

## **Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for June 20-24**

Hello Itasca Friends!

It's mid-June and the answer to your question is "yes, the showy lady slippers are blooming"! The weather has been lovely and the mosquitos aren't too bad (knock on wood and a little bug spray would help). We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this month. There are still blue-flag iris, Canada anemone, Indian paintbrush and various dogwoods all blooming. The wild rice is starting to lift off the surface of the lakes. The birds are busy on their nests and some are starting to sing for their second nesting (in particular the Golden-winged warblers). The veery's continue to sing their melodic downward spiral song throughout the park! Watch for baby white-tailed deer fawns as they are now on the move.

### **Dining in the Park: NEW menu at Douglas Lodge:**

Douglas Lodge is open for the season. Manager Gina and Assistant Manager Jeff are excited for you to come out and try the all-new menu. They are offering scrumptious homemade meals and appetizers including many items that feature Minnesota foods (walleye, wild rice, maple syrup and blueberries). The Lavosh and Walleye Ceviche are excellent appetizers! New this year are fish tacos made with Red Lake walleye (a BIG hit!) Try the homemade Seafood Lasagna, made with Red Lake Walleye, or the Spaghetti and Meatballs with homemade wild rice meatballs. Classic favorites are still on the menu including: the Itasca Burger, Wild Turkey, the Reuben and the famous Itasca Malts. Now you can buy the famous Itasca sugar cookies whenever you want them. Cookies will be available for purchase daily. Great family food served from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. NEW: the lunch menu service has been extended...order off the lunch menu from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Hours: Breakfast: 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.; Lunch: 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Dinner: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

### **Dining in the Park: the Mary Gibbs Café:**

Looking for a quick meal before heading out on the trail, or a cooling ice cream cone after a long day on the trail, the Mary Gibbs Café will be offering new items as well as soup and salad bar, pizza and ice cream. Hours for the café will be 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Thursday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday thru Sunday.

### **Take Home a Memory: Souvenirs and More!**

Snuggle into a wearable memory from Itasca—check out the new line-up of sweatshirts and t-shirts. The ever-popular Douglas Lodge China is still available for purchase. Stop at Douglas Lodge to see the display of available pieces. The china is sold at the Forest Inn gift shop. (Forest Inn features books and northwoods themed apparel and gifts). The Mary Gibbs Gift shop, featuring food stuffs and Mississippi Headwaters items, opens on Friday, May 25 and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For those looking for a northwoods themed item, check out Forest Inn Gift Shop (across from Douglas Lodge). Use your receipt from dining at Douglas Lodge for a 20% discount off of one clothing item at Forest Inn Gift Shop (exceptions apply; refer to your receipt for details). Forest Inn opens for the season on Saturday, May 26; open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Discover the beauty of Minnesota's butterflies on this guided walk, Wednesday, June 20—**  
**Itasca's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Butterfly Hike**

**Meet at Forest Inn.**

Discover the wonders of butterflies on this guided walk with local butterfly enthusiasts, John and Marlene Weber. View a short slide presentation of the most common butterflies, and then go on a butterfly ID walk. Learn how and where to spot these elegant flyers. This family friendly hike is in conjunction with the annual North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Butterfly Count Program held across the nation.

**Name that 'frog' tune...nature style, Saturday, June 23--**

**Itasca's Presenters Under the Pines: "Who's making that noise? Frogs and Toads of the North Woods"**

**from 6-7:30 p.m. Meet in the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center Classroom**

How many frog species do we have in Minnesota? Which frogs live near you? When and why do they call and what sounds do they make? Join Minnesota Master Naturalist, Janet Nelson as she helps you explore what these powerhouses of sound look like as well as listen to what they have to say!

**Enjoy a music concert by the Park Rapids Community Band, Sunday, June 24—**

**Itasca's Music Under the Pines: Park Rapids Community Band Concert**

**from 7-8 p.m. Meet outside Douglas Lodge**

Grab your lawn chairs and blankets and sit outside historic Douglas Lodge as the 50 member Park Rapids Community Band returns for another wonderful concert. These talented musicians will play music full of patriotic, popular, and classic songs.

**"I Scream, you scream we all scream for ice cream!"**

**Sunday Sundae! Ice Cream Social. Sunday, June 24, from 7-8 PM (or while supplies last)**

Held outside Douglas Lodge

Hungry for some ice cream? Enjoy a sweet treat when you join us for a music concert ice cream social. Itasca volunteers from the Friends of Itasca will be making chocolate or strawberry sundaes with proceeds going towards projects in Itasca State Park. There is a \$2 fee per sundae.

**Headwaters in Summer—Watch the Webcam!**

Summer is here and the wild rice is floating on the surface of Lake Itasca. Keep an eye out for the adult loons, they might be carrying a little fluffy black chick on their backs. Check out the webcam. Is your family going to the park but you can't join them? Have them text you when they are at the headwaters and watch them from home! Watch the webcam and see if you can spot any beavers making their way towards the headwaters in evening.

Go to: [Mississippi Headwaters Webcam](#) *Side note: some users with Android systems might have problems viewing the webcam.*

**Featured nature sighting report for the dates of June 14-19:**

- Evidence of raccoons are seen at turtle nests, the empty shells scattered around the excavated nests.
- Showy Lady-slippers began blooming in full force on Saturday, June 16, just in time to celebrate Father's Day.
- New batches of dragonflies are emerging each day.
- Tiny, newly emerged Monarch butterfly caterpillars are seen feeding on milkweed leaves.
- Summer flowers are coming out in full force including Blue-flag iris, sweet bedstraw, ox-eye daisy, Canada anemone, Indian paintbrush, purple avens, wild calla, yellow bullhead water lilies, vetch and more!

Connie Cox

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