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Subject: Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for May 18-June 4
Date: May 16, 2019 at 12:08 PM
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Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for May 18-June 4
Attachments: PDF copy of May 18-June 4 programs

Hello Itasca Friends!

Spring greetings Itasca State Park friends! I think we can finally wish winter good bye and welcome spring. Warm temperatures the last few days have caused the flowers and leaves to 'pop', migrating birds to flock to the park and animals getting ready to have babies! We are gearing up for our late spring and summer program series, which can only mean that the Memorial Day Weekend is coming quick. Attached are our programs for May 18-June 4. We hope you can come out to Itasca and enjoy the spring ephemerals, including large-flowered trillium, bloodroot, large-flowered bellwort and hepatica.

Opening Memorial Weekend:

If you have been anxiously awaiting a meal at Douglas Lodge or a chance to shop at either the Forest Inn or Mary Gibbs Gift shops, your wait will soon be over! These facilities will be opening beginning on the Memorial Weekend. See below for exact opening dates for each location.

Dining in the Park: Douglas Lodge:

Douglas Lodge will open for the season on Friday, May 24 at 5 p.m. for both lodging and dining. Douglas Lodge Manager Gina and Assistant Manager Jeff are excited for you to come out and try some new items on the menu. They are a surprise so you need to discover them first hand! Many of the visitor favorites are back again this year including: fish tacos made with Red Lake walleye (a BIG hit!), pork medallions in blueberry sauce, and blueberry fritter bread French toast.. 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! Classic favorites are still on the menu including: the Itasca Burger, Wild Turkey, the Reuben and the famous Itasca Malts. Great family food served from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. **BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:** 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.

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).

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 (inventory may be limited).

More Dining in the Park: the Mary Gibbs Café:

Mary Gibbs Café will open for the season on Saturday, May 25 at 11 a.m..

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 sandwiches, soup, salad, pizza and a variety of ice cream flavors. Hours for the café will be 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

Take Home a Memory: Souvenirs and More!

Mary Gibbs Gift Shop opens for the season on Friday, May 24 at 10 a.m.

Forest Inn Gift Shop opens for the season on Saturday, May 25 at 9 a.m.

Promote your favorite park with a wearable memory from Itasca—check out the new summer line-up of sweatshirts and t-shirts. The Mary Gibbs Gift shop, features food stuffs and Mississippi Headwaters items, 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). Forest Inn features books and northwoods themed apparel and gifts and is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Featured only at Forest Inn Gift Shop: “Your Mighty Mississippi” collector t-shirt, check it out during your visit. Remember, if you dined at Douglas Lodge, you can 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).

NEW Lodging Opportunity in Itasca—Bert’s Cabins!

Itasca State Park now operates Bert’s Cabins. Check out these one-, two-, or three-bedroom log and stick built cabins are all set in the towering pines located along the Wilderness Drive by the Headwaters of the Mississippi River. A great opportunity for family groups. Check it out on the Itasca web page under Lodging: [Itasca Lodging: Bert’s Cabins](#) (for those who only have a paper copy of this, type in the following address: www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/itasca/lodging/itasca-state-park-berts-cabins.html)

Brush up on your birding skills with the *Take Flight! Spotting Spring Birds* programs:

Three opportunities await you when Ron Miller, birder, returns to help us identify those fast moving migrating warblers, sparrows, wrens and more! Join us on either May 18, May 25 or June 1. See website or attached schedule for meeting locations. Discover the songs and sights of Minnesota’s spring migratory birds! Join birder and instructor Ron Miller MD for a birding walk to discover recently arrived breeding birds as well as species passing through on their northward migration.

Are you new to birding? Don’t worry, birders of all levels are welcome – this program is designed to improve birding knowledge, create field skills through song recognition and have fun watching birds outdoors. Ron, an avid fly fisherman, began birding waiting for the trout to rise and has taught indoor birdwatching classes to beginning and experienced birders for the past several years. Join us and explore local birding hotspots in the park on a beautiful spring morning.

WHAT TO BRING: Bring binoculars and bird field guide books. Itasca State Park has a limited number of binoculars to lend. Wear comfortable shoes for walking and appropriate layers for the temperatures. Insect repellent and a hat are useful. Bring snack and water if you need it for this short outing.

NEW! Program Series— *Science in Nature*:

Join us for the debut of a new series. Uncover the mysteries of nature! Join scientists and researchers with the University of Minnesota's Itasca Biological Station as we explore their discoveries. Are you curious how nature functions? Learn about research from across the country. Topics vary—from forests to water systems and all types of critters to fungus and more! First one will be on Saturday, May 25 from 1-2 p.m. Meet at Forest Inn, (across from Douglas Lodge). **Science in Nature: Beneath the Waves—The Wonders of the Deep:** This week we are meeting Jim Cotner, Professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior who will be sharing information on the mysteries found within our lakes. Join us inside for a brief talk, followed by a walk to a nearby lake.

Headwaters in Spring—Watch the Webcam!

Spring is in full swing and a variety of birds are passing through. Keep an eye out for swans, ducks and even random flocks of pelicans as they stop over on their way to other nesting areas. 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 April 24-May 15:

- Ice out dates for 2019 include: April 24 ice out on Lake Ozawindib. April 25 (a warm day at 75°F with a strong wind) caused LaSalle Lake (in the State Recreation Area), Elk Lake, Mary Lake and Lake Itasca to all open
- April 24: wood frogs, chorus frogs and spring peepers are calling. Mourning cloak butterfly is seen on the trail near the visitor center.
- April 27: Bloodroots are blooming
- April 30: Yellow-bellied sapsucker and white-throated sparrows are observed by the visitor center.
- May 6: The morning temperature started out at 22°F. With cooler daytime temperatures, birds are seen hawking over Mary Lake for insects. The only active insects are noted over the warmer body of water. Birds include: palm warblers, yellow-rumped warblers and a large flock of about 100-150 tree swallow that crisscrossed a small section of Mary Lake feeding on emerging insects.
- May 8: Rose-breasted grosbeaks and Orioles arrive. One day later the catbirds arrived.
- May 12: Marsh Marigolds are blooming. Trembling aspen leaves are the

sizes of nickels. Hummingbirds arrive!

- May 13: birds heard include: chipping sparrow, black-and-white warbler, American tree sparrow, song sparrow, black-throated blue warbler, common yellowthroat, ovenbird, white-throated sparrow, mallard, ruffed grouse, blue jay, oriole, winter wren, black-capped chickadee, red breasted nuthatch, common loon, American robin, phoebe, palm warbler.
- May 13 and 15: a yearling black bear was seen crossing the bike trail in different locations.
- May 15: Trembling aspen leaves are the size of a quarter. Large-flowered trillium, large-flowered bellwort, sessile bellwort, purple violet, sweet colt's foot, wood anemone, hepatica, wild ginger and fly honeysuckle are all blooming.

Postscript:

PS: Feel free to share this program schedule with your friends!

If you no longer wish to receive this email update, please send an email with your first and last name and email address to Constance.Cox@state.mn.us and your name will be removed. In the subject line type: "remove name from newsletter".

Connie Cox

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