogers 1980:38)  
maka'cansinhu [earth resin wood stem]  
alternate: canhlogan hu can swula un he tuktektel yuke [small woodstem exists here and there].

Habitat: Dry grasslands, open sagebrush steppes, and open pine forests at low to mid elevations are the habitats for this plant, which is common in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and John-son 1999:126).

Uses: Most of the uses reported for this plant are medicinal in nature (Kindscher 1992:261-262).

[food] Melvin Gilmore (1919:136) reports that tribal nations in the region used the latex from the plant’s root as a chewing gum.

[medicinal] The Cheyennes considered this one of their most important medicinal plants, and it was procured to treat a whole range of illnesses. The roots were used in treating colds, tuberculosis, and mumps (Hart 1981:22). John Stands in Timber (and Liberty 1967:110) indicated that it was an essential ingredient in nearly all medicinal mixtures and decoctions. A tea made from the entire plant was brewed by the Lakotas to treat childhood diarrhea (Buechel 1970:329). The Plains Apaches and Poncas made a tea to doctor sore eyes (Gilmore 1919:136, Jordan 1965:262). The Cheyennes, Lakotas, and Poncas also used it to stimulate milk production in nursing mothers (Gilmore 1919:136; Hart 1992:27).

Matricaria spp.  
[chamomile]

Two species of Matricaria are located in the Black Hills, and both M. maritime/Tripleurospermum [false mayweed] and M. matricariodes/discoidea [pineapple weed/ disc mayweed] have documented ethnobotanical uses.

Name:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:22)  
onone-voneshe-moxeshene [prairie dog mint]  
M. matricarioides

cansinsinlu [little tree sap]  
M. maritime and Silphium laciniatum

Habitat: Also known as wild chamomile or disc mayweed, pineapple weed M. matricarioides is found over the entire Hills at low to mid elevations in a variety of disturbed
habitats, including parking lots, trails, and roadides (Larson and Johnson 1999: 128). Surprisingly, it is not listed for Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** Although European Americans are known to use *Matricaria* species for culinary and medicinal teas, Native American usage appears to be restricted to medicinal and hygienic uses.

[food] European Americans took this and related varieties of *Matricaria* to make a beverage whose properties are similar to chamomile (*M. chamomilla*) tea (Tilford 1997:110).

[medicinal] The tops of the pineapple weed are an ingredient in many Cheyenne medicines (Hart 1981:22). The plant is known to have mildly sedative properties and anti-spasmodic affects on the stomach, and it is used much like chamomile tea in European American folk remedies. Scentless chamomile or false mayweed is taken by the Lakotas to treat headaches (Lewis, T. 1990: 134).

[cosmetic & hygienic] The Cheyennes included the dried and pulverized flowers and leaves of the pineapple weed in a per-fume mixture, and the Crows lined their baby cradles with the dried plants (Hart 1992:23).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Pineapple weed was part of a mixture blown on the bodies of Cheyenne Sun Dancers to keep them cool (Hart 1981:22).

**Microseris cupidata**

[false dandelion]

This member of the aster family is reported in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3); it is not mentioned in the ethno-botanical literatures on the tribal nations who lived in the area.

**Onopordum**

[Scotch thistle]

Introduced from Europe, Scotch thistle represents a serious weed problem in the Black Hills. No uses of this plant are report-ed for European Americans or the tribal nations who lived in the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:128).

**Petasites Sagittatus**

[arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot]

This coltsfoot species is confined to the central and northern Black Hills where it is uncommon in its appearance. Although there are no reported uses for the plant among the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills in historic times, it has a long history as a popular cough suppressant and expectorant in European American herbal medicine (Tilford 1997:3 Larson and Johnson 1999:128).

**Ratibida columnifera**

[prairie coneflower]

Prairie coneflower is abundant in the grasslands of the northern and central Plains, and it is a valuable medicinal plant for many of the groups who live in the region (Kind-scher 1992:179-181; Larson and Johnson 1999b:132).

**Names:**


*shi shin o wuts’ tse i yo* [rattlesnake medicine]

*she’shenovotse*heseeo?o*e*

alternate: *Maetomone* [blood weed]


*asanpi ija*e* [drink milk with]

alternates: *napostan* [thimble]

*wa*hma-zi *chiklala* [little yellow flower]

*winawazi hutkan* [root of the bur]

**Habitat:** This is an extremely common plant over the entire Black Hills, where it occurs at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairies, sagebrush steppes, meadows, and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999: 132).
Uses: The prairie coneflower was used mostly for medicinal purposes.

[food] Melvin Gilmore (1913b:368, 1919:131) reports that the Oglalas made a culi-nary tea from this coneflower, and that they found its smell pleasant, "lila wash-temna."

[medicinal] Certain unspecified parts of the plant were employed to stop hemorrhages, and a tea made from the tops was admin-istered for stomachaches and headaches (Buechel 1970:355). Frances Densmore (1918: 265) reports that the stalk and leaves were brewed in a tea for pain in the side, while a decoction made from the root was used to treat earaches. Melvin Gilmore (1913b:368) indicates that the flowers were compounded with other plants for a remedy to treat chest pains and wounds. The Chey-en-nes boiled the leaves and stems with a yellow solution to relieve external pain, to draw out rattlesnake venom and to soothe skin rashes from poison ivy and other plant toxins (Grinnell 1972:2:188; Hart 1981:23). They also used the leaves to stop bleeding (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53).


[art & manufacture] The Lakotas used the plant's top as a nipple for feeding infants (Gilmore 1913b:368), and they also made a yellow dye solution from the petals (Lyford 1940:42).

Rudbeckia hirta
[blackeyed Susan]

This Rudbeckia is also common in the Black Hills, where it is found in low to high elevation meadows, open forests, roadsides, and along drainages, and it grows at Wind Cave National Park. Although early settlers are reported to have used it for a kidney stimu-lant, there are no reports of its use for the tribal nations who occupied the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:132; Pisarowicz 2001j:2).

Rudbeckia laciniata
[cutleaf coneflower]

The Cutleaf coneflower is found only occasional-ly in the central and northern Black Hills, and even though ethnobotanical uses have been documented for tribal nations from the eastern Woodlands of North America, there are no reports for groups who lived near the Hills (Larson and John-son 1999:134).

Senecio spp.
[groundsel and ragworts]

Ten different species of Senecio are found in the Black Hills but only four of these are described in Larson and Johnson’s botanical work (1999:134). Of these, three have known names and/or uses among the tribal nations who inhabited the area. These are Senecio canus*[Gray ragwort], Senecio integerrimus [Lambstongue ragwort], and Senecio riddellii [Riddell’s ragwort].

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:190-191; Hart 1981:23)
heove-heseoe?otse [yellow medicine]
S. integerrimus

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117,469, 520; Rogers 1980:39)
canhlogan suta [tough weed]
S. riddelli
sunkawakan tapejuta [horse’s medicine]
S. canus
wahpe slusluta [slippery leaf]
S. integerrimus

Habitat: Senecio canus [Gray ragwort] appears frequently in the Hills at all eleva-tions in dry and open sites in mixed grass prairies, sagebrush steppe, and open pine forest (Larson and Johnson 1999:134). Senecio integerrimus is commonly found at all elevations and in a wide variety of habi-tats, including Wind Cave National Park, while Senecio riddelli is occasional in ap-pearance and restricted to low elevations in the southern foothills and Red Valley (Lars-on and Johnson 1999:136-138).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes brewed a tea from Senecio integerrimus for sedation and also

[veterinary] As its Lakota name implies, *Senecio canus* was applied as a horse medicine (Buechel 1970:469).

**Silphium laciniatum**  
[pilotweed or compass plant]

This plant is located in regions far to the east of the Black Hills, but it had a variety of different medicinal purposes among the Lakotas and Poncas (Gilmore 1919:132; Buechel 1970:123; Rogers 1980:39). Its Lakota name, *cansinsinla* [little tree sap], is also a name for chamomile. The plant was used as an incense in the Lakota Sun Dance (Dorsey, J. 1894: 454).

**Solidago spp.**  
[goldenrod]

Of the seven different goldenrod species, only two, *S. canadensis* [Canada goldenrod] and *S. rigida* [stiff goldenrod], are associated with any name or use by the tribal nations who once occupied the Black Hills. *S. missouriensis*, however, has reported uses for tribal nations outside the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:140).

Names:

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:117, 336, 447, 519; Rogers 1980:39)

- *wahca ziblu* [pulverized yellow flower]
- *S. canadensis*
- *canhlogan maka' ayublaya* [weed spread out on ground]
- *S. rigida*
- alternate: *mime' la wahcazi* [round yellow flower]
- *tal'agnake* [place meat on ground]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:130)

- *cizekase'ize* [cold & fever medicine]
- *S. canadensis*

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:133)

- *zha-sage-zi* [hard yellow wood]

Habitat: Canadian goldenrod is found frequently throughout the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park in moist mea-dows, flood plains, and open forests at low to mid elevations, while the stiff and Mis-souri goldenrods appear commonly at all elevations in grasslands, meadows, and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:138, 140, 144; Pisarowicz 2001j:3).

**Uses:** Goldenrods appear to have been used primarily for medicinal purposes.

[medicinal] The Plains Apaches used an unidentified species of *Solidago* to treat fever (Jordan 1965:131-133). Tribes outside the region used *S. missouriensis* for tooth-aches and sore throats (Larson and Johnson 1999:140). Historically, the plant was wide-ly taken by European Americans to treat up-per respiratory disorders and as a styptic agent (Tilford 1997:66).

[art & manufacture] As one of the Lakota names for this plant suggests, its leaves were probably used as a mat to keep meat clean while butchering (Buechel 1970:117).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The blooming of goldenrod was a calendrical sign for the Poncas to return home from their buffalo hunts, which once took place near the Black Hills, in order to tend to their ripening corn fields (Gilmore 1919:133).

**Sonchus arvensis**  
[field sow thistle]

This is another species reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:3), but one for which no information is found in ethnobotanical sources on the region.

**Symphyotrichum spp.**  
[aster]

Of the different species of aster located in the Black Hills, only two have been named in ethnobotanical sources for tribal nations who historically occupied the area. Tribal nations, who lived outside the region of the Black Hills, are known to have used aster species including
some of those found in the Hills (Kindscher 1992:60-63).

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:187; Hart 1981:19)
sto’wahts is se’yo [ear medicine]
Symphyotrichum ciliolatum
alternate: hestovootse-heseeo?otse

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117, 519; Rogers 1980: 36)
canholgan pepela [prickly stem]
Aster hebecladus*
wahec’zi waste [good yellow flower]
Symphyotrichum falcatum
wahec’zi wastemna [good smelling yellow flower]
Symphyotricus oblongifolium

Habitats: White prairie aster [Symphyotrichum falcatum or A. commutatus] is common throughout the Black Hills in sagebrush steppe, mixed grass prairies, meadows, and open forests from low to high elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:82). New England aster [Symphyotrichum novae-angliae or A. novae-angliae] is occasional but restricted to the central and northern areas (Larson and Johnson 1999:86). Aromatic aster [Symphyotrichum oblongifolium or A. oblongifolius] is ubiquitous and frequently located in dry grassland areas mainly at low elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:88). Smooth blue aster [Symphyotrichum laeves or A. laevis] and the Siskiyou aster [Symphyotrichum hesperium or A. hesperius] are reported in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:3).

Uses: Although the Lakotas had names for three different species of aster, only the Cheyennes are reported to have had any use for them.


Tanacetum vulgare
[tansy]

This plant is ubiquitous in North America, where it is typically found in moist environments in pastures and meadows and along roadsides and irrigation ditches (Tilford 1997:212). It is locally abundant in areas of the northern and central Black Hills, where it appears at low to mid elevations in flood plains and along stream margins (Larson and Johnson 1999:146). It appears at Wind Cave National Park too (Pisarowicz 2001k:4). The Cheyennes called it heove-heseeo?otse [yellow medicine], and they made a tea from the leaves and flowers to treat fatigue (Grinnell 1972:2:190-191; Hart 1981:23). Although this plant has many pharmacological properties (Tilford 1997:192), its medicinal use has been reported only for the Cheyennes. The plant remains, however, popular in European American folk medicine, taken for a wide variety of purposes from treating jaundice to expelling intestinal worms (Tilford 1997:192).

Taraxacum officinale
[dandelion]

One of the most widely recognized weeds in the Black Hills and in other regions of North America as well, the dandelion is known to be rich in many essential vitamins. It is edible and has a long history of medicinal use in European American folk medicine (Tilford 1999:48). It was introduced to the Black Hills by settlers for their own culinary and medicinal purposes, and today, it is common and often locally abundant throughout the Black Hills at mid to low elevations in a wide range of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:148). There is no evidence that it has been adopted and used by the tribal nations who resided in the region, however.

Tetraneuris acaulis
Hymenoxys acaulis
[stemless four-nerve daisy]

There is no information on the name or use of this plant in ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations who lived in the region, although it is very common in the Black Hills in a wide
range of dry habitats at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:122).

**Thelesperma megapotamicum**

[thelesperma]

This plant is located in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3), but nothing has been recorded about it in the ethnobotanical literature.

**Townsendia excapa**

[Easter daisy/ stemless Townsend daisy]

This plant is uncommon in the Black Hills and restricted to the dry and open grasslands of the southern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:148). Lakotas call it *ih’eh’e canhlogan* [rock stem], but there are no reported uses for it (Buechel 1970:218; Rogers 1980:40).

**Tragopogon dubius**

[yellow salsify]

Also known as groundsel or oyster root, this plant was introduced to North America by early settlers as a vegetable crop. It is frequent in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in a wide range of habitats. It is also found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:4). No report on its usage among local American Indian populations has been uncovered, however (Tilford 1997: 132; Larson and Johnson 1999:150).

**Xanthium strumarium**

[cocklebur]

In the Black Hills, the cocklebur is common at low elevations in habitats with disturbed soils (Larson and Johnson 1999:150). The Lakotas named it *winawizi hu tanka hca* [jealous woman stem that is the biggest], and they used it as incense, *silyapi*, in some of their ceremonies (Buechel 1970: 587; Rogers 1980:40).

### Boraginaceae

**Borage Family**

Several members of the Borage family grow in the Black Hills, but only the gromwells and false gromwell had applications among tribes in the region. Wild comfrey and Hound’s tongue, which were not significant to the region’s tribal nations, do have value in European American folk remedies.

**Cryptantha celosioides**

[buttecandle]

Butte candle is found throughout the Black Hills at low to mid elevations on dry slopes and ridges in grassland areas. It is called *canhlogan ape’pepe* [prickly leaf weed] (Buechel 1970:116; Rogers 1980:40), but no use is reported for it.

**Cynoglossum spp.**

[wild comfry]

Both *C. virginianum* [wild comfrey] and *C. officinale* [hound’s tongue] are used in European American folk medicine, often serving as substitutes for each other. Both are ingredients in salves and poultices to treat burns and skin inflammations, and in earlier historical times, they were taken internally to treat respiratory disorders (Tilford 1997:78). There is no mention of these plants in the ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations who lived in the region. These plants are commonly located at low to mid elevations in open forest clearings and meadows over the entire Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:154), and hound’s tongue is found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:2).

**Hackelia floribunda**

[manyflower stickseed]

This plant is common over a wide range of habitats in the Black Hills, but there are no reports of its use by American Indians or...
European Americans in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:154).

**Lappula occidentalis**
[desert/flatspine stickseed]

Called *hupe'pe* [prickly stem] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:190), the desert stickseed and its relative *L.floribunda* [many flowered stickseed] are not associated with any ethnobotanical uses either by European Americans or the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills. Desert stickseed is found frequently in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in areas that have been disturbed and eroded, especially roadsides and pastures but also barren spots in grasslands and open forest (Larson and Johnson 1999: 156).

**Lithospermum spp.**
[gromwell]

Only one species of gromwell is reported for the Hills, *Lincision* [Narrowleaf grom-well], but this and others were widely used by the tribal nations of the region for medi-cinal and other purposes (Kindscher 1992: 142-45). Most of the other species, inclu-ding *L.caroliniense* [Carolina puccoon] and *L canescens* [hoary puccoon], are found in the prairie regions east of the Black Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999b:146).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:185; Hart 1981:15)
*hoh’ ahea no is’ tut* [to revive life]
*L. incisum*

alternate: *hoahea-notahstotse*  
*noahea-nohtsetotse*  
*woh’ po it* [whitish plant growth]
*L. ruderale*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:40,41)
*pejuta wah’e sa* [red root]
*L. gmelini* or *L. caroliniense*

alternate: *pejuta ha sapa* [root with black skin]
*pejuta sapsapa* [black root]
*L. incision*

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:118)
*‘izelicih* [red medicine]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:111)
*bazu-hi* [no translation given]
*L. canescens*

**Habitat:** The narrowleaf gromwell grows over the entire region of the Black Hills, including Wind Cave National Park, from low to mid elevations in grassland and open forest habitat (Larson and Johnson 1999: 156; Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

**Uses:** Gromwells were very important medicinal plants for the tribes of the north-ern Plains, but there are no reported uses for them among European Americans.

[medicinal] The Cheyennes ground the leaves, roots and stems of *L. incision* into a small quantity of powder that was rubbed on paralyzed parts of body. They also crushed the fresh leaves, either in cloth or by chew-ing, and applied them to the afflicted parts of the body. The Cheyennes also made a tea from the roots, leaves, and stems that were rubbed on a patient’s head and face to treat delirium and to prevent them from sleeping too much. Another application involved chewing these parts of the plant and then rubbing them over a patient’s heart or spitting and blowing it on their face (Grin nell 1972:2:185; Hart 1981:15). The Lakotas made a powder from the roots of the narrow-leaf gromwell to treat chest wounds (Buechel 1970:440; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:171). *L.ruderale* was also used by the Cheyennes as a treatment for rheuma-tism; the stems and leaves were finely pulverized and moistened and then applied to the skin as a poultice (Grinnell 1972:2:185; Hart 1981:16). *L.caroliniense* was a medicine used by the Lakotas to treat lung hemorrhages (Densmore 1918:269-70). The Plains Apaches prepared a tea from *L. incision* to treat diarrhea and other stomach disorders. It was also combined with rac-coon liver, brown sugar, and another unidentified plant in a decoction to heal sore mouths in children (Jordan 1965:118-119).

[art & manufacture] Omaha (and Poncas) extracted a yellow dye from the flowers of *L. canescens* (Gilmore 1919:111).
**Mertensia lanceolata**  
**[lanceleaf or prairie bluebells]**

Also known as lungwort and chiming bells, lanceleaf bluebells are edible (Tilford 1997:32) and widely distributed in the Black Hills in a wide range from habitats from low to high elevations, including locations in Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:158; Pisarowicz 2001j:1). Only the Cheyennes are reported to have used them; the leaves were made into infusions to treat smallpox and measles as well as to increase milk production in nursing mothers (Hart 1981:16).

**Myosotis scorpiodes**  
**[forget-me-not]**

This plant, which is occasionally found near springs and spring fed streams in the Black Hills, is not reported to have had any uses among local American Indian and European American populations (Larson and Johnson 1999:158).

**Onosmodium molle**  
**[false gromwell or sothair marbleseed]**

This is a common plant in the northern Plains typically found on the dry, rocky, and sandy hillsides of prairies, pastures, and open woods in the central regions of the Plains (Kindscher 1987:265).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:185)  
*mak esk o wa ni’u* [big rough medicine]  

Lakota (Buechel 1970:445, 469; Rogers 1980:40)  
*sunkcan kahuipiye* [something to fix horses’ spine]  
alternate: *poi-piye* [something to fix swelling]  
*note:* This term is applied generally for any medicine that treats swelling (cf. Buechel 1970:445).

**Habitat:** False Gromwell is frequently found at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairies, meadows, and open forest throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:180), and it is located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1).

**Uses:** The Cheyennes and Lakotas are the only two tribal nations in the region who have names and uses associated with this plant.

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas made a tea and a salve from the roots and seeds of this plant to treat external swelling (Buechel 1970:445), while the Cheyennes pulverized the leaves and stems and mixed them with grease for a salve that treated numbness and lumbago (Grinnell 1972:2:185).

**[veterinary]** The Lakotas administered the plant both internally and externally in medicinal treatments for their horses (Buechel 1970:469).

**[art & manufacture]** Johnson and Larson (1999b:148) also report that the stone-like seeds were used in the making of ceremonial rattles but the origins of this information are not reported.

**Brassicaceae**  
**Mustard Family**

This family contains a diverse array of species with many different varieties in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:160).

**Alyssum desertorum**  
**[dwarf alyssum or desert madwort]**

Located mainly at low elevations, usually in disturbed grassland and open forest environments, the dwarf alyssum is frequent in its occurrence at low elevations. It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and John-son 1999:161; Pisarowicz 2001k:1). It is not associated with any uses among local American Indian and European American populations.
**Arabis globra**  
[tower rockcress]

This is the most common of the five rockcress species found in the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:162).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:174; Hart 1981:24)  
*e hyov’ i se e you alternate: heove-heseeo’otse*

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:41)  
*cahllogan huhwanjila* [stalk with one stem]  
*A. hirsuta* [Hairy rockcress]

**Habitat:** Rockcress is occasionally found in the Black Hills at all elevations and in a wide variety of different habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:162).

**Uses:** This plant is not associated with any uses for European Americans. Among American Indian populations in the area, only the Cheyennes appear to have made use of it.

[medicinal] The Cheyennes used rockcress as a preventive medicine to stave off a cold or other sickness. It was administered as an infusion and given to children when contagious illnesses were spreading in the camps (Grinnell 1972:2:174-75).

**Barbarea vulgaris**  
[yellow rocket]

Yellow rocket is reputed to be edible, but it has toxic qualities that can lead to kidney malfunctions. It is located in the north and central regions of the Black Hills in moist locations at low to high elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:162). The ethnobotanical literature on the tribal nations of this region yields no information on this plant.

**Berteroa incana**  
[hoary false alyssum or madwort]

This plant has been naturalized in the Black Hills only in recent years. It is found occasionally in the central regions at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:164). No uses have been associated with it in European American or American Indian medical traditions.

**Camelina microcarpa**  
[littlepod falseflax]

Littlepod falseflex is common throughout the Hills at low to mid elevations in a wide range of habitats, including those at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:164; Pisarowicz 2001k:2). It is another plant for which there are no reports of any usage in ethnobotanical sources.

**Capsella bursa-pastoris**  
[shepherd’s purse]

Shepherd’s purse is very common over the entire western United States, and it is found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:3). The Cheyennes called it *ota’tave-heseeo’otse* [blue medicine] (Grinnell 1972:2:174; Hart 1981:24), and they made a cold water infusion or a pulverized powder from the plant to treat colds (Grinnell ibid.). European Americans used the seeds in traditional mustard plasters and for a wide variety of other medicinal treatments (Tilford 1997:158).

**Chorispora tenella**  
[blue mustard or crossflower]

Blue mustard is not reported to have any uses in ethnobotanical sources. Introduced to North America from Asia, it is common throughout the Hills in a wide range of low to mid elevation habitats, including those at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:166; Pisarowicz 2001k:3).

**Descurainia sophia**  
[fixed tansymustard]

Fixed tansymustard, which is not associated with any uses in ethnobotanical sources, was introduced to North America from Eurasia. It is common throughout the Hills in a wide
variety of habitats at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:166).

**Erysimum asperum**  
*western or sanddune wallflower*

This plant’s range is restricted to the High Plains. Although it is widely found in the Black Hills and surrounding areas, only the Lakotas and Arikaras are reported to have had any specific use for it (Kindscher 1992: 244-245).

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117, 519)  
*canhlogan pa* [bitter weed]  
alternative *wahca zi sicamna* [bad smell yellow flower]

**Habitat:** This plant is found over the entire Black Hills region at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairie and sagebrush steppe (Larson and Johnson 1999:168), and it grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

**Uses:** The uses for this plant appear to have been restricted to medicinal applications.

[medicinal] Among the Lakotas, the entire plant was dried and either chewed or prepared as a tea to treat stomach and intestinal cramping; the crushed seeds mixed in water were also used for the same purpose (Densmore 1918:269, 389). The Arikaras are reported to have employed it for unidentified medicinal reasons (Kindscher 1992:244).

**Lepidium densiflorum**  
*pepperweed*

Like other members of the mustard family, pepperweed is known to stimulate the production of digestive juices. This mustard is widely distributed across North America (Tilford 1997:158). Two varieties are found at Wind Cave National Park, *L.cam-pestre* [field pepperweed] and *L.perfoliatum* [clasping pepperweed] (Pisarowicz 2001k: 4).

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:659; Rogers 1980:41)  
zika’la tawote [small bird’s food]  
*also used for Lotus corniculatus*  
[prairie bird’s foot trefoil]

**Habitat:** This plant is very common in the low to mid elevation grasslands, open for-est-s, and roadsides of the Black Hills (Lar- son and Johnson 1999:170)

**Uses:** The Lakotas are the only tribal na- tion in the region reported to have named and used pepperweed.

[food] Larson and Johnson (1999:170) report that the plant’s leaves are edible, but its consumption has not been reported for the tribes of the region.

[medicinal] The Lakotas made a tea from pepperweed for kidney ailments (Buechel 1970:659), and European American settlers used it for similar purposes (Larson and Johnson 1999:170).

**Lesquerella ludoviciana**  
*foothill bladderpod*

This is the most common of the four bladderpod species in the Black Hills. It is frequently found in dry habitats with sandy or gravelly soil (Larson and Johnson 1999:170). The Lakotas call it *pangi pepe* [prickly tuber] (Buechel 1970:489; Rogers 1980:41), but there are no reports on its use.
**Nasturtium Officiale**  
[watercress]

This is used as a popular green in salads today. Although introduced from Europe, watercress has been naturalized in many different locations throughout the United States. In the Black Hills, it is typically found near springs and spring-fed streams at low to mid elevations over the entire region of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:172). Although many plants from Eurasia naturalized on North American soil are not identified in native nomenclatures nor used, watercress was adopted and became a popular food staple in the diets of some American Indian tribes. The Plains Apaches called it koya’ ito [water leaves] and ate it either raw or boiled (Jordan 1965:36). The Utes did so too (Albers and Lowry 1995:70). European Americans have long used it as a salad green (Tilford 1997:154).

**Sisymbrium spp.**  
[mustard]

*S.altissimum* [tumbling mustard] is an edible plant commonly located in disturbed locations at low to mid elevations throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:174); it is also located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:3). The ethnobotanical literature contains no reports of uses for this plant among the tribes who lived in the region, although the Lakotas have a name for it, which is canglogan wabluska hu [insect weed stem]. The name reportedly refers to its fringed, leg-like leaves (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:42). *S.loeselii* [tall hedgemustard], which was introduced from Eurasia, is less common but scattered across many of the same habitats as tumbling mustard (Larson and Johnson 1999:174).

**Thlaspi arvense**  
[pennycress]

Also known as Frenchweed, this is another plant naturalized in North America from Europe. It is very common throughout the Black Hills in a wide range of environments at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999: 176). It is present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:4). No names or uses have been documented for it in the ethnobotanical literatures on the tribes who occupied this region.

**Cactaceae**  
**The Cactus Family**

There are several different species of cacti in the Black Hills, and of these two have been associated with names and uses in ethnobotanical sources on the region. Another cacti not listed in Larson and Johnson (1999), the Nylon hedgehog, grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002b:1).

**Coryphantha Missouriensis**  
[pincushion cactus]

This cactus is found in the foothill prairies of the Black Hills where it typically grows in dry and rocky locations (Larson and John-son 1999:176). It also appears at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002b:1). The pincushion cactus was used largely as a source of food. The Hidatsas ate the fruit of this cactus fresh and roasted (Nickel 1974: 67), while the Cheyennes consumed them while they were fresh or after they had been dried. In the Cheyenne language, this cactus is called maatahesono or alternatively mata-ha (Hart 1981:16).

**Opuntia spp.**  
[pricklypear cactus]

Three varieties of this cactus are reported in Black Hills area, *O.fragilis* (fragile prickly-pear), *O.mascrorhiza* (bigroot pricklypear), and *O.polyacantha* (plains pricklypear) (Larson and Johnson 1999:178-179). Most of the native names for pricklypears appear to be generic and include the different varieties.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell1972:2:180; Hart 1981:16)
mah-ta'-o-munst [prickly fruit] 
alternates: heshkove-mata [thorny] 
mataha'ome (-notse) 
O. polyacantha

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:523) 
wekwesi [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:45) 
sen-adl-gaw [no translations given] 
alternates: sen’alo 
a-lo

Lakota (Buechel 1970:506-07) 
unkce’la blaska [flat cactus] 
unkce’la tanka [large cactus]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:38) 
gosci.s [red sticker]

Habitat: Of the varieties located in the Hills, the Plains pricklypear is the most common. It is located over the entire area at low to mid elevations in the sandy and rocky soils of the dry grasslands and sagebrush steppes. The bigroot variety is restricted to the southern parts of the area and is typically found in dry grassland habitats, while the fragile pricklypear is found only occasion-ally in these habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:178). Pricklypears also grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002b:1).

Uses: The tribal nations of the northern and central Plains had many different uses for pricklypear cacti.

[food] The Lakotas ate the fruit, taspu, raw or stewed, and they also ate the stems when other foods were scarce (Gilmore 1913b: 366; Bordeaux 1929:130; Standing Bear 1978:59; Brown 1992:12). Hassrick (1964: 179) quoted a Lakota woman who said,

From the cactus we gathered the red tops or fruit and often brought them home, worked them around in a deerskin to remove all the thorns. Next we crushed them with a pestle and mortar in a rawhide bowl in much the same way we pounded cherries, and placed them in rows to dry. From this, we made mush, sometimes adding a little fat.

The Cheyennes dried the fruits as well, and they used them in meat stews and as a thickening agent for soups (Grinnell 1972:2: 181; Hart 1981:16-17). The Comanches dried the unripe fruit, which they stored and eventually cooked with other foods (Carlson and Jones 1939:523), while the Plains Apaches ate them fresh and raw when they were picked in the fall (Jordan 1965:38). The Kiowa also candied the tunas and made them into jams (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 45). Pricklypears were also consumed in emergency times as food and for water (Kindscher 1987:156-157). Early American settlers in the West quickly learned the food value of these cacti (Ibid:158).

[medicinal] The Lakotas made a tea from the roots to promote urination, and they also mixed them with yucca in an obstetrical de-coction (Buechel 1970: 506). The Lakotas, Kiowas, and Plains Apaches applied the mucilaginous juice from the stems in a dressing for wounds (Gilmore 1919:136; Vestal and Schultes 1939: 545; Jordan 1965: 125). Modern herbalists use the mucila-ginous juice as an emollient to soothe dry skin and also as an anti-inflammatory agent to treat digestive and urinary tract maladies (Tilford 1997: 118).

[cosmetic & hygienic] The Kiowas and Plains Apaches punctured the skin in their ear piercings with the thorn of this cactus (Vestal and Schultes 1939:45; Jordan 1965: 149).

[art & manufacture] Melvin Gilmore (1919:136) reports that the Lakotas used the mucilaginous juice as a sizing to fix colors painted on hides. The Kiowas took the sharp thorns to make small arrows, and they also applied the mucilaginous juice to moc-casins as a varnish (Vestal and Schultes 1939:45).

[symbolic & ceremonial] This cactus is featured in a Lakota story narrated by Left Heron (Walker 1983:128-129).
**Campanulacae**

The Bellflower Family

Only one species from this family is reported in the Black Hills, *Campanula rotundifolia* [harebell] (Larson and Johnson 1999:180). Although this is very common in the Hills and is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1), no names have been found for it in native no-menclatures. Two other species from the bellflower family, however, were identified and named by the Lakotas, and both of these are found in regions east of the Black Hills. The Lakotas call the *Lobelia siphilitica* [great blue cardinal or great lobelia] *zuze’ca tavote unma ape toto he* [the other blue snake food] (Buechel 1970:660). The *Triodanis leptocarpa* [slimpod Venus’ looking glass] is named *canhlogan can-kcanla* [tall swaying weed], while the *Triodanis perfoliata* [clasping Venus’ looking glass], which is also located in Wind Cave National Park, is known as *canhlogan cankcanla* [tall moving weed] (Buechel 1970:117; Pisarowicz 2001h:1). The Paw-nees held the Red lobelia, *Lobelia cardinalis* [cardinalfower], in high regard and considered it a highly sacred medicinal plant, which they may have even cultivated in their Nebraska homeland (Gilmore 1919:129).

**Capparaceae**

The Capper Family

*Cleome serrulata* [Rocky Mountain bee-plant] and *Polanisia dodecandra* [clammy weed] are the only plants in the Capper family reported in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park. The Rocky Mountain beeplant is occasionally found in low elevation, dry grassland environments, especially in the Hogback and Red Valley (Larson and Johnson 1999:182; Pisarowicz 2001h:1). The Lakotas are the only tribe reported to have named the plant, and they called it *wahpe h’eh’e* [ragged leaf] (Buechel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:42). Many tri-bal nations in the American Southwest boiled this plant and ate it, much like spinach (Kindscher 1987:92-93), but there are no reports of such use for the nations who historically lived in the region of the Black Hills. The early explorer, Joseph Nicollet (in DeMallie 1976: 281) reported it was one of two plants the Dakotas used to attract bison. Other species in this family, *Cristatella/Polanisia jamesii* [James’ clammyweed], which is known as *makomnica* [earth bean weed] (Buechel 1970:52; Rogers 1980:42), and *Polanisia dodecandra* [clammyweed], which is called *wahpe hla* [rattle leaf] (Buechel 1970:520), have no reported uses.

**Cannabinaceae**

The Hemp Family

Only one species in this family, *Humulus lupulus* [hop], is reported for the Black Hills. Hops are occasionally found in the Black Hills in moist deciduous woodland habitats at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:181). The Lakotas and the Poncas are the only tribal nations in the region associated with a name and use for hops. The Lakotas call them *wahkpe akicas-kapi* [leaves look like they are tied together] or *winakapo* [to make things swell] (Buechel 1970:520, 586; Rogers 1980:51). Buechel (Ibid:586) writes that hops were an ingredient in Lakota bread making. The Lakotas also made a tea from this plant to treat fever and intestinal cramping, and the inner portion of the root was chewed with the root of ground cherry and meadow anemone to make a poultice for wounds (Gilmore 1913b:362, 1919:86; Lewis, T. 1990:135). The Poncas named them *maka skithe* [sweet medicine] (Gilmore 1919:86), implying they had some kind of medicinal use. The Poncas’ cousins, the Omahas, considered it one of the healing plants associated with the Buffalo Medicine Society (Fletcher & La Flesche 1972:2:487).

**Caprifloiacae**

Honeysuckle Family

*Linnea borealis* (twinflower) is the only flowering forb species from the honeysuckle family associated with the Black Hills. It is
restricted to the central and northern regions of the area, and it is not identified in any of the ethnobotanical source materials used for this report (Larson and Johnson 1999:183).

**Caryophyllacae**

**Pink Family**

There are seven flowering forb species from the Pink family reported the Black Hills: *Arenaria lateriflora* [bluntleaf sandwort], *Cerastium arvense* [field chickweed], *Cerastium fontanum* [mouse-ear chickweed], *Silene pratensis* [white campion],* Silene vulgaris [bladder campion],* and *Stellaria longifolia* [Long leaved stitchwort]* (Larson and Johnson 1999:184-188). Field chickweed and mouse-ear chickweed are both reported at Wind Cave National Park and common over the entire region in a wide range of habitats. The others are restricted to the moister environments of the central and northern Hills (Pisarowicz 2001i:3, 2001k: 2). Although field chickweed is associated with medicinal uses in European American folk medicine (Tilford 1997:30), there are no reports on its identity or use in the literatures on American Indian population from the area.

**Chenopodiaceae**

**The Goosefoot Family**

*Chenopodium* are the only plants in the goosefoot family reported in the region of the Black Hills. These are not covered in Gary Larson and James Johnson’s botanical inventory (1999) of the Black Hills. A few species, however, are located at Wind Cave National Park. These include: *Chenopodium album* [lambquarters], *Chenopodium berlandieri* [pitseed goosefoot] and *Kochia scoparia* [Mexican-fireweed] (Pisarowicz 2001h:2, 2001k:3). Goosefoot and other pigweeds are common in the plains region and North America more generally. *Chenopodium berlandieri* was an ancient food plant in the plains, while *C.album* was in-troduced and naturalized in North America (Kindscher 1987:79-83).

**Names:**

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:25)

*batl-sai-an* [stink weed] species unspecified
alternate: *badl-sai-ya-don*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:117, 574; Rogers 1980:43)

*canhlogan inkpa gmigmela* [small round point stalk]

* C. album

*wazimninkpa iyeca* [its like wazimninkpa] designates *C. hybridum/simplex* [mapleleaf goosefoot]

*canhlogan owi cak* o  *Cyclolma atriplicifolium* [winged pigweed]

**Habitat:** According to Kelly Kindscher (1987:80), goosefoot and related pigweeds are found along roadsides, pastures, and waste grounds.

**Uses:** *Chenopodium* species were used mostly as foods by native populations in North America, but they had medicinal functions as well (Kindscher 1987:81-82).

[food] The Lakotas boiled the immature plant greens of *C.album and C.hybridum* for food or prepared them as a mush (Gil-more 1919; Buechel 1970:117, 574). The Kiowas (Vestal and Schultes 1939:25) also consumed them, even though they believed that the plant was put on the earth “to bother Indians or drive them away from dangerous places” (Vestal and Schultes 1939:25). They were a popular source of greens for European American travelers and emigrants in the nineteenth century (Kindscher 1987: 82).

[medicinal] The Lakotas used the entire plant of *C.album* as a remedy for bloody dysentery in children (Densmore 1918:267).

**Clusiaceae**

**The Mangosteen Family**

Only one species is reported in the Black Hills, *Hypericum perforatum* [St. Johns wort] (Larson and Johnson 1999:188). In recent times, this plant has become a popular herbal remedy for the treatment of depression (Tilford 1997:130). It is scattered over the northern and central Black Hills in disturbed meadows and open forests at low to mid
elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999: 188). There is no evidence, however, in the ethnobotanical literatures for any medicinal use among the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills.

**Commelinaceae**  
**The Spiderwort Family**

*Tradescantia* species are the only ones reported from this family in the Black Hills. Spiderworts are common in the northern and central plains (Kindscher 1987:217-219). In the Black Hills, there are two species, *Tradescantia bracteata* [longbract spiderwort] and *T. occidentalis* [prairie spiderwort]. The bracketed spiderwort is commonly found in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations in grasslands, meadows, and open pine forests, whereas the prairie spiderwort is found in rocky and sandy soils often extending to higher elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:190). The former is located at Wind Cave National Park. Neither of these is identified in ethnobotanical sources, although the Lakotas are known to have used *T. reflexa*.

The Lakota called spiderwort *canhlogan panpanla* [soft stalk] or *hanpi'natopi* [they use it to dye moccasins blue] (Buechel 1970:117, 167; Rogers 1980: 26). The flowers of this plant produce a blue, jelly-like paint that the Lakotas used to paint their moccasins (Buechel 1970:117:1). Melvin Gilmore (1919:70) tells of a Dakota love song, which young men sang when they found this flower in bloom. Although the Cherokees are reported to have prepared this plant for food (Kindscher 1987:219), there is no information on such use for the tribal nations who lived in the region of the Black Hills. Among the tribal nations who inhabited this region, only the Lakota are reported to have used the plant.

**Convolvulaceae**  
**The Morningglory Family**

Two species from this family are found in the Black Hills, and both have names and/or uses reported in the ethnobotanical literatures on the tribal nations who lived in the area.

*Convolvulus arvensis*  
*field bindweed*

This is a frequent plant in the Black Hills, where it grows at low to mid elevations in a wide range of habitats, including those at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:190; Pisarowicz 2001k:1). Although this particular species is not identified in ethnobotanical sources, the related *C. sepium* [hedge bindweed]* is named by the Lakotas. It is called *kimimila tawanahca* [butterfly flower] or alternately *psio'lahu yeeveca* [like the arrowhead] (Buechel 1970: 307; Rogers 1980:43). Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:171), a Lakota medicine man, reports that it is used to make people vomit.

*Ipomoea leptophylla*  
*bush morningglory*

Known for its large taproot, this plant is widely distributed in the high plains regions of the West (Johnson and Larson 1999:164).

**Names:**

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:43)  
  *pejuta nige tanka* [big stomach medicine]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:112)  
  *ciye.yedagol.*ist. [ghost throw at you]  
  alternate: /ohecitce. ize [grass bone medicine]

**Habitat:** This plant is largely restricted to the southern and eastern portions of the Black Hills, especially in the dry sandy grasslands at the south end of the Red Valley (Larson and Johnson 1999:192). Surprisingly it is not reported for Wind Cave National Park.

**Use:** Bush morningglory was used as an emergency food by many Plains Indian nations and also for medicinal purposes.

- **[food]** Lakotas ate the root raw (Buechel 1970:440), and so did the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Pawnees, and Kiowas but mostly as

[medicinal] The scrapings from the root were eaten raw by the Lakotas to treat stomach ailments (Buechel 1970:440). Even though the Plains Apaches feared this plant, the root was chewed and used in treatments to relieve the pain that accompanied a broken bone or other injury (Jordan 1965: 112-113).

[fuel] The Lakotas used the roots as a fire starter. A fire was set in the roots and then these were wrapped and hung outside. The fire could last up to seven months (Buechel 1970:440). Lame Deer (in Fire and Fire and Erdoes 1972: 172) said about this plant,

In the old days, before we had matches, when you lit this herb it would keep smoldering for months. It used to be hung up before the tipi. If you needed a fire you just blew on it until it glowed, then you hung it up again to smolder some more.

**Cornaceae**

The Dogwood Family

*Cornus canadensis* [bunchberry dogwood], also known as dwarf cornel, is located in the moist aspen, birch, and mixed coniferous forests at mid to high elevations in the northern and central regions of the Black Hills. Although there are no reports on its applications by tribal nations in this region, it was used as an antidote for certain poisons by tribes farther north (Larson and Johnson 1999:192). Modern herbalists also use it as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic (Tilford 1997:22).

**Crassulaceae**

The Stone Crop Family

*Sedum lanceolatum* [spearleaf stonecrop] is the only species reported for the Black Hills. It is found frequently throughout the Black Hills at all elevations in dry open pine forest or pine-juniper woodlands and grasslands (Larson and Johnson 1999:194). It grows at Wind Cave National Park in prairie habitats (Pisarowicz 2001h:2). There are tribal na-tions known to have used it to treat sore eyes and throats, but none of these lived histori-cally in the region of the Black Hills. Euro-pan Americans use the plant’s mucila-ginous juice to treat burns and other skin irritations (Tilford 1997:140).

**Cucurbitaceae**

The Cucurbit Family

A wide variety of wild and domesticated plants in the Cucurbit family were very important food staples in the diets of Plains Indians and also used for a variety of medicinal purposes. Some of them, including *Cucurbita foetidissima* [buffalo or Missouri gourd], are located in areas of Nebraska just south of the Black Hills. This plant was believed to have mystical powers, and its root was considered dangerous to pick (Kindscher 1987:106-107, 1992:76-79). The Lakotas call it *wagamun pejuta* [pumpkin medicine], the Poncas name it *niashiga makan* [human being medicine], and the Kiowas know it as *ko-ko-n-baw* [no translation given]. It had a variety of medi-cinal applications among the Poncas, La-kotas, and Kiowas. It was also used by the Kiowas to clean hides (Gilmore 1919: 116-117; Vestal and Schultes 1939:54; Lewis, T. 1990:135).

**Echinocystis lobata**

[wild cucumber]

Wild cucumber is the only *Cucurbitaceae* species noted for the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:196), but it is not found at Wind Cave National Park.

Names:

Lakota (Gilmore 1919:129; Buechel 1970:519; Rogers 1980:44)

*wahna hnahecha* [it is a groaning thing]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:129)

*watangatha* [ghost squash]
Habitat: This plant, which appears occasionally in the Black Hills, is found at low elevations near streams and other moist locations (Larson and Johnson 1999:194).

Uses: Only the Lakotas are known to have any applications for this plant.

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas are reported to have used the plant’s seeds as beads (Gilmore 1919:129).

Euphorbiaceae
The Spurge Family

A number of different spurge species are found in the central high plains, but only Euphorbia esula (leafy spurge) and E.ro-busta/brachycera [Rocky Mt. spurge/ horn-ed spurge] are described in Larsen and Johnson’s work (1999:196) on the Black Hills. At Wind Cave National Park, two species are reported, Euphoriba/ Chamae-syce sticospora [carpetweed/ small slimseed sandmat] and Euphorbia esula [leafy spurge /sandmat] (Pisarowicz 2001:k:4). None of these plants have any documented uses. The Lakotas and the Poncas had medicinal uses, however, for Croton texensis [skunkweed/ Texas croton], E/C.geyeri [Geyer’s spurge/ sand-mat], E.marginata [snow-on-the-mountain], E/C. missurica [prairie spurge/ sandmat], and E/C.serpyllifolia [thymeleaf spurge/ sandmat]. Snow-on-the-Mountain is found widely in southern South Dakota near prairie dog towns, road edges, and other disturbed areas (Johnson and Larson 1999: 166).

Names:

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:36)
khaw-lo-dam-a [no translation given]
  E. marginata
tai-me [Sun Dance weed]
  Croton texensis

Lakota (Buechel 1970:117, 242, 437, 520; Rogers 1980:45)
  asan ’pi’ pejuta [milk root]
  E. marginata
  alternate: itopta sapa tapejuta [Blackfooted ferret medicine]

apela tapislecala iyeececa [leaves are shaped like a spleen]
  E. missurica
canhlogan wapostan [stalk to cover the head]
  E. geyeri
  alternate: paya pejuta [head root]
  wahpe hcahca [flower leaf]
  Croton texensis

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:94)
  naze ni pezhi [milk weed]
  E. serpylliola

Habitat: None of the spurges used by tri-bal nations are reported for the Black Hills.

Uses: Various species of Euphorbiaceae were used largely for medicinal purposes by the tribes who lived in the region of the Black Hills.

[food] The Kiowas made a chewing gum from thymeleaf spurge (Vestal and Schultes 1939:36-37).

[medicinal] The Lakotas called Geyer’s spurge “head root” because it was used as a protection for the head (Buechel 1970:117, 437; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972: 171). The Lakotas also applied the crushed leaves of snow-on-the-mountain for a liniment to treat swellings, and they used them in a tea to promote milk production in nursing mothers (Buechel 1970:242). The Pon-cas used this as a remedy to increase milk production in nursing mothers, and it was employed to treat dysentery and abdominal bloating in children (Gilmore 1919: 94). The Lakotas brewed skunkweed leaves in a tea for stomach pains (Buechel 1970: 520). Spurges were also commonly used in European American folk medicine (Kind-scher 1992: 110-11).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Kiowas claimed that they received their knowledge of skunkweed from the Crows in the 18th century, and that they once used it in their Sun Dance (Vestal and Schultes 1939:36).
**Fabaccae**

**The Legume Family**

This was one of the most significant plant families for Plains Indians because it contained many important food staples. Indeed, most of the plants from this family that are located in the Black Hills had food, medicinal, or other uses among the tribal nations who occupied the area.

**Amphicarpaea bracteata**

*hogpeanut*

Hogpeanut seeds were a very important food delicacy for tribal nations in the region. The plant was very abundant along the Missouri River and its tributaries. The Platte River was also a good site for this member of the legume family (Kindscher 1987:37-40; Larson and Johnson 1999:200).

**Names:**

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:330, 394; Rogers 1980:45)  
  maka'tomnicha [ground beans]

- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:95)  
  Hinbhi-abe [beans]

**Habitat:** This plant is uncommon in the Black Hills, restricted largely to the moist understory of hardwood drainages in low to mid elevation locations of the central and eastern parts of the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:200).

**Uses:** Hogpeanuts were primarily a source of food, although the Lakotas used the plant’s leaves for medicinal purposes.

**[food]** The women of the Ponca, Omaha, and Lakota tribes were known to gather the fleshy underground pods from the caches of field mice or voles (Denig in Denig in Ewers 1961:11; Standing Bear 1978:57). Dakota (and presumably Lakota) women, however, left gifts of corn or other acceptable foods in exchange (Gilmore 1919:96). The underground seeds were gathered in early spring and late fall, while the aboveground seeds were collected only during the fall (Kindscher 1987:38). The beans were eaten raw or boiled with meat fat to make a soup, and the smaller lentil-sized seeds from the aboveground pods were cooked (Gilmore 1919:96; Ewers 1961:11; Kindscher 1987:38-41).

**[medicinal]** Lakotas added the pulverized leaves of the hog peanut to salves for the treatment of swellings (Buechel 1970:394).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** Melvin Gilmore (1925:183-184) relates a moral story about a woman who took beans from a mouse’s storehouse without returning a gift and the calamity that befell her community as a result.

**Apios americana**

*groundnut*

The groundnut or wild potato was another important food source for local tribes, but this legume plant is located primarily in regions east of the Black Hills (Kindscher 1987:46-53). Larson and Johnson do not even mention it in their extensive listing of plants for the Hills. The Cheyennes called it aestome-mesehestotse [tasteless potato], and they probably ate the tubers (Hart 1981:28). The Lakotas called it blo [potato] (Buechel 1970:111) and included it in their diets.

**Astragalus spp.**

*milkvetch*

Milkvetches form one of the most diverse groups in the legume family with many different varieties found in the Black Hills and surrounding regions (Larson and Johnson 1999:200). Many milkvetches contain substances toxic to humans and animals (Kindscher 1992:66-67). Others were used as food and medicine by tribes in the region, although known native names are not always unambiguously linked to specific botanical species.

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:179; Hart 1981:28)  
  ma?xe-heooovo?estse [big scabby weed plant]
A. crassicarpus
mahk ha’ nowas [poison weed medicine]
A. adsurgens

cante yazanpi icuwa [heart pain treatment]
unidentified milkvetch variety
locipsini pezijota [grey appetite herb]
A. carolinianus
peju’ ta ska hu [white stem medicine]
A. canadensis or A. racemosus
alternate: peju’ ta zi [yellow root]
peju’ ta skaya [sweet medicine]
A. gracilis
pteta tawote [buffalo food]
A. crassicarpus
sunkle’ ja hu [horse urine stem]
A. racemosus
alternate: sunkleja [horse urine]
sunko wasakala [easy to get for horse]
A. canadensis
tasusu canhlogan [small bean weed]
A. ceramicus [painted milkvetch]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:91)
gansatho [rattle]
A. carolinianus
tdika shande [no translations given]
A. crassicarpus
alternate: wamide wengithe

Habitat: A. adsurgens is widespread in the Black Hills and found in many different habitats from open pines to grasslands at low to high elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:200). A. agrestis is a low to mid elevation plant of the grasslands and meadows, while A. alpinas is found at mid to high elevations in the meadows and open pine or mixed deciduous forests in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:202). A. americanus, A. canadensis and A. australis are also found in the central and northern Black Hills at mid to high elevations. A. crassicarpus is frequently found throughout the Hills in a wide range of habitats, including in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1). A. flexuosus is frequent in similar environments, but its distribution is restricted to the central and northern Hills. A. gilviflorus and A. gracilis are common at low to mid elevations in dry grasslands especially in the Red Valley and Hogback (Larson and Johnson 1999:206). One additional species is reported at Wind Cave National Park: A. bisculcatus [biscuit milkvetch].

Uses. While A. crassicarpus was an important food staple for many tribal nations in the region, most of the other milkvetch species were used for medicinal and veterinary purposes.

[food] The Lakotas and Poncas were known to collect and eat fresh groundplum (Gilmore 1913b:365; Gilmore 1919:91; Buechel 1970:440). The immature pods were gathered in the spring and eaten raw or cooked (Kindscher 1987:61).

[medicinal] The Lakotas used many different Astragalus species for medicinal purposes. A. carolinianus was a febrifuge for children and also employed to treat loss of appetite (Densmore 1918:257; Gilmore 1919:91). The pulverized roots of A. canadensis and A. racemosus were chewed for heart and back pain, to relieve coughing, and to promote urination (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:45; Lewis, T. 1990:134). Both were also used in an infusion to lower fevers in children (Gilmore 1913b, 365). Lakota women chewed on A. gracilis to promote milk production (Buechel 1970:440). Another unidentified milkvetch, known as cante yazanpi icuwa, was an ingredient in a tea for stomach and heart pain (Densmore 1918: 260; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972: 170).

The Cheyennes powdered the leaves and stems of A. adsurgens and sprinkled them on parts of the body affected by poison ivy and other plant toxins (Grinnell 1972:2: 179).

The Arikaras were also reported to use milkvetches for medicinal purposes, although the native names and specific botanical varieties have not been identified (Kind-scher 1992:66).

[veterinary] Lakotas fed the seeds of A. canadensis to their horses (Buechel 1970: 469). The Cheyennes applied A. crassi-carpus as an ointment to treat horses suffering from difficulty urinating (Hart 1981: 28), and the
Lakotas used this plant as a medicinal preparation for horses too (Buechel 1970: 440).


[art & manufacture] The Poncas used the seeds of A.crassicarpus in children’s rattles, and they wove the leaves into mats for butchering meat (Gilmore 1919:91).

**Dalea spp.**  
[prairie clover]

The tribes of the northern Plains used several different species of prairie clover, including Dalea aurea [golden prairie clover], D.candida [white prairie clover], D.enneandra [slender prairie clover], D.pur-purea [purple prairie clover], and D.Villosa [silky prairie clover].

**Names:**

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:523)  
paketse [no translation given]

**Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:94; Buechel 1970:110,117, 128, 172, 178, 495, 519; Rogers 1980:46, 47)  
cahlogan suta [tough weed]  
D. enneandra  
alternate: hehaka tapejuta [elk medicine]  
toka’la tapejuta hu bloka [male kit-fox medicine stem]

D. candida  
alternate: hitunkala tawoyute [mouse food]  
tokala tapejuta hu winyela [female kit-fox medicine stem]

D. purpurea  
Bla ye zitka ’tacan hu stola [small stem for bird to sit on]

D. villiosa  
alternates: casmu’huholhota [gray sand stem]  
wapiya huholhota [grey wood stem]  
wahcai kanta mna unna hu’lanka [other yellow flower with big stem that smells like plum]

D. aurea  
wanahcha [cultivated flower]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:94)  
makan skithe [sweet medicine]

**Habitat:** The white prairie clover appears frequently in the Black Hills from low to mid elevations especially in open pine forest and grasslands, while the purple variety is even more widely distributed extending into sagebrush steppe, mixed grass prairie, and meadow habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999: 212-14). The other three varieties with reputed uses among local tribes, D.aurelia, D. enneandra, and D.villosa, are not mentioned in Larson and Johnson’s botanical survey of the Hills, although these are found in the adjacent prairies (Johnson and Larson 1999:178-180). D.Aurelia, D.enneandra, and D.purpurea, however, appear at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1).

**Uses:** Dalea species were used for both food and medicine by the tribal nations of the region.

[food] Many tribes, including the Poncas, Lakotas, and Comanches, chewed the roots of the white and pink varieties as a gum (Gilmore 1919:94; Carlson and Jones 1939: 523; Buechel 1970:495; Bordeaux 1929: 131; Kindscher 1987:111). The Lakotas also used them to make a pleasant beverage tea (Gilmore 1919:94).

[medicinal] The Lakotas used the roots of D.villosa as a purge, and its leaves and blossoms were taken to cure a sore throat (Buechel 1970:110, 549). D.enneandra was included in Lakota treatments for dysentery and intestinal ailments (Gilmore 1913b: 366), while the Plains Apaches burned it as a moxa for headaches, rheumatism, and pneumonia (Jordan 1965: 109). The Lakotas also took D.purpura as a medicine for unidentified maladies (Densmore 1918:271).

**Desmodium Canadense**  
[Canada tickclover or showy ticktrefoil]

Also known as ticktrefoil, this plant is restricted to the moist meadows and steam
banks in the central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:214). The Lakotas identified this plant with three different names: *hante pepe’iyeca* [like a prickly juniper], *wahpe-‘inkpa pepe* [prickly leaf ends], and *wokahtan blaskaska* [small flat burs that stick to clothing] (Buechel 1970:520, 601; Rogers 1980:46). No uses have been report-ed for this plant, however.

**Glycyrrhiza lepidota**
[American licorice]

This is another plant that is common and widely distributed throughout the western United States in prairies and pastures. It is also one that has a scientifically documented medicinal value (Kindscher 1992:116-117).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:178; Hart 1981:28)
*haht’nowasspoph* [yellow-jacket stinger plant]
alternate: *ma?kehaha-novaso*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:587; Rogers 1980:46)
*winawizi cik’ala* [little jealous woman]

*Gilmore (1919:92) writes that the name derives from the word for jealous woman and refers to the burr which ‗take hold of a man."

**Habitat** This plant appears frequently over the entire Black Hills on stream banks, floodplains, and meadows at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:216). It is located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1).

**Uses:** Licorice was used for food and many other purposes by tribal nations in the re-gion.

**[food]** The roots were an important food in the diets of tribes in the northern Plains (Kindscher 1987:120-21). Lakotas peeled and dried large quantities for winter use (Gilmore 1919:92), while Cheyennes ate the young shoots of the licorice plant raw when they budded in early spring (Grinnell 1972: 2:178).

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas mixed the root with *pejuta ska* in a treatment for the flu (Buechel 1970:587; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170), and they also used it as a remedy for toothaches, earaches, and other ailments (Densmore 1918:263; Gilmore 1913b:365;1919:92). The leaves were steep-ed for earache treatments, and a decoction of the root was employed for treating fever in children (Gilmore 1919:92). The Cheyennes relied on the dried leaves and the dried roots to make a medicinal tea for stomachaches and diarrhea (Hart 1981:28-29; 1992:35). The Arapahos treated sore throats with the root of the wild licorice (Nickerson 1966: 48). This plant was also employed as a folk remedy for a variety of ailments in European American folk medicine (Kindscher 1992: 115; Tilford 1997:90).

**[veterinary]** The Lakotas made a poultice out of licorice as a remedy for a horse’s sore back (Gilmore 1919:92).

**[art & manufacture]** Lakota men used the burrs of this plant to hold their hair back when shooting bows (Red Cloud High School 2001).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Cheyennes chewed the roots for their cooling effect during sweatlodges and the Sun Dance (Hart 1919:92).

**Hedysarum alpinum**
[alpine sweetvetch]

Frequently found in the mid to high elevation meadows and forests in the central and northern Black Hills, Alpine sweetvetch is used by tribes farther north, but it is not associated with any name or application among local tribal nations (Larson and John-son 1999:216-217).

**Lathyrus ochroleucus**
[cream pea or vetchling]

This is another plant of the northern and central Black Hills found in dense forest environments. It is not known to have any
names or uses for the tribes who lived in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:218). The Poncas, however, used *L. polymorphus* [manystem pea] as a source of food and called it *hinbthi-si-tanga* [large seeded bean] (Gilmore 1919:96).

**Lupinus argenteus**
[silvery lupine]

Silvery lupine is common from the northern to the central Hills, and it is abundant on the western side of the Hills. It appears from low to high elevations in meadows and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:218), and it is found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1). The Lakotas call a related species, *L. pusillus* [low or rusty lupine], *canhlogan nabлага* [burst open weed] (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:46).

**Medicago lupulina**
[black medic]

This plant was introduced from Eurasia, and it has become very common in the Black Hills in a wide range of environments at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:220). It is reported at Wind Cave National Park. No names or uses for it have been documented in the ethnobotanical literature.

**Melilotus spp.**
[sweetclover]

*M. alba* [white sweetclover] and *M. offici-nalis* [yellow sweetclover] were introduced by European Americans, and both spread rapidly across the plains where they com-monly appear along roadsides, in range-lands, and fields (Johnson and Larson 1999: 186). Yellow sweetclover is common in the Black Hills in a wide range of environments from low to mid elevations. White sweet-clover is also present but not as common (Larson and Johnson 1999:220). Both are present at Wind Cave National Park. The Lakotas call white sweet clover *wachanga iyechecha* [like sweetgrass] (Gilmore 1919: 91). The Poncas and Dakota quickly adapted the sweetclover because its pleasant scent reminded them of sweetgrass. They hung it in their homes as an air freshener (Ibid.) Yellow sweetclover was named *wahpe swula* [fine leaf] (Gilmore 1913b: 365; Bue-chel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:47), but no use for it has been reported.

**Oxytropis spp.**
[crazyweeds or locoweeds]

Also known as locoweeds, these species are well known for their ability to intoxicate horses (Larson and Johnson 1999:222). The varieties reported for the Black Hills include *O. campestris* [slender crazyweed or loco-weed], *O. lamberti* [Lambert/purple crazy-weed], and *O. sericea* [white crazyweed] (Larson and Johnson 1999:222-223).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:179)  
*wi ke isse e yo* [sweet root] applies to *O. sericea*  
alternate: *ve?ohke-heseeo?otse* [bitter medicine]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:470; Rogers 1980:47)  
*sunkta peju"ta* [horse root]  
*O. lamberti*

**Habitat:** The Slender crazyweed is com-mon throughout the Black Hills from mid to high elevations and in a variety of different habitats, while the Lambert and white crazy-weed species are found at low to mid eleva-tion ranges. The Lambert crazyweed is fre-quent in the Hills, particularly in the Hog-back and Red Valley, and the white crazy-weed is seen occasionally in mixed grass prairies, sagebrush steppes, and open pine forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:222-223). Both species are reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1).

**Uses:** In the Black Hills area, only the Cheyennes and Lakotas are reported to have had any use for crazyweeds.
[medicinal] Although other tribal nations in the West used crazyweeds for various medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1992:265-67), the Cheyennes are the only nation with an historical connection to the Black Hills that employed it medicinally. They used the powdered root of O. sericea and mixed it with their “blue medicine” [Sheperd’s purse] to increase the milk flow of a nursing mother (Grinnell 1972:2:179).

[veterinary] The Lakotas report that horses eat and even dig out the roots of the O. lamberti variety of crazyweed (Buechel 1970:47).

Psoralea spp. [scurfpea]

This was a very significant group of legumes for the tribal nations of the Plains. One of its species, esculenta, served as a major source of food, but many others were used for a wide range of benefits too.

Psoralea argophyllum [silverleaf Indian scurfpea]

Like many other members of the scurfpea family, argophylla is widely distributed in the prairies and plains of the United States (Kaye, Berry and Moodie 1978:329-336; Kindscher 1992:176; Johnson and Larson 1999:188).

Names:

to’ wan i yuhk ts [ingredients to cool]
alternates: hestamoa?ano [devil’s turnip]
hestamokan

Lakota (Buechel 1970:487; Rogers 1980:47)
ticanicahu [curlew’s plant]
alternate: ticanicahu hlohota [grey curlew’s plant]

Habitat: Silver scurfpea is found over the entire region of the Black Hills at low to mid elevations. This plant grows in the mixed grass prairie, sagebrush steppe, meadows, and open pine forest of the Hogback, Red Valley, and Gray Shale Foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999:224). It is found at Wind Cave National Park too (Pisarowicz 2001h: 1).

Uses: The Cheyennes and Lakotas are the only two populations from the Black Hills for which names and specific applications for this plant are recorded, although other tribes in the northern Plains are known to have made use of it (Kindscher 1992:176-177).

[medicine] The Lakotas used it as a medicine but for an unknown therapeutic purpose (Buechel 1970:487). Cheyennes applied it as a febrifuge in two ways. In one, the leaves and stems were ground fine and boiled as a tea. In the other, the leaves and stem were ground to powder and mixed with grease to rub on the body (Grinnell 1972:2:178).

[veterinary] The Lakotas used the root as a stimulant for their horses (Buechel 1970: 487; Red Shirt 2002:9).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas and the Cheyennes used the tough green stems of this plant to weave baskets for transporting meat (Buechel 1970:487; Whiteman in Sch-wartz 1988:53). This may have been the plant on which Lakotas butchered buffalo meat, when they put on demonstrations at the park in 1937 (Freeland 1938:4).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Cheyennes have a story about how this plant could lead young girls astray while they were looking for breadroot (Hart 1981:21).

Psoralea aurea [golden scurfpea]*

This scurfpea is not reported for the Black Hills. The Lakotas called it pejuta pa [bit-ter medicine], and they prepared a decoction of the leaves for colic and dysentery (Gilmore 1919:94; Buechel 1970:519).
Psoralea cuspidate
[tall breadroot scurfpea]

Although this scurfpea is not reported for the Black Hills, it is abundant on gravelly uplands, hillsides, and slopes in south central and southwestern South Dakota and adjoining areas of Wyoming and Montana (Johnson and Larson 1999:188). Lakotas call it mato’ tatinpsila [bear’s turnip], and they say that it has the same qualities as auneyyapi or sandcherries, which I suspect means that one must approach it from opposite the windward side. It is used as a medicine, the purpose of which is undis-covered (Buechel 1970:334; Rogers 1980:47). The Plains Apaches regarded this plant as unpalatable and saw it as a “mate” to P. esculenta (Jordan 1965:47).

Psoralea esculenta
[breadroot scurfpea]

Historically, this was one of the most important foods for the tribal nations of the northern Plains, and it is one of the most commonly reported as well (Kindscher 1987:183-189). Notwithstanding its importance, this is not an easy plant to harvest because its roots are generally compacted in hard soil. Historically, women used spec-ially carved digging sticks to pry the tur-nips from the ground, and today, Lakota and Cheyenne women often use crowbars to do the job (Albers 1966-1976; Hart 1981:29). Also, because the plant’s top breaks off and scatters its seeds soon after ripening, it is difficult to identify once this happens (Kind-scher 1987:184-185). As a result, the win-dow of opportunity for identifying and dig-ging these tubers is limited. Melvin Gilmore (1919:92-93) notes that Lakota mothers told their children to take note of the direction in which the plants point and follow these to find other plants because it is said that the plants “point to each other.”

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:178; Hart 1981:29)
mohk’ ta en’ [black face]

alternate: moʔoltaʔeno

Lakota (Buechel 1970:489; Rogers 1980:48)
ti’psila [no translation given]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:46)
ơ’o’a. [no translation provided]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:92)
nugthe [no translation given]

Habitat: This important source of food is abundant, and it appears over the entire Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park from low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairie and open pine forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:226).

Uses: Although one of the most important sources of food and carbohydrates for Plains populations, wild turnip had other functions too.

[food] This is still a very important root to the Cheyennes and Lakotas who gather it in early summer, usually in the month of June. Historically, the root was dried, braided, and stored for winter use. It was often boiled with meat and sometimes used with a sweet-ener for pudding (Gilmore 1919:92; Bor-deaux 1929:129; Hassrick 1964:178-179; Grinnell 1972:2:178; Standing Bear 1978: 57, 1988:111; Hart 1981:29-30). It is still gathered today by women and men, and it is an important ingredient in soups served on ceremonial occasions (Albers 1966-1976; Lewis, T 1990:59). This was considered the most important root crop for the Plains Apaches, and it has remained so in post-reservation times (Jordan 1965:46). Hidatsa women pounded the roots to a fine powder, which was used as a flour to thicken soups and puddings (Nickel 1974:72). The Arik-aras and Hidatsas frequently acquired their supplies of breadroot in trade with the Lakotas, Apaches, and other tribal nations who lived on the high plains near their villages (Gilmore 1926:14; Jordan 1965:47; Nickel 1974:72).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes used it as an ingredient in various decoctions, including one
for healing burns and another for treating diarrhea (Hart 1981:29).

[symbolic & ceremonial] This plant occupied such an important place that it found its way into many important stories in the oral traditions of the tribal nations in the region (Gilmore 1919:93), including the Fallen Star story cycle. Among the Plains Apaches, it appears in one of their origin stories (Jordan 1965:47). It was also one of the ceremonial foods served at the Chey-enne’s Animal Dance or Massaum (Hart 1981:29).

**Psoralea hypogeaum**
[subterranean Indian breadfruit]

This is another scurfpea not reported in the Black Hills. The Cheyennes called it *ma im mohk’ta’ en* [red and black face], and they ate it fresh or dried it for winter use (Grinnell 1972:2:178). The Comanches, who ate the roots raw, knew it as *e’kakoni* [no translation given] (Carlson and Jones 1939: 523).

**Psoralea lanceolata**
[lemon scurfpea]

Although not located in the Black Hills, this scurfpea is found in sandy habitats in west-ern South Dakota and in neighboring Wyo-ming (Johnson and Larson 1999:192). The Lakotas named it *canhlogan hukan hanka* [tall root stem/our translation] (Buechel 1970:116; Rogers 1980:48), but there are no reports that they used it. The Arapahos, on the other hand, chewed the roots to reduce hoarseness, used the leaves to moisturize the skin, and brewed a tea from the flower’s head to treat headaches (Nickerson 1966: 48).

**Psoralea tenuiflora**
[slimflower scurfpea]

Also called few-flowered psoralea, this scurfpea is widely distributed in the United States, extending from Kentucky in the east to Arizona in the southwest (Larson and Johnson 1999:226).

**Names:**

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:34)

Lakota (Buechel 1970:487, 521; Rogers 1980:48)

*ticanica tua tanka* [large curlew’s plant]

alternate: *wahepo’kijata* [branched leaf]

**Habitat:** Slimflower scurfpeas are found mostly at low elevations in the Red Valley and Hogback regions of the central and southern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:226). Surprisingly, it is not listed at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** This variety of scurfpea was used medicinally, and it had hygienic and manu-facturing applications as well.

[medicinal] The Lakotas prepared treat-ments for headaches from its root, and they also combined the roots with other uniden-tified plants in a remedy to treat consump-tion (Gilmore 1919:93; Buechel 1970:487). Garlands were made from the tops of the plant to protect the head from the heat of the sun (Gilmore 1919:93).

[cosmetic & hygienic] A smudge was pre-pared by the Lakotas from the plant’s root to use as a mosquito repellent (Buechel 1970: 487).

[art & manufacture] The Plains Apaches employed a section of the plant’s lower stem as a scoop to remove marrow from long animal bones (Jordan 1965:75), and the Kiowas used it as a fork to eat buffalo steak (Vestal and Schultes 1939:34).

** Thermopsis rhombifolia**
[goldenpea]

Also known as prairie thermopsis, buck-bean, yellow bean, or false lupine, it is wide-ly distributed in the high plains regions of the
West (Johnson and Larson 1999:192). In the Black Hills, it is common at all elevations and in a range of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:226). It is also reported at Wind Cave National Park. Melvin Gilmore (1919:91) learned that this plant was dried to use in a smoke treatment for rheumatism, although he does not identify the tribal origin of this practice. The Cheyennes used it in a similar manner, and they also brewed a medicinal tea from it (Hart 1981:30).

**Trifolium spp.**  
**[clovers]**

*T. hybridum* [alsike clover], *T. pratense* [red clover], and *T. repens* [white clover] were all introduced to North America from Europe for animal forage. They are frequent from low to high elevations in all kinds of domesticated and disturbed environments in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 228-30), but they are not listed among the plants at Wind Cave National Park. Euro-pan Americans made tea from dried red clover flowers as a blood purifier and for coughs, skin problems, liver and gall bladder disorders (Tilford 1997:124). There is no documentation of their names and uses in ethnobotanical sources on the tribal nations who were associated historically with the Hills.

**Vicia Americana**  
**[American vetch]**

The Lakotas refer to this plant as *tasusu* [buffalo testicles] (Buechel 1970:482), but no uses have been reported for it. It is found throughout the Hills in a wide range of low to high elevation environments (Larson and Johnson 1999: 232), and it also grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1).

**Fumariaceae**  
**Fumitory Family**

Only one species of this family, the *Cory-dalis aurea* [scrambled eggs], is reported for the Black Hills, and it is not associated with any names or uses in the ethnobotanical literatures on European American or Ameri-can Indian populations in the region. It is found occasionally in the Hills in moist and shady locations in pine forests and decid-uous woodlands at low to high elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:231).

**Gentianacae**  
**Gentian Family**

Of the gentian species reported for the Black Hills, only three are identified by name in the botanical nomenclatures of local tribal nations, and of these, two, *Gentiana Andrewsii* [closed bottle gentian] and *G. puberulenta* [downy gentian], are also common-ly found in neighboring grassland habitats (Johnson and Larson 1999:196).

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:184; Hart 1981:26)  
  *e kon i noh k ta’ en* (hard black face)  
  *Frasera speciosa* [elkweed]  
  alternate: *he?kone-mo?kohta?ene* [strong turnip]

- **Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:109; Buechel 1970:287, 519; Rogers 1980:49)  
  *pejuta zi* [yellow root]  
  *G. puberulenta*  
  *wahca’ waste* [good flower]  
  *G. andrewsii*  
  alternate: *kapo’papi* [makes popping noise]

**Habitat:**  
*Frasera speciosa* [elkweed] is common to occasional in the northern and western portions of the Black Hills where it is found on the Limestone Plateau in open pine and aspen forest, while *Gentiana affinis* [northern gentian] is located in the same area but in moist locations at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:234). On the eastern side of the Hills, *G. Andrewsii* [closed gentian] is uncommon and found at low to mid elevations in moist meadow or stream bank environments, while *G. puberulenta* [gowney gentian] is rare and confined to sites in Pennington County (Larson and Johnson
Also present and frequent in the Black Hills at mid to high elevations is the Dwarf gentian, *G. amarella*, which grows in moist meadows and clearings, and the Spurred gentian, *Halenia deflexus*, which is found in moist forests and ravines (Larson and Johnson 1999:236).

**Uses:** Elkweed and downy gentian are the only two gentian species for which there are reported uses in the botanical literatures on the tribes who occupied the Black Hills. No uses were reported for the other two species identified in Lakota nomenclatures.

*Geraniaceae*

**The Geranium Family**

Only one native species in this family, *Geranium richardsonii* [Richardson’s Geranium], is reported in the Black Hills, and it appears in the northern and central Black Hills at mid to high elevations along stream margins and in moist meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999:238). Only the Cheyennes are reported to have named and used this plant. They called it by several names: *mat’ o min is to’ a* [nose bleed medicine], or alternatively *matomene-vo?-estse* or *matomene-hesee-?otse* (Grinnell 1972:2:179-80; Hart 1981: 26). The Cheyennes made a medicine from the pulverized leaf, which was rubbed on the nose or powdered and sniffed. The dried roots of this plant were also powdered and administered in a liquid infusion (Grinnell 1972:2:180). European American herbalists employ this and other *Geranium* species to treat diarrhea and other intestinal irritations (Tilford 1997:43).

**Iridaceae**

**The Iris Family**

Two species, *Iris Missouriensis* [Rocky Mountain iris] and *Sisyrinchium Montanum* [mountain blue-eyed grass], are reported in the Black Hills, and although both are common in the Hills and the surrounding plains, neither have been named or described in any of the ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations who inhabited the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:240). The Rocky Mountain Iris or Western blue flag is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001j:1).

**Lamiaceae**

**The Mint Family**

Of the eleven species from this family reported in the Black Hills, five of them can be identified with names in tribal nomenclatures and four are associated with important cultural uses. Indeed, two of the species in this family had significant medicinal and ceremonial functions. The Lakotas also named and identified two other species not reported in the Black Hills, *Phsostegia virginiana* [false dragonhead],* which they called *wahpe yatapi iyeca* [it is like lavender hyssop], and *Pycnanthemum virginianum* [mountain mint], which they called *i wahpe ceyaka* [mint leaf]. From the leaves of the mountain mint, they made a medicinal tea for coughing (Buechel 1970:520, 521; Rogers 1980:50).

*Agastache foeniculum*  
[lavender hyssop]

This plant is largely restricted to, but widely distributed in, the northern Plains and western Great Lakes regions (Kindscher 1992:224-25),
and along with its western relative, *Agastache urticifolia* [nettleleaf giant hyssop/horsemint], it was used by several tribal nations in the region.

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:186; Hart 1981:27)  
*mo e' emohk'shin* [elk mint]  
alternate: *mo?ehe-moxesheene*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:521; Rogers 1980:49)  
*wahpe'yata'pi* [chewing leaf]

**Habitat:** Lavender hyssop is found occasionally in moist meadows and thickets or open forests and woodlands near streams at low to high elevations in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:242).

**Uses:** Three of the tribal nations with known historical associations to the Black Hills used this plant for food, medicine, and hygiene.

**Food**  
The Cheyennes, Hidatsas, and Lakotas boiled the leaves of the lavender hyssop for a beverage (Buechel 1970:521; Grinnell 1972:2:186; Nickel 1974:58). Other tribes in the region are reported to have used the related species *A.anethiodora* [giant hyssop] as a culinary sweetener (Gilmore 1919:113).

**Medicinal**  
An infusion made from the hyssop was used by the Cheyennes to treat a weak heart and sore lungs (Grinnell 1972: 2:186), and it was also a remedy for colds and fevers (Hart 1981:27). Modern herbalists rely on it for its carminative, sedative, and diaphoretic properties (Tilford 1997: 102).

**Cosmetic & Hygienic**  
Hidatsas attached the leaves of the lavender hyssop to their fans because they gave off a fragrant odor (Nickel 1974:58).

**Dracocephalum parviflorum**  
*[American dragonhead]*

The American Dragonhead is restricted in its distribution to the northern and central portions of the Black Hills where it appears occasionally. No names or uses have been reported for this plant in ethnobotanical sources (Larson and Johnson 1999:242).

**Hedeoma drummodi**  
*[false pennyroyal]*

For more information, see *Salvia reflexa*.

**Lycopus americanus**  
*[American bugleweed]*

Also known as “water horehound,” this plant is common and found along the margins of water habitats at low to mid elevations throughout the entire Black Hills. The tubers are edible. While European Americans and tribal nations outside the region are known to have used this bugleweed (Kindscher 1987:87; Tilford 1997:22), nothing has been reported for those who occupied the Black Hills in historic times. And of these nations, only the Lakotas are known to have had a name for this plant, *skiskita hu* [rough stem] (Buechel 1970:464; Rogers 1980:49).

**Mentha Arvensis**  
*[field mint]*

Field mint is ubiquitously present in the northern Plains where it is typically found along stream banks and at the margins of lakes and sloughs. It is widely used by European Americans and the tribal nations of the region for culinary and medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1992:152-155).

**Names:**

**Arapaho** (Nickerson 1966:50)  
*paquanah* [no translation]

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:186; Hart 1981:27)  
*mahpe'-moxe'shene* [water mint or perfume]  
alternate: *he heyuts't'shiss'ots* [vomiting medicine]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:131, 799; Rogers 1980:49)  
*ceya'ka* [mint]  
*can peju'ak cik'ala* [small wood medicine]  
*applies to the roots only*
**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:112)  
*Pezhe nubthon* [fragrant herb]

**Habitat:** Mint is ubiquitous in the Black Hills, and it is found at all elevations in moist locations especially along stream banks and lakeshores (Larson and Johnson 1999:244). It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:2).

**Uses:** All of the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills in historic times have reported uses for this important plant.

**[food]** The Cheyennes, Lakotas, and Poncas boiled the dried leaves for a culinary tea (Gilmore 1919:112; Bordeaux 1929: 129; Standing Bear 1978:58; Hart 1981: 27). This tea is still served today at Lakota feasts and other ceremonial occasions (Albers 1966-1978; Nurge 1970:67, 82). The Dakota (and possibly the Lakotas) flavored their cooked meat with mint and packed the plant with their dried meat too (Gilmore 1913b:363, 1919:112).

**[medicinal]** The Kiowas chewed the fresh leaves or brewed a tea to treat stomach ailments (Vestal and Schultes 1939:49). The Lakotas made a tea from the roots to treat headaches (Buechel 1970:799), swellings (Lewis, T. 1990:134), and abdominal pain (Suka sni win n.d:15; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170), while the Cheyennes used the leaves and stems in a tea to induce vomiting and to strengthen the heart and stimulate other vital organs. The Cheyennes also believed it could function as an aphrodisiac (Grinnell 1972:2:186; Hart 1981:27). The Hidatsas made a medicinal tea for unidentified purposes (Nickel 1974: 67). Mint has a long history of use in Euro-pean American folk medicine, and it is one of the most popular herbal teas in the United States today (Kindscher 1992:153-54).


**[symbolic & ceremonial]** A bed of mint was used in the Cheyenne Sun Dance for its cooling effects (Hart 1981:28).

**Monarda fistulosa**  
*[bergamot]*

Also popularly known as beebalm and horsemint, there are two major varieties, *M.fistulosa*/*menthafoila* [wild bergamot] and *M.clinopodia*/*fistulosa* [white bergamot] (Larson and Johnson 1999:246). Bergamot is widespread and common in the grasslands surrounding the Black Hills, where it is typically located on prairie hillside, steam banks and roadsides (Kindscher 1992:156; Larson and Johnson 1999b:198) Most of the tribal nations in the Plains recognized differences in the two varieties by the names they applied to the plant, and as Kelly Kindscher (1987:151) writes, this indicates “their knowledge, observation, and use of this plant.”

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:186; Hart 1981:28)  
  *wi'as kimohk'shin* [bitter perfume]  
  *mo in'a mohk'shin* [horse perfume]  
  alternate: *v e?ohke-moxeshene*

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:49)  
  *po-et-on-sai-on* [perfume plant]

- **Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:111; Buechel 1970:172, 521; Rogers 1980:50)  
  *wahpe wastemna* (sweet smelling leaf)  
  *hehaka tawote* (elk food)  
  alternate: *heha'ka tapejuta* (elk medicine)  
  *maka ceyaka iyececa* [like earth mint]  
  *M. pectinata* [pony beebalm]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:143)  
  *'ita.coh* [big leaf]

- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:111)  
  *pezhe pa* [bitter herb]  
  *izna-kithe-ige* [no translation]

**Habitat:** This is a very common plant throughout the Black Hills, where it is loca-
in meadows and open forests and along roadsides at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:246). The Lakotas distinguish between the one that grows on the open grasslands, *M. menthafolia*, and the one located in the forests, *M. fistulosa* (Buechel 1970: 172). Surprisingly, neither varieties of wild bergamot are reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** This had many important medicinal, hygienic, and ceremonial uses for the tribal nations who occupied the Black Hills in historic times.

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas had many different medicinal applications for this plant. In one, a tea was brewed from the blossoms of *M. fistulosa* to soothe sore throats and to treat colds and fevers, and in another the roots were used to doctor whooping cough. The boiled leaves were also wrapped in cloth and placed on sore eyes to provide overnight relief, and the chewed leaves were applied to wounds to stop blood flow (Buechel 1970:172). In yet another application, the leaves and flowers were mixed together in a treatment for abdominal pain, and in still another, the leaves were used to prevent fainting (Gilmore 1913b:363; Densmore 1918:270). The Kiowas used bergamot to treat insect bites and stings (Vestal and Schultes 1939:49), while the Crows made a tea from it for respiratory ailments (Hart 1992:70). Early European American settlers found this plant useful for medicinal purposes and applied it in a wide variety of remedies (Hart 1992:70; Kindscher 1992: 158; Tilford 1997:18).

**[cosmetic & hygienic]** The Poncas used one variety as a fragrance in hair pomade (Gilmore 1919:111). Cheyenne and Lakota men used it to perfume their bodies, cloth- ing, and robes (Gilmore 1913b:363; Grinnell 1972:2:186). The Hidatsas used *M. fistulosa* as a perfume (Nickel 1974:67). The Plains Apaches held top quality varieties of this plant in high esteem and considered its perfumed leaves one of their most treasured possessions. The leaves were prepared as an infusion and sprinkled on blankets, garments, ritual paraphernalia, and on the body. They recognized wide variations in the aromatic qualities of the plants and distinguished these by names, identifying those without a strong fragrance as “look alikes” or not the “real perfume.” Individuals who had the ability to “sniff out” the true plants, which were rare, were held in high regard, and when stands of highly fragrant plants were found, their locations were kept secret (Jordan 1965:143-147).

**[veterinary]** Young Cheyenne men perfumed their favorite horses with the plant (Grinnell 1972:2:186).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** Lakota singers and dancers chewed the leaves of *M. menthafolia* (Buechel 1970:521), especially during the Sun Dance (Gilmore 1919:111). Lakotas also smudged the dance area with it (Dorsey, J. 1894:454). The stems and flow- ers were once used by the Cheyennes to make pillows for young girls from puberty to marriage to insure their health and fertility (Grinnell 1972:2:186). The Plains Apaches believed the plant had properties that could attract and arouse the opposite sex (Jordan 1965:148-149). The association of this plant with elk, known for their seductive powers, suggests a similar use of the plant among the Lakotas (Densmore 1918:178).

**Nepeta cataria**

**[catnip]**

Introduced to North America from Europe, this is a popular plant in European American folk remedies where the leaves are typically used in herbal treatments to aid digestion and to reduce gas and stomach bloating (Tilford 1997:28). It is common all over the Black Hills, including Wind Cave National Park, from low to mid elevations in a wide variety of disturbed environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:246-247; Pisarowicz 2001k:2). There are no reports on its identification and use in ethnobotanical sources on the area’s American Indian populations.
**Prunella vulgaris**

[selheal]

Selfheal occurs occasionally at all elevations in the Black Hills in moist or wet habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:248), and it is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:2). In European American folk medicine, it is a popular remedy for a variety of maladies (Tilford 1997:70). Yet, its healing applications have not been reported in ethnobotanical sources on the tribal nations who lived in the region.

**Salvia reflexa**

[lanceleaf sage]

Two varieties of salvia are located in the Black Hills: *S. pratensis* [meadow sage] and *S. reflexa* [lanceleaf sage]. Meadow sage was introduced from Europe, and it is now locally abundant in the northwestern Black Hills, while lanceleaf sage, a native, is occa-sional in a variety of environments through-hout the Hills from low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:248-250). The Lakotas call lance-leaved sage *maka ceyaka* [earth mint], a name also used in reference to the pennyroyal that is not located in the Black Hills. *Hedeoma drummodi* [false penny royal], also absent in the Black Hills, is known as *ih'e maka ceyaka* [rock earth mint] (Gilmore 1919:112; Buechel 1970: 329, 702; Rogers 1980:50). The Lakotas flavored their soups with false pennyroyal (Buechel 1970:329), and they used it as a tonic in diets for the sick (Gilmore 1919: 112). Melvin Gilmore (Ibid.) also writes that *maka ceyaka* was used as an infusion to cure colds. Whether any of these applications were used for lance-leaved sage is unclear.

**Scutellaria spp.**

[skullcaps]

*S. galericulata* [marsh skullcap] located at Wind Cave National Park, and *S. lateriflora* [mad dog or blue skullcap] are the two skullcap species reported in the Black Hills. Both of these occur occasionally near streams, lakes, ponds, and springs from low to mid elevations throughout the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:250-252; Pisarowicz 2001j:2). They are found throughout the United States, and their native names and uses have been described for various tribal nations (Kindscher 1992: 279-281) and also in European American herbal remedies (Tilford 1997:136). No information on these plants was uncovered, however, for the tribes who lived in the Black Hills region.

**Stachys palustris**

[marsh hedgenettle]

Also called woundwort, this plant is located occasionally in riparian environments at low to mid elevations over the entire region of the Black Hills, including Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999: 252; Pisarowicz 2001j:2). Early settlers used it medicinally, and it is now included in modern herbal remedies to treat sore throats, headaches, and joint inflammations (Tilford 1997:72-73). Again, there is no information on its use for the American Indian populations who lived in the region.

**Liliaceae**

The Lily Family

The bulbs of many plants in the lily family were used for food and medicinal purposes by tribal nations who lived and traveled in the environs of the Black Hills.

**Allium spp.**

[wild onion]

Wild onions contain important micronutrients, including vitamin C and A (Kind-scher 1992:222-23), and as Kelly Kindscher (1987:16) writes, they would have been a
“nutritious complement” to the buffalo-meat diet of the tribal nations who lived in the central and northern Plains. Several different species of wild onions can be found in the Black Hills and surrounding areas, including *A. cernuum* [nodding onion], *A. textile* [textile Onion], and *A. stellatum* [autumn or pink onion], and *A. geyersi* [Geyer’s onion] (Johnson and Larson 1999:200; Larson and Johnson 1999:254; Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

Names:

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:171; Hart 1981:12)

kha-ohk-ksi-me-is’-tse-hi [smells like skunk]
alternates: xaoe-hehestavo [skunk nuts]
pat se’ wots [no translation given]
	tohoo’e-xaoe-nestavo [prairie skunk]

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:520)

pakoik [large onion]
	t?diekiok [small onion]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:447; Rogers 1980:27)

psin [onion]
	psín sića’i nna [bad smelling onion]
specifically *A. drummondi*

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:27)

libicilcinah [horses don’t eat them]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:71)

manzhonka-mantanaha [no translation given]

Habitat: Onions, particularly the *cernuum* variety, are frequent in the Black Hills at low to high elevations in a variety of habitats including open pine forests and mixed grass prairie (Larson and Johnson 1999: 254), and they also appear at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

Uses: American Indian and European American populations throughout the area collected wild onions for food and medicine.

【food】Wild onions were a popular food, eaten alone or as a condiment for meats and soups among all tribes in the region (Kind-scher 1987:12-17). The Lakotas and their neighbors ate them raw as a relish, and they fried or cooked them to enhance the flavor of other foods (Gilmore 1919:71; Buechel 1970:447; Standing Bear 1978:58). Royal Hassrick (1964:179) quoted a Lakota woman who said: “wild onions were larger and sweeter than turnips. It was time to pick them when the prairie grass was thickest. Mixed with meat, either fresh or jerked, onions were extremely good.” The Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Plains Apaches flavored meat with wild onions, especially in the absence of salt (Jordan 1965:27; Nickerson 1966:46-47; Grinnell 1972:2:171; Hart 1981:12). The Comanches typically roasted them (Carlson & Johnson 1939:520).

【medicine】Poultices were made by the Cheyennes from the pulverized roots and stems of onions to heal carbuncles (Grinnell 1972:2:171-72), and the Dakotas were reported to use bruised onions to treat bee stings (Kind-scher 1992:29). The Hidatsas relied on onions as medicine to heal bone disorders (Nickel 1974:58). In European American folk medicine, onions were employed to treat a variety of respiratory ailments including colds and pneumonia, and they were used as laxatives, expectorants, diuretics, and stimulants (Kind-scher 1992:30; Tilford 1997:160).

**Calochortus gunnisonni**

【Gunnison’s mariposa lily】

Gunnison’s mariposa lily and the closely related Sego lily, *C. nuttalli* were sources of food for tribal nations in the northern Plains and adjoining regions of the Inter-mountain West.

Names:

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:172; Hart 1981:12)

ehka’i ni’ kan [no translation given]
alternate: exaa-no?kane

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:447; Rogers 1980:27)

psin tan’ka [big onion]

t?diekiok [small onion]

applies to *C. gunnisonni* and *C. nuttalli*

Habitat: The mariposa lily is commonly found in mixed grass prairies, open forests, and upland meadows from low to mid elevations in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:256). The sego lily is the only one
reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001i:2).

**Uses:** Both varieties of lily were a common source of food and medicine for the tribal nations of the region.

[food] Among the Cheyennes, the bulbs of the mariposa lily were dried, pounded, and stored for winter use to make a sweet mush, and the flower buds were eaten as well (Grinnell 1972:2:172; Hart 1981:12)

[medicinal] The Cheyennes included the dried and cut up bulbs in a mixture for un-specified medicinal uses (Hart 1981:12).

[veterinary] Cheyennes placed the roots in their horses’ mouths before they raced (Hart 1981:12).

**Disporum trachycarpum**  
[roughfruit fairybells]

Fairybells are abundant in the moist forest environments of the central and northern Black Hills from low to mid elevations. The berries and young shoots are edible (Larson and Johnson 1999:256). There is no evidence, however, of this or any other use for the American Indian and European American populations who lived in the region.

**Fritillaria atopurpurea**  
[leopard lily or spotted fritillary]

This plant is found infrequently at mid elevations in the northern and western regions of the Black Hills. Larson and Johnson (1999:258) claim that the bulbs of this plant are tasty either in a raw or cooked form, but because they are so small they are not often harvested for food. The Lakotas called the leopard lily canhlogan makatola [little blue earth stalk] or pejuta winhneya ipiye [gopher medicine], and they used certain parts of the plant as an ointment for scrofulous swellings (Buechel 1970:117; Rogers 1980:27; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170).

**Leuocorinum montanum**  
[star lily]

Also called sand or mountain lily, this plant appears in mixed grass habitats, but it is more commonly found in association with sagebrush (Johnshon and Larson 1999:202). It is very common at all elevations and in many different habitats throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:258). The Lakotas called *L. montanum* [mountain lily], found at Wind Cave National Park, yapi zapi iyececa [like the spikenard], a name also given to the false dandelion (Buechel 1970: 626; Rogers 1980:27; Pisarowicz 2001i:2). The Crows are reported to have consumed the roots of this lily (Johnshon and Larson 1999:202).

**Lilium philadephicum**  
[wood lily]

This plant, which is very common in the eastern United States, does not appear frequently in the central Plains and western parts of South Dakota and Nebraska (Larson and Johnson 1999b:202), although it does grow at Wind Cave National Park in ravine environments. The Black Hills is an important outlier area for its growth. While this plant is rarely found in the grasslands and sagebrush steppes surrounding the Black Hills, it frequently appears at low to high elevations in the central and northern Hills in woodland habitats and riparian meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999:260). The Lakotas know it as mnacha’ hca [very fragrant flower] (Buechel 1970:337; Rogers 1980:27), and they pulverized or chewed the flowers of the plant and applied them as an antidote for the bites of certain small poisonous brown spiders (Gilmore 1919:71).

**Maianthemum canadense**  
[Canada mayflower]

Also known as Canada mayflower, it is found in the understory of spruce, aspen, birch, pine, and mixed forests at mid to high elevations in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson
In Lakota, it is called *yapi’zapi iyececa* [like a mouth organ], which probably refers to the fact that the leaves can be used to produce musical tones (Buechel 1970:626). The same name is given by the Lakotas to several other plants, including the false dandilion and False Solomon’s seal.

**Nuphar polysepala**  
*spatterdock*

This plant is located in regions west of the Black Hills. Its roots were a source of food for the Cheyennes who called it *heh pan?* [green spongy] (Grinnell 1972:2:173; Hart 1981:31).

**Polygonatum biflorum**  
*[Solomon’s seal]*

This plant does not commonly appear in the Black Hills, and when it does, it is found at low to mid elevations in the central regions of the Hills in moist and shaded habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:262). No reports of its use by tribal nations associated with the Black Hills were found, but the Lakotas called it *zuzeca tawote hu tankinyan heca* [large plant with a stem like snake food] (Buechel 1970:659-660; Rogers 1980:27).

**Smilacina ssp.**  
*[False Solomon’s seal]*

Two *smilacina* species, *S.racemosa* [False Solomon’s seal] and *S.stellata* [starry false Solomon’s seal, starry false lily of the valley, or spikenard] are found in the Black Hills. *S.racemosa* is uncommon and restricted to moist forest and woodland habitats at mid to high elevations in the northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:262), whereas *S. stellata* is common at all elevations in open forest and woodland locations over the entire region (Larson and Johnson 1999:264). The latter species is located in the region of Wind Cave (Pisarowicz 2001j: 2). The Lakotas called both varieties *yapi’-zapi hu* [mouth organ plant] or *zuzeca ta-wote hu iyececa* [like snake food stem], and they used the leaves of both to produce musical tones (Buechel 1970:626, 660; Rogers 1980:27). While *Smilacina* species were used as food and medicine by tribal nations farther to the east and the west, there are no reports of such use among the tribes who lived near the Black Hills (Kindscher 1992:282-283; Tilford 1997:58). This is a popular European American herbal remedy employed as a laxative, anti-inflammatory, and cough suppressant (Tilford 1997:58).

**Smilax herbacea**  
*carrion flower*

Also known as Jacob’s Ladder, this plant is not reported in the Black Hills but is more typically found in the eastern prairies of South Dakota and Nebraska. The Lakotas called it *caniyawi cik’ala* [little wood calls a man/ little wood mouth speaks] or *zuzeca tawote ptypa ikoyaka* [like snake food with clusters attached]. The Poncas ate the fruit of the *S. herbacea* to treat hoarseness (Gilmore 1919:71).

**Zigadenus spp.**  
*deathcamus*

Two varieties of the deathcamus, *Zelegans* [mountain or showy deathcamus] and *Z. venenosus* [meadow deathcamus] are commonly found in the Black Hills and in the surrounding grasslands as well. The latter is also located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001i:2). While *Zelegans* occurs at mid to high elevations in open forest and woodland environments, *Z. venenosus* exists at lower elevations in open pine forests, sagebrush steppes, and mixed grass prairies. Both are highly toxic to humans (Larson and Johnson 1999:264, 266, Johnson and Larson 1999:204). The Lakotas knew the meadow deathcamus to be poisonous and called it *psin hubloka* [male onion stem] (Buechel 1970:447; Rogers 1980:28). It was featured in the cycle of stories associated with the Four Winds (Walker 1983:353-355).
**Linaceae**

**The Flax Family**

Two species of flax, *Linum Lewissi* [prairie flax], named after Meriwether Lewis, and *L. rigidum* [stiffstem flax] are reported in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:266-68) and the surrounding grasslands (Kindscher 1987:244). Another variety *L. perenne* [blue flax] grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:2).

**Names:**

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:96, 117; Rogers 1980:50)

*ata'osapina nabla'ga* [they spit on it and it spreads out]

**L. rigidum**

alternate: *canhlogan nablag* [stalk that swells and bursts]

**Habitat:** In the Black Hills, both species occur at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairies and open forest habitats. But while *L. Lewissi* is frequent in its occurrence, *L. rigidum* is common but not abundant (Larson and Johnson 1999:266-68).

**Uses:** Although the tribal nations who lived in the area of the Black Hills used *Linum* as a food condiment, they do not appear to have applied it medicinally.

[food] Tribes in the region used the seeds of both varieties to flavor food (Gilmore 1919:96; Kindscher 1987:244).

[medicinal] The tops were made into infusions for eyewashes by tribal nations located in the Intermountain West, and the cultivated varieties of flax were used by European Americans in decoctions to treat digestive, lung, and urinary complaints (Kindscher 1992:258-59).

[arts & manufacture] Many tribal nations, especially those west of the Black Hills, used the *L. Lewissi* variety to make cordage (Larson and Johnson 1999:266).

**Loasaceae**

**The Stickleaf Family**

There are three *Mentzelia* species in the Black Hills, *M. decapetala* [tenpetal blaz-ingstar], *M. nuda* [sandily or bractless blaz-ingstar], and *M. oligosperma* [stickleaf or chenkthief], but only the sandily is report-ed to have had any use for tribal nations in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:268-69).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:30)

*wo’ome-hese’e’o’otse* [white medicine]

*M. nuda*

**Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:103; Buechel 1970:117, 190; Rogers 1980:50)

*hu’ pe’pe* [Prickly stem]

*M. nuda*

alternate: *to’kahu hu’pe’pe* [Prickly stem thistle]

*M. nuda*

*canhlogan mah’awanglakela* [Locust stalk]

*M. decapetala*

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:72)

*’ita’edil’ise* [leaves stick to you]

*M. stricta*

**Habitat:** *M. decapetala* is found occasionally on the dry clay, rocky, or shale hillsides of the Hogback, Red Valley, and Gray Shale Foothills, whereas *M. nuda* is less frequent in the region and located on barren sandy and gravelly soils in the southern Black Hills at low elevations. *M. oligosperma* is the rarest of the three and confined largely to dry rocky ledges and slopes in the low elevation regions of the southern Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 268-269).

**Uses:** The tribal populations of the Black Hills used the *Mentzelia* primarily for medicinal purposes.

[food] None of the *Mentzelia* varieties found in the Plains are used as a food by local tribal nations, although Kelly Kind-scher (1987:245) writes that the Hopi of the Southwest ate the seeds from the *M. albi-caulis* variety.
Melvin Gilmore (1919:103) reports that Dakotas stripped the leaves off the stems of *M.nuda* [sandlily] and pounded them into a gummy yellow juice that was applied externally to treat fever. The Cheyennes considered the sandlily to be one of their oldest medicines and held it in high regard; the plant was never used alone but in combination with other medicines to treat fevers, earaches, and arthritis (Hart 1981: 30).

**Malvaceae**

**The Mallow Family**

Larson and Johnson (1999) report only one species from this family, the Scarlet (false red) globemallow, in the Black Hills. Other species, widely distributed in the immediate environs of the Hills, are recognized by local tribal nations and need to be considered as well (Kindscher 1987:68-71, 1992:229-30).

**Callirhoe involucrata**

[purple poppymallow]

The Black Hills stand literally at the center of this plant’s restricted distribution in North America, so it is surprising that it is not covered in Larson and Johnson’s book (1999) on the plants of the Black Hills and Bear Lodge Mountains (Kindscher 1987: 69). The Lakotas knew it as *pezhuta nantia-zilia* [smoke treatment medicine], and, as the name implies, they used the dried leaves in a smoke treatment for colds (Gilmore 1919: 103). The purple poppymallow’s sweet starchy root was also reported as a food used by tribes along the Oregon Trail in many 19th century sources, but surprisingly, little has been written about its culinary uses in more contemporary ethnographic sources (Kindscher 1987:69-70).

**Hibiscus trionum**

[flower-of-an-hour]

This plant was originally introduced from Africa but is now reported to be a nuisance in much of the southern parts of the West where it is primarily located. The Lakotas call the flower-of-an-hour *utahu canhlogan* [oak stalk] but have no reported use for it (Buechel 1970:508; Rogers 1980:51).

**Sphaeralcea coccinea**

[scarlet globemallow]

Culturally, this was a very important plant for at least two tribal nations in the region, the Lakotas and the Cheyennes, both of whom used it for medicinal and ceremonial purposes.

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:180; Hart 1981:30; Schwartz 1988:53)

*wi ke isse’ e yo’* [Sweet medicine]

alternates: *hestomoa?akan?ano* [no translation given]

*eomoseez* [grease weed]

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:523)

*yekanatsu* [no translation given]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:174; Rogers 1980:51; Lewis, T. 1990:149)

*heyo’ka tapeju’ta* [Heyoka’s medicine]

alternate: *utahu canhlogan* [oak stalk]

**Habitat:** This plant is common over the entire Black Hills at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairie, open pine woodland, and sagebrush steppe habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:270), and it is also widely located on the neighboring grasslands (John-son and Larson 1999:206). It is listed among the plants at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

**Uses:** Although the scarlet globemallow is also documented for tribes in the Southwest, most of the ethnobotanical reports on it come from the Plains region (Kindscher 1992:207-209).

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas prepared a salve from the roots of the scarlet globemallow to treat skin sores and burns (Gilmore 1919:55; Buechel 1970:174), while the Comanches made a tea from it to reduce swelling (Carlson and Jones 1939:523). The Cheyennes pounded the entire plant and steeped it in boiling water with other herbs to make them more palatable (Grinnell 1972:2:180), and the Arikaras combined the herb with a gum from the
chokecherry tree to relieve post-partum hemorrhage (Gilmore 1930:74). In European American folk medicine, it is used as an emollient to soothe skin irritations and in treatments for respiratory ailments (Tilford 197:94).

[symbolic & ceremonial] In their ceremonies, the Lakota Heyoka [Contraries] rubbed the mucilaginous substance over their arms and hands to prevent them from burning when they plunged them into boiling water to take up pieces of hot meat (Densmore 1918:167-168; Gilmore 1919:55; Buechel 1970:174; Lewis, T. 1990:149). Susie Hollowhorn related a story to Helen Beckwith (1930:415-416) about the relation between Heyoka and the scarlet globe-mallow. Members of the Cheyenne Contrary Society had a similar use for this plant in their ceremonies (Hart 1981:31; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53).

**Monotropacea**

**The Indian Pipe Family**

Only one species from this family, *Pterospora andromedea* [pinedrops], is reported in the Black Hills, and only one of the region’s tribal nations, the Cheyennes, are known to have named and used them. The plant appears occasionally over the entire Black Hills at mid to high elevations in varied forest habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:270). The Cheyennes call pinedrops *matu’ minis’ tois se’ e yo* [nose bleed medicine] or *matomeneheseeo’otse* (Grinnell 1972:2: 183; Hart 1981:25) and employ them to prevent bleeding from the nose and lungs. The stem and berries were ground and combined in an infusion that was snuffed up the nose or drunk for treatments of the lungs (Grinnell 1972:2:183).

**Nyctaginaceae**

**The Four O’Clock Family**

Also known as narrowleaf umbrellawort, *Mirabilis linearis* [narrowleaf four o’clock] and the related *M. nyctaginea* [heartleaf four o’clock] and *M. hirsuta* [hairy four o’clock/umbrellawort] are found in a wide variety of prairie, plains, and pasture habitats in the northern and central Plains region (Kind-scher 1992:263-264). *M. linearis* is the most common four o’clock in the Black Hills. Although much less frequent, the other two varieties are located in the Hills as well (Larson and Johnson 1999:272).

**Names:**

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:117, 189, 445; Rogers 1980: 51, 52)
  - *huokiha hanskaska* [tall jointed stem]
  - *cahlogan okiheton* [jointed stem]
  - *M. hirsuta* [medicine for swellings]
  - *M. nyctaginea* [strong medicine]

- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:78)
  - *makan-wasek* (strong medicine)

**Habitat:** *M.linearis* and its less common relatives are found in the southern regions of the Black Hills in low elevation mixed grass prairie, open pine woodlands, and sagebrush steppe (Larson & Johnson 1999:272).

**Uses:** *Mirabilis* species were used entirely for medicinal purposes.

[medicinal] The Lakotas made a tea from the roots of *M.linearis* to treat urinary problems (Buechel 1970:117; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170). The root of a related variety *M.nyctaginea* was one of the ingredients the Lakotas used for making a tea to reduce fever, and it was also combined in a mixture boiled with *Echinacea angustifolia* to get rid of intestinal worms. The Lakotas treated limb swellings and broken bones with the grated and moistened roots, while the Poncas masti-cated the roots to heal wounds (Densmore 1918:270; Gilmore 1913b:361, 1919:78).
**Onagraceae**  
**Evening Primrose Family**

Nine different species from the evening primrose family are reported in the Black Hills, and, of these, at least four are described in ethnobotanical sources for the tribes who lived in the region.

### *Calylophus serrulatus*  
[yellow evening primrose or yellow sundrops]

The yellow evening primrose is widespread in the Great Plains, and it is a common plant over the entire Black Hills where it grows in mixed grass prairie and open pine forest as well as limestone outcrops and rocky slopes at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:272-274). It is located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1). The Lakotas called it *waha'zi cik'ala* [little yellow flower], but they apparently had no specific use for the plant (Buechel 1970:519; Rogers 1980:53). It is not documented among other American Indian populations in the region or European Americans.

### *Epilobium angustifolium*  
[fireweed]

Fireweeds are found in the northern and central Black Hills in moist, mid to high elevation forests, thickets, and clearings (Larson and Johnson 1999:274). The Cheyennes are the only tribe in the immediate region reported to have named and used the plant. They knew it as *ma?e-heseeo?ote* [red medicine] and made a medicinal tea out of the dried and pulverized leaves as a remedy for rectal hemorrhaging (Grinnell 1972: 2:181; Hart 1981:31). European American herbalists and tribes outside the area used it for medicinal purposes too (Tilford 1997: 62).

### *Gaura coccine*  
[scarlet guara or beebl blossom]

This plant, which is native to the western regions of the United States, is typically found in open dry areas of the prairies and plains (Kindsgen 1992:247-48).

#### Names:

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:399, 483; Rogers 1980:52)
- *tata'wabluska taczahlogan* [horsefly’s weed]  
- alternate: *sunkoyuspapi* [they use it to catch horses]
- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:65)  
- *ka zaye* [little arrow]

#### Habitat:  
This plant is common and widespread in the Black Hills, located largely in mixed grass prairie and open forest regions at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:276). This plant is not reported at Wind Cave National Park, but the *G.mollis parvilfora* [velvetweed] is located here (Pisarowicz 2001h:1).

#### Uses:  
Only the Lakotas and Plains Apaches are reported to have had uses for this plant.

- **[medicinal]** Although medicinal uses are reported for tribal nations outside the Plains and among European American herbalists (Kindsgen 1992:247-248), there is no documentation for tribes in the Black Hills area.

- **[veterinary]** The Lakotas chewed and rubbed it on their hands as a salve to attract horses (Buechel 1970:399). Standing Bear (1978:60) described another use for this plant as follows: “On the plain also grew a small-leaved, low growing plant which was valuable in treating horses when they became afflicted with distemper.”

- **[art & manufacture]** The Plains Apaches once made toy arrows for their children from this plant (Jordan 1965:65).
Several different *Oenothera* species are found in the Black Hills, including *O. biennis* [common evening-primrose], *O. caespitosa* [gumbo or shortfruit evening-primrose], and *O. coronopitfolia* [cornleaf evening-primrose].

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:116, 190; Rogers 1980:52,53)
- *canhlogan hu nla* [rattle weed]
- *O. biennis*
- *canhlogan hu sansa* [whitish stemmed weed]
- *O. pallida*

**Habitat:** All *Oenothera* appear occasionally in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations. *O. biennis* inhabits sandy or gravelly stream banks and bars and other moist, disturbed habitats throughout the Black Hills, whereas *O. caespitosa* is largely restricted to the Hogback and Red Valley and *O. coronopitfolia* is located mostly in the open forest and grassland areas of the southern areas of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:278-80). Another, *O. albicaulis* [white evening-primrose], is recorded at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1, 2001i:1).

**Uses:** Primroses were used primarily for medicinal purposes.

**[food]** Although the roots are edible (Kindscher 1987:246-247), there is no evidence that the tribal nations who lived in the area ever consumed them.

**[medicine]** The Poncas made a poultice from *O. rhombipeta* [fourpoint evening-primrose], a species not reported in the Black Hills, and several tribes outside the immediate region also had medicinal uses for different *Oenothera* species (Kindscher 1992:162). European Americans in the West had a variety of herbal remedies derived from the members of this subfamily, including diuretic, laxative, and antispasmodic applications (Moore, M. 1979:75; Tilford 1997: 56).

**Orchidaceae**  
**The Orchid Family**

Many different orchid species are found in the Black Hills, and with a few exceptions, most occur in the central and northern regions of the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:280-288). One exception is *Epipactis gigantea* (giant helleborine). This is a rare plant, restricted to the calcareous stream banks along Cascade Creek south of Hot Springs, South Dakota (Larson and Johnson 1999:288). Although *Coerallorhza macula-lata* [spotted coralroot] was held in high regard by some unidentified tribal nations in the West and used in teas to treat colds (Larson and Johnson 1999:282), this has not been established for any of the tribes who lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills. The only orchid species named and used by local tribes is *Cypripedium calceolus* [greater yellow lady’s slipper], which is found on the northern and eastern sides of the Black Hills at low to mid elevations on moist rocky slopes (Larson and Johnson 1999:286). The Lakotas called it *maka canakpa* [earth groin swelled up] and ate its bulbous roots as an emergency food (Buechel 1970:329; Rogers 1980:28).

**Orobanchaceae**  
**The Broomrape Family**

There are several different *Orobanche* species in the Black Hills, and these are found occasionally in proximity to *Artemisia* at low elevations in the mixed grass prairies, dry open forests, and sagebrush steppe habitats of the Red Valley, Hogback, and Minnelusa Foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999:290). The only species reported at Wind Cave National Park is *O. fasciculata* [clustered broomrape] (Pisarowicz 2001h:1). Although this plant was reportedly used as a food by some of the Numic speaking tribal nations in the West (Kindscher 1987:247), there is no [cosmetic & hygienic] Reverend Eugene Buechel [1970:116] wrote that the Lakotas found the seeds of *O. biennis* aromatic.
documentation for this among the tribes who historically lived around the Black Hills.

**Oxalidaceae**

**The Woodsorrel Family**

Several species of the subfamily *Oxalis* are found in the Black Hills, including *O. priceae/dilleni* [tufted yellow or greygreen woodsorrel], *O. stricta* [common yellow woodsorrel], and *O. violacea* [violet woodsorrel] (Larson and Johnson 1999:290-292). Woodsorrel is commonly found in the moist prairies and open woodlands in the eastern regions of South Dakota and neighboring states (Kindscher 1992:159), but some varieties, like the greygreen woodsorrel, are adapted to drier environments in the west.

**Names:**

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:35)

aw tawt an ya [salt weed]

*O. stricta*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:53)

wahpe skuya [sweet leaf]

*O. stricta*, also used for *Rumex venosus*

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:98)

hade-sathe [sour herb]

*O. violacea*

**Habitat:** The greygreen woodsorrel is frequent at all elevations in a variety of grass-land and forest environments, while the related yellow woodsorrel is less common and found in moister habitats. The violet woodsorrel is found occasionally at low to mid elevations in the meadows and open forests of the central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:290-292).

**Uses:** Woodsorrels were edible and also used medicinally by the tribal nations of the region.

[food] The leaves of yellow woodsorrel were chewed by the Kiowas to relieve thirst on long walks (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 35). These species may have been ingested by the Lakotas who reported that their leaves tasted bitter (Buechel 1970:520).

[medicinal] The Poncas used the leaves of *O. violacea* for a poultice to treat swellings (Gilmore 1919:98).

**Papaveraceae**

**The Poppy Family**

Both species in the Poppy family, reported in the Black Hills, were named and used by tribal nations who lived in the region during historic times.

**Argemone polyanthemos**

[Crested pricklypoppy]

The Crested pricklypoppy grows in the central Plains region of North America from Montana in the north to Texas in the south (Kindscher 1992:228).

**Names:**

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:520)

pitisteya [no translation given]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:494; Rogers 1980:53)

to ‘kahu wahinkpe on ziyapi [thistle to dye arrows yellow]

**Habitat:** The Crested pricklypoppy is frequently found at low elevations primarily in the central and northern portions of the Red Valley and the Hogback (Larson and John-son 1999:292), but it also grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

**Uses:** The Comanches and Lakotas are the only tribes with reported uses for it.

[medicine] The Comanches used the sap in a treatment for sore eyes (Carlson and Jones 1939:520).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas made a dye from it to color their arrows yellow (Buechel 1970:494).
**Sanguinaria Canadensis**  
[Bloodroot]

Although this plant is fairly common in the eastern prairies of South Dakota and Nebraska, it is rare farther west and confined largely to locales in the Black Hills. Here it is uncommon and found in the moist under-story of mixed and deciduous forests at low to mid elevations in the northeastern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:294). The Poncas called it _minigagthe makan wau_ [woman seeking medicine]. Ponca men employed the root as a love charm to attract members of the opposite sex, and sometimes used it for a facial paint (Gilmore 1919:83).

**Plantaginaceae**  
**Plantain Family**

Even though several members of the Plantain family are common in the Plains, Larson and Johnson (1999) do not list any of them in the Black Hills. _Plantago pata-gonica_ [woolly plantain or Indianwheat] is widely found in the dry upland plains of the western Dakotas and adjoining states (Larson and Johnson 1999b:212). It is also located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2). _P. major_ [common plan-tain] is a wetlands plant that is more common on the prairies east of the Missouri River, but it also exists at the park too (Pisarowicz 2001k:4).

**Names:**

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**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:51)  
*bo-a-na* [no translation given]  
*P. patagonica*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:117, 531, 584; Rogers 1980:53)  
*canhlogan wopostanka gapi* [stalk that spread out like a warbonnet]  
*P. patagonica*  
*wihutahu yeecca* [like a cattail]  
*P. major*

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:74)  
*‘iza’o libenida kase* [some kind of grass, horse racing]  
*P. patagonica*

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**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:115)  
*sinie makan* [no translation given]

**P. major**

**Uses:** Several different tribal nations are reported to have had uses for members of the Plantain family.

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[**medicinal**] The Poncas heated the leaves of _P. major_ to draw out thorns and splinters from the foot (Gilmore 1919:115). The seeds of this variety of plantain are widely used by European American herbalists for their laxative effects and as a source of dietary fiber. The leaves are also used for their anti-inflammatory properties for skin irritations and wounds (Tilford 1997:112).

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[**art & manufacture**] The spikes of _P. patagonica_ were used in a game played by Plains Apaches boys (Jordan 1965:75).

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[**symbolic & ceremonial**] The Kiowas tied garlands of _P. patagonica_ around their heads during dances as a symbol of health (Vestal and Schultes 1939:51).

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**Polyemoniaceae**  
**The Phlox Family**

Of the species in this family, only the ballhead gilia and the plains phlox are described in the ethnobotanical literature for tribes who lived in the Black Hills region.

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**Collomia linearis**  
[slender collomia or tiny trumpet]

Slender collomia is widely distributed in the Hills in many different environments and at all elevations, including Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:294; Pisarowicz 2001h:1). No names or uses for this plant have been uncovered in the ethnobotanical literature.
**Ipomopsis congesta**  
[ballhead gilia]

The ballhead gilia is frequently found in the grasslands and open forests of the Hogback, Red Valley, and Minnelusa Foothills at low to mid elevations over the entire range of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:296). Another gilia, not reported in the Hills, *I. Longiflora* [flaxflowered ipomopsis] was called *yazokapi* [to suck the stem] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:632; Rogers 1980:53).

**Phlox spp.**  
[phlox]

Only one of the phlox species, *Phlox andicola* [prairie phlox], listed in the Black Hills is documented in the ethnobotanical literature. Closely related to *P. hoodii* [Hood’s or carpet phlox], which is common in the Hogback and Red Valley (and at Wind Cave National Park), prairie phlox is largely found in the sandy soils of the lower elevation foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999:296-298; Pisarowicz 2001h:2). The Lakotas called it *wahpe pepe* [prickly leaf] (Buechel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:53). *P. multifora* [flowery phlox], although not reported for the Hills, was employed by the Cheyennes to make a mild stimulant, which was rubbed over parts of the body for numbness. It was named *esk o wan i’ o* [gritty] in Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:184).

**Polygalaceae**  
The Milkwort Family

There are three members of the Milkwort family in the Black Hills, *Polygala alba* [white milkwort], *Polygala verticillata* [whorled milkwort], and *Polygala senega* [Seneca snakeroot]. Two of these were used by the tribal nations of the region. White milkwort is a common plant in mixed grass prairie, sage grasslands, and open pine forests from the Hogback to the Limestone Plateau (Larson and Johnson 1999:298); it appears at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001i:2). Kindscher (1992: 165) notes that this was one of the plants that Plains Indians traded. It was used by the Lakota to treat earaches (Kindscher 1992: 165). The Black Hills is an outlier location for the Seneca snakeroot, a plant typically associated with the eastern Woodlands. It is confined largely to the northern Black Hills where it occasionally appears at mid to high elevations in open pine or mixed forest environments (Larson and Johnson 1999: 300). The Dakotas (and possibly the Lako-tas) used this plant as an antidote for toxic bites and stings, but most of the information on its native uses comes from tribes in the eastern Woodlands (Kindscher 1992:165-166). This might be the snakeroot that Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:172) said could stimulate erections. It was also a popular herbal remedy in European American folk medicine (Kindscher 1992:166-67; Larson and Johnson 1999:298).

**Polygonaceae**  
The Buckwheat Family

**Eriogonum spp.**  
[wild buckwheat]

There are many different and often locally restricted species of wild buckwheat in the northern and central Plains, some of which had specific uses for tribal nations in the region (Kindscher 1992:243-245). Two of the species reported in the Black Hills are identified in the Lakota language, but no specific uses were designated for them. Other *erigoneum* species with reported uses among the tribal nations of the region are not listed in the Hills, although *E.annum* [annual wild buckwheat] is apparently very common in surrounding rangelands (John-son and Larson 1999:218).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:172)  
*hisse e yo* [no translation given]  
*E. umbellatum* [sulpher-flower buckwheat]

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)  
*ekamatsu* [no translation given]  
*E. lancifolium* [lanceleaf buckwheat]
**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:116-117, 227, 399, 470; Rogers 1980:54)
*canhlogan hutkan sabsapa* [black root medicine]
*E. flavum* [alpine golden buckwheat]
*i'niyan pejuta* [breathing medicine]
*E. annuum* [annual buckwheat]
alternative: *on wahinyuntonpi* [to rub on hides]
*sunktawote* [horse’s food]
*E. pauciflorum* [fewflower buckwheat]

**Habitat:** *E. flavum* [wild yellow buckwheat] is common in the Black Hills at low to mid elevations on dry limestone and sandstone outcrops and in red stone soils, and *E. pauciflorum* [fewflower buckwheat] is found occasionally in the Hogback and Red Valley at low elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999: 300). Both are reported at Wind Cave and so is *E. annuum* [annual buckwheat] (Pisa-rowicz 2001h:1).

**Uses:** Wild buckwheats had a number of different uses for the tribal nations who lived in the region of the Black Hills and also for those who resided in the Southwest (Kindscher 1992:244).

### [medicinal]

The Cheyennes made a tea from *E. umbellatum* to shorten the length of menses, and they considered this medicine scarce and so valuable that they would give a horse for a small quantity of the prepared medicine (Grinnell 1972:2:172). The Lakotas brewed a tea from *E. annuum* to treat sore mouths in children and also to promote urination (Buechel 1970:227), while *E. flavum*, judging by its Lakota name, was probabaly used for some unidentified medicinal remedy (Buechel 1970:116-117). The Co-manches are also reported to have made a tea from *E. longifolium* to doctor stomach disorders (Carlson and Jones 1939:521).

### [veterinary]

The Cheyennes used *E. subalpinum* to strengthen their horses (Grinnell 1972:2:172).

### [art & manufacture]

Reverend Eugene Buechel (1970:227, 399) reports that hides were rubbed and bleached by the Lakotas with a solution of the blossoms of *E. annuum* and brain, liver, gall, or spleen.

**Polygonum** *spp.* [smartweed]

Two varieties *Polygonum amphibian/coccineum* [marsh smartweed] and *P. douglasii* [Douglas’ knotweed], are reported in the Black Hills, but many others exist in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:302-303). The Lakotas had names for six different *Polygonum* species.

**Names:**

Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:2:173; Hart 1981:32)
*aestome-mesehestotse* [tasteless potato]

*P. bistortoides* [American bistort]

### [food]

The Cheyennes considered the roots of *P. bistortoides* a delicacy and boiled them with meat (Grinnell 1972:2:176). The Lakotas...
reported that _P.coccineum_ was edible (Buechel 1970:476).

**[medicinal]** The Lakota medicine man, Lame Deer (in Fire and Erdoes 1972:170), did not identify a specific variety, but he noted that smartweed was good for stomach cramping and diarrhea.

**Rumex spp.**

**[dock]**

Many of the various _Rumex_ species have known uses among tribal nations in the Plains, including the five reported for the Black Hills: _R. acetosella_ [sheep sorrel] and _R. occidentalis/aquaticus_ [western dock] are native species, while _R. crispus_ [Indian rhubarb or curly dock], _R. stenophyllus_ [toothed or narrowleaf dock], and _R. patienn-tia_ [patience dock] are introduced species, commonly seen along ditches and roadsides (Larson and Johnson 1999:304). _R. venosus_ [veiny dock or wild begonia], although not reported for the Hills, is very common in the mixed grass prairies of the greater plains region (Johnson and Larson 1999:220).

**Names:**

**Arapaho** (Nickerson 1966:47)

*hewovey* [no translation given]

* R. venosus

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:172; Hart 1981:32)

* ma’i tuk ohe* [red steeping in water]

* R. venosus

* alternate:* *ma’?e-tohko-o’he’e*

* hohaso’e* [no translation given]

* R. crispus

**Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:77; Buechel 1970:476, 520; Rogers 1980:55)

* shiakipa* [no translation given]

* R. crispus

* *This probably from the word siya’ka* [a boil] (Buechel 1970:463).

* taka sasala hu iyececa* [like the red plant stem]

* R. altissimus [pale dock]

* wahpe skuya* [sour leaf]

* R. venosus

**Habitat:** Sheep sorrel and western dock are located occasionally at the mid to high elevations of the central and northern Black Hills, while the introduced docks occur in disturbed habitats throughout the Hills and neighboring grasslands (Larson and Johnson 1999:304). Only the non-native curly dock, _R.crispus_, is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:2).

**Uses:** The tribal nations of the Plains had many different uses for members of the _Rumex_ subfamily.

**[food]** The Poncas ate the leaves of _R. crispus_ like European Americans (Gilmore 1919:77), while the Cheyennes consumed the inner portion of the plant’s stem (Hart 1981:32).

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas made a decoction from _R. altissimus_ to treat stomach cramps and diarrhea (Buechel 1970:476), from _R. crispus_ to draw out a boil’s suppuration (Gilmore 1919:77), from _R.venosus_ to expel the afterbirth (Buechel 1970:520), and from an unspecified _rumex_ species to treat fevers and headaches in children (Densmore 1918: 267). Thomas Mails (1991:164) reported that the dock was one of Fools Crow’s preferred medicinal plants; he wrote:

He used its leaves and powdered root to make a poultice or a salve to treat skin problems and to stop bleeding. It as applied to boils and burns. It also reduced arthritis, rheumatism, bruises and swellings. When made into a tea, dock reduced fevers, helped kidney problems and treated sore throats, constipation, and diarrhea.

The Cheyennes dried the root of _R. crispus_, pulverizing and boiling it into a decoction to treat lung hemorrhages; they also used it in a poultice for wounds or sores (Grinnell 1972:2:173). The Arapahos made a wash from the stems and leaves to treat sores (Nickerson 1966:47). According to Gary Tilford (1997:134, 168-169), European American herbalists rely on sheep sorrel and other _Rumex_ species for poultices in treating skin disorders, metabolic imbalances, diarrhea, fevers, and inflammations.
The Cheyennes made yellow and red dyes for quills and feathers from the roots of the veiny dock (Grinnell 1972:2:173), and the Hidatsas and Arapa-hos did so as well (Nickerson 1966:47; Nickel 1974:69). The Cheyennes also used the roots of *R. crispus* as a source of yellow dye for porcupine quills (Grinnell 1972: 2: 173) and so did the Lakotas, who also added the roots to berry dyes to give them a richer color (Lyford 1940:42).

**Primulaceae**

*The Primrose Family*

None of the members of the Primrose family located in the Black Hills have reported uses among the European American and American Indian populations who lived in the region, although one species does have a Lakota name.

**Dodecatheon pulchellum**

*darkthroat shootingstar*

This plant is common in the open pine and mixed forest areas of the Black Hills at low to high elevations. Although tribal uses for this plant have been documented, none of these are associated with tribal nations from the immediate region (Tilford 1997:136; Larson and Johnson 1999:306).

**Lysimachia spp.**

*loosestrife*

*L. cilata* [fringed loosestrife] is a very common plant throughout the northern Plains, and it is frequently found on the edges of streams, ponds, and springs over the entire range of the Black Hills. *L. thyrsiflora* [tuf-ted loosestrife], on the other hand, is restricted to the northern and central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 306). The Lakotas are the only local tribal nation whose ascriptions for *Lysimachia* species are documented in the ethnobotanical literature (Buechel 1970: 116, 117; Rogers 1980:55). *Can-hlogan huwanjila* [plant with only one stalk] is their name for *Lalatum,* while *Canhlogan wahcazi panspanjela* [soft bun-chy yellow flower stalk] refers to *L. thyrsiflora.*

**Pyrolaceae**

*The Wintergreen Family*

Several different species from the win-tergreen family are found in the Black Hills, including *Chimaphila umbellata* [prince’s pine] and *Pyrola asarifolia* [pink or liver leaf shinleaf]. Many of the species are rare, existing as outliers from the eastern regions of North America where they are much more common. Wintergreens were used by American Indians to treat a variety of ailments, although none can be documented for tribes who historically used the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:308-09). They also have a long history of use in European American folk medicine (Tilford 1997:120). *Wahpe blaskaska* [flat leaf] is the Lakotas’ generic name for wintergreens (Buechel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:44)

**Ranunculaceae**

*The Buttercup Family*

Several species in this family were used by tribal nations in the region, and some, like the baneberry and pasqueflower, had significant uses and meanings.

**Aconitum columbianum**

*Columbian monkshood*

This plant frequently appears in the moist forest and meadow environments of the mid to high elevation central and northern Black Hills. Although it has reported uses in European American folk medicine, nothing has been uncovered for the tribal nations who lived in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:310).

**Actaea rubra**

*red baneberry*

Even though this was a very important and sacred plant to the Arikaras, Cheyennes, and Hidatsas, there is surprisingly no mention of it
in the ethnobotanical literatures on other tribal nations who lived in the area, including the Lakotas.

**Names:**

Arikara (Gilmore 1930:75)  
*shkanikait* [no translation given]

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:174; Hart 1981:33)  
*motsi’iyan* [sweet medicine]  
alternate: *motse’eoi’e* [about raising children]

**Habitat:** This plant occurs frequently at all elevations in the northern and central Black Hills where it is located in moist coniferous or mixed deciduous forest habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:311).

**Uses:** The baneberry plant had very important medicinal and ceremonial uses for the Arikaras, Cheyennes, and the Hidatsas.

[medicinal] The Cheyennes dried the roots and stems for an infusion to increase the flow of a nursing woman’s milk and to strengthen the blood (Hart 1992:8). The plant also served as a sweetener to make other medicinal remedies palatable (Randolph 1937:193). The plant’s roots were used by the Arikaras to aid in childbirth, to treat menstrual cramping, to heal breast abscesses, and to clean the nostrils, eyes, and mouth of a newborn child (Gilmore 1930:73, 75, 76, 77).

[symbolic & ceremonial] This is one of the most sacred plants of the Cheyennes who believe that their culture hero brought “to help the people save and bring up their children” (Grinnell 1972:2:174; Randolph 1937:193). To the present day they keep its roots in their Sacred Arrow, Sacred Hat, and Sun Dance bundles. They also use the root in the ‘throwing it at him’ ceremony, in which a spiritual leader bites tiny fragments of the root and spits it on his hands and those of others who conduct sacred tasks. Historically, it was employed in ceremonies to ‘blind’ the Cheyennes’ enemies (Hart 1992:8). The Hidatsas also considered the root sacred and used it in their River Cere-mony (Nickel 1974:57).

**Anemone spp.**

[anemone]

Five different anemone species are reported in the Black Hills, and of these, three are associated with names and/or uses in ethnobotanical sources for tribal nations in the region.

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:178, 183; Rogers 1980:55)  
*hitun’kala tunkce* [mouse feces]  
*A. cylindrica*

Pulsatilla patens  
alternative name: *hoksi’wana nahca* [the boy child has come]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:82)  
*te-zhinga-makan* [little buffalo medicine]  
*A. canadensis*

*wathibaba-makan* [playing card medicine]  
*A. cylindrica*

**Habitat:** The meadow anemone, *A. canadensis*, is common in the wetter prairies of the eastern parts of South Dakota and adjoining states, but it occurs as a rare outlier plant in the Black Hills and is restricted to the mid to high elevation meadows in the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:312; Johnson and Larson 1999:220). By contrast, the candle anemone, *A. cylindrica*, is common in the Black Hills. It is found at all elevations throughout the region in open forest, woodland, and meadow habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:312). The cutleaf anemone, *A. multi-fida*, and the pasqueflower, *Pulsatilla patens*, are both frequent in the northern and central areas of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:312). While the former is restricted to locations at mid to high elevations, the latter, which is the state flower of South Dakota, is found at low to mid elevations, including locations at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999: 314;
The Tall anemone, *A. virginiana*, is also found in these areas, but it is a rare plant (Larson and Johnson 1999:312).

**Uses:** Members of the anemone subfamily were important medicinally and symbolically to some of the tribal nations who lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills.

**[medicinal]** The root of the meadow anemone was one of the most highly es-teemed medicines of the Poncas and their close relatives the Omaha. It was prescribed for wounds and many other ailments, but the right to use it was confined to members of the Tes-sin-de gens (Gilmore 1919:82). The Dakotas (and probably the Lakotas as well) crushed the leaves of the pasqueflower to use as a counter irritant for rheumatism. The Arapahos, Poncas, and Omahas used it for the same ailment (Gilmore 1919:82; Nicker-son 1966:47). The Cheyennes also used the pulverized root in treatments for unknown medicinal purposes (Hart 1981:34). Various species of anemones are also associated with uses in European American folk medicine (Kindscher 1992:39-40).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Poncas used the woolly fruits of the candle anemone as charms for good luck in gambling (Gilmore 1919:82). The pasqueflower blossoms on the high plains before the snows completely melt, and as a result, they were considered a harbinger of spring, renewal, and rebirth for several of the tribes in the region. Arikaras and Pawnees hung pasqueflowers each spring on their sacred cedar tree, which symbolized the return of spring and the renewal of life (Gilmore 1987:188). The Dakotas had many stories about this flower (Gilmore 1987:205-208), and they sang songs to celebrate its appearance in the early spring (Gilmore 1919:81).

**Aquilegia spp.**

**[columbine]**

Of the two columbine species noted in the Black Hills, *A. brevistyla* [blue or small-flower columbine] and *A. canadensis* [red columbine], only the latter has any reported ethnobotanical use.

**Names:**

**Ponca** (Gilmore, 1919:82)

*inubthon-kithe-sabe-hi* [black perfume plant]

**Habitat:** The blue columbine is occasion-ally located in moist coniferous and mixed deciduous forests of the northern and central Black Hills at mid to high elevations. The wild columbine is frequently found in the Black Hills but in the eastern regions at low to mid elevations, in moist and shady deciduous woods which border local streams (Larson and Johnson 1999:316).

**Uses:** Of the tribes who lived in the region, only the Lakotas and Poncas are reported to have used the wild columbine.

**[medicinal]** The Lakotas made a tea from the wild columbine by pouring hot water over its leaves. It was used to treat diarrhea in children (Densmore 1918:267). European American herbalists have a long tradition of using columbines for treating a wide variety of maladies, but it must be used with extreme care because of its toxicity (Tilford 1997:192).

**[cosmetic & hygienic]** The Poncas crushed and chewed the seeds of the wild columbine to create a fragrant paste that was applied to clothing (1919:82).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Poncas rubbed the pulverized seeds of the wild columbine in their hands to apply as a love medicine (Gilmore 1919:82-83).

**Clematis tenuiloba/ Columbiana**

**[rock clematis]**

Rock clematis is a common plant in the Minnelusa Foothills and the Limestone Plateau (Larson and Johnson 1999:318). There is no evidence on its names or uses in the ethnobotanical literature.
**Delphinium spp. [larkspur]**

*Delphinium bicolor* [little larkspur] is the species reported in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:318), but it is not reported in association with the region's tribal nations. *D. virescens/carolinianum* [prairie larkspur], which is documented in ethno-botanical sources, is widespread, but not abundant in the prairies of South Dakota (Johnson and Larson 1999:222; Larson and Johnson 1999:318).

**Names:**

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:28)

*ton-a* [gourd seed]  
*D. virescens*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:536; Roger 1980:55)

*wanagi tïpsila* [spirit turnip]  
*D. virescens*

**Habitat:** *Delphinium bicolor* [low larkspur] is found west of the Missouri River, and it is especially abundant in the Black Hills area (Larson and Johnson 1999:318).

**Uses:** The Kiowas and Arapahos are the only native population with connections to the Black Hills that have any reported use for larkspurs.

**[cosmetic & hygienic]** Michael Moore (1979:96), in his work on the medicinal uses of western plants, notes that delphinium seeds and flowers were an ingredient in tinctures used by European Americans to kill lice. Larson and Johnson (1999:319) also report that American Indian populations crushed the foliage and used it as an insecticide, but the tribal attributions of this usage are not noted.

**[art & manufacture]** The Kiowas used the seeds from this plant in their peyote rattles (Vestal and Schultes 1939:28), and the Arapahos and Shoshones made a blue dye from the blossoms (Nickerson 1966:47).

**Ranunculus, spp. [buttercup]**

There are several different buttercup species in the Black Hills, but none of these have any reported ethnobotanical uses (Larson and Johnson 1999:320-322). Two species are reported at Wind Cave National Park: *R. abortivus* [little leaf or early wood buttercup] and *R. glaberrimus* [crowfoot or sage-brush buttercup] (Pisarowicz 2001h:1, 2001j:1). Only one species, which is not identified with the Hills, is named in any of the native nomenclatures we have studied, and this is *R. cardiophyllus* [heartleaf buttercup] or *canhlogan wicagnaske* [gooseberry stalk] in Lakota (Buechel 1970:118; Rogers 1980:55).

**Thalictrum dasycarpum [purple meadowrue]**

This is a common plant in the moist prairie and wet meadow environments of eastern South Dakota, and it is also found in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:322; 1999b:224).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:174; Hart 1981:34)  
*mo i’name it se’e yo* [elk, horse medicine]  
*T. sparsiflorum* alternate:*mo:ehe-mo?name-heseoo?ote*

**Lakota** (Gilmore 1919:80; Buechel 1970:574; Rogers 1980:56)  
*wazi’mninka* [pine top]  
*T. polygonum/pubescens* [king of the meadow] and *T. dasycarpum*

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:80)  
*nisute-hi* [flute plant]  
*T. dasycarpum*

**Habitat:** Blue or purple meadowrue is found occasionally over the entire Black Hills region at low to mid elevations in moist meadow, open forest, and woodland habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:322-23).

**Uses:** Meadowrues were used by a number of different Native populations in the Plains for a variety of purposes.
The Lakotas picked the mature fruits in August and stored them with clothes and other personal articles because of their pleasant odor (Gilmore 1913b:360), and they also rubbed the seeds on their hands as a lotion (Buechel 1970:80). The Hidatsas considered the seeds a young woman’s perfume (Nickel 1974:74), and the Cheyennes mixed the flowers with other plants for perfumes (Hart 1981:34). The Arapahos used the seeds and roots for perfume too and in a powdered form for shampoo (Nickerson 1966:47).

The Cheyennes dried and ground the plant into a fine powder to make their horses spirited and to give them endurance (Grinnell 1972:2:141, 174). The Lakotas used the seeds to make their horses lively (Buechel 1970:80), and the Hidatsas did the same (Nickel 1974:74).

Ponca bachelors are reported to have used the meadowrue’s top as a love charm (Gilmore 1919:80).

**Roseceae**

**The Rose Family**

A number of different non-woody species in the rose family are found in the Black Hills. Of these, only two are associated with ethnobotanical uses for either European American or American Indian populations in the region.

**Agrimonia striata**

**[roadside agrimony]**

Agrimony is common in the Black Hills in a variety of moist habitats at low to mid elevations, but it has no reported cultural associations (Larson and Johnson 1999:324).

**Fragaria virginiana**

**[Virginia strawberry]**

Two species of strawberry are found in the Black Hills, the rare Woodland strawberry, *F. vesca*, and the much more common Virginia strawberry, *F. virginiana*. Both are found in similar environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:326).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:34; Hart 1981:34)

*ve`shkee`?ehe-menoste* [sweet berries]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:475, 575; Roger 1980:56)

*takan yecala* [string like runners]

alternates: *wazi’skeca* [pine mink]

*wahe` skuya* [sweet leaf]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:146)

*bashte* [no translation given]

**Habitat:** This popular food plant is com-mon over the entire range of the Black Hills. It grows at all elevations in moist meadows and open pine, spruce, and deciduous forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:326).

**Uses:** This was an important food plant for American Indian and European American populations in the region.

**[food]** All of the tribal nations in the northern Plains ate the wild strawberry fresh when it ripened in June, and some apparently dried them to season other foods (Gilmore 1919:146). They were also desired and sought after by early travelers and settlers in the region (Kindscher 1987:117).

**[medicinal]** Although the Blackfeet of the northern Plains and many tribal nations in the upper Great Lakes used wild strawberry medicinally, there are no reports of such use among the tribes who lived in the region of the Black Hills in historic times (Kindscher 1992:245-246).

**Geum spp.**

**[avens]**

Prairie smoke or old man’s whiskers, *Geum triflorum*, and yellow avens, *G. aleppicum*, are two of the *geum* species that are widely distributed over the entire Black Hills region at all elevations from mixed grass prairies and sagebrush steppes to open forests and
meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999:328-29). Prairie smoke and white avens \([G. \text{ canadense}]\) are found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2; 2001j: 2). Although ethnobotanical uses for \(G. \text{ triflorum}\) have been described (Kindscher 1992:249-50), none of these have been re-reported for tribes who historically lived in the Black Hills region.

**Potentilla spp.** (cinquefoils)

There are more than ten different cinquefoil species in the Black Hills. They are commonly found at all elevations in a diverse range of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999: 330-336). Only the woody variety (see section on Woody Plants) has any reported name and/or use among local tribes. Names and uses for the non-woody species, however, have been documented for tribal nations outside the region (Kindscher 1992: 271-272). Cinquefoils were often used in European American folk medicine to treat sore throats, gum inflammations, and a wide variety of intestinal maladies (Moore, M. 1979:132).

**Rubiaceae**

**The Madder Family**

Only \(G. \text{ boreale}\) or bedstraw species are reported in the Black Hills, including \(G. \text{ boreale}\) [northern bedstraw] and \(G. \text{ aparine}\) [cleavers, catchweed bedstraw, or sticky-willy]. Another species, which is more common to the prairies farther east, is \(G. \text{ triflorum}\) [Fragrant bedstraw]. Both species grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001i:2) and are associated with names and/or uses in American Indian and Euro-pean American cultural contexts.

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1971:520, 521; Rogers 1980:57)

\(G. \text{ triflorum}\)

**Habitat:** The northern bedstraw is the most common in the Black Hills where it is located in a great variety of moist habitats in mixed grass prairies and forests. Cleavers and fragrant bedstraws are not as common and restricted to moist forest environments [Larson and Johnson 1999:338].

Uses: For local tribes, the members of this subfamily were used predominately as a perfume.

[cosmetic & hygienic] Fragrant bedstraw was used as a perfume for women among the Poncas (Gilmore 1913b:367, 1919:115), and we can suspect, since its name carries a similar meaning, it had the same function among the Lakotas as well. The catchwood variety would have been used as a fragrance for men (Buechel 1970:520-521).

[art & manufacture] Northern bedstraw was used as a source of red dye for some tribal nations including the Arapahos and Shoshones (Nickerson 1966:50) and a stuffing for European American bed mattresses (Tilford 1997:36).

**Santalaceae**

**The Sandalwood Family**

Only one species from this family, \(C. \text{ umbellata}\) [bastard toadflax], is reported in the Black Hills. It is a very common plant throughout the region where it grows in varied habitats and at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:338-39). While known as a food among Numic-speaking tribal nations in the West (Kindscher 1987:95-97), the only tribal nation from the Black Hills region with a reported use for it are the Arapahos who made a blue dye from the root bark (Nickerson 1966:50).
**Saxifragaceae**  
The Saxifrage Family

Three species from this family are reported in the Black Hills, but only one has any reported cultural associations.

**Heuchera richardsonis**  
[Richardson’s alumroot]

Richardson’s alumroot was an important medicinal plant for European Americans and tribal nations in the northern plains (Kind-scher 1992:122-125).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:176; Hart 1981:38)  
*e hyo’ isse’ eyo* [yellow medicine]  
alternate: *heove-heseeo’tse*

Lakota (Buechel 1970:118, 520; Rogers 1980:58)  
*wakpe t’oga* [dries out the mouth leaf]  
alternates: *canholh’shasnala* [little rustling leaf]  
*canholh t’agela hu* [tough weed stem]

**Habitat:**  
Alumroot is generally found in rocky soil or rock crevices in open to dense forests and woodland meadows from low to high elevations over the entire Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:340).

**Uses:**  
American Indians and European Americans used alumroot primarily for medicinal purposes alike.

[medicinal] Among the Lakota, the root was prepared as a tea for chronic diarrhea, and it was also administered in powder form as a treatment for wounds and skin sores (Densmore 1918:269; Buechel 1970:520). The Cheyennes used a remedy from the alumroot to treat rheumatism and another for healing skin rashes (Grinnell 1972:2:176; Hart 1981: 38). The Arapahos employed it as well but for unidentified remedies (Nickerson 1966: 48). European Americans applied the root in ways that were nearly identical to native remedies (Kindscher 1992:124).

**Lithophragma parviflorum**  
[prairie woodland-star]

Although the prairie star is frequently found at many different elevations and in a wide variety of environments in the northern and central Black Hills, its native names and uses have not been documented in the ethnobotanical literature (Larson and John-son 1999:340).

**Saxifraga spp.**  
[saxifrage]

Alberta saxifrage, *S. occidentalis*, is restrict-ed to Lawrence county in the northern Black Hills, where it occurs infrequently at mid to high elevations on moist forested rocky slopes and high meadows (Larson and John-son 1999:342). Although there is no ethnobotanical information on this plant, a related species, *S. jamesi*, was used by the Chey-ennes and named *mah is se’e yo* [red medicine]. The dried plant was rubbed in the hands until finely powdered and then boiled as a tea to treat lung hemorrhage (Grinnell 1972:2:175).

**Scrophulariaceae**  
The Figwort Family

Of the sixteen different species in the Figwort family found in the Black Hills, most of the ones reported to have any cultural use are those belonging to the Beardtongue species.

**Besseya wyomingensis**  
[Wyoming kittentails]

This is a very common plant throughout the Black Hills, but it is not associated with any cultural uses among American Indian or European American populations in the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:342-343)
Two *Castilleja* species are located in the Black Hills, *C. sessiliflora* [downy paintbrush or paintedcup] and *C. suphurea* [sul-pher Indian paintbrush], but only the former is associated with any cultural uses.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:39)

*stseke?he?pomeestse* [no translation given]

*C. sessiliflora*

Lakota (Buechel 1970:521; Rogers 1980:59)

*wahpe yazokapi* [suck leaf]

*C. sessiliflora*

**Habitat:** Downy paintbrush is especially common to the Hogback, Red Valley, Minnelusa Foothills and surrounding grasslands, while Sulpher paintbrush is restricted to the central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:344). It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

**Uses:** Only the culinary value of the Downy paintbrush is described in the ethnobotanical literature for the tribal nations of the Black Hills.


[medicinal] Although tribal nations outside the Black Hills region used *Castilleja* species for medicinal purposes (Tilford 1997:82), there are no reports for local tribes.

[art & manufacture] The Shoshones and the Arapahos used these species to make a red-tan dye (Nickerson 1966:50).

Neither of the two *Linaria* species reported in the Black Hills, *L. dalmatica* [Dalmatian toadflax] and *L. vulgaris* [butter and eggs], are associated with any tribal names or uses. The latter grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2). Both plants were introduced by European Americans as ornamental species, and both were rapidly naturalized in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:346).

**Mimulus guttatus**

[monkeyflower]

The habitats of this plant are located mainly in the central and northern Black Hills, where it is found only occasionally at the margins of springs from mid to high elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:348). It is also found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:1). In Lakota, the plant is called *ceski’kan iyeececa* [like a button] (Buechel 1970:130; Rogers 1980:59), but no applications have been reported for it.

**Orthocarpus luteus**

[yellow owl’s clover]

This is a common plant in the Black Hills where it grows in a wide variety of habitats at all elevations. Although the Blackfeet are reported to have used it to make a red dye, no applications for it have been documented for the tribal nations who lived in the Black Hills region (Larson and Johnson 1999:348).

**Penstemon spp.**

[beardtongues]

Five species of beardtongues are reported in the Black Hills, and these are *P. albidos* [white beardtongue or penstemon], *P. an-gustifolius* [narrowleaf/broadbeard beard-tongue or penstemon], *P. glaber* [smooth/ sawsepal beardtongue or penstemon], *P. gracilis* [slender/lilac beartongue or pen-stemon], and *P. grandiflorus* [shellleaf/ large beardtongue]. This is an important subfamily of plants for the
Lakotas, who have names and/or uses for four of the species found in the Black Hills.

Names:

- *P. albidus* [slippery skin weed]
- *P. augustifolius* [rattle weed]
- *P. grandiflora* [snake’s root]
- *P. gracilis* [like what’s used

Habitats: White penstemon is especially common to the Hogback and Red Valley at low to mid elevations in mixed grass prairies and sagebrush steppe, and the arrowleaf variety is located there occasionally as well but at low elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:350). Smooth and slender penstemons are found throughout the Hills at all elevations and in a wide range of environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:352). The shell-leaf or large beardtongue is found only occasionally at low to mid elevations largely in the Hogback, Red Valley, and Minnelusa Foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999:354). Four of these species, the white, the slender, large, and shelleaf varieties grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

Uses: These species had very important medicinal uses for a number of tribes in the region.


**Scrophularia lanceolata**

[Lanceleaf figwort]

Lanceleaf figwort is found occasionally in the Black Hills at all elevations and in a wide variety of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:354). The Lakota name for it is wahpe yatapi iyec [its like the leaf they chew on], but no uses for it have been reported (Buechel 1970:521; Rogers 1980:59).

**Verbascum thapsus**

[Common mullein]

This plant, which was introduced from Eurasia, has become a common roadside plant throughout the American west. In the Black Hills, it is common and sometimes abundant in a range of habitats from low to high elevations. It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:3). Widely used in European American folk medicine as a remedy for the treatment of asthma and bronchitis, it was adapted by many tribal nations who also applied it in the treatment of respiratory ailments (Tilford 1997:102; Larson and Johnson 1999:356). No evidence of its use, however, has been found for tribes who lived historically in the vicinity of the Hills.

**Veronica spp.**

[Speedwell]

*V. Americana* [American speedwell] is common at all elevations over the entire Black Hills near springs and spring-fed streams, and *anagallis-aquatica* [water speedwell] is also common but only up to mid elevations where it grows near streams and ponds (Larson and Johnson 1999:356, 358). *V. arvensis* [corn speedwell] is found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001k:4). The leaves of *americana* are edible, but the roots may be poisonous. Modern herbalists use it as an expectorant (Tilford 1997:14). There are no
reports, however, on its use among the tribal nations who resided in the region.

**Solaneae**

**The Potato Family**

Four plants, *Hyoscyamus niger* [black henbane] and three species of *Physalis*, are reported in the Black Hills. Black henbane is poisonous and occasionally found in the Hills and at Wind Cave National Park, but there are no cultural uses associated with it (Larson and Johnson 1999:358; Pisarowicz 2001k:2). Another member of the potato family, *Solanum rostratum* [buffalo bur nightshade], is not mentioned in Larson and Johnson’s plant inventory on the Black Hills, but it is common in disturbed areas throughout the Great Plains (Johnson and Larson 1999:234). It is also found in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2). The Lakotas called it *spansni yutapi iyecceca* [it is like what they eat uncooked] (Buechel 1970:467; Rogers 1980:60). *Solanum triflorum* [cutleaf nightshade], a close relative, was known as *canhlogan skiskita* [woodduck weed]; the Lakotas used the berries of this species for stomach aches (Buechel 1970:117).

**Physalis spp**

**[Virginia groundcherry]**

Also commonly known as tomatillo, Chinese lantern, and popweed, three groundcherry species are identified in the Black Hills. These are *P. virginiana* [Vir-ginia groundcherry], *P.heterophylla* [clam-my groundcherry], and *P. longifolia/hispida* [longleaf/prairie groundcherry], but only the clammy variety has been reported on in ethnobotanical sources.

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:477; Rogers 1980:60)

* tamniohpi hu [womb, fetal membrane, and nest stem]
  * P. heterophylla

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:113)

* pe igatush [forehead, to pop]
  * P. heterophylla

maka bashahon shon [crooked medicine]

**P. lanceolata**

**Habitat:** *P. virginiana* is distributed across a wide variety of habitats in the Black Hills, while *P. heterophylla* favors the sandy and rocky soils of open grassland environments. *P. longifolia* is also found in the Hills but less frequently (Larson and Johnson 1999: 360).

**Uses:** The berries of all of these varieties are edible.

[food] Ground cherries were picked opportunistically and eaten fresh by Lakota children (Buechel 1970:477), but they were also made into a sauce and dried for the winter when quantities were sufficient (Gilmore 1913b:362, 1919:113; Red Cloud High School 2001). The Hidatsas and Kiowas also valued them as food (Nickel 1974:69).

[medicine] The Lakotas believed that the consumption of ground cherries increased peoples’ appetite (Buechel 1970:470). They also used them in a treatment for snakebites (Red Cloud High School 2001). The Poncas brewed a tea from the root for headaches and stomach ailments, and they also used the root to heal wounds (Gilmore 1919:113). The roots of this plant were associated with the healing traditions of the Buffalo Medi-cine Society among the related Omahas (Fletcher & La Flesche 1972:2:487, 488, 584).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Lakotas are also reported to have an unspecified use for them in their Sun Dances (Red Cloud High School 2001).

**Typhaceae**

**The Cattail Family**

Two members of this family are reported in the Black Hills: *Typha latifolia* [broadleaf cattail] and *T. angustifolia* [narrowleaf cattail] (Larson and Johnson 1999:360-361). Native names for cattails appear to be generic to the family.
Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:170; Hart 1981:13)
vi’tan ots [tongue plant]
alternates: vo?heneo?ste-vo?e (stse) [fat plant]
veta-no?h estse

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:524)
pisbumi [no translation given]

Lakota (Gilmore 1919:64; Buechel 1970:177, 584; Rogers 1980:32)
wi’huta’ hu [tent bottom plant]
alternate: hantkan [hair scraped off]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:50)
ka.zol [translation not given]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:64)
wa?ab’gaskonthe [similar to corn]

Habitat: Cattails are found over the entire Black Hills near streams, ponds, lakes, and boggy areas at all elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:361). They are also found in ravine environments at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001:i:1).

Uses: Cattails had a wide range of uses among the tribal nations of the region.

[food] The Plains Apaches ate the root-stocks occasionally (Jordan 1965:50).


[art & manufacture] The Lakotas also relied on the fuzz as a filling for pillows (Gilmore 1919:65; Buechel 1970:177), and the Hidatsas employed the seeds as an all-purpose padding for packing and pillows (Nickel 1974:75). The Cheyennes once used cattail leaves in their basketry (Hart 1981:13). The Lakotas applied the roots of the common cattail in making of a yellow dye (Lyford 1940:42).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Pieces of the cattail were essential in the making of ceremonial objects for the Ponca Wawan ceremony (Gilmore 1919:64-65).

Utricaceae
The Nettle Family

The stinging nettle, U. dioica/ gracilis, is the only Utrica species reported in the Black Hills.

Names:

Lakota (Buechel 1970:188; Rogers 1980:61)
cani ca’hpe hu [woody whip stalk]  
U. dioica

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:77)
hanuga-hi [no translation given]  
U. gracilis

Habitat: Stinging nettle, especially the U. dioica variety, is found frequently in moist areas bordering streams at all elevations over the entire region of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:362).

Uses: The Lakotas and Poncas had medicinal or manufacturing uses for these nettles.

[medicinal] The Lakotas prepared a tea from the roots to administer for stomach pain (Buechel 1970:188). European Ameri-can herbalists consider this a good nutritive tonic (Tilford 1997:210).

[art & manufacture] The dried stalks were crumpled by the Poncas to free the fiber from the woody part, and the fiber was used for twine and cordage (Gilmore 1919:77).
Valerianaceae
The Valerian Family

Two species in the Valerian family are reported for the Black Hills, *Valeriana dioica* [marsh valerian] and *V. edulis* [edible valerian or tobacco root]; both have ethnobotanical applications. Marsh valerian is occasionally found in the northern and central Black Hills where it grows in moist habitats at mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:362), while edible valerian is located occasionally at mid to high elevations in the Minnelusa Foothills and the Limestone Plateau in the northwestern and western portions of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:364). Although members of the valerian family are popular herbs in European American medicine (Tilford 1997: 150), there is no documentation on their use among the tribal nations who lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills. Both varieties are used as a popular sedative in European American folk medicine (Moore 1979:158). The cooked rootstalks of these species are edible, and they can also be dried and pulverized to make flour (Larson and Johnson 1999:362, 364). Their culinary uses, which are widely reported for the tribal nations of the Northwest, have not been documented for the tribal nations who covered the Black Hills.

Verbenaceae
The Verbena Family

Three species of the verbena family, *Glandularia bipinnatifida* [Dakota mock vervain], *Verbena hastata* [blue or swamp ver-vain], and *Verbena stricta* [wooly or hoary verbena] are reported in the Black Hills. The last two grow at Wind Cave National Park in various habitats. Another species in this family, *Phryma leptostachya* [looseseed], also grows at the park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3, Pisarowicz 2001i:3, 2001j:3).

Names:

Lakota (Gilmore 1919:111; Buechel 1970:500, 520; Rogers 1980:61)

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:111)

Habitat: Dakota mock vervain is occasionally located in the low elevations of the southern Black Hills in mixed grass prairies and pastures (Larson and Johnson 1999:364), while blue vervain and wooly vervain are found at low to mid elevations in moist habitats in the southern Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:366).

Uses: Although tribes outside the region are reported to have relied on verbena for various applications, the Lakotas and Poncas are the only two associated with the Black Hills with documented uses for them (Kind-scher 1992:211-212).

[food] The Poncas steeped the leaves of blue vervain for a culinary beverage (Gilmore 1919:111).

[medicinal] The Lakotas prepared the leaves of the blue vervain in a tea as a remedy for stomachache [Gilmore 1913b:363, 1919: 111; Lame Deer in Fire and Erdoes 1972: 170]. This was also a popular plant in Euro-pan American folk remedies (Kind-scher 1992:212).

Violaceae
The Viola Family

Although there are many different species in the violet family growing in the Black Hills and a few at Wind Cave National Park too (Larson and Johnson 1999:368-374; Pisarowicz 2001h:3, 2001i:3, 2001j:3), none are reported to have had any special cultural uses except as markers in an Omaha (and Ponca) children’s game (Gilmore 1919:103). The Lakotas called the *Viola pedatifida* [prairie violet] *wahpe to* [blue leaf] (Bue-chel
Outside the region, European American and American Indian herbalists are reported to have used violets as an emetic to induce vomiting (Tilford 1997:152). In the Black Hills, the prairie violet appears occasionally in the central and northern regions at low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:372). This and other violet species are potentially edible (Kindscher 1987:222).

### III. VASCULAR PLANTS: GRASSES, SEDGES, RUSHES, FERNS, AND HORSETAILS

#### Pocaceae

**The Grass Family**

Hundreds of different grass species grow in the plains and prairie regions of North America with over eighty varieties reported in the Black Hills alone. Many of these grasses were important to the tribal nations of the region because they provided nutritious fodder for their horses. The locations where these grasses were abundant would have been recognized as good places for local tribes to camp and pasture their horses. Knowledge of grasses and their growing seasons would also have been important in locating bison and other ungulate species who depended on them for their forage. Unfortunately, very few of the anthropologists and botanists who studied the native uses of plants in the region gathered information on tribal knowledge of forage conditions in their various areas of occupation. The ethnobotanical data on grasses are sparse relative to other plant families, and even where a fairly detailed nomenclature exists for grasses, as is the case with the Lakotas for whom over thirty different names have been recorded, much of the knowledge associated with them is not documented.

**Agropyron cristatum**

[crested wheatgrass]

Introduced from Siberia and naturalized in the Black Hills and surrounding plains regions, the names and uses of crested wheatgrass are not documented in ethno-botanical sources (Larson and Johnson 1999:380; Johnson and Larson 1999:16). Nor are the names and uses for the other wheatgrasses reported in the area, including *A. Repens* [Quackgrass] and *A. intermedium* [Intermediate wheatgrass] (Larson and Johnson 1999: 408, 410).

**Agrostis spp.**

[tickleglass]

Two species of this subfamily *A. scabra* [tickleglass/rough bentgrass] and *A. solonifera* or *gigantea* [redtop], a European introduction, are common in a variety of different habitats in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:380). Neither of them is associated with any cultural uses in the ethno-botanical literature.

**Andropogon spp.**

[bluestems]

*A. gerardii* [big bluestem] was a major species in the tallgrass prairie (Kindscher 1992: 226), and it is the only one listed in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 382). Other bluegrasses, however, were recognized and named in the ethnobotanical nomenclatures of Plains tribes.

**Names:**

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 13)

so-wangs-ksion [no translation given]

_A. saccharoides_

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970: 440, 452; Rogers 1980: 28, 31)

peji sasa oikihe tankinkinyan [large red joint grass]

_A. gerardii_

alternate: _santhuhu ohiheton_ [jointed santhuhu]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965: 60)

ōci.s [red grass]

_A. gerardii_ and _A. scoparius_

alternative: _‘a.ōhe_ [native grass]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919: 68)

hade-hide [red hay]
**A. gerardii**

**Habitat:** In the Black Hills, big bluegrass is located on north and east-facing slopes with deep soil and added moisture (Larson and Johnson 1999:382). It grows at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** This grass had a number of different cultural associations for tribes in the region.

[medicinal] The Omahas and probably the Poncas as well made a decoction from the grass to treat lethargy and fatigue and to reduce fever (Gilmore 1919:69).

[cosmetic & hygienic] The Kiowa used the stems of *A. saccharoides* to clean their teeth (Vestal and Schultes 1939:13).

[veterinary] The Plains Apaches considered blue grasses to be the most nutritious for their horses (Jordan 1965:62).

[art & manufacture] The Poncas used the thick jointed stems of big bluestem in the construction of their earth lodges (Gilmore 1919:69). For the Plains Apaches, this was the prime material for making sleeping mat-tresses and also for manufacturing brooms to sweep out the tipi (Jordan 1965: 56). The Lakotas lined this grass on the floor of their tipis to absorb moisture, and they used it for insulation in their moccasins (Red Cloud High School 2001).

[fuel] Plains Apaches used bunches of blue stem grass as tinder to start their fires (Jordan 1965:156).

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**Bouteloua spp.**

**[grama]**

Three species of the warm-season, short grama grass are located in the Black Hills: *B. curtipendula* [sideoats grama], *B. gracilis* [blue grama], and *B. hirsuta* [hairy grama]. This was an important group of grasses for bison.

**Names:**

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 14)

son-pa-pa [no translation given]

*B. hirsuta*

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 439, 544; Rogers 1980: 28, 31)

wapaha kamnimnila peji [banner waving in wind]

*B. curtipendula*

peji okijata [forked grass]

*B. gracilis*

possible alternate: peji hinkpila [fur grass]

**Habitat:** Sideoats grama is common in a wide range of upland habitats in the Black Hills, including the dry prairies and pine savannas of the foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999:384). Blue grama is found in most of the Black Hills’ dry grassland hab-itats, and it is a primary species of shortgrass and mixed-grass prairie environments found at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1996:386; Pisarowicz 2001g:2). Hairy grama, also located in the park, is largely confined to the sandy or rocky grass-land soils of the foothills (Pisarowicz 2001g: 3).

**Uses:** Only the Lakotas, Kiowas, and Plains Apaches are reported to have had uses for these grasses.

[medicinal] Plains Apaches used sideoats grama in a medical procedure to remove cataracts from the eyes (Jordan 1965:105)

[veterinary] The Kiowas reported that *B. curtipendula* and *B. hirsuta* were good fodder for horses (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 14).
The Kiowas believed that sideoats grama resembled a lance decorated with feathers, and so it was worn by warriors who killed an enemy with a lance (Vestal and Schultes 1939:14). Young Lakota women searched for four-headed spears of grama grass to bring them good fortune in love and romance (Hassrick 1964:241).

**Bromus spp.**

**[Brome]**

There are many different brome species in the Black Hills, including *B. anomalus* [nodding brome], *B. carinatus* [mountain/California brome], and *B. inermis* [smooth brome grass], and many of them are excellent forage (Larson and Johnson 1999:388, 390, 392). *B. communitatus* [hairy chess/meadow brome] and *B. tectorum* [cheat-grass], however, are the only ones listed at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g:2-3). The only native name reported for a brome grass is *peji hanskaska* [long grass] (Buechel 1970:439; Rogers 1980:390), a name which refers to the smooth brome grass introduced to the region from Europe.

**Buchloe dactyloides**

**[buffalograss]**

Buffalo grass, which provides excellent forage for bison, is found in the foothills and lower elevations of the Black Hills, including Wind Cave National Park, where it appears in mixed grass and shortgrass prairie environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:382; Pisarowicz 2001g:3). The Lakotas knew it as *santuhu hcaka* [like the grass santuhu], and they used the culms to clean their pipes. Crazy Horse, the famous Oglala war leader, wore the top of this grass on his head as a *wotawe* [war charm] instead of a feather (Buechel 1970:452).

**Calamagrostis spp.**

**[reedgrass]**

*C. canadensis* [bluejoint reedgrass] is found in wet habitats at mid to high elevations, while *C. purpurascens* [purple reedgrass] is restricted to the open pine and spruce forests of the Harney Range (Larson and Johnson 1999:394). Neither of these grasses is mentioned in ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations of the region, although Dilwyn Rogers (1980:31) suggests that the Lakota name *peji okihe toto* [grass with blue joints] may refer to *C. canadensis*. Neither of these grasses is reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Calamovilfa longifolia**

**[prairie sandreed]**

This warm-season, tall grass is most frequently found in the sandy or gravelly soils of mixed grass prairies at lower elevations in the Black Hills, including the area of Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:396; Pisarowicz 2001g:3). The Lako-tas knew it as *santuhu hcaka* [like the grass santuhu], and they used the culms to clean their pipes. Crazy Horse, the famous Oglala war leader, wore the top of this grass on his head as a *wotawe* [war charm] instead of a feather (Buechel 1970:452).

**Catabrosa aquatic**

**[brookgrass/water whorlgrass]**

No ethnobotanical information was found on this grass, which is located occasionally at higher elevations in the northern and central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:396).

**Cenchrus longispinus**

**[mat sandbur]**

This grass is especially common at lower elevations in the southern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:398), although it is not listed among the grasses at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g:1-6). The Lakota call it *peji unkcela* [cactus grass] (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:29).
**Dactylis glomerata**  
*orchardgrass*

This tall grass was introduced from Europe and grows on park lands. It is now common in a wide range of environments in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 398). There is no information about it in ethnobotanical sources.

**Danthonia spicata**  
*poverty oatgrass*

Several *Danthonia* species are found in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:400), but only one is identified at Wind Cave National Park, *D. spicata* [poverty oatgrass] (Pisarowicz 2001g:2). There is no documentation, however, on this mid cool-season grass in ethnobotanical sources.

**Deschampsia caespitosa**  
*tufted hairgrass*

This uncommon grass is confined to the mid elevations of the northern and central Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:400), and it is also not reported in the ethnobotanical literature.

**Dichanthelium oligosanthes**  
*Scribner dichanthelium*

Several varieties of the cool-season dichanthelium are reported in the Black Hills, where they frequently appear in the area’s grasslands and open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999: 402). Wind Cave National Park is apparently not one of the locations where it grows, however. In Lakota, this grass was called *peji wakan* [sacred grass] (Buechel 1970: 440; Rogers 1980:30). The Lakotas believed that it had a toxic effect on horses, but according to Larson and Johnson (1999: 402), there is no evidence to support this idea. The Kiowas, however, viewed this as a palatable and nutritious grass to fatten their horses (Vestal and Schultes 1939:16).

**Distichlis spicata**  
*inland saltgrass*

Although not reported for the Black Hills, saltgrass is widespread in the Plains region where it typically grows in alkaline or saline soils (Johnson and Larson 1999:30). The Lakotas knew it as *peji suksuta* [tough grass] (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:29).

**Echinochloa muricata**  
*rough barnyardgrass*

Also known as wild millet, barnyard grass is a common warm-season grass throughout the Great Plains where it typically occupies cultivated fields, ditches, and feed grounds (Johnson and Larson 1999:32). It is one of the grasses listed for Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). The Lakotas call *E. crusgalli*, the European variety, *peji’skuya* [sweet grass] (Buechel 1970:230; Rogers 1980:29).

**Elymus spp.**  
*wildrye*

*E. caandensis* [Canada wildrye], *E. elymoides* [squirreltail], *E. glaucus* [blue wildrye], *E. trachycaulus* [slender wheatgrass], *E. villosus* [hairy wildrye], and *E. virginicus* [Virginia wildrye] are the wildrye species reported in the Black Hills by Larson and Johnson (1999:402-408).

**Names:**

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939: 521)  
puitsaseni [no translation given]  
*E. canadensis*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970: 449; Rogers 1980: 29)  
pteya hota [cow makes it gray with mouth]  
*E. canadensis*
Habitat: Cool season wildrye species occupy a wide range of habitats in the Black Hills, but many are occasional in their appearance or restricted to specific regions. The Canada wildrye, which is the only one named in native nomenclatures, is commonly found over the entire area in open grass-land habitats and along stream banks, including at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999:402; Pisarowicz 2001g: 2).

Uses: Only the Cheyennes are reported to have had uses for any of the wildrye species.

[art & manufacture] Cheyennes also used *E. cinereus* to make a black dye (Hart 1981:28).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The bedding for various Cheyenne ceremonies was made out of *E. cinereus* (not reported in the Black Hills) because it was known to help cool the dancers (Hart 1981:8).

**Eragrostis cilianensis**
[stinkgrass]

The warm-season stinkgrass, although introduced from Europe, is common in the northern Plains (Johnson and Larson 1999: 38), and it is found at Wind Cave National Park too (Pisarowicz 2001g: 3). The Lakotas named it *peji sicamna* [bad smelling grass] (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980: 29).

**Hierochloe odorata**
[sweetgrass/vanilla grass]

Sweetgrass is not reported in the Black Hills nor is it mentioned in Larson and Johnson’s book on the grasses and plants of South Dakota, even though it is widely present in the northern and central plains. This plant is highly sacred to the tribal nations of the region, and it is widely traded by them as well.

Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:9)
*ve?ho?otsetse* [no translation provided]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:15)
*an-son-a* [no translation offered]

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 440, 512; Rogers 1980: 30)
*peji wacanga* [sweetgrass ]
alternative: *wacanga*

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 66)
*pezhe sonsta* [no translation given]

Uses: Sweetgrass is one of the most important sacred plants used by the Lakotas and other tribal nations in the northern Plains for ceremonial purposes.

[cosmetic & hygienic] Kiowas wrapped the grass with articles of clothing to give them a sweet smell, and they also stuffed it in pillows and mattresses (Vestal and Schultes 1939:15).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Kiowas burned it as incense in many of their ceremonies (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 15). In Cheyenne creation stories, sweet grass is mentioned as the first plant the creator laid down when he made this world, and it is also a plant that Sweet Medicine, the Cheyenne’s culture hero, burned to purify the world (Hart 1981: 9). It remains an important ceremonial incense in the Cheyennes’ Sacred Arrow and Sacred Hat ceremonies, in the Sun Dance, in protecting warriors and contraries before they entered battle, in healing rituals, and in warding off evil influences in homes (Hart 1981:9-10).

The Lakotas use it in many different ceremonial contexts too. Indeed, it is ubiquitous in these contexts because the Lakota believe that its smell pleases the spirits, and as a result, it is used whenever the spirits are petitioned for assistance (Buechel 1970: 512; Walker 1980:113,119). For the Lako-tas, sweet grass attracts good spirits, while sage repels evil ones (Gilmore 1919: 66). It is used in consecrating a pipe and in praying with a pipe (Walker 1980:76-77, 81, 83, 87, 89), in seeking visions (Walker 1980: 86), in birthing (Hassrick 1964: 271), in the ceremonies performed by *wicasta wakan* (Hassrick 1964: 249; Walker 1980:94-95), in the adoption rituals of the *Hunka* cere-mony (Walker 1980:194, 197, 202, 209, 210, 214, 228-230, 235), in the Sun Dance (Sword in Deloria 1929; Hassrick 1964:244; Walker 1980:184),
the *Omaha wacipi* (Hassrick 1964:266), the *Pte San Lowampi* (Fletcher 1887c; Hassrick 1964:266; Walker 1980:244-245, 247-248, 251), the Elk ceremony (Fletcher 1983b), Spirit Keeping ceremonies (Hassrick 1980:262), and the rituals surrounding eagle-trapping (Standing Bear 1988:79).

Historically, the wand used in the dances of the White Badges was decorated with sweet grass (Walker 1980:263), and it was attached to the armlets of *Tokala* [Kit Fox] society members (Walker 1980:273). It is men-tioned in the story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, where it represents a tangible sign of Wohpe’s benevolence (Hassrick 1964:215; Walker 1980:111,221). In modern times, sweet grass continues to be used in a variety of ceremonial contexts including *Yuwipi* (Kemnitzer 1970:66). The Poncas used it in their *Wawan* ceremony (Gilmore 1919:66).

**Festuca saximontona**

[Rocky Mountain or sheep fescue]

This grass is common at higher elevations in the northern and central Black Hills (Larsen and Johnson 1999:410). Although it is not listed at Wind Cave National Park, another related variety, *Festuca/Vulpia octoflora* [sixweeks fescue] is reported at the park (Pisarowicz 2001g:3). Neither of these is mentioned in the ethnobotanical literature.

**Glyceria grandis**

[American mannagrass]

This grass is occasionally located in the shallow waters and exposed muds of streams and ponds in the Black Hills (Larsen and Johnson 1999:412). There are no reports on it in ethnobotanical sources.

**Hordeum jubatum**

[foxtail barley]

Foxtail barley is commonly found at low to mid elevations along stream margins and in moist meadow habitats, including those at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g:2). Its forage value is very low, and it is also avoided by many animals because of the abrasive effects of its awns (Larson and Johnson 1999:412). The Lakotas call this cool-season grass by several different names, including: *ite asiniyanpi* [tickle face], *peji ite’on asinivyapi* [one uses it to tickle the face], and *peji’ jiji* [light color-ed grass] (Buechel 1970:239, 439, 823; Rogers 1980:30).

**Koeleria spp.**

[Junegrass]

Junegrass is very common in the Black Hills where it is found in mixed and shortgrass prairie habitats, meadows, open forests, and scrublands; (Larson and Johnson 1999:414). It grows at Wind Cave National Park too (Pisarowicz 2001g:2). This is a highly nutritious cool-season grass, and one that many animals, including bison, elk, and deer favor (Larson and Johnson 1919:414). The Cheyennes are the only tribal nation who are reported to have named and used it, but given its sacred importance to them, it probably had significance to the Lakotas too. The Cheyenne name is *naaseto?estse* [sacred plant]. The Cheyennes regarded this as a highly significant plant whose flowering culms were used in the Sun Dance to give the dancers strength. The grass also served as a brush to apply paint to the dancers, and it was applied in a medicinal mixture to treat cuts and abrasions (Hart 1981:10; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:53).

**Melica bulbosa**

[oniongrass]

This is an uncommon grass in the Black Hills where it is restricted to moist rocky slopes or open forests in the northern Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:416); it is not
listed at Wind Cave National Park. No records on its cultural use are found in the ethnobotanical literature.

*Muhlenbegia racemosa*
[green muhly]

This warm-season grass is frequent in a variety of environments throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 416). This and the related variety *M. cuspidata* [Plains mushy] are found at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g 2-3). No information was found on their tribal names or cultural associations in ethno-botanical sources.

*Oryzopsis spp.*
[ricegrass]

Three species of ricegrass are reported in the Black Hills: *O. asperifolia* [roughleaf ricegrass], *O. hymenoides* [Indian ricegrass /Swallen's needlegrass], and *O. micranthum* [littleseed ricegrass]. The first is common in the forest areas of the central and northern Black Hills, while the second is found occasionally in the lower elevation dry grassland environments of the Hogback and Red Valley (Larson and Johnson 1999: 418). The third one is commonly located in open forest habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999: 420). Only the first two of these cool-season grasses are found at Wind Cave National Park, however (Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). Although ricegrasses were widely taken as food by tribal nations in the Southwest and Intermountain West (Kindscher 1992: 232-233), there are no reports of such use for tribes in the Plains. Nor is there any other information on them for the tribal nations who lived among the Hills. These varieties of grass are reported to be excellent forage for wildlife, and one of them, the rough-leaved variety, also keeps its green leaves through the winter -- a fact that may have had symbolic significance for local tribes.

*Panicum virgatum*
[switchgrass]

This tall, warm-season grass is common throughout the plains of South Dakota (Johnson and Larson 1999: 48). In the Black Hills, it is found at lower elevations in grassland and open forest environments (Larson and Johnson 1999:420) and at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). The Lakotas knew it as *peji blaskaska* [flat grass] (Buechel 1970:439), while the Poncas called it *hade wathazhninde* [no translation given] (Gilmore 1919:66). *P. capillare* [witchgrass] was called *tie awicasniyan hu* [plant that tickles the face] (Buechel 1970: 239; Rogers 1980:30).

*Pascopyrum smithii*
[western wheatgrass]

This cool-season grass is common on sedimentary valley floors in the Black Hills where it grows in a wide range of dry to wet grassland habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999: 422). It is not reported at Wind Cave National Park. The Lakotas knew it as *peji hcaka* [real grass], and they said that when it is tall and abundant, the horses eat only the part that the snow has not reached (Buechel 1970:439; Rogers 1980: 27).

*Phalaris arundinacea*
[reed canarygrass]

Located at Wind Cave National Park, this tall, cool-season grass grows at the edge of low elevation streams, ponds, and lakes throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:422; Pisarowicz 2001g:2). There is no information on it in the ethno-botanical literature we consulted.

*Phleum pratense*
[timothy grass]

This widely used forage grass was intro-duced to the Black Hills and Wind Cave National
Park from Europe, and it is found in meadows, pastures, and roadsides (Larson and Johnson 1999: 424; Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). There is also no documentation on this grass in ethnobotanical sources.

**Poa spp. [bluegrass]**

There are several different varieties in this family of cool-season grasses listed in the Black Hills in a wide range of habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999: 424-432). Six different varieties are reported at Wind Cave National Park: *P. arida* [plains bluegrass], *P. sandbergii/secunda* [Sandberg’s blue-grass], *P. compressa* [Canada bluegrass], *P. canbyi* [Canby’s bluegrass],* P. interior* [inland bluegrass], and *P. pratensis* [Kentucky bluegrass] (Pisarowicz 2001g: 3) With the possible exception of Kentucky bluegrass, which has a second period of growth in the fall and good forage for wildlife, most of the other species do not have good grazing potential (Larson and Johnson 1999:424-432; Johnson and Larson 1999:58). None of these varieties are named or described in ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations in the region.

**Pseudoroegeneria spicata [bluebunch wheatgrass]**

This grass is local to the Black Hills, where it is found on sandstone ridges and dry slopes in the western regions of the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 432). It is not listed among the grasses at Wind Cave National Park. There are no data on this cool-season grass in ethnobotanical sources.

**Schedonardus paniculatus [tumble grass]**

This grass is not reported in the Black Hills but it is very common in the surrounding Plains, especially in open prairies and near prairie dog towns (Johnson and Larson 1999: 62). The Lakotas knew it as *wabluska hua ota peji* [many insect legs grass] (Buechel 1970:512; Rogers 1980:30).

**Schizachne purpurascens [false melic]**

Another grass, also not described in ethnobotanical sources, false melic is common in the moist forest habitats of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:432). It is not reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Schizachyrium scoparium [little bluestem]**

This was one of the warm-season grasses that were valued by Plains Indians for its medicinal and spiritual properties.

**Names:**

- **Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:520)  
  *ekonip* [no translation given]  
  *A. scoparius*
- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970: 440,452; Rogers 1980:28,31)  
  *peji sasa svula* (small red grass)  
  *A. scoparius*  
  possible alternate: *peji sasa* [red grass]
- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965: 60)  
  *čoci.s* [red grass]  
  *A. gerardii* and *A. scoparius*  
  alternative: ‘a.č ohe’ [native grass]
- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:16)  
  *hade-zhide* (red hay)  
  *A. scoparius*

**Habitat:** Little bluestem is a common grass in the mixed grass prairies and dry open forests of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:434).

**Uses:** Plains Indians relied on this grass for many different purposes.

[**medicinal**] Omahas and probably Poncas made a decoction of the lower blades of little bluestem [*A. scoparium*] to treat leth-argy of unknown origin, and they also took it to treat fever (Gilmore 1919:16). The Comanches are
reported to have used ashes made from this grass to treat syphilitic sores (Carlson and Jones 1939:520).

[veterinary] The Plains Apaches considered little bluestems to be the most nutritious for their horses (Jordan 1965:62).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas processed the dried culms and leaves of little bluestem into soft fibers to line and insulate their moccasins in winter (Buechel 1970: 440).

[fuel] Plains Apaches started their fires with tinder made from bunches of bluestem grass (Jordan 1965:156).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Comanches and the Plains Apaches made bundles of little bluestems into switches that they used to cure bodily pain and drive away evil spirits in their sweat lodges (Carlson and Jones 1939:520; Jordan 1965:98).

Sorghastrum nutans (avenaceum)
[Indiangrass]

Indiangrass is more typical of the tall grass prairies east of the Missouri. It is an uncommon grass in the Black Hills where it is found primarily along low elevation road-sides and drainages on the Hills’ eastern edges, including locations in Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999: 434; Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). It offers high quality forage prior to flowering in late summer. The Lakotas knew it as peji sasa inkpa jiji [red grass with fluffy light-colored end] (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:30). The Kiowas called it son-ton-pa or son-ka [no translations given], and they considered this an excellent fodder for their horses (Vestal and Schultes 1939:17). The Lakotas called it peji takan [sinew grass] because of its toughness (Buechel 1970: 440; Rogers 1980: 31).

Sporobolus spp.
[dropseed]

Three species of dropseed are identified in the Black Hills: S. asper [tall dropseed], which is uncommon, and S. cryptandrus [sand dropseed], which is frequent in occurrence. Both are among the warm-season grasses found at Wind Cave National Park. S. heterolepis [prairie dropseed] is also frequent, but it occurs only at higher elevations in open pine forests and meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999: 436-438; Pisarowicz 2001g: 2). The Kiowas knew sand dropseed to be an excellent fodder for their horses (Vestal and Schultes 1939:17). The Lakotas called it peji takan [sinew grass] because of its toughness (Buechel 1970: 440; Rogers 1980: 31).

Stipa/Hesperostipa spp.
[needlegrass]

Three of the five different stipa species reported in the Black Hills are found at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999: 440-444); these are Stipa/Hesperostipa comata [needle and thread], Stipa/Hesperostipa spartea [porcupine-grass], and Stipa/Nassella viridula [green needle-grass]. Only porcupine grass has been described in the ethnobotanical literature, however.

Names:

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 336; Rogers 1980: 31)
micapeca [to stab or pierce]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 66)
mika-hi [comb plant]
Habitat: In the Black Hills, *S. comata* is typically found in mixed prairies at lower elevations in the Hills, while *S. spartea* is commonly found in moist grassland and open forest habitats. *S. nassella* appears in a wide variety of environments from mixed grass prairies to open forests (Larson and Johnson 1999: 441-443). All three are reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001g:3).

Uses: Porcupine grass was used primarily to make brushes for utilitarian and ceremonial purposes.

[cosmetic & hygienic] After binding them into a bundle, the Poncas burned the pointed grains to make brushes for combing the hair (Gilmore 1919: 67).

**Cyperaceae**

**The Sedge Family**

**Carex spp.**

More than twenty different species of this subfamily are located in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 448-466), but only one of them has been documented in ethnobotanical sources. *C. nebrascensis* [Nebraska sedge] is frequently found in wet habitats at low elevations in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:148), and it is known as *mehne-mehno?estse* [serpent or dragon plant] in Cheyenne (Hart 1981:7). The Cheyennes believed that this sedge lived in waters that serpents inhabited, and they placed it in the cavities of a buffalo skull during their Sun Dance and Massaum ceremonies (Hart 1981:7). It was also inserted in the cavity of a yellow-faced wolf skull during the Massaum ceremony (Hart 1981: 8-9). Symbolically, its use represented a prayer for an abundance of water and the growth of vegetation (Hart 1981:9). Another *Carex* species, *C. gravida* [heavy sedge], not reported in the Black Hills, was called *peji psumpsunla* [flexible, loose, fallen-out weed] by the Lakotas (Buechel 1970:439; Rogers 1980: 26). Standing Bear mentioned an unidentified sedge with long, jointed roots that was used to treat nervousness. He wrote:

Though very bitter, this medicine was a favorite with the women, who often wore a piece of it around their necks. It was also carried by the Duck-Dreamer medicine man, for it was one of the secrets imparted to him by the duck (Standing Bear 1978: 60).

**Cyperus spp.**

**[flatsedges]**

Although not reported in the Black Hills, various species of flatsedges are found in wetland habitats in regions to the east of the Black Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999: 84). The Lakotas called *C. schweinitzii* [Schweinitz’s flatsedge] *minisantuuhu* [water santuhu] (Buechel 1970:336; Rogers 1980: 26). The Kiowas are reported to have used it in medicinal ways (Vestal and Schultes 1939:18). The Plains Apache name for *C. setigerus* [lean flatsedge] is *koya.^'oh* [water grass] or alternatively *wagozaya-dika.de* [it makes a baby skinny]. Apaches consumed the tender white part at the base of the culm, although nursing mothers avoided the plant because they believed it led to weight loss in their infants (Jordan 1965:31).

**Eleocharis erythropoda**

**[bald spikerush]**

Several spikerush species are reported in the Black Hills, although *E. erythropoda* is the most common and found in the shallows of wet habitats at low to mid elevations throughout the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:468). There is no information, how-ever, on spikerushes in ethnobotanical sour-ces for the tribal nations who lived in the region.
**Schoenoplectus and Scirpus spp.**

[bulrushes]

Several bulrush species are reported in the Black Hills.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972: 2: 170)

*mo um’ stats* [stately plant]

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 439, 446, 542, 584, 824; Rogers 1980: 26-27)

*psa* [rush]

**generic for* S. tabernaemontani** and *Scirpus*

*psa oholotan* [cornered rush]

* S. tabernaemontani

alternates:

*peji’iwiwicoyaka* [grass that sticks to people’s clothes]

*psa popopela* [pithy rush]

*wanteye* [like an arrow]

*wiwuta hu svula* [lower border of tent]

* It is unclear whether or not all of these refer to *S. tabernaemontani*.

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 69)

*sa-hi* [no translation given]

**Habitat:** *Scirpus pallidus* [pale/cloaked bulrush] is frequently found in low to mid elevation wet habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:470-472), while *Schoenoplectus pungens* [threesquare bulrush] is common and found at low elevation stream banks and pond edges over the entire Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:468). *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*, also known as *Scirpus validus* [softstem bulrush], is common at similar elevations in the shallow waters of ponds and streams. It is located at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j: 2).

**Uses:** Softstem bulrush was an important source of food and also material for the manufacture of various kinds of mats.

**[food]** The Cheyennes ate the inner part of the softstem bulrush’s stem (Hart 1981:8) and so did the Lakotas (Gilmore 1913b:359; Bordeaux 1929:130). Standing Bear (1978:58) wrote:

A food that had an interesting history for us was the tall plant that grew in the swamps, commonly called the bulrush. The duck, who brought many good plants and roots to the tribe, told the Duck Dreamer medicine-man about it and named it *psa*. In the early spring and summer we welcomed this plant which was pulled up by the roots, and the white part eaten like celery.

**[art & manufacture]** Melvin Gilmore reports that all of the tribes in the central Plains region used the stems of softstem bulrush to make mats (Gilmore 1919:69). Cheyenne women wove mats that they spread like blankets (Grinnell 1972:2:170-171). The Lakotas did so as well, judging by the names which describe blankets, beds, and tent drops made of *rush*

*psa owinja* [rush blanket] or *psa oyunke* [rush bed] (Gilmore 1913b: 359; Buechel 1970:446). Although Larson and Johnson (1999:469) claim that *S. pungens* was used widely for basket weaving, there is no confirmation in ethnobotanical sources for the tribal nations who lived and traveled in the Black Hills.

**[symbol & ceremony]** Another bulrush, not reported in the Black Hills, *S. nevadensis* [Nevada bulrush] was used by the Chey-ennes to mold the nose and eyes of the buffalo skull placed on their Sun Dance altar. It also went into making a foundation for their beds (Hart 1981: 8).

**Juncaceae**

**The Rush Family**

Six species of rush are reported in the Black Hills with varying degrees of occurrence (Larson and Johnson 1999:474-478). *Juncus dudleyi* [wiregrass] is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j:2). None of these are described in the ethnobotanical literature, although *J. balticus* [Baltic rush], not reported in the Hills, is named and used by local tribes. It is widely distributed throughout the northern Plains (Johnson and Larson 1999:86). The Lakotas know it as *mak’uzanpi*
[it gives good health], and they use it to cure diarrhea (Lewis, T. 1990:134). The Cheyennes call it *ho oma’ wishemen oh’ to wits* [robe ornamented with quills] or alternately,*hooma-ve?she-meeeno?estovest-se* [for robe ornamenting] (Grinnell 1972: 2:171; Hart 1981:12). Historically, the fine rootlets from this rush’s rootstock were applied as ornamentation on robes and other leather products, and its stems were used in basket-weaving as well (Grinnell 1972:2:171).

**FERNS AND HORSETAILS**

Although there are more than sixteen different species of spleenwort, fern, poly-pody, and horsetail located in the Black Hills, only two are widely recognized by the tribal nations who historically occupied the region and both are in the horsetail family.

The vast majority of ferns are located in the central and northern Black Hills, mostly at high elevations, and only a few are common or widespread in their occurrence. The Brittle fern is very common throughout the Hills at all elevations in the shady locations of pine, spruce, and deciduous forests, and so are the Slender lip and Mountain cliff ferns. Venus’ hair fern is quite common along Cascade Creek south of Hot Springs (Larson and Johnson 1999:26-38). Tribes outside the region used some of these ferns for a wide variety of medicinal purposes (Tilford 1997:94). Although many of them were no doubt recognized and named in the langua-ge of the tribes who once inhabited the Black Hills, and some of them may have even been used, this information has not been recorded in published ethnographic and ethnobotanical accounts.

**Equisetaceae**

**Horsetail Family**

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:169; Hart 1981:4)
mo in’a am es e ohk [elk medicine]

*E. hyemale*

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:12)
do’npa [fat plant]

*E. arvense*

Lakota (Buechel 1970:440)
wan yecahu [stem like a big arrow]

*E. hyemale*

wan yeca swula [small, fine horsetail]

E. variegatum*

alternative: Peju swula [fine medicine]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965: 64)
koya ‘oh [water grass]

*E. hyemale*

alternative: kazolbe’ e’ side [resembles cat tail]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 63)
mande idhe shiuna [to make a bow smooth]

**Habitat:** Three members of the horsetail family are common in the Black Hills. *Equisetacea arvense* [field horsetail] is confined to moist habitats in the low to mid elevation regions of the central and northern Hills. *E. laevigatum* [smooth scouring rush] and *E. hymale* [common scouring rush] are found throughout the Hills at the same elevations and in similar habitats. The third, *E. sylvaticum* [wood horsetail] is occasional and restricted to the higher elevation regions of the northern and central Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:40-42).

**Uses:** Horsetails were named and used by a number of different tribal nations in the region for a wide range of purposes.

[food] The roots are edible, and the Kiowas are reported to have eaten the swollen base of *E. arvense* (Tilford 1997:76; Vestal and Schultes 1939:12).

[medicinal] While *equisetacea* are reported to have medicinal uses as diuretics among European American and American Indian herbalists (Tilford 1997), no evidence of such usage has been found for the tribal nations who lived in the Black Hills.
The Lakotas maintain that horses grazed on *E. hymale* have greater stamina (Buechel 1970:440). The Cheyennes used it as medicine to treat hard coughs in their horses (Grinnell 1972:2:169).

The high silica content of the smooth scouring rush’s stems and the closely related *E. hyemale* give them a gritty texture, which was useful to local Indians and early settlers for scouring and polishing (Gilmore 1919:63; Kindscher 1992:241-42; Larson and Johnson 1999:42). Field horsetail was used by the Cheyennes to make a dye for porcupine quills, robes, clothing, and lodges (Hart 1981:4), while the Plains Apaches made the plant’s hollow stems into toy whistles (Jordan 1965:64).

### IV. WOODY PLANTS: TREES, BUSHES, AND SHRUBS

Over eighty different species of woody plants are reported in the Black Hills, with more than two-thirds of these identified by name and/or use in ethnobotanical and ethnographic sources for the tribal nations of the region.

**Aceraceae**

*The Maple Family*

Only one species in this family, the box elder, is located in the Black Hills, and historically, it was a very important source of food, fuel, medicine, and manufacturing material for tribes in the region. It was important in the ceremonial life of many tribes as well.

**Acer negundo**

*[box elder]*

This tree is widespread in the plains and prairies beyond the Black Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999:238), and it is one of several trees prized for their sweet sap.

### Names:

- **Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:1:249; Hart 1981:13)
  
  *mish ke mai’*  [no translation given]
  
  alternate: *me’eshkemaha*

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40)
  
  *kaw-se-n-an-daw*  [no translation provided]

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:123; Rogers 1980:32)
  
  *cansu ska*  [sweet sap tree]

- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:101)
  
  *zhaba-ta-zho*  [beaver wood]

### Habitat:

In the Black Hills, it is located at low elevations along streams and canyon floors in association with green ash, bur oak, and American elm (Larson and Johnson 1999:480), and it is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f:1).

### Uses:

This tree was widely used for both practical and spiritual purposes by the tribal nations who inhabited the Black Hills.

- **[food]** Many tribes relied on the tree’s sap to make sugar (Gilmore 1919:101). The Hidatsas, Kiowas, Lakotas, and Cheyennes produced sugar from its sap. This was an important productive activity for women during the spring (Gilmore 1913b:366; Grinnell 1972:1:249; Vestal and Schultes 1939:40; Hassrick 1964:150; Nickel 1974:57; Standing Bear 1978:59, 1988:98-99; Hart 1981:3, 1992:5). The Cheyennes boiled the sap in a kettle and combined it with shavings from the inner side of hides to make a candy, and they also mixed it with water for a beverage known as *mishke mai’ mapi* (Grinnell 1972:1:249; Hart 1981:13).

- **[medicinal]** Tribes outside the Black Hills area are known to have used the inner bark in a tea used as an emetic (Vestal and Schultes 1939:41), but there are no reports of such use for tribes who lived in this region.

- **[art & manufacture]** The Cheyennes made ceremonial bowls, as noted above, from its wood, the Hidatsas used it in their basketry (Nickel 1974:57), and the Lakotas used the wood in making pipe stems and the forked...

[fuel] Larson and Johnson (1999: 480) mention that the wood of this tree produces long burning hot embers, making it attractive for culinary and ceremonial purposes. The Arikaras considered it a good source of fuel, although it was difficult to split (Nickel 1974:57). It was the favorite firewood of the Cheyennes (Hart 1981:13). The Lakotas used dried box elder wood for the fire at a young woman’s puberty ceremony (Walker 1980:244), the Kiowas fueled their altar fires with it at Native American Church ceremonies (Vestal and Schultes, 1939: 40), and the Cheyennes relied on it when making spiritual fires for medicines, lighting tobacco pipes, and the Sun Dance (Hart 1981:13, 1992: 5).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Several tribes employed the bark to make charcoal for ceremonial painting and tattooing (Gilmore 1919:101). The Cheyennes carved their ceremonial root digger for the Sundance from this wood (Grinnell 1972:2:60), and they used the knots of the wood to shape bowls in which medicines were mixed ceremonially and special feast foods were served (Grinnell 1972:1:171; Hart 1981:13). The Lakotas carved their grass dance whistles from box elder wood (Densmore 1918:471), and they also made wooden plates out of this wood for use in the Pte san lowampi (Flet-cher 1883c: 266). This tree is frequently mentioned in the oral traditions of the Arikaras (Gilmore 1987:119-125).

**Anacardiaceae**

**The Cashew Family**

Two shrubs in the cashew family, skunk-bush and smooth sumac, were widely used by the tribal nations of the Plains for multiple medicinal and ceremonial purposes, and they were also favored for food and medicinal uses by European Americans who settled in the region (Kindscher 1987:190-94, 1992:182-88). Both shrubs range widely in the environs of the Black Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999:238,240). Notwithstanding its poisonous toxins, another member of the cashew family, poison ivy, has reported uses.

**Rhus aromatica**

[skunkbush]

Skunkbush, a.k.a. squawberry or stinking hazel, is widespread throughout the northern and central Plains (Kindscher 1987:191-92).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972: 2:180; Hart 1981:14)
ho a to’ o nuts [smoke issues]
alternate: ho?atoono?estse

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:524)
datsipv [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:39)
dtie-ai-pa-ye-’go [bitter red berry]
alternate: ’t’a ‘npe-a’ [no translation provided]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:126; Rogers 1980:32)
canun’keemna [wood smells of feces]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:48)
cede.kose. [bitterseed]

**Habitat:** In the Black Hills, skunkbush is located from the low elevation grasslands to the mid elevation limestone meadows where it appears in open locations or at the base of ponderosa pines, including at Wind Cave National Park (Larson and Johnson 1999: 482; Pisarowicz 2001j:1).

**Uses:** Skunkbush was used for a wide variety of different purposes by the tribal nations who lived and traveled within range of the Black Hills.

[food] The fruit was eaten fresh and cooked, or dried for later use by the Kiowas and Plains Apaches (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 39; Jordan 1965:48). In fact, the Kiowas considered skunkbush fruit to be one of their ancient foods (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40, 72). The Plains Apaches used the berries in their green stage
for a sauce, and in their orange stage, the Utes mixed them with grass seeds to make a food called "tattie." (Albers and Lowry 1995:56). Other tribal nations from the Black Hills region do not appear to have consumed skunkbush berries as a regular part of their diet, but they were probably taken opportunistically.

**[medicinal]** Many tribes, however, relied on skunkbush for medicinal preparations. The Cheyennes boiled the leaves in decoctions to treat edema and headcolds; they chewed the fruits to treat toothaches and to protect the hands from being scalded in hot water (Hart 1981: 14, 40). The Comanche also used the plant to treat colds (Carlson and Jones 1939:524, 534), while the Kiowas relied on it to doctor influenza and stomach ailments (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40).

**[veterinary]** The Cheyennes treated their racehorses with a remedy made from skunkbush to prevent them from getting tired and also to promote urination (Hart 1981:14).

**[art & manufacture]** Skunkbush also had a variety of manufacturing uses: the stems and shoots for basketry, the roots for a yellow dye, the wood for making bows, and the leaves for tanning processes (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40; Nickerson 1966:48; Kind-scher 1987:192). The Lakotas used skunk-bush berries for making red dyes (Lyford 1940: 42).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Lakotas added the leaves to their tobacco mixtures (Buechel 1970:126; Lewis, T. 1990:47), and the Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Plains Apaches did so as well (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40; Jordan 1965:128; Grinnell 1972:2:180; Hart 1981:14). The Ta’aipek, one of the Kiowas' six ceremonial societies, is reputedly named after the berry of this plant (Vestal and Schultes 1939:40).

**Rhus glabra**  
**[smooth sumac]**

Also called lemonade sumac, since its berries are often used to make a cooling beverage, this plant is widely found in the northern and central Plains (Kindscher 1987: 190-194, 1992:182-188).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:180; Hart 1981:14)  
no’ani ni mai’kimins [mixing ingredients]  
alternate: no?aneone-make-menots [mixing red berries]

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:524)  
dimeyov [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:39)  
maw-kho-la [tobacco mixture]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:127; Rogers 1980:33)  
canzi [yellow wood]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:128)  
iaksci.de [mix with something]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:47)  
mi bdi hi [no translation provided]

**Habitat:** This shrub is commonly located in upland prairies, thickets, and pastures or bordering fences, roads, and woodlands at low to mid elevations in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:482). It grows at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** Smooth sumac played important medicinal and ceremonial roles in the cultures of the tribal nations who lived around the Black Hills.

**[food]** Tribal nations outside the Black Hills region are reported to have made a tea from the fruit and flowers (Kindscher 1987:92), but this has not been documented for local tribes. Comanche children ate the fruits, however (Carlson and Jones 1939: 524).

**[medicinal]** The Poncas boiled the fruits to stop postpartum hemorrhaging in women, they used the root in a diuretic decoction, and they crushed the leaves to make a poultice to treat wounds and skin irritations (Gilmore, 1919:48). They also combined the fruits and root in a remedy for skin sores (Kindscher 1992:184). The plant is also re-ported to be a herbal remedy in European American folk
[art & manufacture] The manufacturing uses of this plant were similar to skunkbush (Kindscher 1987:192). The Kiowas, for one, used roots dug during the spring to make a yellow-orange dye (Vestal and Schultes 1939:39).

[symbolic & ceremonial] When the leaves turn red, the Lakotas, Cheyennes, Co-manches, Plains Apaches, Kiowas, and Poncas were all reported to pick and dry them for their tobacco mixtures (Gilmore 1913b:367, 919:47; Carlson and Jones 1939: 524; Vestal and Schultes 1939:39; Jordan 1965:128; Buechel 1970:127; Hart 1981: 14). The Kiowas also smoked the leaves for their purifying effects, which were believed to be effective in the treatment of tuberculosis (Vestal and Stanley 1939: 38).

**Taxicodendron rybergii**

**poison ivy**

This well-known and toxic shrub is widely distributed throughout the northern and central Plains (Johnson and Larson 1999: 240).

**Names:**

Lakota (Buechel 1970:586; Rogers 1980:33)
wikoskat tape'juta [medicine for women's disease]

Ponca (Gilmore 1913b:335)
hthi wathe [to make sore]

**Habitat:** It ranges from low to mid elevations in the Black Hills, where it is frequently sighted in rock outcrops, woodland mar-gins, deciduous drainages, and ponderosa pine forests (Larson and Johnson 1999:484). It is identified with a variety of habitats at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:1, 2001i:1, 2001j:1).

**Uses:** Since its resin is highly irritating to human skin, the plant is generally avoided.

[medicinal] Even though Reverend Eugene Buechel (1970:586) wrote that the plant has no medicinal value, its name does suggest that the root may have been used by the Lakotas to treat venereal disease in women. That this may have been the case is suggested by the Kiowas' use of the plant; they rubbed it over the surface of boils, skin eruptions, and other types of running or non-healing sores. Dermatitis followed the application, but when it disappeared, the sores were healed (Vestal and Schultes 1939:39).

**Asteraceae**

**Aster Family**

Several species from this family, including various sagebrushes, rabbit brush, and broom snakeweed, were important to the tribal nations of the region.

**Artemisia spp.**

**sagebrush**

As noted in regards to the non-woody varieties of *artemisia*, it is not always clear how to gloss species in this genre with the varieties of names typically associated with them in American Indian botanical nomenclatures. *A. tridentatata* [silver sage] for example, is often reported in the same ceremonial contexts as the non-woody variety, *A. ludoviciana*, while *A. filifolia* is often used interchangeably with the non-woody variety, *A. frigida*. The two woody varieties in the Black Hills, *A. cana* [silver sage] and *A. tridentatata*, are found predominately in the drier western and southwestern areas of the Hills. Neither of these varieties is found at Wind Cave National
Park. However, *A. filifolia* or sand sagebrush, not reported for the Black Hills, is found in rangelands in the southwestern parts of South Dakota often in great abundance locally (Johnson and Larson 1999:242), and it is present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001:3).

**Names:**

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:55)
  - *h-taig-h-gai* [no translation]
  - *A. filifolia*

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970: 439, 587; Rogers 1980: 35-36)
  - *peji hota tanka* [big grey leaf]
  - *A. tridentata*
  - *peji hota toto* [grey blue leaf]
  - *A. cana*
  - *peji hota swula* [small grey herb]
  - *A. filifolia* and *A. frigida*
  - alternate: *winyan tapeji’ hota* [woman’s grey leaf]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:140)
  - *^ eldisgo.dedica.hi* [big sage]

**Habitat:** *A. cana* is found in the foothills and valleys of the Black Hills, primarily in the southwestern portions of the region (Larson and Johnson 1999: 484). *A. tridentata* is the much more common and wide-ly distributed species of sagebrush, and while it is frequent on the western slopes of the Hills, it is uncommon in the east (Larson and Johnson 1999:486).

**Uses:** Clearly, these varieties of sage were much more important to tribes who lived on the western side of the Black Hills, with much less information on their uses by tribes who lived and traveled in the east.

- **[food]** The Lakotas ate *A. tridentata* seeds raw or dried and pounded them into a meal (Rogers 1980:49).

- **[medicinal]** *A. tridentata* was also used as a medicine among the Lakotas. Although Rev. Eugene Buechel (1970:439) did not report its specific applications, modern Lakota medicine men told Thomas Lewis (1990:135) that it was brewed in teas for earaches, respiratory complaints, diarrhea, and stomachaches.

- *A. filifolia* is reported to be the sage the Lakotas identified as “women’s medicine,” which was used to treat irregular menstruation. This sage and *A. cana* were used to cleanse women after their period (Gilmore 1913b:369-370; Buechel 1970:587). The Kiowas made a decoction of *A. filifolia* to treat indigestion, flatulence, biliousness, and intestinal worms, and they also treated scalp diseases with it (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 55).

- **[cosmetic & hygienic]** The Kiowas employed *A. filifolia* to dry their hands and as a “toilet paper,” and the Plains Apaches did the same (Vestal and Schultes 1939:55; Jordan 1965:140). The Lakotas use *A. cana* and *A. tridentata* to freshen the air in their homes (Kemnitzer 1970: 64).

- **[art & manufacture]** Modern Lakota hunters rub silver sage on traps, guns, and themselves to disguise their own scent (Kemnitzer 1970: 64).

- **[fuel]** Woody varieties of sage were pro-bably an important source of fuel for many of the tribal nations who lived in the high altitude deserts and steppes west of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 486).

- **[symbolic & ceremonial]** *A. tridentata* is considered a potent purifier for many ceremonial activities among the Lakotas. Like cedar, sage does not die off in the winter, a fact noted in some discussions of the cer-e-monial roles it plays among the Lakotas (Kemnitzer 1970:65). It is very important in *Yuwipi* ceremonies, where, among its many different roles, it covers the floor in the sacred spot the ceremony is performed, it functions as a plug for the pipe, it is attached to the knots of thongs that tie up the medi-cine man, and it is placed on the water dish and on the kettle of dog soup (Kemnitzer 1970:64). This variety of sage is also spread on the floor of a sweat lodge, and it is used in the Sun Dance to fill the
orifices of the buffalo skull, to plug the pipes of dancers, and as a medicine to heal the wounds of those who make sacrifices (Kemnitizer 1970:65).

_Ericameria/Chrysothamnus nauseosus_
[rubber rabbitbrush]

Rabbitbrush is a common plant in areas west of the Missouri River where it typically grows in dry rangelands (Kindscher 1992: 233-233; Johnson and Larson 1999:242).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:187; Hart 1981:20)
o’iv is se’e yo [scabby medicine]
alternate: me’eshkaatseh’estse [hairy plant]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:439; Rogers 1980:36)
peji hota sicamana [bad smelling grey grass]

Habitat: Rabbitbrush is also more abundant on the western side of Hills where it is frequent in dry grassland and foothill loca-tions (Larson and Johnson 1999:486).

Uses: Many of the uses associated with rabbitbrush are reported for tribal nations whose historic territorial ranges extended into areas west of the Black Hills

[food] The Lakotas pounded the roots to extract a black colored juice that was used as a chewing gum (Standing Bear 1988:101).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes prepared the leaves and stems in a decoction to treat skin sores, including those associated with small-pox, and they also burnt the leaves and branches on box elder wood to treat night-mares (Grinnell 1972:2:187; Hart 1981: 20).

_Gutierrezia sarothrae_
[broom snakeweed]

In South Dakota, this plant typically grows in the western part of the state where it is found in habitats associated with western wheatgrass, big sagebrush, and short grasses (Johnson and Larson 1999:246). It grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:3).

**Names:**

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:522)
sanaweha [no translation given]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:440; Rogers 1980:37)
peji zizi [yellow grass]

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:65)
beokoze [broom]
alternate: ’o’xehaci’a’ [grass burns quickly]

Habitat: Mostly found at lower elevations in sagebrush-grassland, mahogany shrub-land, open pine woodland, and open grass-land. It is widespread in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:488).

Uses: Apart from its use in making brooms, broom snakeweed was used as a medicine for treating ailments in humans and animals (Kindscher 1992: 251-252).

[medicinal] The Lakotas boiled the entire plant in a tea used for coughing and colds, and they also applied it as a remedy for dizziness (Buechel 1970: 440). Plains Apaches boiled the tops of mature plants in a tea to treat colds and respiratory conditions, and also as an external remedy for skin rashes and fungus (Jordan 1965:65-66). Colds were treated with this plant as well by the Comanches (Carlson and Jones 1939: 522). The Crows treated kidney problems with a tea made from the flowers, they produced a steam infusion to doctor sinus inflections, and they applied a liquid solution to swellings (Kindscher 1992:251).

[veterinary] Lakotas used the plant in a remedy to treat diarrhea in horses (Gilmore 1913b:368; 1919:133).

[art & manufacture] Its English name is derived from the popular use of its stems for making brooms (Kindscher 1992:251). Two tribes who once lived in the Black Hills area,
the Comanches (Carlson and Jones 1939:522) and Plains Apaches (Jordan 1965 1965:65), are reported to have done so too.

[symbolic & ceremonial] The Plains Apaches occasionally used this plant to sprinkle water on the fire in a sweat lodge (Jordan 1965: 66), and the Lakotas included it in one of the “war medicines” they rubbed on their body before battle (Densmore 1918: 350).

Berberidaceae
The Barberry Family

Only one species from this family is reported in the Black Hills, and its names and uses have been documented for only a few of the tribes in the general area.

Mahonia/Berberis repens
[Oregon grape or creeping barberry]

This is a plant that reaches its easternmost extension in the forested and high elevation landscapes of the Black Hills.

Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:15)
mehme-menotse [spicy berries]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:28)
kawadi-shap-pa-a [no translation given]

Habitat: The Oregon grape is most commonly located along forested hillsides and canyons over the entire range of the Black Hills from the foothills to the high limestone plateau (Larson and Johnson 1999:488).

Uses: Uses for Oregon grape are much more common for tribal nations who lived and traveled in regions to the south and west of the Black Hills.

[medicinal] The Kiowas knew the plant but made no use of it (Vestal and Schultes 1939:28). The Cheyennes, on the other hand, used its roots as a medicine for un-specified purposes (Hart 1981:15). In fact, Larson and Johnson (1999: 488) report that the root contains an antimicrobial, which is effective in treating infections, liver dis-orders, and digestive ailments.

Betulaceae
The Birch Family

Several species in this family are named in native nomenclatures, but only two are reported to have any uses.

Betula spp.
[birch]

Three varieties of birch are located in the Black Hills, B. occidentalis [water birch], B. minor/papyrifera [dwarf water or paper birch], and B. pumila [bog birch]. The one tribal name found in the literature is generic to the family and does not distinguish between species. Most of the uses connected with it come from tribal nations outside the region.

Names:

Lakota (Buechel 1970:116)
canha’san [whitish bark tree]

B. occidentalis also applies to maple.

Habitat: The most common species in the Black Hills is B. occidentalis, which is found at mid elevations in moist locations along streams, hillsides, and boggy sites. B. papyrifera is also common in the area, and it can be found at lower elevations in canyons, cool drainages, and in the transitions be-tween forest and meadow (Larson and John-son 1999: 490-491). This is the only one noted for Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001f:1). The least common, B. pumila, is restricted to higher elevation bog-gy sites in the central and northern Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 490-492).

Uses: The tribes in the Black Hills region appear to have had little use for birch trees, since there is not much information in ethnobotanical sources. Although tribes, such
as the Cheyennes, recognized them (Grinnell 1972:2:212, 245) and probably had important uses for them in their former Great Lakes homelands, many of their functions were now performed with hide.

**[food]** The Lakotas used the same name for the sugar maple tree, and this suggests that they may have tapped birch trees for their sap. This was a common practice among Numic speaking peoples in the Intermountain West (Albers and Lowry 1995:34).

**[art & manufacture]** The Arapahos used the bark to make an orange dye (Nickerson 1966:47).

Corylus cornuta  
**[beaked hazelnut]**

The better-known *C. Americana* is reported in the Black Hills, but it is rare (Larson and Johnson 1999:492). The nuts of the hazel species are hard to collect in the plains region, not only because they bear less fruit, but also because they are a favorite source of food for birds and other small animals (Kindscher 1992:99).

**Names:**

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:508)  
*u* 'ta [hazelnut, acorn]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:74)  
zhinga-hi [hazel bush]

**Habitat:** This tree is located outside the environs of Wind Cave National Park from low to high elevations in the northern and central portions of the Hills at the edge of meadows and moist woodlands (Larson and Johnson 1999:492). In 1875, however, Wal-ter Jenney (in Newton and Jenny 1880: 316) reported that they grew in extensive patches in the southeastern Hills.

**Uses:** Other than the opportunistic collection of the tree’s nuts, there are no other reported uses for this tree among the tribal nations who lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills.

**[food]** Notwithstanding the difficulties in collecting them, Lakotas and Poncas ate hazel nuts raw or pounded them into a meal for thickening soups (Gilmore 1919:74). In times of food scarcity, they became an important emergency food especially during the winter months (Hassrick 1964:156, 180).

**Ostrya virginiana  
[ironwood]**

Also known as hop hornbeam, this member of the birch family is located mainly in the northern and eastern sections of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:494). The Lakotas called ironwood *ispán spanheca* [to make something soft by using for pounding], or, alternatively, *can maza* [ironwood]. They are the only Native group with documented applications for this plant. The blossoms were applied in face paint, and the wood went into the construction of bows (Buechel 1970: 233). The Poncas and Omahas called it *he’tązhonta* (Fletcher and La Flesche 1972:106).

**Caprifoliaceae  
The Honeysuckle Family**

Five species from this family have been identified with names and uses in ethnobotanical sources, with coralberries and snowberries being the most important to local tribes.

**Lonicera spp.  
[honeysuckle]**

Two species of honeysuckle are reported in the Black Hills, *L. dioica* [limber honey-suckle] and *L. tartarica* [Tartarian honey-suckle] (Larson and Johnson 1999:494-96). Neither of these varieties is very common in the Black
Hills. *L. dioica* is found in moist locations in the northern and central Hills at low to mid elevations, while *L. tartarica*, which was introduced to the area from Eurasia, is typically found near towns at low elevations. Its Lakota name is *cani’ksuye* [sweetened wood], which refers to *L. dioica* (Buechel 1970:118). No uses have been reported for either variety among the tribal nations who lived and traveled in the region of the Black Hills, despite the Lakota’s suggestive name for the plant.

*Sambuicus racemosa*  
**[stinking elderberry]**

This particular species of elderberry is commonly associated with the eastern wood-lands. Other species, however, are widely found in the moist, mountainous locations of the greater Northwest where they were an important food for Native populations (Kindscher 1987: 249-250).

**Names:**

**Dakota** (Gilmore 1919:115)  
*canputa’hu* [upper lip skin tree]  
*S. Canadensis* but may include this variety too.  
*Note:* There is no reference to elderberry in Buechel’s dictionary (1970), which suggests that this berry may have been consumed primarily by Dakotas east of the Missouri River.

**Poncas** (Gilmore 1919:115)  
*Wagathahashka* [elder bush]

**Habitat:** This plant frequently appears in the central and northern Black Hills at mid to high elevations in moist locations (Larson and Johnson 1999:496). It is found in ravine environments at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001j: 1).

**Uses:** Elderberries were used mostly as a food by native peoples in the Plains region.

**Symphoricarpos spp.**  
**[snowberry]**

Two *Symphoricarpos* species are located in the Black Hills, white snowberry, *S. albus*, and western snowberry, *S. occidentalis*. Both are also widely distributed in areas adjacent to the Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999:246).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:17)  
mehme-menotse [spicy berries]  
probably refers to *S. occidentalis*

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:52)  
gu-la-ko-kee-a [no translation given]  
*S. occidentalis*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:399,575,659; Rogers 1980:43)  
on’sunk’nasapi [stem to hunt dogs with]  
*S. occidentalis*  
Alternate: *zuzeca tawote* [snake food]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:116)  
*Inshtogah-te-hi* [eye lotion plant]  
*S. occidentalis*

**Habitat:** *S. albus* is a very common under-story in the forests of the central and north-ern Black Hills from low to high elevations, while *S. occidentalis* is more widely distri-buted in the Hills at low to mid elevations in meadows and foothill grasslands (Larson and Johnson 1999: 498). Both species grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h: 2, 2001j: 1).

**Uses:** Larson and Johnson (1999:498) re-port that the two species had similar uses for native populations in the area, and some of these correspond with those documented for tribes in regions further west (Kindscher 1992:283-284).

**[food]** The Hidatsas ate snowberries fresh and collected them during the late winter and early
spring from the last season’s growth (Nickel 1974:74).

[medicinal] The Lakotas and Poncas steep-ed snowberry leaves to make a remedy for weak or inflamed eyes (Gilmore 1913b: 367; 1919:116). According to William Schweigman (in Lewis, T. 1990: 137), a Lakota healer, the plant was also relied on to treat sexual disorders in women. The Hidatsas used the bark in a decoction to treat snow blindness (Nickel 1974:74). Larson and Johnson (1999: 498) suggest that all parts of plant were employed in dressing wounds, but they do not give the tribal attributions for this.

[art & manufacture] When playing, La-kota boys are said to have made arrows from the stems of S. occidentalis to shoot at dogs (Buechel 1970:399). Hidatsa women made brooms, mattresses, and snares for prairie chickens from the stems of this plant (Nickel 1974:74), and the Lakotas made a red dye from its berries (Hassrick 1964:191).


Virbunum opulus
[highbush cranberry]

Restricted to wet habitats in the northern Black Hills, the berries are gathered by European Americans for flavoring jelly. European Americans also processed the bark for a medicinal tea to diminish cramps, and the flowers were mixed in a decoction for the treatment of skin conditions (Larson and Johnson 1999:500). No names have been found for this plant in native languages, nor have any uses been reported for it among the tribal nations who used the Hills in historic times.

Celastraceae
The Staff Tree Family

Only one species in this family, Celastrus scandens [American Bittersweet], is located in the Black Hills. It is a very common plant of the eastern deciduous forests, which extend into the prairie states through wood-ed river and stream valleys. It is frequent in the low elevation canyons on the northern, eastern, and southern sides of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 502). The Lakotas knew it as wohlokapi sni pejuta [medicine to ward off wounds/our translation]. They believed that when the red roots are chewed and smeared on the body, a person would be protected from being wounded (Buechel 1970:599).

Chenopodiaceae
The Goosefoot Family

The only species from this family listed for the Black Hills, greasewood, is rare in its occurrence. It has important uses among the Cheyennes. Two species, not reported for the Hills but common in the general region, were also named and/or used by local tribal nations.
**Atriplex canescens**  
*fourwing saltbrush*

Although not reported specifically for the Black Hills, saltbrush is very common in the regions surrounding the Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999: 248). The Lakotas called it *pangi sasa* [red tuber] or alternatively, *tinpsinla sasa* [red turnip], but there are no references on how it might have been used if at all (Buechel 1970:430,489). The Arapa-hos and Shoshones applied all parts of the plant in the manufacture of a yellow dye (Nickerson 1966:47).

**Krascheninnikovia lanata**  
*winterfat*

Winterfat appears occasionally in the mixed grass prairies of the Black Hills’ southern and western foothills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 502). In Cheyenne, winterfat is called *hetanevanósz*, and it is the man sage used in the Sun Dance and other sacred ceremonies (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:52).

**Sarcobatus vermiculatus**  
*greasewood*

This is another plant that grows occasionally in western South Dakota but is rare in the Black Hills (Johnson and Larson 1999:250). The Cheyennes are the only group reported to have named and used it. They knew it as *ve?ohke-vano?e* [bitter sage], and they ap-plied it for variety of different purposes (Hart 1981:17). In one medicinal application, the Cheyennes sharpened the ends of greasewood sticks for puncturing instruments to draw blood, and they also fash-ioned the sticks into tools to deliver acupuncture-like piercings. They also treat-ed horse sprains and bruises with this wood (Hart 1981:17). Sticks of greasewood are used for making the man design upon which Sun Dancers dance and for hanging Sun Dance whistles. In addition, they serve as tampers for tobacco pipes and as the upright twirling sticks for making fires. Finally, the Cheyennes made arrow-shafts from grease-wood (Hart 1981:17).

### Cornaceae  
**The Dogwood Family**

The only woody species from this family located in the Black Hills, Redosier dog-wood, remains very important to tribal nations in the region.

**Cornus sericea** (*C. Stolonifera*)  
*redosier dogwood*

Different varieties of dogwood were widely used by the tribal nations of the Plains as an ingredient in tobacco mixtures smoked on ceremonial occasions (Kindscher 1987:193). This includes the variety reported for the Black Hills.

**Names:**

*mah’ kom e his* [red bark]  
*C. sericea*

alternates: *a?oome-hesono*  
*ma?koome-hesono*  
*hoatmoanoenoz*

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)  
*pariobi* [no translation given]

Kiowa [Vestal and Schultes 1939:46]  
*zaikh’-kon-a* [arrow wood]  
alternates: *gwai-gee-ap-aip* [no translation given]  
*sek’an’-kan* [no translation provided]

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 123; Rogers 1980: 44)  
* cansa’ sa* [red wood]  
but probably referred originally to *C. anomum*  
* cansa’ sa hcaka* [real or original wood]  
*C. sericea* (considered the best for smoking)
Plains Apache (Jordan 1965: 63)
kahkas [arrow branch]
C. dromondii

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:108)
ninigahi [to mix for the pipe]
C. anomum
ninighai hte [the real or original]
C. sericea

Habitat: Commonly found over the entire Black Hills, dogwood favors moist locations along stream banks, lake shores, and springs (Larson and Johnson 1999: 504). It also appears at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2002c:1).

Uses: Tribes throughout the area employed the stems and bark of this plant.

[food] The Hidatsas are the only tribal nation in the region of the Black Hills that are reported to have eaten the berries of this shrub on a regular basis (Nickel 1974:61).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes mix the berries of this plant with chokecherries and bear-berry to make a medicine called sepo that is used to treat a variety of ailments (White-man in Schwartz 1988: 53).

[art & manufacture] The Cheyennes wove the root stems in baskets, which they used for playing a popular seed game (Grinnell 1972:1:246), and the Crows employed it in making drumsticks, tipi stakes, tipi pins, and forks for sweatlodge racks (Hart 1992: 20). The Plains Apaches relied on dogwood for manufacturing their arrow shafts, and they also used it to make backrests and drum-sticks (Jordan 1965:63-64). The Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Comanches also manufactured their arrowshafts out of dogwood (Carlson and Jones 1939: 521; Vestal and Schultes 1939:46; Hart 1981:23).


Cupressaceae
The Cypress Family

Three species in this family are reported in the Black Hills, and all of them are associated with medicinal uses in European American and American Indian cultures.

Juniperus communis
[common juniper]

This is a common understory plant in pine and spruce forests throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:504), and it is present at higher elevations in Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001i:1). The Cheyennes named it heshkove-shestoto?e [thorny], and they called J. sibirica, another low growing species, wi’ iv tsis’ to to [ravine coniferous tree] (Grinnell 1972:2: 169; Hart 1981:4). European Americans often grind the berries of the common juniper to flavor meat (Larson and Johnson 1999). The common juniper is a popular folk remedy among European Americans for menstrual ailments, or to expel afterbirth, to treat ulcers, and to cure diarrhea (Kindscher 1992:133-34). Similar uses have also been reported for the Utes and
other tribal nations west of the Black Hills (Albers and Lowry 1995: 44). The Cheyennes made a tea from *J. sibirica* to treat coughs and sore throat (Grinnell 1972:2:169-70), but nothing is reported for *J. communis*.

**Juniperus horizontalis**  
[creeping juniper]

This species of juniper is occasionally found in the lower elevation hillsides and open woods of the northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 506). The Cheyennes knew it as *evoneesheenose-shestote’e* [no translation given], and they treated coughs and tickling sensations in the throat with a medicine tea brewed from its boughs (Hart 1981: 4). The Hidatsas are the only other tribal nation for whom there is a report of a medicinal use of this juniper species (Nickel 1974:67).

**Juniperus scopulorum**  
[Rocky Mountain juniper]

This and the related red cedar, *J. virginiana*, are considered sacred to tribes throughout the northern Plains. In the southeastern parts of the Black Hills, the two varieties of cedar hybridize (Larson and Johnson 1999: 506).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:170; Hart 1981: 4)  
*wi’iiv tsis’to’to*  
[ a tall tree]  
*J. scopulorum*  
alternate: *ve?eveshestote’e*

**Comanche** [Carlson and Jones 1939:522]  
*ekawai: pv*  
[no translation]

**Kiowa** [Vestal and Schultes 1939: 13]  
*’ko-kee-ad-la; ahi’n*  
[peculiar]  
*J. virginiana*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970: 192; Rogers 1980: 25)  
*hante* (cedar)  
*J. scopulorum*  
*hantesa* (red cedar)  
*J. virginiana*

**Plains Apache** [Jordan 1965:113]  
gōad; dīkale. [odor spilling out]  
*J. virginiana*

**Ponca** (Gimore 1919:63)  
*maazi* [red cedar]  
*J. virginiana*

**Habitat:** The Rocky Mountain juniper is found over the entire Black Hills, mostly at lower elevations in transitional zones be-tween ponderosa pine and prairie or sagebrush steppe. Red cedar is confined to the southeastern regions of the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999). Only the Rocky Mountain juniper is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f: 1).

**Uses:** The tribal nations of the northern Plains and neighboring regions had myriad uses for cedar, considering it especially beneficial for ceremonial purification and warding off evil influences. Indeed, Louis Kemnitzer (1970:66) notes that the Lakotas trade their own local cedar for varieties procured by tribal nations living in other parts of the United States and Canada, and they compare differences in their odorous qualities.

**[food]** The Utes, Comanches, and other Numic speaking tribes of the Intermountain West ate the berries of this tree (Carlson and Jones 1939:522; Albers and Lowry 1995: 65). The Lakotas did so as well but only on an occasional basis.

**[medicinal]** The Dakotas and the Lakotas made a tea from the leaves and berries that was administered for coughs, fevers, chest congestion, and pneumonia (Gilmore 1919: 63; Kemnitzer 1970:66; Standing Bear 1988:96, 102), and the Arikaras, Cheyennes, Crows, Kiowas, and Utes did so too (Vestal and Schultes 1939:13; Grinnell 1971:2:170; Hart 1981:5; 1992:37; Albers and Lowry 1995:65). The Lakotas also burnt the twigs in a smoke treatment for colds (Gilmore 1919:63; Kemnitzer 1970:66), and they brewed the
seeds in a tea for gastrointestinal disorders (Feraca 1998:78). According to John Moore (1974a:171), the Cheyennes used green cedar berries for diseases relating to the teeth and eyes and red cedar berries for blood-related illnesses. They made a va-porizer from the leaves for treating colds and fever (Hart 1981:5), and they burnt the twigs to treat hyperactivity (Grinnell 1972: 2:170; Hart 1981:5). In addition, the Chey-en-nes made a tea from cedar to quicken delivery in childbirth (Grinnell 1972:2: 170). The Crows steeped it in a tea for removing the afterbirth, to check diarrhea, and to stop nosebleeds (Hart 1992:36). The Kiowas chewed the berries as a treatment for canker sores (Vestal and Schultes 1939:13), and the Plains Apaches made a tea for treating hemorrhages and the after pains associated with childbirth (Jordan 1965:118). The Hidatsas employed it as well, but the specific medical applications remain un-identified (Nickel 1974: 66). Long asso-ciated with herbal traditions in Europe, it is not surprising that the cedar was widely used by early European American settlers in their folk remedies (Hart 1992:36; Tilford 1997:84).

[veterinary] The Lakotas brewed the ber-ries and twigs in a tea to treat coughs in horses (Gilmore 1919:63).


[symbolic & ceremonial] Considered highly sacred, the twigs are burnt as a smu-dge for spiritual purification in many healing and religious ceremonies among all tribes in the northern Plains (Gilmore 1919:64; Carl-son and Schultes 1939: 522; Vestal and Schultes 1939:13; Walker 1980:93; Hart 1992:36; Kindscher 1992:132). The Lakotas placed cedar boughs on tipi poles to ward off lightning (Gilmore 1919:64; Standing Bear 1988:96-97), and they made a wazilya [incense] out of cedar whenever they petitioned the thunders who favored the smell of this smoke (Walker 1980:77). The Chey-en-nes also burned cedar incense to ward off lightning and thunder (Hart 1981: 4). The Lakotas chewed a medicine made from the boughs to put on scalp locks (Walker 1980:93), and the Heyoka burned cedar in their ceremonial encounters with the thun-ders (Walker 1980:155). Today, Lakotas use cedar in their Yawipi ceremonies, in the meetings of the Native American Church, during Christian church services, and many keep it in their homes to attract luck and spiritual blessings (Kemnitzer 1970: 66-67). The Cheyennes also burned cedar incense to ward off lightning and thunder (Hart 1981:4), and they associated the tree’s green berries with the green colored hailstones that fall during summer storms (Moore, J. 1974a:171). For the Arikaras, Gilmore (1987:180) lists cedar as one of three sacred trees whose chief pur-pose was to drive out evil influences. Cedar figures predominately in Arikara origin stories; it is the great protector and a ritual was held annually to show gratitude to the grandmother cedar. In this ritual, pasque-flowers and baby moc-casins were hung on a cedar tree to insure health and long life (Gilmore 1987:186-87). This was another very important plant for the Plains Apaches, who burnt it as an incense and fumigant in most of their ceremonies; it was believed to ward off the negative influences of any spirit or ghost who might intend to bring harm to people (Jordan 1965:113-117).
Elaegnaceae  
The Oleaster Family

Two members of this family are reported in the Black Hills. The Russian olive, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, was introduced from Europe as a shade tree. It is now considered a troublesome predator in the riparian environments of the West. No names or uses for this tree have been reported in the ethno-botanical literature. The other member of the family, the buffaloberry (*Shepherdia*), however, is very important to the tribal nations of the region.

Shepherdia spp.  
[buffaloberry or rabbitberry]

Two buffaloberry a.k.a. rabbitberry species are located in the Black Hills, *S. argentea* (Silver) and *S. canadensis* (Russet or Canadian). Local tribes probably gathered both species, even though many reports refer to the Russet variety. Silver buffaloberry is found throughout the western portions of South Dakota and neighboring states (Johnson and Larson 1999:254).

Names:

Arapaho (Nickerson 1966:49)
auch-ha-haybena [no translation given]

Arikara (Gilmore 1987: 199)
natara-kapachis [no translation provided]

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:181; Hart 1981:25)
mat’ si-ta-si’mins [red hearted]
alternate: ma’ke-meniotse [red berries]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:333-334; Rogers 1980: 44)
masin‘capute [rabbit lip tree]
*S. argentea*

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:106)
zhon-hoje-wazhide [no translation provided]

Habitat: Both species of buffaloberry are common in the area. Silver buffaloberry is found on banks above streams and dry drainages in the foothills and grasslands, including locations at Wind Cave National Park, while the Russet variety is located in moist forest or open habitats at mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999:508-510; Pisarowicz 2001j:2).

Uses: Buffaloberries are valued mainly as a source of food, although other uses have been reported for them.


The Lakotas made a red dye from buffaloberries, and they used the thorns in making awls (Lyford 1940:38, 42).

Branches for the Cheyennes’ Sun Dance altar were made from the young shoots of this plant (Hart 1981:25). Melvin Gilmore (1987:198-200) recorded a story of how a buffaloberry bush took pity on the Arikaras and showed them how to use its leaves. He also notes that this was one of the bushes where the Arikaras hung the bundles in which an infant’s placenta was wrapped (Gilmore 1930:75).

The Heath Family

All of the species from this family associated with the Black Hills have reported names and/or uses in the ethno-graphic and ethnobotanical literature on the region.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
[bearberry or manzita]

Also called “kinnikinick” or “larb,” bear-berry is not found in open grassland and prairie locations or in many of the river and stream valleys that the tribes of the region typically traveled and inhabited. Consequently, the Black Hills and other higher elevation, wooded locations would have been the only places where Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribal nations would have been able to secure this very important ceremonial plant.

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:183; Hart 1981:25)

no’an-i un ots [to mix]

alternates: no’aneonotse [mixture leaf]

ma?ke-menotse [red berry]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:520; Rogers 1980:44)

wahkpe canli [tobacco leaf]

Habitat: Bearberry is a common under-story at all elevations in ponderosa pine for-ests that grow on granite and limestone soils (Larson and Johnson 1999:510), and it grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisaro-wicz 2001i:2).

Uses: Local tribes value bearberry primarily for its medicinal and ceremonial appli-cations.

Food] The berries were sometimes consumed as an emergency food since they remain on the bush throughout the winter months. Although tribal nations in western Montana used them as a condiment and boiled them in broth, they do not appear to have had culinary uses for Native peoples who lived in the region of the Black Hills (Hart 1992:41).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes made a tea from the stems, leaves, and berries for the treatment of back pain; the tea was also applied as a compress with wetted leaves. The Cheyennes also used the plant as a smudge to treat people who were acting “crazy” (Grinnell 1972:2:183; Hart 1981: 25). The Lakotas put bearberry leaves in a pipe smoke treatment for wounds, and they included it in smudge treatments too (Walker 1980:93; Standing Bear 1988:103). Fools Crow (Mails 1991:165) ground the stems and roots of this plant to treat kidney ailments and back pain. The Crows pul-verized the leaves and made a powder to treat canker sores of the mouth (Hart 1992: 41). European American herbalists rely on this plant in remedies for inflammations of the digestive and urinary tracks (Tilford 1997:86).

[symbolic & ceremonial] This is one of the most important plants added to Cheyenne tobacco mixtures (Hart 1992:40-41). Bearberry leaves were also the foun-dation of Lakota tobacco mixtures (Buechel 1970:520; Black

**Vaccinium spp.**

[huckleberry and grouseberry]

*V. membranaceum* [thinleaf or mountain huckleberry] and *V. Scoparium* [grouse-berry or grouse whortleberry] are the two *Vaccinium* species found in the Black Hills. Both of these species typically occur at high elevations in the western United States, and consequently, they are more commonly used by tribal nations living in the Intermountain West than by those who occupied the central regions of the Plains.

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:183; Hart 1982:25)

mah’ ki mins [small red berry]

*V. Scoparium*

alternate: ma’ke-menotse [red berry]

Lakota (Riggs 1968:125; Buechel 1970:168; Rogers 1980:44)

ha’za [huckleberry]

winohin taha’za [women’s huckleberry]

wakanksin taha’za [blackbear’s berry]

*The last two names are Dakota.

**Habitat:** Mountain huckleberry is not common in the Black Hills, and it is re-stricted to the northern mountain slopes above 5,000 feet in the Lead-Deadwood area. Grouseberry is more widespread, but its also confined to the central and northern portions of the Black Hills where it is found in moist coniferous or mixed forest environments at low elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999: 512).

**Uses:** Of the tribal nations in the region, only the Cheyennes are reported to have used these berries for non-culinary purposes.

[food] Huckleberry is a very important fruit staple for tribes of the Rocky Mountains (Albers and Lowry 1995:34-35). While Plains tribes, including the Cheyennes and Lakotas, no doubt picked these berries opportunistically, they were not a major source of food. They are popular among European Americans who use them in jams, jellies, pies, syrups, and baked goods. Grouseberry is also edible, but its size is small and its yields are low (Larson and Johnson 1999: 512).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes gave children dried and pulverized grouseberries to increase their appetite, and the leaves and stems were mixed in water as a treatment for nausea and loss of appetite (Grinnell 1972: 2:184). European American herbalists apply the leaves in decoctions to reduce blood sugar in diabetes (Tilford 1997:80).


**Fabaceae**

The Legume Family

Two *Amorpha* species are located in the Black Hills, Leadplant and False indigo. Early explorers reported the leadplant, *A. canescens*, in great abundance amidst prairie grasses with good southern exposures. The bacterial nodules on its roots contribute to the cycling of nitrogen in native prairie ecosystems. After European American set-tlement, it was reduced by heavy grazing (Kindscher 1987:35-36). False Indigo, *A. fruitcosa*, which appears similar in many respects to the leadplant, is less common in the region.

**Names:**

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)

seha’sabiv [no translation given]
**Fagaceae**

**The Beech Family**

The Bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, is the only tree reported from this family in the Black Hills. It is typically found amidst stands of ponderosa pines and also on sandy loam prairies (Larson and John 1999: 258).

**Habitat:** Leadplant is found in the eastern regions of the Black Hills in low to mid elevation prairies where it is closely associated with big and little bluestem grasses, while False indigo is infrequent and restricted to moist stream banks or open woodlands on the eastern and southern perimeters of the Black Hills (Larson and John 1999:514). Both plants grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f: 1).

**Uses:** Each of these plants had multiple applications among the tribal nations who were reported to have used them.

**[food]** The Lakotas made a leaf tea from the leadplant for culinary uses (Gilmore 1919: 93).

**[medicinal]** The Omahas and probably the closely related Poncas dried leadplant leaves and blew them on cuts and open wounds. The twigs were cut and burned as “moxa” on the skin to treat neuralgia and rheumatism (Gilmore 1919: 93).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The Lakotas mixed the crushed leaves of the leadplant with buffalo fat for smoking (Gilmore 1919:93). Joseph Nicollet (in Bray and Bray 1976:117) reported in the late 1830s that this was one of the plants that Dakotas used to attract bison.

**[art & manufacture]** The Lakotas and other tribes fashioned their arrowshafts from the straight stalks of the leadplant (Buechel 1970:658), and the Kiowas made bedding material from the false indigo (Vestal and Schultes 1939:31).

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:26)
  - *vo?ome-oo?meshe* [no translation given]

- **Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:524)
  - *pasapeni* [ no translation given]

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:508; Rogers 1980:48)
  - *u’tahu can* [acorn tree]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:76)
  - *socilici’e* [star brush]

- **Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:75)
  - *tashka-hi* [no translation given]

**Habitat:** Bur oak are common at low to mid elevations in the eastern Black Hills along streams and at the edge of meadows (Larson and Johnson 1999: 516). They grow at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f: 1).

**Uses:** This tree had important uses as food and medicine for the tribal nations in the region.

**[food]** Oak acorns were an important food staple of the Lakotas, Comanches, Poncas, and Cheyennes (Gilmore 1919:75; Carlson and Jones 1939:524; Grinnell 1972:1:248). The bitterness of the nuts was extracted through a leaching process (Gilmore 1919: 75). The Lakotas ground the acorns into a meal for soups and mush (Hassrick 1964: 156,180; Brown 1992:12).

**[medicinal]** Lakotas boiled the bark in a decoction to treat lower intestinal ailments, particularly in children (Gilmore 1919:75).
The Plains Apaches used this and other oaks as a supporting frame for their brush arbors, meat drying racks, and cooking tripods, and oak char-coals were employed in making black pig-ment for painting designs on artifacts (Jordan 1965:77). The Lakotas made a yellow dye from the decayed bark of the oak (Lyford 1940:42).

The Plains Apaches considered all oaks, including bur oak, a good fuel source because they burned well and produced ample coals (Jordan 1965:155). Oak was also used by the Lakotas to fuel their fires (Bordeaux 1929:155).

The Ribes subfamily includes a great variety of woody plants which bear edible berries that are highly valued by the tribal nations in the region. Six different species of currant are located in the Black Hills, including R. americanum [black currant], R. aureum [golden or buffalo currant], R. cereum [western red or wax currant], R. hirtellum [hairy stem gooseberry], R. lacustre [swamp or prickly currant], and R. oxyacanthoides [Canadian or northern gooseberry]. R. missouriensis [Missouri gooseberry] is not found in the area, although it is often con-fused with some of the species native to the area (Larson and Johnson 1999:518). All of these were mentioned in the journals and reports of early expeditions to the Hills (Newton and Jenny 1880: 316; Donaldson in Krause and Olson 1974: 61).

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2;175; Hart 1981:26-27) eshko’ vi ta si’-mins [thorny heart-shaped berry]

R. setosum *

Habitat: Black currants are occasional along low elevation stream banks and moist ravines (Larson and Johnson 1999:518). Golden currents are common at low elevations mainly in foothills near wood bor-ders, fences and in open areas. Swamp cur-rant are infrequent and localized at mid to high elevations in the northern and central Black Hills (Ibid:522); and red currant are frequent in open pine forest and forest openings at all elevations, but most com-monly in the southern Black Hills (Ibid: 520). Hairystem gooseberry is found only occasionally in the Hills along streams and moist forest habitats at mid to high eleva-tions, whereas the Northern gooseberry is frequently

Grossulariaceae
The Grossularia Family

Ribes spp.
[currants and gooseberries]

G. missouriensis
Pezi nuga [male gooseberry]

R. odoratum
found at all elevations in meadows, canyons, rocky slopes, and open environments under dry and moist soil conditions (Ibid: 520, 522). Only the golden currant is reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001:i:1).

**Uses:** All of the tribal nations in the region ate the berries from various species in the *Ribes* subfamily, and many used the bushes for other applications as well (Kindscher 1987:196-98).

**[food]** One of the numerous berries used as food by tribal nations in the northern Plains. Probably all currants were taken, especially in emergency situations, but the golden currant and black currant were the ones most actively sought after for food. The Lakotas ate many varieties of currants. They dried and packed gooseberries in parfleches and made a mush from them that was reputed to be very tasty (Bordeaux 1929: 132; Hassrick 1964: 179; Standing Bear 1978: 59, 1988: 11-12; Brown 1992:12). The Cheyennes also ate a variety of gooseberry and currant species fresh and in a dried form (Grinnell 1972:2:175; Hart 1981:26-27), and the Kio-was made jellies from them (Vestal and Schultes 1939:29). The Hidatsas ate them fresh and sometimes dried them in mixtures with juneberrys (Nickel 1974:72). The Plains Apaches also gathered and ate many different *Ribes* species (Jordan 1965:49). Currants remain popular among European Americans and American Indians too for making jams and jellies, pies, and preserves (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70: 40, 402, 425, 583; Kindscher 1987:196-198).

**[medicinal]** Black currant roots were used by the Poncas to treat uterine disorders (Gilmore 1919:84). The Kiowas believed that snakes feared this plant and kept away from it, so they employed it as an antidote in their snakebite treatments (Vestal and Schultes 1939:29). The Arapahos took *A. cereum* as an emetic (Nickerson 1966:48). The Sho-shones made a poultice from the inner bark of *R. aureum*. Tribes outside the Black Hills region had many additional medicinal uses for *Ribes* species (Kindscher 1992:275-276)

**Oleaceae**

*Fraxinus pennsylvaniaica* [green ash] is the only species from this family reported in the Black Hills. It is an important tree, symbolically and ceremonially, for the tribal nations of the region.

**Names:**

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:446; Rogers 1980:52)
*pse’htin can* [ash tree, colloquially a pipe]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:155)
cildilg ¿o.¿ce. [wood splits easy]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:108)
tashnanga-hi [no translation given]

**Habitat:** This is a common tree at low elevations throughout the Black Hills, where it is typically located along streams (Larson and Johnson 1999:524). It is also abundant outside the Black Hills along woody flood-plains and stream banks (Johnson and Lar-son 1999:260). It grows at Wind Cave Na-tional Park.

**Uses:** This tree was not only important as a source of wood for manufacturing a wide variety of different items, but it was also significant in the ceremonial observances of local tribes.
The ash tree is associated with many sacred properties. The Cheyennes made whistles for their contrary dances from ash wood, and they employed it in the construction of their Sun Dance lodges (Grinnell 1972:2:81; Hart 1992:20). The Lakotas made a wand for the otiyotipi to use when they selected people to sit with them (Walker 1982:22), for wooden plates used in the Pte San lowampi (Fletcher 1883c: 266), and also for whistles played in the grassdance (Densmore 1918: 471). Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:321) pointed out that when Lakota men were chosen to be akicita, they were told: “You will resemble the ash. You have noticed it cannot be broken. It is up to you to look after the people and take care of the laws.”

As reported by James Walker (1982:31), a Lakota tradition tells that:

once upon a time the people tried all the wood of every kind of a tree and they found that the wood of the ash was the most durable and strongest. So they made the ash the emblem of the marshals and the marshals made all their wooden utensils and implements of ash.

For the Lakotas and most other tribes in the northern Plains, ash was the primary wood for making pipe stems (Gilmore 1919:108, 1987: 06; Buechel 1970:446; Standing Bear 1988:99), and it was favored as well for making bows (Hassrick 1964:198; Standing Bear 1988:20). Also, the young stems of the green ash furnished the material for arrowshafts (Gilmore 1919:108). The Lakotas and Cheyennes relied on ash wood to fashion a variety of other items, including tipi pins and pegs, drums, and meat drying racks (Curtis 1907-30:6:156; Gilmore 1919:108; Hart 1981:20). The Lakotas also used burnt ash wood to produce a black coloration in their paints (Bordeaux 1929:182). The Hida-tsas made wedges, corn mortars, and travois hoops from this tree (Nickel 1974:64).

The Pine Family


Names:

**Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:6)

*hooxe* [no translation given]

*P. contorta*

*Shestoto* [no translation provided]

*P. ponderosa*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:575; Rogers 1980:25)

*wazi* [generic]

and specific to *P. contorta*

*wazi’haka* [real pine]

*Picea glauca*

*wazi’can* [pine wood]

*P. ponderosa*

**Ponca** (Fletcher and La Flesche 1972: 107)

*Ma’ci* [real pine]

*Picea glauca*

**Habitat:** The Black Hills spruce is typi-cally found on the cool and moist, north fac-ing slopes at mid to high elevations over an area that extends from Custer to Spearfish (Larson and Johnson 1999:524). The lodge-pole pine occurs as an isolated stand in a small area of Lawrence county, and limber pine is also restricted to a small area of the Black Hills south of Harney’s Peak (Ibid: 526). Ponderosa pine is the dominant tree, growing over the entire Black Hills from the foothills to the highest mountains (Ibid: 528). Only the ponderosa is reported at Wind Cave National Park.
Uses: The various species of pine were used for multiple purposes by tribes in the region.

[food] Lakotas used the resin from the bark of Black Hills spruce and the ponderosa pine as a chewing gum (Buechel 1970:574,799; Saka Sni Win n.d.: 15), and the Cheyennes did the same with the ponderosa pine (Hart 1981:6). The Cheyennes also ate the seeds from this pine (Hart 1992:57). Larson and Johnson (1999:524,528) report other food uses of the Black Hills spruce and also the Ponderosa pine, but they do not give their tribal attributions: these include using the inner bark for flour or eating it fresh in the spring, boiling the young shoots or cones for emergency food, and brewing the ponderosa pine needles in a tea.

[medicinal] Cheyennes used ponderosa re-sin in an ointment to treat sores and scabby skin (Hart 1981:6).

[cosmetic & hygienic] Cheyenne men attached ponderosa gum to locks of hair in certain older hairstyles (Grinnell 1972:1: 54).

[art & manufacture] Larson and Johnson (1999: 524, 526) note that early explorers and ethnographers reported Indians visiting the Hills to collect spruce wood for tipi poles, and of course the lodgepole pines, which were the classic pine for this use (Hart 1981:6; Brown 1992:12). Standing Bear (1975:16-17), however, describes in great detail how the Lakota gathered and processed ponderosa for tipi poles in the vicinity of the Buffalo Gap, and Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:157) described this process in the Black Hills above Rapid Creek. The Cheyennes and Lakotas used ponderosa pine gum in making their war and Sun Dance whistles (Grinnell 1972:1:204; Hart 1981:6; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988: 53; Standing Bear 1988:172). The Lakotas gathered a resin from the ponderosa pine that they boiled to produce yellow dyes (Buechel 1970:134), while the Cheyennes are reported to have used the roots in making a blue dye (Hart 1981:6). The Black Hills spruce was probably the pine species, only found in the Black Hills, whose roots went into the making of a yellow dye (Lyford 1940:42).

[fuel] The wood from various species of pines undoubtedly fueled the fires of local tribes, but it was probably not considered very desirable because it burns rapidly and sends off sparks. The Lakotas, however, used pine pitch shavings as a fire starter (Bordeaux 1929:155).

[symbolic & ceremonial] Even though the specific species is not identified, Francis Densmore (1918: 79) mentions that pine was the tree for making the poles where spirit bundles hung. Pine trees are widely asso-ciated in Lakota storytelling traditions with Waziya, Old Man Winter, and his grandson, Waziyata, The North Wind (Afraid of the Bear in Walker 1980: 200-201; Blue Thunder in Walker 1980: 208; Bad Wound in Walker 1980: 210; Walker 1983: 125, 136, 194, 201, 208). In fact, these two names are often translated as “Towards the Pine.” The Cheyennes used ponderosa pine resin in their love medicines (Hart 1981:6).

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**Ranunculaceae**

**The Buttercup Family**

*Clematis ligusticifolia* [western virgin’s bower or white clematis] is the only woody *Ranunculaceae* species reported in the Black Hills, where it is located in woods and thickets along low to mid elevation stream banks in dry and sandy soil (Larson and Johnson 1999:528). The Lakotas called it *cuniyuwi o’wichak’o* [flowers crowd on vine] or alternatively *cani’yuwi skaska’ nahca* [white blooming flower vine] (Buechel 1970:119,134,415; Rogers 1980:55), and they prepared a tea from its roots as a headache remedy and also a medicinal wash (Buechel 1970:119). Arapahos and Shoshones used the stems for string and made a shampoo from the roots (Nickerson 1966: 46). Modern European American herbalists also use it to treat headaches (Tilford 1997: 191).
**Rhamnaceae**

*The Buckthorn Family*

Closely related to the popular New Jersey tea, *Ceanothus Americanus*, of American Indians and European American settlers along the East Coast (Kundscher 1987:78), the Inland Ceanothus [*Ceanothus herbacea*], also known as “redroot,” went into a culinary tea and a medicinal tonic in the West (Tilford 1997:126). The dry leaves of another variety, *Ceanothus fendleri*, were used for the same purposes. The Inland Ceanothus is common to the rocky soils and open ponderosa forests of the northern Black Hills. The Fendler Ceanothus is found primarily in the western Black Hills and their high limestone and sandstone reaches (Larson & Johnston 1999:530), but it is also present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001k:1). The Poncas knew *C. americanus* as *tabe-hi* [no translation given] (Gilmore 1919:10) and used its knarled roots to start fires on their buffalo hunts when timber was scarce. The *C. fendleri* species was called *unpan’ tawote* [female elk food] by the Lakotas who prepared a nourishing tea from its leaves (Buechel 1970:507; Rogers 1980:56).

**Rosaceae**

*The Rose Family*

Many of the most prized fruits for Plains Indians come from the Rose family, and most of the twelve woody species reported in the Black Hills have names and/or uses among the tribal nations of the region.

**Amelanchiera spp.**

*serviceberry*

*A. alnifolia* [Saskatoon serviceberry], also known as Juneberry, grows under a wide range of conditions in the northern Plains and the Black Hills. This was another fruit-bearing bush that was described as abundant in the Black Hills in the 1870s (Newton and Jenny 1880: 316; Donaldson in Krause and Olson 1974: 61). Along with *A. humilis* [low serviceberry], it remains an important and popular source of food for American Indians and European Americans alike (Larson and Johnson 1999:532-534).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:176; Hart 1981:34)

*he-tan-i-mins* [male berry]

alternate: *hetane-menotse*

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:589; Rogers 1980:56)

*wi’panzukan* [refers to a thing to crack bones]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:87)

*zhon-huda* [gray wood]

**Habitat:** Saskatoon serviceberry is abundant in the Black Hills and located across a wide range of habitats with well-drained soil, while the low serviceberry is commonly found in wooded habitats. Both bear fruit from late June to early August (Larson and Johnson 1999:532-534). The Saskatoon variety is reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** Serviceberries were valuable as a source of food, but they also had other uses for tribes in the region.

preserve the fruit either through canning, drying, or freezing and use it to make pemmican and puddings especially for use at ceremonial feasts (Albers 1966-1976).

Serviceberries were also an important trade item between tribes and with European Americans. The Arikaras exchanged two measures of shelled corn for one measure of dried serviceberries in their trade with neighboring tribes (Gilmore 1919:91).

European American explorers, trappers, and traders commonly relied upon Juneberries for food in their travels. Along with early settlers, they not only picked the berries but also acquired them through trade with local tribes. The berries remain a popular fruit among European Americans who prepare them in jams, jellies, and pies for home use and commercial sale (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70:40, 402,425,583; Fall River County Historical Society 1976: 119,243; Sundstrom J. 1977:227,339; Kind-scher 1987:31-32).

[medicinal] The Cheyennes were also reported to brew the leaves in tea for medi- cinal purposes (Grinnell 1972:2:176), and they mixed the leaves with medicines to make them more palatable to children (Hart 1981:34).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas used the wood stems to make arrowshafts and hoops or tahuca cangleska (Densmore 1918: 438; Gilmore 1919:87; Hassrick 1964:196; Buechel 1970:474, 589). The Hidatsas made fish traps from the stems (Nickel 1974:58). The Lakotas also prepared a red dye from the berries of this bush (Lyford 1940:42).

Cerocarpus montanus
[alderleaf mountain mahogany]

This shrub is restricted to chaparral-like stands that are located in the southern rea-ches of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:534) and at Wind Cave National Park. Larson and Johnson (1999: 534) claim that the seasoned wood of the mahogany is very hard and functions as a desirable firewood, but there are no reports on its names and uses for the tribal nations who occupied the region.

**Crataegus chrysocarpa**
[northern hawthorn]

Local tribes used various species of haw-thorn, but only the northern hawthorn is reported in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 536).

Names:

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:176)
tasi’ mins [bear heart-shaped berry] C. Douglasii

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:521)
tidiamewo: [no translation given]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:334,482,705; Rogers 1980:56)
taspan [generic word for fruit]
taspan’ hu [fruit stock] C. sheridana
matō taspan [bear fruit] C. chrysocarpa
taspan’ sloslola [soft fruit] C. uniflora

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:31)
bakacilta.hi [tree you make arrows for]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 87)
taspan [no translation given]

Habitat: This tree is common but restrict-ed primarily to low elevation areas in the northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:536). It grows, however, at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

Uses: The berries of the hawthorn were taken for food and medicine.

food] Gilmore (1919:87) reports that the fruit was used mostly as an emergency food among the Lakotas and Poncas. Nickel (1974: 61-62) indicates that the Hidatsas ate the fruit fresh but infrequently. The Plains Apaches ate them
but in moderation (Jordan 1965:31), and the Comanches consumed them too (Carlson and Jones 1939: 521). The Cheyennes collected, dried, and stored the fruit of *C. douglasii* in large quantities for winter use (Grinnell 1972:2: 176).

**[medicinal] The berries were mixed with medicines by the Lakotas to make them more palatable (Buechel 1970:482), but they are also reported to have unidentified medicinal properties in their own right (Ibid:334). Along with the berries, the flowering branches of this tree have long been used in Chinese and European American folk medicine to treat heart ailments (Tilford 1997:70).**

**[symbolic & ceremonial] The Arikaras hung the bundles in which they kept their infants’ placentas on the branches of haw-thorn trees (Gilmore 1930:75).**

**Physocarpus spp.**

* [ninebark]

Neither of the two ninebark species, *Physocarpus monogynus* [mountain nine-bark] or *P. opulifolius* [common ninebark], reported in the Black Hills, are associated with names or uses in the ethnobotanical literature on the region. The mountain ninebark is abun-dant but largely restricted to the rocky and wooded areas of the central Black Hills, whereas the common ninebark is frequent in forested areas on the eastern side of the Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:536-538).

**Potentilla fruticosa**

* [shrubby cinquefoil]

Shrubby cinquefoil is most common at mid to high elevations in the central, northern, and western Black Hills (Larson and John-son 1999: 538). The Cheyennes know it as *o nuhk’ is’e yo* [contrary medicine] or alternatively as *van’o’e-moxese-hohp* [sage mint soup]. They made a beverage tea from the leaves and used it as a medicinal pro-tection from enemies. Cheyenne contraries also used the plant to protect their hands from burning when they plunged them into kettles of boiling soup (Grinnell 1972:2:176; Hart 1981:35). European Americans relied on this cinquefoil for various medicinal remedies too (Kindscher 1992:272).

**Prunus Americana**

* [wild plum]

The wild plum is widely distributed in the region’s native grasslands where it grows along drainage ways and in sheltered areas (Larson and Johnson 1999: 260).

**Names:**

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2:177; Hart 1981:35)
 *mak u mins’* [great berry]
 alternate: *ma’xe-menotse* [big berry]

**Comanche** (Carlson and Jones 1939:523)
 *yuweke* [early plum]
 *parawaseke* [late summer plum]
 *kasiweke* [fall plum]

**Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:29)
 *pang-a-dal-lo* [sour or thick-rind plum]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:284; Rogers 1980:56)
 *kan’u-hu* [plum tree]
 *kansu* [plum stones]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:41)
 *ye.cooh* [big fruit]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:87)
 *kande’ hi* [plum tree]

**Habitat:** The wild plum is commonly found at lower elevations in woodlands, val-leys, and drainages over the entire Black Hills (1999:540), and it also grows at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h: 2).

**Uses:** Wild plum trees provide not only food but also materials for making many different objects for ceremonial and every-day use.

**[food] This was an important fruit for tribal nations throughout the region. The fruit was eaten fresh, cooked as a sauce, or dried for**

[medicinal] The Omahas (and Poncas) used the roots to treat abrasions (Gilmore 1919:87), while the Cheyennes mixed the crushed fruits with salt to treat mouth irritations (Hart 1981:35).


[symbolic & ceremonial] Among the Lakotas, the stems were made into prayer wands, called wauuyanpi, which were used for the benefit of the sick (Gilmore 1919: 87). The sprouts of the tree were utilized in making spirit banners for vision questing (Sword in Walker 1980:85), and the withes to make invitation wands for the Hunka ceremony (Walker 1982:65). The Chey-ennes used the tree’s branches in their Sun Dance altar (Hart 1981:5). The Arikaras hung the bundles in

which they kept their infants’ placentas on the branches of wild plum trees (Gilmore 1930:75).

**Prunus pumila**

[ **sandcherry** ]

Except when flowering, the sandcherry is an unobtrusive plant in the areas in which it grows (Larson and Johnson 1999: 542). It was not as plentiful as its relatives, the wild plum and the chokecherry, but it was a valued source of fruit.

**Names:**

*Cheyenne* (Grinnell 1972:2:177)  
*muh’-ko-ta-mins*  [smell from a distance]  
alternate: *moxohe’esta-menotse*

*Lakota* (Buechel 1970:97; Rogers 1980:56)  
*aun’yeypi*  [to put on stem]  

*Poncas* (Gilmore 1919:88)  
*nomp ta ngaa*  [big cherry]

**Habitat:** The sandcherry is sometimes located in the low foothills of the southern and central Black Hills in sandy or rocky prairie and woodland habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:540). It is also present at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** The sandcherry was used primarily as a source of food by tribal nations in the region.

[ **food** ] The Lakotas and Poncas dried the fruits for later use and also made them into a sauce when fresh (Gilmore 1913b:364, 1919:88). The Lakotas and Cheyennes had a belief (hence, their name for the plant) that if a person approached sandcherries from the windward side they would be bitter, but coming from the opposite direction, they would be sweeter (Gilmore 1919:88; Buechel 1970:97; Grinnell 1972:2:177; Eastman in Graeber 1978:88,101; Standing Bear 1988:12).
**Prunus pennsylvanica**

*pin cherry*

Also known as bird cherry, this small tree is found only occasionally in the moist wooded habitats of the low to mid elevation central and northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:542). The Lakotas called it *canpa’ kakan* [knock off cherry from tree], but there are no reports of its use (Buechel 1970:122; Rogers 1980:57).

**Prunus virginiana**

*chokecherry*

Without question, the chokecherry was the most highly prized fruit eaten by the historic tribal nations of the northern Plains. It is widely distributed in the region and frequently grows in river valleys where it is a typical understory in wooded habitats (John-son and Larson 1999:262).

**Names:**

- **Cheyenne** (Hart 1981:35)
  - *menoise* [berry]

- **Crow** (Kindscher 1987:177)
  - *malupwa* [no translation]

- **Kiowa** (Vestal and Schultes 1939:30)
  - *o-hpan-ai-gav* [no translation]

- **Lakota** (Buechel 1970:122)
  - *canpa’-hu* [bitterwood stem]

- **Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:45)
  - *ze* [fruit or food]

- **Ponca** (1919:88)
  - *nonpa-zhinga* [little cherry]

**Habitat:** The chokecherry is very common in the Black Hills where it is found at all elevations along stream banks, in open woods, and rocky hillside habitats (Larson and Johnson 1999:542). It is also present at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h:2).

**Uses:** The chokecherry was significant not only nutritionally and medicinally, but it also carried important symbolic messages that marked cultural identities and social relationships (Kindscher 1987:178), and as Melvin Gilmore (1919:88) writes, it was widely mentioned in tribal stories, songs, and myths.

**[food]** Chokecherries were highly esteemed by all tribes in the region, and they made special trips to find the locations where this fruit was abundant (Gilmore 1919:88). Indeed, Jeff Hart (1992: 42) writes that it is probably the most important berry plant for the Cheyennes and their neighbors. Choke-cherries are eaten fresh and dried for later use. Historically, these cherries were ground with special mortars and pestles and made into small cakes dried in the sun. They were a principal ingredient in pemmican, a dried mixture of meat, fat, and fruit, which the Lakotas call *wasna* (Gilmore 1913b:364-365; 1919: 88; Bordeaux 1929: 132; Grin nell 1972:2: 178; Nickel 1974:71; Standing Bear 1975:22, 1978:6, 59, 1988: 111; Brown 1992: 12). Many of the corn-producing tribes in the region combined chokecherries with ground corn meal, a practice also followed by the nonhorticultural groups (Gilmore 1926b: 14; Nickel 1974: 71). The tribal nations of the northern Plains mixed them in a variety of different soups and stews, and today, they are made into a popular pudding among the Cheyennes and the Lakotas, who call it *chanpa’ijapi* or *wo-ijapi* (Albers 1966-1976; Lewis, L. 1980: 252; Hart 1981:36, 1992: 42). Historically, chokecherries were an important part of the trade between the Dakotas and Arikaras (Gilmore 1987:90-91). Today, the Lakotas continue to gather and process chokecherries but with the use of meat grinders and food processors. Many American Indians also can and freeze chokecherries and prepare them as jams, jellies, and syrups (Albers 1966-1976; Nurge 1970:67, 82; Lewis, T. 1990: 155). Needless to say, this fruit also became a favorite for European American settlers in the region, and they now use it regularly in making butters, jams, jellies, syrups, and pies (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70: 40, 402, 425, 583; Fall River County Historical Society 1976:119, 243; Sundstrom, J. 1977:227, 365, 379).

[**art & manufacture**] The Lakotas and Cheyennes, used the twigs of the choke-cherry tree to make arrowshafts (Curtis 1907-30:6:156; Hassrick 1964: 196; Buechel 1970:108; Hart 1981:35; Standing Bear 1988:18). Chokecherry wood was used by the Lakotas to make bows when ash was not available (Standing Bear 1988:20). The Lakotas also made sticks from the branches for poking coals (Buechel 1970:123). The Crows used the wood for tipi stakes and pins, and they mixed the sap with the neck portions of certain animals to produce glue and with clays to make permanent paints for decorating parfleches and shields (Hart 1992:43). Melvin Gilmore (1919:88) reports that Ponca trappers boiled the bark of choke-cherry in a solution to clean their traps and to remove the scents of former captives.

[**fuel**] Crow war parties made their camp-fires with chokecherry wood because they claimed it made no smoke (Hart 1992:43).

[**symbolic & ceremonial**] Chokecherries are extremely important ceremonially and are served in various ways at many major religious observances. Among the Lakotas, wasna, a mixture of corn, tallow, and chokecherries, is typically served at naming ceremonies. Chokecherry stems were (and still are) placed in a bundle and put in the fork of the sacred cottonwood pole at Sun Dances (Densmore 1918:118; Sword in Deloria 1929; Walker 1980: 178-79; Lewis, T. 1990:53). The Lakotas give Sun dancers a tea prepared from the bark. Cankpe ijapi, a boiled pudding thickened with flour, is a popular dish the Lakotas serve at feasts and powwows (Al-bers 1966-1976; Kemnitzer 1970:3). A staff made of cherry wood was used in the puberty ceremony for young women (Fletcher 1883c:266-267; Walker 1980:244). Chokecherry branches were part of many Cheyenne ceremonies as well: they went into the making of the Sun Dance altar, and there was one branch for each of the 145 songs sung in the Sacred Arrow ceremony (Hart 1981:36).

**Rosea spp. [wild rose]**

There are four varieties of wild rose in the Black Hills, *R. acicularis* [prickly rose], *R. arkansana* [prairie rose], *R. blanda* [smooth rose], and *R. woodsii* [woods’ rose]. While the prairie rose is ubiquitous in the surrounding grasslands of the Black Hills, the other varieties favor woodland habitats (Johnson and Larson 1999:264).

**Names:** In most native nomenclatures, the term for wild rose is used generically, and the various species are not distinguished.

Arapaho (Nickerson 1966:48) ya no
Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2:177; Hart 1981:31) hih’ nin [to pour out] alternate: henene
Lakota (Buechel 1970:398,506; Rogers 1980: 57) onjin’jintka [stands erect] alternate onjinjintkaha can [stinky upright tree]
Ponca (Gilmore 1919:85) Wazhide
**Habitat:** Mostly common at low to mid elevations, both the prairie rose and prickly rose are found on prairie foothills and at woodland edges. The former is also located in dry open forests and roadsides while the later can be sighted in canyons and on rocky slopes or ledges (Larson and Johnson 1999: 545-546). The woods rose is also common and located in the same habitats as the other two but it is also found in stream valleys (Ibid:546). The smooth rose is rare in the region and found in environments similar to the prickly rose (Ibid.). Given their ubiquitous distribution in the Black Hills, it is surprising that none of these rose species are reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** Rose hips are a good source of vita-mins A and C. Although they were readily available in the environments in which Plains Indians lived, they were used mostly for medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1987: 203; Hart 1992:62; Larson and Johnson 1999:544).

**[food]** Wild roses were widely used as an emergency food among American Indians, especially during the winter months (Gilmore 1919:85; Hassrick 1964: 156; Nickel 1974:73; Hart 1981:36, 1992:62; Wilson 1981:106-107; Kindscher 1987:200-204). According to Jeff Hart (1992:62), several tribal nations, including the Cheyennes, had cultural prohibitions against eating them on a regular basis. In historic and modern times, Oglalas boiled rose hips in puddings made for ceremonial events, and the Sican-gus used them as a condiment with other foods (Bordeaux 1929:131; Kemnitzer 1970: 73; Brown 1992:12). Although Ethel Nurge (1970:82) reports that at Rosebud they were eaten only by very poor families, Luther Standing Bear (1988:11) fondly recalls how women used to pound the fruits into balls that were considered a tasty delicacy. The Arapahos are reported to have made teas from the bark of *R. woodsi* (Nickerson 1966:48). European Americans preserve and dehydrate the buds to flavor food, they candy the petals, they eat them fresh in salads, and they steep them in teas (Kindscher 1987:203).

**[medicinal]** Although roses were not an important food source, they were widely recognized for their medicinal properties. The Omahas (and Poncas) and the Cheyennes made a solution from rose hips to treat the eyes (Gilmore 1919:88; Hart 1981:36). The Cheyennes boiled the roots or inner bark for a tea to treat diarrhea and other intestinal disorders (Hart 1981:36), and the Arapahos produced a tea from the petals to heal mus-cle pain (Nickerson 1966:48). The Crows brewed the roots as a remedy to reduce swelling and to treat sore throats and mouth bleeding. The vapors from this remedy were also sniffed to treat nosebleeds (Hart 1992: 62). Wild roses are also popular in European American folk remedies for a variety of different ailments (Kindscher 1992:192; Tilford 1997:162).

**[cosmetic & hygienic]** European Americans use the petals for potpourri air fresheners and rose water (Larson and John-sen 1999: 544).

**[art & manufacture]** The Arapahos are reported to have used the roots to make an orange dye (Nickerson 1966:48).

**[symbolic & ceremonial]** The bark was peeled and dried for tobacco mixtures (Gilmore 1919:88). The Arikaras also hung their infants’ placenta bundles on rose bushes (Gilmore 1930:75). A song Melvin Gilmore (1919:86) published suggests that roses were placed on a Lakota woman’s dress at the time of her marriage. Gilmore (1987:200-203) also relates a story of un-reported tribal attribution about the prairie rose in which a demon wind blows other flowers away to decorate the robe of mother earth, and only the prairie rose is strong enough to withstand him.

**Rubsus idaeus**

**[red raspberry]**

This raspberry and the related *R. occidentalis* [black raspberry], which is found at the far eastern edge of the prairie zone, were not among the major sources of fruit for tribal
nations in the region. Still, their fruits were highly prized (Kindscher 1987:205-208).

Names:

**Cheyenne** (Grinnell 1972:2: 177; Hart 1981:36)  
*mohk’ tahwiske e’ mins* [black heart-shaped berry] 
alternates: *ma?xe-veshkee/ehe-menotse*  
*mo?shstiveshkee/ehe-menotse*  
*wis ke e’ mins* [heart-shaped berry]

**Lakota** (Buechel 1970:475; Rogers 1980:57)  
takan’ hecalala [stem like sinew]

**Plains Apache** (Jordan 1965:49)  
‘idaksah [no translation provided]

**Ponca** (Gilmore 1919:84)  
agathamungi [no translation given]  
*R. occidentalis*

**Habitat:** Red raspberries are widely located from mid to high elevations in aspen and birch woodlands or streamside woods over the entire Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:548), and they are also reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001:j: 2).

**Uses:** Raspberry bushes were used primarily for their culinary and medicinal benefits.

**[food]** The Cheyennes ate black and red raspberries fresh when in season and dried them for winter use (Grinnell 1972:2:177). The Plains Apaches ate them fresh, and today, they make jam and jelly from them (Jordan 1965: 49). The Dakotas steeped the young leaves of black raspberries to make a drink similar to tea (Gilmore 1919:85). This was probably true for the Lakotas who ate the berries too (Buechel 1970:475), but they probably found the red rather than the black varieties in the locations where they lived. This species is popular among local Euro-pean Americans for making jams and jellies (Eastern Custer County Historical Society 1967-70:40, 402, 425, 583).

**[medicinal]** The Omahas (and probably Poncas) used raspberry roots in a treatment for childhood bowel problems (Gilmore 1919:84), and the Plains Apaches made a decoction from the roots for diarrhea and stomachaches (Jordan 1965:129). In Euro-pean American folk medicine, raspberry leaves were brewed in teas to treat female reproductive disorders (Tilford 1997: 122).

**Rubus Parviflorus**  
[thimbleberry]

This fruit does not flower or set fruit as productively in the Black Hills as happens in other mountain regions of the west. It is common to the areas where it grows, but these are restricted to moist, shady locations from mid to high elevations in the northern Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:548). Although a major source of food for tribal nations of the greater Northwest, it was not as important for tribes in the Plains region. There is hardly anything about them in ethnobotanical sources from the region. No doubt, all tribes in the area took the fruit opportunistically when it was available.

**Rubus Pubescens**  
[creeping or dwarf red blackberry]

The Creeping blackberry grows in the moist environments of the mid to high elevation central and northern Black Hills. The fruit is too sparse to be of any significance as a food (Larson and Johnson 1999:55). There are no reports on its names and/or uses in the ethnobotanical literature for the region.

**Sorbus scopulina**  
[mountain ash]

Another species currently in decline, the mountain ash, is restricted to the northern Black Hills. While its fruits are cooked for jam and jellies by European Americans, no names or uses for it have been reported in ethnobotanical sources on the tribal nations of the region (Larson and Johnson 1999: 550).
**Spiraea butulifolia**  
[wild spiraea]*

This species is also restricted to the northern Black Hills, where it is widespread from high to mid elevations on coniferous, birch, and aspen forestlands (Larson and Johnson 1999:552). Known to have analgesic properties, this shrub was used by tribes outside the area for medicinal purposes and also by European Americans as an anti-inflammatory (Tilford 1997:96; Larson and John-son 1999:552). There are no reports on it, however, for tribes who lived and traveled in the Hills.

**Salicaceae**  
The Willow Family

The willow family contains many different trees that had significant benefits for the tribal nations of the region.

**Populus spp.**  
[poplar]

In this family, two species of cottonwood, one poplar, and one aspen are reported in the Black Hills. *P. deltoides* [plains cotton-wood] is a major and much revered tree in the northern Plains that typically grows along floodplains and major drainages (Johnson and Larson 1999:264). *P. angusti-folia* [narrowleaf cottonwood] is more com-mon in regions to the west of the Black Hills, and as a result, the tribal nations who inhabited the northern and central Plains were less familiar with it. It is the variety reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisa-rowicz 2001f:1). *P. balsamifera* [balsam poplar], also known as Balm-of-Gilead be-cause of its fragrant resin, is uncommon in the region (Larson and Johnson 1999:554), while *P. tremuloides* [quaking aspen] is common but restricted to high elevation lo-cations in the Black Hills and at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f:1).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Grinnell 1972:2: 179; Hart 1981:36, 37)  
*mohk wi hio mohk tut tus* [robe painters]

*P. deltoides*  
alternate: *xamaa-hoohtsetse*  
veshkeeʔte [no translation given]

*P. tremuloides*

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:19)  
y-a-hee-hwai [no translation provided]

*P. deltoides*  
alternate: a ’hi’n [principal tree]

Lakota (Gilmore 1913b: 60; Buechel 1970:118, 127,515,519; Rogers 1980:57, 58)  
cani ’tazipa [bow tree]

*P. tremuloides*

canya’hu [wood to chew]

*P. deltoides*  
*According to Reverend Eugene Buechel (1970: 127), the name derives from the fact that horses feed on the bark.

wachina’ca [refers to offspring]  
saplings of *P. deltoides*

wa’ga can [wood to strip]

*P. sargentii*

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965:75)  
’ini.li [no translation provided]

*P. deltoides*

Poncas (Gilmore 1919:72)  
maa zho [cotton tree]

*P. deltoides*

**Habitat:** *P. deltoides* is a characteristic tree of river floodplains in the northern Plains, and it is very common along riverbeds at lower elevations in the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:556). *P. angustifolia* is locally abundant in the canyons of the northern Black Hills; and even though *P. balsamifera* occupies many of the same locations, it is uncommon in the region (ibid:554). *P. tremuloides* is common and found at mid to high elevations throughout the central and northern Black Hills (Ibid:556).
Uses: With the possible exception of the Plains Apaches, who hardly used it (Jordan 1965:75), the cottonwood was an important tree for most tribal nations who once lived in the Black Hills region.

[food] The Lakotas peeled the young sprouts and ate the inner bark, which was known to have a sweet taste (Gilmore 1919:72; Bordeaux 1929:131; Standing Bear 1988:94), and the Cheyennes and Hidatsas did so as well (Nickel 1974:70; Hart 1981:37). The Cheyennes also made a culinary tea from the bark (Hart 1981:37).

[medicinal] Tribal nations outside the area of the Black Hills used cottonwoods and aspens for medicinal remedies (Hart 1992:37), but, curiously, there are no reports of such use for local tribes. European Americans were also known to use the cottonwood for various medicinal purposes (Kindscher 1992:270-271). In one European American folk treatment, the buds from the lower branches of the balsam poplar are soaked in alcohol to dissolve the resin, which is used in an anti-inflammatory salve (Tilford 1997:114).


[art & manufacture] Among the Lakotas and Cheyennes, dyes for feathers, arrows, and robes were extracted from boiled cotton-wood buds. Musical instruments and child-ren’s toys were fashioned from the tree’s leaves (Gilmore 1919:73; Grinnell 1972:2:7, 19; Hart 1981:37, 1992:69; Standing Bear 1988:95). The large poles in the Kiowa’s summer arbors were made from the cotton-wood, and this tree also provided the poles for the tipis in which their ceremonies took place (Vestal and Schultes 1939:19). The Plains Apaches used cottonwood in the absence of cedar to make their tipi poles (Jordan 1965:75). The Hidatsas considered the cottonwood a general purpose wood, and they used its poles in the construction of their earth lodges, corrals, drying stages, tipis, hoe handles, and travois runners (Nicol Kel 1974:70). The Arikaras used cottonwood saplings for making fish traps (Gilmore 1924:120-121). The Lakotas also made their saddles from cottonwood and lined them with buffalo hide, and they used the down from cottonwood pods to fill their buckskin pillows (Standing Bear 1978:21).

[fuel] The Kiowas favored cottonwood for their fuel (Vestal and Schultes 1939:19), and they used smoke-sticks from this tree for their peyote ceremonies. By contrast, the Plains Apaches burned it only when nothing else was available, believing that it burnt too fast and popped badly (Jordan 1965:156). The Poncas used it to roast clays used in ceremonial painting (Gilmore 1919:72). The Lakotas burned cottonwood for everyday fires, for the ceremonial fire of the Pte San Lawanpi (Walker 1980:244), for tanning hides, heating paints, and whenever they needed to make coals for other purposes (Standing Bear 1988:94,122). The Cheyennes typically made their hearth fire-sticks out of cottonwood, and their upright or twirling stick from greasewood (Grinnell 1971:154). Aspen also provided firewood for tribes in the northern Plains (Hart 1992:37).

[symbolic & ceremonial] The cottonwood was held sacred by several tribal nations in the region. The trunk of a young tree served as the center pole for Sun Dances and other ceremonies among the Omaha (Gilmore 1919:72), the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:2:229-232,259,287; Hart 1981:37), and the Lakotas (Standing Bear 1978:222; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:287; Walker 1982:97). According to Luther Standing Bear (1988:94), “for all ceremonial purposes the cotton-wood was favored” among the Lakotas. Its bark was used in the Lakota elk dance and in the rituals of the Owns White society (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:242-243, 340). It was also brewed into a tea served to the dancers at the
Sun Dance (Sword in Deloria 1929: 400. The cottonwood was also featured in Black Elk’s visionary experiences (in DeMallie 1984: 109, 130). The Lakotas made a stick from cottonwood on which to hang a buffalo hump as an offering in the Sun Dance (Densmore 1918: 118). The posts of the lodges in which the Lakota wanagi wicagluha [spirit keeping] cere-monies were performed were made from cottonwood (Densmore 1918:81). Cottonwood was a symbol of fidelity among the Lakotas, and young girls burnt twigs of the cottonwood to ward off the scheming of Anog Ite [Double Faced Woman] who foments infidelity, scandals and strife (Gilmore 1919:72; Walker 1982:52). In earlier times, cottonwoods were favored for Lakota tree burials (Gilmore 1913b:360). Today, Lakotas use cottonwood saplings to construct their sweatlodges, iInikagapi (Lewis, T. 1990:47).

The Kiowa’s origin story tells of the people emerging from a hollow cottonwod (Vestal and Schultes 1939:31).

Salix spp. [willows]

In the Black Hills, there are more than twelve different salix species, all of which probably carried some function for the tribal nations of the region. Native names for willow species are largely generic, and with a few notable exceptions, are difficult to match with scientific botanical nomenclatures. Salix amygdaloides (peach willow) and Salix exigua (sandbar willow) are also widely distributed in moist areas of the surrounding grasslands (Johnson and Larson 1999:266). Salix humilis [prairie willow], which is an eastern prairie and woodlands species, is not reported for the Black Hills, although it is named by some of the tribes who lived in this region (Kindscher 1992: 194-198).

Names:

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:37)
meno?ke?o [no translation given]
S. amygdaloides

Comanche (Carlson and Jones 1939:524)
ohasehebuf [no translation given]

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 19)
sen-a [no translation provided]
aat-paa-a’gaw [no translation given]
sen-ya-daw [no translation offered]

Lakota (Buechel 1970:32,520; Rogers 1980:58)
cohwan jica [rich willow]
refers to a low thin willow, probably S. humilis
cohwan jica sasa [rich red willow]
S. humilis
cohwanjica’ tanka [large willow]
wahe’ popa’can [leaf burst wood]
probably S. amygdaloides
wahe’ wizilya [incense leaf]
possibly S. exigua

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965: 78)
kasce.o [drooping limbs]
S. exigua

Ponca (Fletcher and LaFlesche 1972:107)
Thihspan [no translation given]

Habitat: S. amygdaloides [peachleaf willow] grows along lower elevation stream banks over the entire area. S. exigua [sand-bar willow] and S. lutea [yellow willow] are both common along streams and wet meadows at low to mid elevations throughout the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999: 564). S. bebbiana [bebb willow] is found at mid to high locations in wet or boggy meadows. S. petioloris [meadow willow], S. planifolia [planeleaf willow], S. pseudo-monticola [serviceberry willow], S. scou-leriana [scoular willow], S. discolor [pussy willow], and S. serissima [autumn willow] are found at mid to high elevations as well but restricted to the northern regions of the Hills. S.candida [hoary willow] is located only in the area around Castle Creek (Ibid: 560-570). Various species of willow also grow at Wind Cave National Park (2002c: 1).

Uses: There are numerous generic refer-ences to willow in ethnographic and ethno-botanical sources, but particular species identifications are often absent.
[food] The Hidatsas chewed the roots and bark of the sandbar willow as a confection in the spring and early summer (Nickel 1974:73), while the Lakotas cooked the buds with fat (Bordeaux 1929:131).

[medicinal] The bark of all willows and some poplars contains “salicin,” a derivative found in present day aspirin; American Indians and European Americans alike recognized the healing effects of this com-pound (Kindscher 1992:197). The Chey-ennes made a tea for diarrhea and other ailments from the peach leaf willow, S. amygdaloides, and they used strips of willow bark as tourniquets (Hart 1981:38, 1992:66). The Kiowas chewed willow bark to relieve toothaches, while the Crows cleared their teeth with it (Vestal and Schultes 1939:19; Hart 1992:67). The Crows also chewed the bark to relieve headaches and induce vomiting (Hart 1992:66), while the Kiowas made a tea from willow leaves to cure pneumonia and treat rheumatism (Vestal and Schultes 1939:19). The ashes from burning willow stems were used by the Comanches in an eye treatment (Carlson and Jones 1939:524,533). European Americans used them for many of the same purposes as well (Hart 1992:66; Kindscher 1992:197; Tilford 1997:164).


[symbolic & ceremonial] The Cheyennes used willow stems in making hoops for their antelope hunting ceremonies, willow wood to make drums, and willow charcoal to paint their faces when going into battle. They also employed willow products for a variety of ritual purposes in the Sun Dance and in the Massaum ceremony (Grinnell 1972:1:284, 2:20, 229-32,3 28-29; Hart 1981:37-38). Willow stems were wrapped around the arms, waists, and legs of Cheyenne Sun Dancers because they were believed to help ward off thirst (Grinnell 1972:2:265, 268, 277). The shavings from the sprouts of red willows were mixed in Cheyenne tobacco mixtures, and they were considered a male plant (Moore, J. 1974a:173).

A similar idea existed among the Utes who used willow branches for various purposes in their Sun Dance. The Utes considered willow a channel of power, a repository of the life force, and thus it played a critical role in their Sun Dance, where it was placed in the crotch of the Sun Dance tree to repre-sent “a nest of water” (Jorgenson 1972:181-184, 267-268).

The Poncas used willow twigs in their funerary practices (Gilmore 1919:74). The willow was connected to water and its purifying and healing qualities. Willow twigs were also
used in certain funerary rites of the Ari-kara (Gilmore 1987:180-181).


**Ulmaceae**

**The Elm Family**

Three species in the elm family are reported in the Black Hills. Except for the Siberian elm, which was introduced to North America from Asia, *Celtis occidentalis* [Hackberry] and *Ulmus americana* [American elm] are named and described in ethno-botanical sources on the region.

**Celtis occidentalis**

[hackberry]

This tree is most common in the central and southern Plains, but its distribution does reach the southern edge of the Black Hills.

**Names:**

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:22)
ya-ai-gaw [hackberry fruit]
ya-aip-hap [hackberry tree]

Lakota (Gilmore 1913b:362; Buechel 1970:609-610)
yamanumanugapi can [crunching tree]

*so called because animals crunch its berries.

Plains Apache (Jordan 1965: 63)
cedičice [hard seed]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 76)
gube [no translation given]

**Habitat:** This tree is confined exclusively to the extreme southern edge of the Black Hills in the vicinity of Hot Springs, South Dakota (Larson and Johnson 1999:572).

**Uses:** Hackberries were relied upon mostly for their berries, which were prepared in a variety of ways by tribal nations in the region.

[food] Plains Apaches relished hackberries eaten fresh, as flavoring for pemmican, and mixed with kidney fat to make a candy (Jordan 1965:63). The Lakotas used the fruits as a condiment for seasoning meats (Gilmore 1913b:362). Poncas also ate the fruits, but they did so opportunistically (Gil-more 1919:76).


[symbolic & ceremonial] The Lakotas used hackberry wood to make plates for the Pte San lowampi (Fletcher 1883c: 266).

**Ulmus americanus**

[American elm]

This is another major tree in the region. It is typically located along moist stream banks and valley floors, but it can also grow in open grasslands and along rocky hillsides (Johnson and Larson 1999: 266).

**Names:**

Cheyenne (Hart 1981:39)
homene?e

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 450; Rogers 1980: 61)
*p’e* [elm]
alterate:*p’ecan p’eikceka

Ponca (Gilmore 1919: 75)
ezhon zhon [elm tree]
Habitat: Found in the foothill valleys and along waterways at low elevations, elms are usually mixed with bur oak, green ash, or plains cottonwood, especially on the south-ern, eastern, and northern sides of the Black Hills (Larson and Johnson 1999:570). This species is also reported at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001f: 1).

Uses: The elm had multiple uses among tribes in the region.

[food] The Cheyennes made a tea from the bark and drank it like coffee (Hart 1981:39).

[medicinal] Cheyennes also gave it to children to insure their stability, and pregnant women drank it in hopes it would impart its effects on their offspring (Hart 1981:39).

[art & manufacture] The Lakotas and other Siouan speaking tribes relied on the elm for making small mortars and pestles used in grinding medicines and perfumes (Gilmore 1919:75). The Lakotas also made their stirups and saddles out of elm wood, and they made drum bands from the wood as well (Standing Bear 1978; 21, 1988:95,98). In a vision, the Lakota Red Thunder is credited with learning to make bowstrings from elm bark (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:310). The structural timbers of Man дан, Hidatsa, and Arikara earth lodges were fastened with the fibers of elm or basswood (Gilmore 1987:55). The Hidatsas also employed the inner bark for the binding section of their willow fences (Nickel 1974: 75). European Americans rely on elm wood for making tools, furniture, flooring, barrels, and boxes (Larson and Johnson 1999:571).

[fuel] Elm was a favorite source of fuel among the Lakotas and Poncas (Gilmore 1919:75), and the Plains Apaches considered it good firewood as well (Jordan 1965:156). Rotten elm roots were used with yucca as fire-starters (Mallery 1886:291).

[symbolic & ceremonial] For the Cheyennes, the tree has important ties to their sacred mountain, Bear Butte, at the northern edge of the Black Hills (Hart 1981: 39).

Vitaceae

The Grape Family

The two species in this family reported in the Black Hills, Partheocissus vitacea [Woodbine] and Vitis riparia [River grape] are associated with names and uses in the ethnographic and ethnobotanical literature.

Partheocissus vitacea

[woodbine]

Also known as false grape, woodbine is closely related to P. quinquefolia [Virginia creeper], which was introduced into the Black Hills by European Americans as an ornamental vine (Larson and Johnson 1999: 572).

Names:

Kiowa (Vestal and Schultes 1939:42)
sa-tai-al-go [paint berries]

Lakota (Buechel 1970: 119; Rogers 1980:61)
can’ yuwi iyecceca [like a curly wood]

Ponca (Gilmore 1919:102)
ingiha hazi itai [ghost grapes]

Habitat: In the Black Hills, woodbine is common at low elevations where it climbs along tree trunks, over brush, and rock led-ges following local stream banks (Larson and Johnson 1999:572). It grows in ravine and woodland environments at Wind Cave National Park (Pisarowicz 2001h: 1, 2001i: 2).

Uses: A variety of different tribal uses have been reported for this plant.

[medicinal] The Lakotas made a tea from the roots for headaches and also as a medicinal wash (Buechel 1970:119).

[cosmetic & hygienic] Kiowa women painted their skin with a dye made from its berries (Vestal and Schultes 1939: 42).

The feathers worn by the Kiowas in war dances were dyed in a solution made from the berries (Vestal and Schultes 1939:42).

This plant symbolized warbonnets in the Cheyenne Sun Dance (Grinnell 1972:2:229-232). Although the Hidatsas considered this plant sacred, they apparently did not use it (Nickel 1974:68).

*Vitus riparia*

[river grape]

This is one of several species of grapes located in the plains. Along with *V. vulpina*, it is a popular source of food for the region’s American Indian and European American populations.

**Names:**

*Cheyenne* (Grinnell 1972:2:180; Hart 1981:41)

*hoh pah ti si mins* [sticky berries]

alternate: *hopahao?ehe-meno*

*Kiowa* (Vestal and Schultes 1939:42)

*’kodl-ta-pai* [wild grapes]


*cuw’i’yapehe* [tree twiner]

*V. vulpina*

Alternate: *cuw’yape*

*Plains Apache* (Jordan 1965:53)

*’idalcal bikoslide.si* [long necked grapes]

*Ponca* (Gilmore 1919:102)

*hazi* [no translation given]

**Habitat:** Wild grapes are distributed widely in the Hills along streams from low to mid elevations (Larson and Johnson 1999: 574), but they are not reported at Wind Cave National Park.

**Uses:** Wild grapes were procured mostly for their food value, but they also had other uses.
APPENDIX C

THE MINERALS AND SOILS
OF THE BLACK HILLS
AND WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK:
Their Cultural Uses & Meanings

Of all the natural resources named and used by the tribal nations of the plains, information on minerals, rocks, clays, and soils is the weakest and least developed. There is good data on this subject for the prehistoric period, but to what degree this applies to the historic era is uncertain.

ROCKS AND MINERALS

There is a striking difference in the literatures on the Cheyennes and Lakotas when it comes to describing the uses of rocks and minerals. While there is comprehensive information on Lakota beliefs surrounding stone generically, especially its religious use and associations, there are few details about the names and identities of the specific varieties involved. Also, information on the utilitarian functions of stone is not well developed. There is much better data on the Cheyennes’ practical uses for stones, although there is hardly any information on their symbolic and religious meaning.

By the time ethnographers began to consult with Lakotas and Cheyennes about their cultures at the end of the nineteenth century, materials and items of European origin replaced many traditional uses for stone. This change is reflected in what White Hawk, a Lakota, told Francis Densmore (1918:437-438) about arrow points. He recalled three different kinds of arrow points for hunting bison, the flint arrow points his grandfather flaked, the bone ones his father fashioned, and those he made from steel. What is interesting about his commentary is it shows how, within three generations, the materials and knowledge for producing certain tools had changed. Probably as a result of these changes, our understanding of native nomenclatures for specific stones and minerals, their uses and meanings is much more limited than it is for faunal and floral resources.

FLINT AND QUARTZ

At the turn of the nineteenth century, when flint was still in use, there were many locations in the greater plains region to acquire various knappable rocks, and some of the best sites were located in or near the Black Hills. Two of these sites are in close proximity to Wind Cave National Park. One is Battle Mountain, about five miles southeast of the park, where a large outcropping of variegated colored quartzite is found atop the mountain in association with numerous flaked pieces, which local whites have mis-takenly interpreted as the remains of a battle site. While battles certainly took place near this location, as reported in tribal oral histories and winter counts, the debris of worked stone found atop this mountain does not reveal a
battleground but a quarrying site. Another is Flint Hill, about six miles south of Minnekahta and approximately fifteen miles southwest of the park, which also contains rich outcroppings of quartzite material. Tipi rings abound near both of these locations, and the stone material quarried at both was well represented in archaeological sites submerged by the Angostura Reservoir on the Cheyenne River. Other stone, including agate, chalcedony, and chert, suitable for making projectile points, is also found in the general area (Wedel 1961:272; Sundstrom, L. 1990:59-60; Wedel and Fri-son 2001:44-45,49). Evidence for the prehistoric quarrying of chalcedony is found at a number of documented sites in Wind Cave National Park or on its borders (CU0869, CU0870, CU0871, CU0872, CU0873, CU0875, CU0876, CU1194, CU1235, CU1236, CU1285).

In the Lakota language, the flint and quartzite used in knapping is called wahin or wanhi (Buechel 1970:517,541). The Cheyennes had at least two names for flint: mopatonoz was the flint used to start fires, and moxoz designated the quartz from which arrowpoints were fashioned. Flint was the preferred material for arrowheads before Europeans introduced trade metals (Buechel 1970:517,541; Grinnell 1972:1:184). The Cheyennes once armed their elk horn scrapers with a piece of flint (Grinnell 1972: 1:213), and they made other scrapers from this mineral too (Grinnell 1972:1:214). As mentioned elsewhere, the Lakotas attributed prehistoric arrow points to the work of spiders (Smith, D. 1949:307; DeMallie 1984:311n6; Brown 1992:47), and the Cheyennes believed they were “shot” by the Thunders (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:54). Flint was probably the stone that Itokaga gave Wohpe because it was described as a stone that could be rubbed to make fire (Sword in Walker 1983: 68). Peter Bordeaux (1929:155) reports that “a pair of flint rocks were held against a small pile of decayed powdered wood and struck together with a glance, chipping off sparks which would, when coming in contact with the decayed wood, start a flame.”

Quartzite probably had religious functions in earlier times too because one member of the Black Hills Expedition, Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:208) reported that atop Inyan Kara Mountain “small pieces of white quartz were found. As they had no geological business to be there, they were no doubt left there by the Indians, who are fond of making offerings to their gods from these lofty altars.” There is little recorded about the use of quartz for religious purposes among the Lakotas or the Cheyennes in more recent periods, although the mis-sionary John Williamson (1970:162) re-cords the Dakota name Inyan ocaze for this mineral. For crystal, he uses the words, kohdi or zanzan (Williamson 1970:42). Kohdi or Kogli in Lakota is also the word for flint corn, a name that describes its transparent quality (Riggs 1968:294; Bue-chel 1970:314, 825). Zanzan is the Dakota word for glass (Riggs 1968:651) or janjan as it is written in Buechel's Lakota dictionary (1970:267). In a story told by Wawoslata in 1915, Inyan janjan was mentioned as one of the stones used in a Yuwipi ceremony that took place at the Race Track in prereservation times (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264-265 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:452-453]). George Bushotter (in Dorsey 1889:153-154), a Lakota scholar, wrote there were two sorts of “mysterious stones,” one that was white and looked like ice or glass and another resembling “ordinary stones.” Rufus Pilcher (1964) reported that crystalline stones from Wind Cave were desired by the Lakotas for healing. Knowing the importance of such stones in the practice of Yuwipi, including the round crystalline ones ants bring to the surface of the earth, it is very likely that any of a variety of translucent quartzite stones hold importance today as well. It should also be mentioned that quartzite stones from the Black Hills were kept in the Plains Apaches’ most sacred religious bundles (McAllister 1965).
GYPSUM[Selenite]

Gypsum [Selenite] is found throughout the Black Hills, and it is especially characteristic of the formations straddling the Red Valley including those found at Wind Cave National Park. It is an important mineral for the Cheyennes and Lakotas, who commonly refer to it as “mica.” William Ludlow, Chief Engineer of the Custer Expedition, reported a site on the northwestern side of the Black Hills where there were enormous quantities of gypsum that were quarried by local tribes who left offerings there (McLaird and Tur-chen 1974:293). According to John Moore (1974a:197, 1981:14), the Northern Cheyennes continue to quarry their gypsum in the Black Hills and in a shale formation at Bear Butte. Cheyennes in Oklahoma, however, apparently now secure their supplies from beds in the Southern Plains (Moore 1996a: 67).

The Cheyennes had many practical and spiritual uses for gypsum, which was called haeseton [also means “hail”] (Moore 1974a: 174) or Ova-e (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988: 54). Burnt gypsum was used to whiten the backs of their bows (Grinnell 1972:1:175) and as a glue to attach tiny red feathers to the tips of eagle feathers (Grinnell 1972: 1:222). Women rubbed white gypsum on their hands to prevent robes from being soiled when they were decorating them with quills (Grinnell 1972:1:164). Powdered gypsum marked the ground where the altar was built at the Massaum [Animal Dance] and the Oxheheom [Sun Dance] (Grinnell 1972: 2:292, Schlesier 1987:93). It was also mixed with fat and painted on the small altar sticks that represent the Cheyenne people during the Sun Dance (Whiteman in Sch-wartz 1988:54). In their Sacred Arrow ceremony, it is ground into a fine powder and melted into a mold to represent the moon. This object is attached to a sacrificial bush outside the arrow tepee, which the Cheyennes call vozem or frost (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:4). The Cheyennes believe the gypsum found in the Red Valley is the remains of froth spilled from Slow Walking Buffalo’s mouth when she raced around the Hills in the Great Race (Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:30-31). Also, the Cheyennes’ hero, Stone Boy, was conceived after his mother swallowed a fragment of gypsum or what Grinnell (1926:179) translated as a “Sun Arrow.”

The Lakotas also appear to have associated gypsum with frost and ice. No name has been uncovered for it in linguistic sources. However, in James Walker’s creation cycle (1983:220-221, 222-223, 227-228), icage, “white fruits,” were said to grow under the earth, suggesting the crystalline formations in caves. Taku Skanskan made entrails from these fruits and molded a masculine father and feminine mother figure from them, the first Pte Oyate, and gave them the fruits as their source of eternal nourishment (Walker 1983:225-226, 249). Like the Cheyennes, the Lakotas sprinkled powdered gypsum on the ground around the Winwanyan wacipi [Sun Dance] altar (Densmore 1918:122).

Icage means “to make something with” (Riggs 1968:171; Buechel 1970:199). The related word, icago, refers to a mark or line that is drawn or sketched on something (Buechel 1970:199); gypsum powder is certainly used in this way. Also related is the word icaga, which means to grow, and it is associated with the maturation of plants, animals, and other living things (Buechel 1970:199), while kaga means to transform something through making or imitation (Buechel 1970:271). Another term, wak-icaga, refers to a sacred ceremony, and the generative effects it creates (Buechel 1970: 835). Icage and icaga might be connected to the word caga [ice, to freeze] as well (Riggs 1968:84; Buechel 1970:113). In so far as ice is the outcome of a transformative process that occurs when cold air interacts with water, it has the capacity to expand or grow. Gypsum expands and contracts in response to temperature change. It also has a glass or ice-like appearance.
SLATE

Slate also exists in the Black Hills and its surrounding areas. In Lakota, slate is called inyan sapa [black stone] (Buechel 1970: 228). Historically black slate was used by the Cheyennes in making axe heads and scrapers (Grinnell 1972:1:186, 214). The same was probably the case for the Lakotas. No ceremonial uses for this stone have been identified in the ethnographic literature, although Wawoslata mentions inyan sapa in the story about a Yuwipi being performed at the Race Track (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264-265; [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:452-453]).

LIMESTONE

No names have been uncovered for limestone in either the Lakota or Cheyenne language. In Dakota, the limestone cliffs along the Mississippi River near St. Paul are called imniza ska dan [little white rocks]. Since white clay is called maka san, light colored limestone might also be called inyan san. This is the rock from which Wind Cave and other caves were formed in the Black Hills. The Lakotas used ground white limestone in making their paints (Bordeaux 1929:182), and they powdered and applied it to skins when these were being tanned (Bordeaux 1929:183). It is also one of the rocks used in sweatlodges.

SANDSTONE

Sandstones make up the Hogback formations that surround the Black Hills on the outer edge of the Red Valley. The Lakotas and Cheyennes used various grades of sandstones to make mauls, hammers, axe heads, grinding stones, and knives (Grinnell 1972: 1:211). Finely grained sandstones used in the making of knives were called, miogle or miyogli in Lakota (Buechel 1970:336). The Lakotas and Cheyennes relied on these sandstones for finishing off arrowshafts (Grinnell 1972:1:179). According to Francis Densmore (1918:438), these stones were found in the Black Hills. The Lakotas called the rougher varieties that were employed in the manufacture of axeheads and hammers izu'za or inyan iguga (Buechel 1970:266, 744) or wiyakainyan [thunder stone] in Dakota (Williamson 1970:190). There were also ceremonial uses for sandstones. Thomas Odell (1942:23-24) describes a formation near Bear Butte as follows:

Many small concretions of brownish color, divisible into two parts, each of which forms a cup-like receptacle, abound in the vicinity of Bear Butte. The Dakotas, it is said, gathered and polished these stones, on which they engraved pictures of Bear butte, together with those of the sun and moon. It is reported that some of these stone idols are still in existence.

GRANITE

The central core of the Black Hills is made of granite, but no specific information on the meaning and use of granite was found in the ethnographic literature on the Lakotas or the Cheyennes. The Dakota, however, named this stone inyanhcake (Williamson 1970:77). This might be related to the word hcaka, which means “real” or “true” (Buechel 1970:192). If so, it might well imply the idea of an original stone.

HEMATITE

Another mineral located in the Hills is hematite. According to John Moore(1981: 14), the Cheyennes collected red hematite from locations in the Hills to use as a pigment in their ceremonial paints.

COAL

The Cheyennes also quarried coal in the Black Hills to use in the production of their black ceremonial paints (Moore 1981:14). Coal is called cahli in Lakota (Buechel 1970:114) and ho?kóse in Cheyenne (Northern Cheyenne Culture and Research Center 1976:22).
Soils and clays are identified with a spiritualized feminine generative principle in Cheyenne and Lakota cosmologies. The Cheyennes call the earth *Escehewan* [The Earth or Our Mother] (Powell 1969:2:437; Schlesier 1987:5, 8, 82; Moore 1996a:208, 211), and the Lakotas call her *Maka* or *Maka Ući* [Grandmother Earth] (Buechel 1970:328; Sword in Walker 1980:102; St. Pierre and Long Soldier 1995:74, 97, 110; Bucko 1999:208). Pulverized earth is present at all major Lakota and Cheyenne ceremonies (Densmore 1918:218, 222; Kemnitzer 1970:54; Schlesier 1987:6). Earthen clays and shales were important too, and they were used in making paints for ceremonial and practical purposes. These materials were ground into powders and then mixed with water or animal fats (Walker 1982:100). Many different locations have been reported for these clays, including sites in the Black Hills.

**WHITE CLAY/EarTH**

White clay, *maka san* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:329), was used to paint horses because it purportedly produced a “genuine color” (Densmore 1918:353). The Cheyennes used white clay to draw the patterns for quilling a robe, they applied it to the skins and heads of birds worn as talismans in war, they rubbed it on men’s bodies when war shields were painted and on women when they tanned a white buffalo robe. They used it to whiten the feather plumes and buffalo robes worn in the Sun Dance, and they applied it to the pins that surrounded the Sun Dance altar (Grinnell 1972:1:163, 192, 2:202, 242, 262). According to Francis Densmore (1918: 116), the white earth used by the Lakotas for paints came from local sources, but she does not specify the locations where it was gathered. The Lakotas also relied on streak-ed clay to make toy horses for children that were called *maka‘tanasula*. Again the site where it was collected is not identified (Buechel 1970:330). Chalk is *vōtanotse* and white clay *vōetséna?e* in the Cheyenne language (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976: 89).

**BLUE CLAY/EarTH**

Blue earth, *maka’to* in Lakota (Buechel 1970:330), is found in southern Minnesota and also at a location between the Black Hills and the Powder River (Densmore 1918:116). Helen Blish (1934:186) wrote that the blue paint applied to the joints of the Sacred Bow Society dancers came from a site near Lusk, Wyoming. John Moore (1974a:259; 1981:14) claims that the Cheyennes procured their blue clay in the Black Hills, but he does not identify any location other than Bear Butte. This clay was combined with charcoal and used as a black paint in the *Massaum* (Grinnell 1972:2:301-308-309). Among Lakotas, it was used as a paint in the Sun Dance (Sword in Deloria 1929: 402). The color blue stands for the cloudless sky, and it signifies success (Densmore 1918:77,124). It also represents the quarter moon (Densmore 1918:77). Among Cheyennes, it signifies the sky and serenity (Petter 1915:97; Grinnell 1972:1: 168).

**RED CLAY/EarTH**

Lakotas used red earth, *maka‘wase* and vermillion, *tani span* or *wase aceptipi* for painting (Buechel 1970:330,480,549). Quite likely, some of the clay found in the Red Valley or the Race Track was once used for this purpose. The red colors of the soils in the valley are believed to be the remains of the blood spilled by the animals as they careened around the valley in the Great Race (LaPointe 1976:19; Walking Bull 1980:8; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51). Red earth is called *neoma* in Cheyenne (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51). Some Lakotas also used a yellow earth, *maka zi*, which was found near Standing Rock, to produce red paints. Francis Densmore (1918:116) described how it was made in some detail. As she wrote:
A yellow ocherous substance which after being reduced to a fine powder is used by the Indians in making a yellow paint. This substance when treated by means of heat yields the vermillion used on all ceremonial articles as well as in painting the bodies of the Indian. The baking of this ocherous substance -- a process which requires skill is done by women. First, the substance mixed with water is formed into a ball. A hole is dug in the ground in which a fire of oak bark is made. When the ground is baked, the coals are removed, the ball is placed in the hole, and a fire is built of the substance usually prepared at the time. The action of the heat changes the color of the substance to red. When the ball is cold, it is pounded to powder. In the old days this red powder was mixed with buffalo fat in making the paint, but at the present time it is mixed with water.

The Cheyennes relied mostly on red hematite for their paint, which they also secured somewhere in the Black Hills (Moore 1981:14). They also called red clay or earth md?o-ma?otse, and they believed that it was the substance out of which humans were made (Northern Cheyenne Language and Culture Center 1976:35). Among the Cheyennes and Lakotas red paint signified blood. The Lakotas' Sun Dance altar was surrounded by lines traced in the earth; these were filled with tobacco, then covered with red paint powder and topped with gypsum dust (Densmore 1918:122). This is curiously suggestive of the Race Track with its red soil, the vestige of the blood spilled by the animals in their primal race, and with its ribbon-like striations of gypsum that cut through the sedimentary formations bordering the valley. Red also signifies a full moon or the clouds at sunset, which forecast good weather, while yellow represents the morning sky at sunrise or forked lightning (Densmore 1918:77, 124-125). Red has similar meanings for the Cheyennes who link it to life, blood, food, and warmth; yellow signifies the sun, beauty and ripeness (Petter 1915:97; Grinnell 1972:1:168; Powell 1969:2:33, 417, 422, 425). In both tribes, red paint was rubbed on dancers and applied to sacred paraphernalia in most major ceremonies (Densmore 1918:124-125, 127, 139, 167, 205, 208, 330; Grinnell 1972:2:122-123, 300-304, 328-329, 345-346; Walker 1980:183-191, 234-235).

Much more detailed information on the symbolic meanings and applications of various colors for decorative or ceremonial purposes can be found in most of the standard ethnographic sources on the Lakotas and Cheyennes (Densmore 1918; Wissler 1910; Lyford 1940; Hassrick 1964; Walker 1980; 1983) and the Cheyennes (Powell 1969; Grinnell 1972; Moore 1996a).
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE AND TRIBAL CONTACTS FOR
WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

The American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota has received a contract from the National Park Service to do an ethnographic study of traditional American Indian cultural affiliations to Wind Cave National Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota. All of the research, entailing an exhaustive survey of ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources, primary as well as secondary, has been completed. Having identified the tribal nations with a documented cultural and historical interest in the park, we are now contacting staff in tribal culture resource offices to determine whether these interests remain current. If they are current, we are making a preliminary inquiry of what kinds of sites within the park require protection under the guidelines of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the National Historic Sites Preservation Act and/or the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act; 2) what kinds of access do tribal members want to the park and its resources to conduct traditional activities; and 3) under what conditions would the tribe wish to engage in further consultation with the park service on these matters?

The research and report that will be submitted to the park service by the American Indian Studies Department is an advisory document and preliminary to further and direct consultations between the park service and concerned tribes. The principal investigator of the research is Dr. Patricia C. Albers, Professor and Chair of the American Indian Studies Department. Elizabeth Brown, Vanessa Kittelson, and Yvonne Kelly are the department staff working on the project and making the preliminary contacts with tribes.

The following are questions that we will be asking of all tribal cultural preservation officers.

Part One

1) Does your tribe have any cultural interests in Wind Cave National Park?

2) If answer is no, to your knowledge, do any members of the tribe have any interests in the park?

3) If answer is yes, please continue?

Part Two

1) Can you tell me what areas of the park are important to the tribe?

   Are there any special sites in these areas that need protection from the perspective of the tribe?
How would the tribe like to see the sites protected? Are there any resources in the park, in terms of plants, soils, or minerals that are important in traditional cultural practice?

Can you tell me what some of these are, and where they’re located in the park, and do they need special protection?

2) Do tribal members need to have access to the park to conduct religious ceremonies?

If so, which kinds of ceremonies are likely to be conducted on park lands?

Where in the park would these ceremonies be conducted, and what consideration does the park need to make to accommodate this activity?

Are there any resources, like plants, soils, and minerals that tribal members might need to collect in the park?

If so what are these and where does the collection typically take place, and what Consideration does the park need to make to accommodate this activity?

3) Should the park service include tribal perspectives on the park in their interpretive programming?

If answer is no, why?

If answer is yes, what kinds of cultural material would be appropriate for the park to include in its programming?

Would it be permissible for the park service to tell about any of the traditional stories associated with park lands -- for example, the Race Track story? Any others? For Sioux tribes, what about the Buffalo Woman or the Tokahe story?

4) Would the tribe be interested in entering into further consultation with the Park Service on any of these matters?

Are there any other culturally knowledgeable people from the tribe, other than you, who might be interested in participating or should be included in these consultations?

Would it be better for these consultations to be private, person-to-person or as part of a group?

Would you be interested in attending a meeting with other tribal cultural resource people from the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes to discuss tribal cultural interests in the park?

Thanks for your time. Would your office like to receive a copy of the report once its completed and approved by the Park Service?
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<td>Ponca Tribe of Nebraska</td>
<td>Tribal Council P.O. Box 288 Niobrara, NE 686760</td>
<td>Tribal Council</td>
<td>P: 580-762-8104</td>
<td>No Interest</td>
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<td>F: 580-762-2743</td>
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<td>Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma</td>
<td>Business Committee 20 White Eagle Drive, Ponca, OK 74601</td>
<td>Phil Wendzillo</td>
<td>P: 402-857-3519</td>
<td>Possible Historic</td>
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<td>F: 402-857-3736</td>
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<td>Rosebud Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Tribal Council Box 430 Rosebud, SD 57570</td>
<td>Terry Gray</td>
<td>P: 605-856-4901</td>
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<td>F: 605-747-5027</td>
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<td>Santee Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Santee Sioux Tribal Council Rt. 2 Box 235 Niobrara, NE 68670</td>
<td>Thelma Tribal VP</td>
<td>P: 402-857-3860</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>F: 402-857-2307</td>
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<td>Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>P.O. Box 359 Sioux Community Center. Fort Totten, ND 58335</td>
<td>Lorraine Greybear</td>
<td>P: 701-766-1376</td>
<td>No Interest</td>
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<td>F: 701-766-4126</td>
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<td>Standing Rock Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>P.O. Box D Fort Yates, ND 58538</td>
<td>George Iron Shield</td>
<td>P: 701-854-2120</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>F: 701-854-7299</td>
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<td>Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold</td>
<td>Business Council HC2 Box 3 New Town, ND 58763</td>
<td>Marilyn Hudson</td>
<td>P: 701-627-4781</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>F: 701-627-3805</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Tribal Business and Claims Committee P.O. Box 248 Marty, SD 57361</td>
<td>Francis Bernie</td>
<td>P: 605-384-3804</td>
<td>No Interest.</td>
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<td>F: 605-384-5687</td>
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