

Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for June 27-July 1

Hello Itasca Friends!

As June comes to a close the park is hopping with new baby birds, baby animals and wonderful wildflowers! 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). In answer to your question, YES, the showy ladyslippers are still blooming but they are starting to wane. A good location is the start of both the Dr. Roberts Trail and the Brower Trail. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park as we get ready to celebrate the 4th of July. Enjoy the colorful red, whites and blues in our wildflowers, including blue-flag iris, Canada anemone, Indian paintbrush and white water lilies. 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 veery's continue to sing their melodic downward spiral song throughout the park and the ovenbirds call out teacher, Teacher, TEACHER! 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 winged raptors at this evening talk, Saturday, June 30—
Itasca's Presenters Under the Pines: Minnesota Raptors, Live Bird Program**

Saturday, June 30, 2018 from 7:30- 8:30 p.m.

Meet inside the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center

Come learn what makes a raptor different from other types of birds. Learn their various hunting styles, what they eat, where they nest, and whooo might be living in your backyard. Chris Tolman from The Nature Connection will bring several live Minnesota raptors providing a great opportunity to get a close up look at these magnificent birds. A fun and engaging program for all ages.

Enjoy a music concert by Craig Willis, Sunday, July 1—

Itasca's Music Under the Pines: Craig Willis

from 7-8:30 p.m., Meet inside Forest Inn (across from Douglas Lodge)

Enjoy this music performance by singer and songwriter Craig A. Willis, whose "cowboy at heart" spirit is reflected in his original songs about the beauty of country living.

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

Sunday Sundae! Ice Cream Social. Sunday, July 1, from 6:30-7:30 PM (or while supplies last)

Held at Forest Inn

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. 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 June 20-27:

- Young sandhill cranes are seen walking in wetlands with the adults, their fluffy orange down feathers glowing in the sun.
- Showy Lady-slippers began blooming in full force

- Mother ruffed grouse are seen with their puffy baby chicks along the sides of roads, picking at gravel and grit
- Monarch butterfly caterpillars are seen feeding on milkweed leaves.
- Summer flowers are coming out in full force including tall meadow-rue, cow parsnip, cleavers, wild rose, bunchberry, blue-flag iris, sweet bedstraw, ox-eye daisy, Canada anemone, Indian paintbrush, purple avens, wild calla, yellow bullhead water lilies, vetch and more!