

Itasca State Park Nature Programs and special event for July 4-10

Hello Itasca Friends!

July 4th Holiday greetings Itasca State Park friends! I think we can finally wish the cool spring-like weather good bye and welcome summer. Warm temperatures the last few days have caused the flowers and bugs to 'pop', as dragonflies are seen zooming everywhere after the fresh hatch of insects! Fireflies are lighting up the evening as the temps continue to warm. Attached are our programs for July 4-10. We hope you can come out to Itasca and enjoy the July 4th holiday at one of our programs or by playing in the park.

Weekend Music and Ice Cream Social worth coming for on Sunday, July 7:

Enjoy the music of Unpolished and a dish of ice cream during the Friends of Itasca's ice cream social (\$2 fee) on Sunday, July 7. This year's proceeds from the sundaes go towards replacing playground equipment. **Itasca's Evening Under the Pines: Unpolished from 6:30-8 p.m.** Meet on the lawn outside Douglas Lodge (inside 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. **Sunday Sundae! Ice Cream Social. 6-7 PM** (or while ice cream 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.

Dining in the Park: Douglas Lodge:

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:

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!

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](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/itasca/lodging/itasca-state-park-berts-cabins.html) (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 nature cartooning skills with Gary Harbo’s program.

Join Minnesota artist and author, Gary Harbo as he teaches the art of nature cartooning. Kids and adults, come draw alongside Gary as he shares techniques based on his book, "How to Draw 104 Cartoons with Gary Harbo." Gary also will be sharing stories about Bart and his friends' adventures in Minnesota from his children's book, "The Northern Woods Adventure," which includes a visit to the Headwaters of the Mississippi River. Book signing to follow program.

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! Our third one will be on Thursday, July 11 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Meet at Preacher’s Grove. **Science in Nature: Beneath the Waves—The Afterlife of Trees:** This week we are

meeting Jonathan Schilling, Director of the University of Minnesota's Itasca Biological Station and a Professor in Plant & Microbial Biology who will lead a walk in Preachers Grove focused on fungi, fire, and the 'circle of life' for trees. Tree death and decay is part of what makes Itasca and its old growth special, and the fungi that dominate biological decomposition are part of a massive biofiltration system that cleans the water draining into Lake Itasca.

Headwaters in Summer—Watch the Webcam!

Summer is in full swing and the headwaters are alive with people experiencing the beginning of the river. Keep an eye out for bald eagles, common loons and even white-tailed deer as they come to the water's edge for water. 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 15-July 3:

- July 3: Spring stragglers and mid-summer flowers are blooming at the same time. Nodding Trillium are still blooming as are the showy lady's slippers. Other blooms include: Daisy fleabane, golden Alexander, heal-all, alsike clover, red sweet clover, bullhead lily, white (fragrant) water lily, Canada anemone, northern bush honeysuckle, columbine, bladder champion, wild rose species, cow parsnip, rough bedstraw, blue-flag iris, and yarrow.
- July 3: several birds are singing as they prepare for their second clutch of eggs, including chestnut-sided warblers, northern parula, ovenbirds, black-throated green warblers, veery and others.
- July 2: Mother bear from last year's research project is seen with her 3 little cubs (born this spring).
- July 2: both painted and snapping turtles are still laying eggs. Turtles have been laying eggs for almost 3 weeks now.
- June 30: ruffed grouse hen and chicks are seen crossing park road. Chicks are very small but already displaying their little crest of feathers on top of their heads!
- June 29: Trumpeter swan cygnets are seen resting on the nest, their fluffy grey down feathers contrasting with the adult's snow white feathers.
- June 25: Loon chicks are seen riding on their parents back as eggs are finally hatching.

- June 22: hen turkey with her flock of 13 chicks are seen along park road. Chicks are the size of a small ruffed grouse and able to fly.
- June 19: red fox kit seen along park roads near Forest Inn as they begin to roam from the den site.
- June 18: a fisher is seen along Main Park Drive near the visitor center.

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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