

## **Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for July 18-August 15**

Hello Itasca Friends!

Summer is in full swing and we are enjoying a bit of milder weather with pleasant temperatures in the mid-70s, lower humidity, and cooler nights in the 50s and low 60s. Flowers are moving into late-July and August blooms even though we are still in the middle of the month, 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). The purple and golds typical of late summer flowers are now dominating the forest floor. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park as the best days of July and August are now here. Cool off by taking a dip in Lake Itasca. The wild rice has lifted off the surface of the lakes and is growing quickly, ready to flower. The birds are busy with their second nesting. The Hermit thrush's song can be heard mid-morning singing their melodic upward spiral song throughout the park and White-throated sparrows are calling out 'Old man Peabody, Peabody, Peabody.' Watch for warblers as some are getting ready to migrate back to Central and South America. American Redstart males are seen flitting about, still flashing their bright black and orange feather pattern. Watch for young eagles as they cry from their nest, begging for food. They are nearing the size of the adults and are taking their first flights!

### **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.

**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!

**Holy Smokes! Its Smokey Bear Day!, Thursday, July 19**

**Thursday, July 19, 2018 from 11:30-1:30 p.m.**

**Meet at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center.**

Smokey Bear invites you to this fun, family friendly event with many activities for all ages! Join Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fire fighters as they share their experiences with fire in the forest. Learn how fire affects the forest, check out fire trucks and equipment, try getting into a fire shelter, make a variety of forest crafts and much more. Don't forget to have your picture taken with Smokey Bear!

**I scream, you scream, we all scream for Ice Cream! Ice Cream Social, Sunday, July 22 at the swim beach:**

**Sunday Sundae! Ice Cream Social.**

**Sunday, July 22, from 1:30-2:30 PM (or while supplies last)**

**Held at the Swim Beach**

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.

**Enjoy a music concert by Jacob Mahon, Sunday, July 22—**

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

**Sunday, July 22, 2018 from 7-8:30p.m.**

**Meet outside Forest Inn (inside Forest Inn if raining)**

Bring your blanket or lawn chair and come out for an evening of entertainment outside Forest Inn with singer-songwriter Jacob Mahon. Jacob has played out with his brother, Owen Mahon, around Northern Minnesota in a group called "Hog Rooster" from 2012-2016. In the fall of 2016, the two moved to Duluth, and Jacob started performing folk songs and original compositions as a solo artist. Jacob writes wordy songs about old people, and other people, cartoons and occasionally himself (but who would want to admit that). Influences such as Blind Reverend Gary Davis and Elizabeth Cotten add an old-timey feel to Jacob's guitar playing which, when paired with his unconventional vocal style, yield a unique sound.

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

Summer is here and the wild rice is lifting off the surface of Lake Itasca. Watch for immature bald eagles as they learn to fly and attempt fishing. 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 10-18:**

- Cicada's can be heard buzzing in the tree tops when the days warm up into the 80s.
- 4 new species of butterflies were seen on the Itasca butterfly count: Western tailed blue, Bog fritillary, Regal fritillary and American Snout (this guy is very rare, typically living in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina).
- White-tailed deer are wearing a stunning orange-red coat of fur, the males antlers still covered in thick velvet.
- A wide array of butterflies are seen nectaring on the abundant summer flowers.
- Large leaved aster and early goldenrods are blooming.
- Wild raspberries and blueberries 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: early goldenrod, aster species, pearly everlasting, Joe Pye weed, pointed leaved tick trefoil, fireweed, white water lilies, brown-eyed Susan, giant blue hyssop, daisy fleabane, cow parsnip, cleavers, ox-eye daisy, yellow bullhead water lilies, and more!