

## **Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for July 10-18**

Hello Itasca Friends!

Summer has heated up as temperatures move into the 80s and the humidity goes up. Flowers are moving into mid- and late-July blooms, many baby animals are now half the size of the adults and moving about freely! The weather has been lovely and the mosquitos and deer flies aren't too bad (knock on wood and a little bug spray would help). A variety of pink, mauve, yellow and white flowers decorate the forest floor. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park as the best days of July are now here. Cool off by taking a dip in Lake Itasca. The wild rice is starting to lift off the surface of the lakes. The birds are busy on their nests and many are starting to sing for their second nesting. The Hermit thrush's song can be heard mid-morning singing their melodic upward spiral song throughout the park and the ovenbirds call out teacher, Teacher, TEACHER! White-throated sparrows are calling out 'Old man Peabody, Peabody, Peabody.' Watch for young eagles as they cry from their nest, begging for food. They are nearing the size of the adults.

### **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, 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 is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Explore the world of Monarch butterflies Friday and Saturday (July 13 and 14):**

**Itasca's Presenters Under the Pines: Life of the Monarch Butterfly Display**

**from 10-2 p.m. both days**

**Meet in the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center Lobby**

Discover the life cycle of the monarch butterfly, Minnesota's state insect, with Tom and Carol Uecker. Check out real samples of the caterpillar, chrysalis, and the adult butterflies. Some lucky visitors may even get to see a butterfly come out of its chrysalis! Visit for as little or as long as you like.

**Enjoy a music concert by Unpolished, Sunday, July 15—**

**Itasca's Music Under the Pines: Unpolished**

**Sunday, July 15, 2018 from 6:30-8 p.m.**

**Meet outside Douglas Lodge (inside the Forest Inn if raining)**

Bring your blanket or lawn chair and come out for an evening of entertainment outside historic Douglas Lodge as the musical group "Unpolished" performs an eclectic mix of roots, Americana and bluegrass music on bass, guitar, mandolin and banjo complete with rich three-part harmonies. The group covers many styles of folk music including music from the 1800's - Civil War, old cowboy music, railroad songs, bluegrass music, and traditional Gospel music.

**I scream, you scream, we all scream for Ice Cream! Ice Cream Social, Sunday, July 15:**

**Sunday Sundae! Ice Cream Social.**

**Sunday, July 15, from 6:15-7:30 PM (or while supplies last)**

**Held outside Douglas Lodge (inside Forest Inn if raining).**

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.

**One good read! Campfire with author and storyteller Mike Lein:**

**Itasca's Presenters Under the Pines: Stories from Minnesota's Northwoods with Author Mike Lein**

**Wednesday, July 18, 2018 from 7-7:45 p.m.**

**Meet in Bear Paw Campground (the grassy area near the tiny log pump house and campsite #70 near the bike trail). If raining, inside the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center.**

Bring your lawn chair or blanket and sit around the campfire with local author Mike Lein. Mike is noted for stories about life at his North Country cabin near Itasca State Park. Many of these have been published in *The Lake Country Journal Magazine*, *Cabin Life Magazine*, and other national and regional magazines – including the MN DNR's own publication *The Conservation Volunteer*.

He has put many of these stories together into two award winning books. *Firewood Happens—Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Minnesota's Northwoods* and *Down At The Dock – More Stories of the Good Life in the Northwoods*. Both books have won First Place Awards for Humor from the Midwest Independent Publishers Association [MIPA].

Come join Mike as he shares some of these tall, mostly true tales around the campfire!

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

Summer is here and the wild rice is lifting off the surface of Lake Itasca. Watch for bass as they leap out of the water, attempting to catch dragonflies that are laying eggs. 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 July 2-9:**

- Cicada's can be heard buzzing in the tree tops when the days warm up into the 80s.
- Snapping turtles are seen submerged under water by the Lake Itasca fishing pier.
- Young red fox are seen crossing roads around the park.
- A wide array of butterflies are seen nectaring on the abundant summer flowers.
- Large leaved aster and goldenrods are sending up flower stalks.
- Wild raspberries are now ripe.
- The red and white colors of the baneberry fruits are visible throughout the forest. Look but DON'T eat!
- Summer flowers are coming out in full force including Joe Pye weed, pointed leaved tick trefoil, fireweed, yellow avens, white water lilies, brown-eyed Susan, giant blue hyssop, daisy fleabane, cow parsnip, cleavers, ox-eye daisy, Indian paintbrush, blue flag iris, yellow bullhead water lilies, vetch and more!