

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Soldiers improve Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup corral

Story by Spc. Manda Walters
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CUSTER STATE PARK, S.D. – Soldiers of the U.S. Army Reserve’s 486th Engineer Company, of Southfield, Mich., completed renovations at the Custer State Park buffalo corral complex, as part of a Golden Coyote infrastructure project June 17.

The 28th annual Golden Coyote exercise provides relevant training opportunities for active-duty military, National Guard, and Reserve units. The Reservists used military occupational specialties to engineer multiple projects at the site to include: demolishing old fencing, trenching 800 feet of earth, installing electrical components and fixtures, emplacing water lines and installing freeze-proof hydrants and geothermal waterers.

“This is the first year the buffalo corral has been on the Golden Coyote project list,” said Jayme Severyn, who has worked as the Custer State Park Golden Coyote project liaison for the past five years. “The work of these service members will make the buffalo roundup more efficient this year.”

The buffalo roundup is an annual fall event at the park that herds approximately 1,300 buffalo into corrals. The corral is a holding pen for animals during veterinary checks and auctions.

“Until now, the water had to be hand carried in buckets to the corral,” said Severyn. “The water line the engineers put in makes it easier to get the water to the animals.”

The 16 to 22 engineers who were on-site daily completed the water line and other projects during the four-day mission at the corral.

“Mission failure was not an option,” said 1st Lt. Brian Jutila, the 486th officer-in-charge of the buffalo corral worksite. “These dedicated Soldiers take tremendous pride in their work. They spent countless hours here at the buffalo corral complex, even after evening release, to make sure this project was on time and finished.”

Jutila said the dedication of these Soldiers, combined with the U.S. Army’s established standards in military decision making processes, positive risk management and closed-loop learning process, contributed to the success of the project.

“The closed-loop learning process helps us to identify solutions to problems that arise at the worksite,” said Jutila.

At the buffalo corral worksite, the Soldiers met the obstacle of finding a water main and had a chance to utilize the closed-loop learning process.

“We added numerous unplanned man-hours to search for an existing water line,” said Jutila.

The 486th has learned from the challenge.

“Using the closed-loop learning process we identified a solution to the problem of finding a water main,” said Jutila. “We brainstormed and came up with the idea that we could use ground-penetrating sonar if we confront a similar problem on future missions.”

The Golden Coyote exercise has improved the unit’s mission readiness by providing hands-on experience and opportunities for Soldiers to brainstorm and find solutions, said Jutila.

The platoon of engineers, comprised of 39 members, finished the project while also alternating Soldiers through combat training lanes.

Park visitors can see the work of the 486th in use this year at the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup scheduled for Sept. 24.

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120617-A-IM587-403: 1st Lt. Brian Jutila, of U.S. Army Reserve’s 486th Engineer Company of Southfield, Mich., buffalo corral worksite officer-in-charge, identifies one of the freeze-proof hydrants emplaced by engineers at the buffalo corral complex at Custer State Park during the South Dakota National Guard’s Golden Coyote training exercise June 17, 2012. The engineers completed a variety of projects to improve the efficiency of the site in just four days, while simultaneously participating in combat training lanes. The 28th annual Golden Coyote training exercise benefits the Black Hills by providing manpower and equipment for infrastructure projects for the National Forest and Custer State Park as well as training opportunities for military personnel in support of overseas contingency operations and homeland defense. (SDNG Photo by Spc. Manda Walters) (RELEASED)



120617-A-IM587-431: Spc. Brian Jackson, a carpentry and masonry specialist, drives a skid steer and Sgt. James Daly, an interior electrician, both members of the U.S. Army Reserve’s 486th Engineer Company of Southfield, Mich., provides ground guidance, while Jayme Severyn, Custer State Park Golden Coyote project liaison, observes at the buffalo corral complex in Custer State Park June 17, 2012. The Reservists are working to move earth displaced from a trench dug for electrical conduit. The engineering project, part of Golden Coyote, was completed in four days and provided the unit with hands-on military occupational specialty training. The 28th annual Golden Coyote training exercise benefits the Black Hills by providing manpower and equipment for infrastructure projects for the National Forest and Custer State Park as well as training opportunities for military personnel in support of overseas contingency operations and homeland defense. (SDNG Photo by Spc. Manda Walters) (RELEASED)



120617-A-IM587-442: Members of the U.S. Army Reserve's 486th Engineer Company of Southfield, Mich., unload electrical supplies for completing an engineering project at the buffalo corral complex at Custer State Park during the South Dakota National Guard's Golden Coyote training exercise June 17, 2012. The project was completed in four days and provided the Reservists with hands-on military occupational specialty training. The 28th Golden Coyote training exercise benefits the Black Hills by providing manpower and equipment for infrastructure projects for the National Forest and Custer State Park as well as training opportunities for military personnel in support of overseas contingency operations and homeland defense. (SDNG Photo by Spc. Manda Walters) (RELEASED)

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