

## **Nature Adventures Module: Bear Butte**

(Highlighted words are found in the Glossary List)

Terri: Who is up for a hike?

Todd: I am always up for a good hike.

Terri: Todd, remember when we hiked to the top of Bear **Butte**, you and Tom both collapsed when I made you run up the steps?

Todd: How could I forget? It was a long two miles, but when we got to the top, it sure was worth it!

Terri: Bear Butte State Park, located eight miles east of Sturgis, South Dakota, is a lone mountain formed millions of years ago by the intrusion of **igneous rock**. Bear Butte means Mato Paha in Lakota – meaning ‘Bear Mountain’ and although it is called a ‘butte’, it is not truly a butte, as buttes have flat tops.

Todd: Bear Butte is believed to be the remains of ancient volcanic activity. Scientists believe Bear Butte was formed around 65 million years ago when magma, or molten rock, from the earth's interior pushed up under the crust, but never reached the surface. The magma cooled and hardened. Over time, the covering rock and topsoil washed away, exposing the cone-shaped rocky formation we now know as Bear Butte.

Terri: Long before recorded time, the area now occupied by such landmarks as Bear Butte, the Devil's Tower in Wyoming and the Black Hills of South Dakota was covered again by vast ancient seas. Over time, these seas and the winds left deposits of various materials. The weight of each new layer helped compress the ones below, eventually forming sedimentary rock over millions of years.

Todd: Bear Butte rises 1,253 feet above the surrounding plain. It is 4,426 feet above sea level. Human artifacts have been found on or near Bear Butte that date back 10,000 years, indicating a long and continuous interest in the mountain. And when you visit it's easy to see why people come from all over to see!

Terri: Next time you are in the Black Hills Region and would like to take an amazing hike, be sure to take a couple hours to hike to the summit of Bear Butte, and enjoy the panoramic view of 4 states from the top. You will be glad you did!

Sources:

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