

What to pack and Directions

Check List of what to bring with you

- long pants with the knees intact
- comfortable walking shoes - No Sandals – No Flip flops
- sunscreen & sunglasses
- rain/wind jacket
- water in plastic or metal bottles
- lunch and snacks that you can put in a back pack
- camera
- (optional) If you'd like to bring your own climbing shoes, harness, helmet etc.
- All the needed rock climbing gear is provided including climbing shoes, climbing harness and helmet.

Details: The Black Hills climbing season, usually mid-April through mid-October, generally has very pleasant weather. Obviously you should dress for the season, and remember the climbing areas are sometimes cooler and windier than local forecasts may imply (the elevation of Sylvan Lake is 6000+ feet). Sunscreen and sunglasses are highly recommended as we'll be over a mile high in Custer State Park.

To be prepared for possible inclement weather a wind shirt or rain jacket and a fleece are handy. The weather can quickly change. Even if it is sunny and 70 when you leave the lodge, bring extra clothes on your South Dakota or Wyoming tours! Normally though comfortable pants, t-shirts, and sweatshirts work well for summer climbing. In the spring and fall it is wise to have polypro tops and bottoms (long underwear) as well as a warm hat and light gloves. Wear comfortable close toed shoes (heavy hiking boots are not necessary) but no sandals. Pick footwear that is made for scrambling over uneven terrain.

Cameras are also great to have along on a climb. Digital pics are great to share with friends and the Black Hills Forest summits and scenery are truly spectacular. Point and shoot cameras are perhaps better than SLR size units for any course beyond Discover Climbing but feel free to bring the big camera or your GoPro.

Feel free to bring your own climbing equipment; if we consider it unacceptable, we may insist you use ours. Climbing gear (shoes, helmet, harness, backpack and necessary hardware) is included for all classes at no extra charge.

Bring at least 1.5 liters of water in a personal, plastic water bottle or hydration bag/ pack. Plastic soda bottles re-filled with water work great. Remaining hydrated is very important, especially for kids. Our climate is dry and you will be putting forth more energy than normal. Bring a good sack lunch and some snacks to graze on throughout the day. Food that can stand up to a squishing fares best. Energy bars make excellent climbing grub.

Rock Climbing is not a risk free activity. You will be asked to read, review and sign a Liability Waver and or Acknowledge of Risk form prior to participating in activities with Sylvan Rocks Climbing School and Guide Service.

If anyone in your crew is under 18 years old, they will need to arrive with a parent/ legal guardian or a completed copy of the liability form that is available for download at the link above. Grandparents, aunts uncles...etc cannot sign unless they have a current and notarized power of attorney form with them and a copy of that form for Sylvan Rocks to keep.

Courses are designed to have an adult participating in any group signing up with kids under age 18.

Directions to various meeting places from various places around the Hills:

Unless otherwise arranged, we will meet at 8am in front of the Sylvan Lake General Store. The Sylvan Rocks Rig is hard to miss. It is a big white trailer with large graphics on the sides. You can fill out your Liability Release Form while we work to get you fitted in climbing gear then we will head out for your day of rock climbing.

Directions To Sylvan Lake from Custer, SD and all points South. Head East out of town on Highway 16. Turn left just out of town at the rock shop (big signs pointing to Sylvan Lake). Follow highway 89 for approx 5 miles, turn right at entrance to Custer State Park/Needles Highway 87. Stop at entrance station to pay the parking fee. The parking lot where we'll meet you is just down the hill on the left in front of the General Store. See you at the picnic tables in the grass beside the road. Approx. travel time is 25 minutes.

Directions To Sylvan Lake from Hill City, SD and all points North including Rapid city and the Northern Hills: Drive south on highway 385/16 towards Custer. Past the turn off for Mt. Rushmore turn left on Sylvan Lake road, Highway 87. Wind up hill through a narrow tunnel and some very sharp curves. Turn left at the entrance to Custer State Park/Needles Highway. Stop at entrance station to pay the parking fee. The parking lot where we'll meet you is just down the hill on the left in front of the general store. See you at the picnic tables in the grass beside the road. Approx. travel time is 25 minutes. Because of a tunnel located on hwy 87, RV's and other large vehicles cannot travel this route and must enter the park via the city of Custer.

Directions To Sylvan Lake From Keystone, SD: Head West on Hwy 244 PAST the faces of Mount Rushmore. At the Stop light where 244 T's up with Hwy 16/385 turn left. Approx 2 blocks, Turn left again onto Sylvan Lake road, Highway 87. Wind up hill through a narrow tunnel and some very sharp curves. Turn left at the entrance to Custer State Park/Needles Highway. Stop at entrance station to pay the parking fee. The parking lot where we'll meet you is just down the hill on the left in front of the general store. See you at the picnic tables in the grass beside the road. Approx. travel time is 40 minutes. Because of a tunnel located on hwy 87, RV's and other large vehicles cannot travel this route and must enter the park via the city of Custer.

Directions To Mount Rushmore Meeting place: Our Mount Rushmore Meeting place is located at the western entrance of the Memorial along Highway 244. From Rapid City or Keystone you will most likely approach from the east, drive past the faces, and meet us as you are leaving the Mount Rushmore National Memorial and entering the Black Hills National Forest. From Hill City and Custer, you will turn east off of Hwy 16 onto Hwy 244 and drive about 10 miles to the Mount Rushmore entrance from the Black Hills National Forest. There are stone sign structures on both sides of the road and parking there as well.

Directions To Devils Tower meeting place From I-90: Exit at Hwy 14 and head north. Then turn onto Hwy 24, which is well signed and will take you to the entrance of the Monument. After going through the entrance station continue up the park service road to the visitor center. At the Stop sign make a hard right turn into the gravel parking lot where you will meet your Sylvan Rocks Guide for the day. If you are staying at the Devils Tower Bed and Breakfast, you get there by turning off the Park Service road to the left onto the first and only gravel road towards Joiner Ridge Trailhead. Drive past the trailhead and stay to the right, which will take you to the B and B.

About the only time we lose people is when they try to use their GPS units instead of following these directions. For some reason the units always take you to the southern portion of Custer State park and those guest end up an hour late, and miss out on an hour of climbing at best.

According to Google Earth, our Sylvan Lake meeting place is located at:

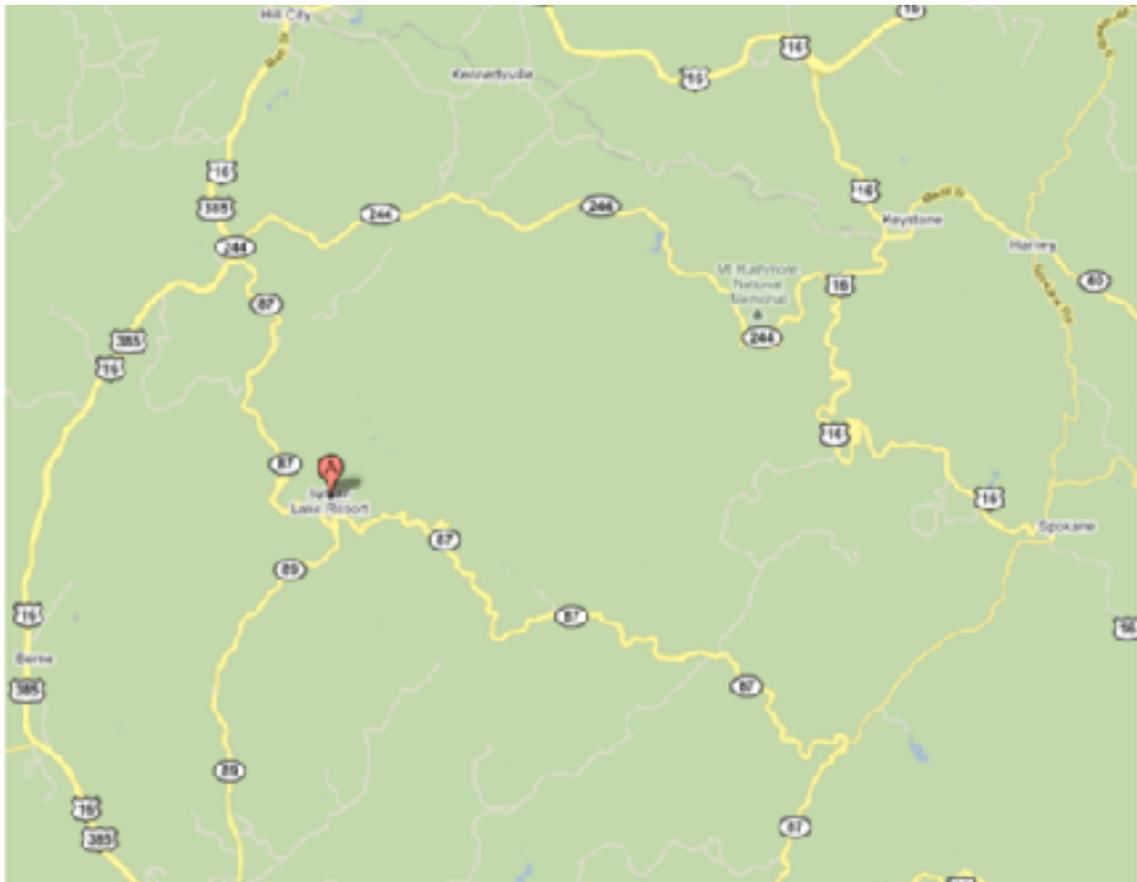
Lat- 43°50'35.67"N

Long - 103°33'46.78"W

The nearest building address is the entrance station at 518 SD-87, Custer, SD 57730 beware of using smart phones or GPS to find us as they are often incorrect in rural areas like this, but if you just print out and follow the directions from the link below, you will most likely arrive on time to our Sylvan Lake meeting place.

Directions to Palisades State Park: Leaving from the Sioux Falls area, drive east on I-90 and take the Brandon exit to your right. Turn left on SD Hwy 11 (482nd Street). Traveling north through Corson, continue to follow SD Hwy 11 and turn right on 485th Street. The Garretson Golf Course will be to your left as you drive south 1.2 miles to the park entrance. As you enter the park, you will need to stop and purchase a park sticker if you don't already have one. You can do this at the park check-in cabin. Just in front and to your left, there is a parking lot with shelter and out-houses. You can plan to meet your guide at this point. Approx travel time 35 minutes. About the only time we lose people is when they try to use their GPS units instead of following these directions. For some reason the units always take you to the southern portion of Custer State park and those guest end up an hour late, and miss out on an hour of climbing.

If you are climbing at the Palisades be sure to check above for the available PDF download.



VICINITY MAP OF THE BLACK HILLS.