






Thank you for your interest in interpretive and educational programming at Giant City State Park!

- Programming for school and civic groups is available. Please call the park naturalist for more information.
 - At least two responsible adults must accompany each group of 15 minors.
 - Please note that depending on the size of group and time of year, some programs may not be available.
 - Please call at least one month in advance.
- All programs begin at the Giant City Visitors Center unless otherwise noted.
 - Please note that some programs require advanced registration.
 - Please register for programs by calling the Giant City Visitors Center at 618-457-4836.

New programs are added throughout the year!

For an updated list, visit the Friends of Giant City Facebook site.

www.facebook.com/friendsofgiantcity

Invasive Species Removal

Invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to Illinois' natural areas, native communities, and natural resources. Giant City State Park along with the Friends of Giant City, Sierra Club, River to River Weed Cooperative (CWMA) and the Southern Illinois Invasive Strike Team are partnering to combat invasive species in the park and southern Illinois.

March 7th-Barbara Racana Memorial Invasive Pull at Giant City State Park, 9am-Noon, call 618-457-4836 for more information or to register.

April 18th-CWMA Invasive Species Identification, 9am-Noon, email rtircwma@gmail.com for more information or to register.

May 16th-CWMA Invasive Species on your property presentation, 9am-Noon, email rtircwma@gmail.com for more information or to register.

JANUARY

Hiking the River to River Trail across Southern Illinois

Sunday, January 19, 2-3pm

In December 2018 Chris Benda hiked the River to River trail from Elizabethtown on the Ohio River to Grand Tower on the Mississippi River and blogged about it as he hiked. Join him as he explains the challenges of this thru-hike, as well as the ecology of the land and plants observed along the trail. No registration required.

Storytime in the Park: Owls

Saturday, January 25, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join park volunteer Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive story about owls. After the story, stick around to make an easy nature themed craft. This program is open to all but geared towards children ages 3-8. No registration required.

FEBRUARY

Birding Basics

Saturday, February 1, 10-11am, optional outdoor program to follow 11:00AM to 12:30PM

Come learn about the resident birds that ride out the winter at Giant City State Park. Learn key characteristics used for songbird identification and some neat natural history about birds that overwinter at Giant City. After the indoor program, there will be an optional guided bird walk.

Snake Road: A Southern Illinois Treasure

Saturday, February 8, 1-2:30pm

Snake Road, located in the Shawnee National Forest, is not only a place to find a diverse array of amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife, but also boasts a rich display of plant life. Join biologist, John Palis, on a virtual walk of the world-famous Snake Road. John will share his observations of snakes and other natural wonders that Snake Road has to offer. (Please note that this is an indoor presentation at the Giant City State Park Visitors Center)

The Underground Railroad in Southern Illinois

Sunday, February 9, 1-2pm

The Underground Railroad was a vast but secret network of travel routes and safe havens to help African Americans

escape slavery. Did you know that there are several natural landmarks in the Shawnee that remain as markers of the Underground Railroad activity in southern Illinois? Join Mary McCorvie, Heritage Program Manager for the Shawnee National Forest, as she discusses the role that southern Illinois played in the Underground Railroad network. No registration required.

Striped Skunk Ecology in Southern Illinois

Saturday, February 22, 1-2pm

Katelyn Ampsacher has a background in wildlife research and conservation. She is currently a PhD student in the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at Southern Illinois University where she studies striped skunks. Katelyn will present an overview of her research that will discuss home ranges, habitat use, survival, denning behaviors, and disease in relation to human impact. No registration required.

Storytime in the Park: Fox

Saturday, February 29, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join park volunteer Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive story about our canine friend the fox. After the story, stick around to make an easy nature themed craft. This program is open to all but geared towards children ages 3-8. No registration required.

MARCH

Hike with a Homeless Dog

Saturday, March 21, 10am-Noon

Giant City is partnering with Wright Way Animal Rescue to get our four legged and two legged friends out for a hike together! Participants will have the opportunity to walk either the moderate one-mile Giant City Nature Trail, or the easy 1/3 mile Devil's Standtable Trail. The first hike will run from 10 to 11am and the second hike will run from 11am-noon. What a great way to give our canine friends a little exercise and, maybe, help them find a fur-ever home. This program is free and open to the public but registration is required and begins on March 1st. Please call 618-457-4836.

Storytime in the Park: Trees

Saturday, March 21, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join park volunteer Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive nature story about trees. After the story, stick around to make an

easy nature themed craft. This program is open to all but geared towards children ages 3-8. No registration required.

Giant City "Streets" Exposed

Saturday, March 28, 10am-11:30am

The "streets" of Giant City are one of the most well known spots in the park. These rocks are how Giant City gets its name! But, do you know how they were formed or why they look like the "streets" in a city of giants? Join Geologist Joe Devera as he reveals the mystery behind these amazing rock formations! There will be a short presentation indoors then, hike on the 1 mile Nature Trail after. No registration required.

Botanical Names Demystified

Sunday, March 29, 2-3pm

"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their rightful names." Botanists communicate about plants using scientific names, but they are often difficult to spell and pronounce. This presentation will teach you the importance of botanical names, how to pronounce them, and what their names mean in a fun and informative way.

APRIL

Spring Wildflower Walks

Saturday, April 4, 11 and Friday, April 17, 10am-Noon

Trillium Trail in Giant City is one of the best spring wildflower trails in southern Illinois. Join the Natural Resources Coordinator as we meander through the spring woods and take a closer look at these petite beauties. Please register in advance by calling 618-457-4836. This is a moderately difficult two-mile trail with some steep stair climbing.

The Mysterious Morel Mushroom

Saturday, April 11, 1:00-2:30pm

The Morel is one tricky fungus! There seems to be no rhyme or reason to these mushrooms. Park Volunteer, photographer and local nature enthusiast, Gretchen Steele, has some great tips to help you find the sometimes hard to locate Morel. After a brief presentation, we will head out to the field for a small hike. While we may not find any mushrooms, participants will have a chance to learn more about what makes a good mushroom habitat. Please call 618-457-4836 to register.

Friends of Giant City Annual Meeting Sunday, April 5, 1-3pm

Would you like to learn more about the Friends of Giant City? If so, why not join us for the annual meeting. At 1pm, meet Friends members and enjoy refreshments. After a brief business meeting enjoy a special guest speaker. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Friends group or the Park is encouraged to attend. *Meet at the Visitors Center.*

MAY

Shrub Identification Hike Saturday, May 2, 10am-Noon

Blueberries, delicate lantern like seeds, and wonderfully fragrant leaves are all things that belong to shrubs that you can find at Giant City! If you have ever hiked in the park and wondered, "what is that shrub," now is your chance to find out! Join Forestry Research Technician, Kevin Rohling, for a fun and informative hike on the two mile Trillium Trail. This is a moderately difficult trail with some steep stair climbing. Please call 618-457-4836 to register.

Tree Meditation Saturday, May 2, 3-5pm

The search for balance between work, family and self-care often results in chaos as one hurries madly from one thing to the next. Trees, however, do not have the option of running. In this two hour guided journey with trees, learn how to tap into the strength that comes from standing strongly in one place. Slow down. Root. Grow. Bring a lawn chair and meet with meditation and Reiki instructor Lorie Allen away from the paths trod by millions and take some time to connect with the trees in Giant City. Please register by calling 618-457-4836.

Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) May 15 & 16, 1-4pm

Shinrin-Yoku, translated as forest bathing, has been shown to lower cortisone (the stress hormone), lower blood pressure, and improve immune function. Forest bathing walks take you away from your day to day stressors so you can slow down and connect with the forest in a carefully designed three-hour program. The walk is guided by Keri Luly, who has been trained and certified by the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs. Registration is required and will begin on May 1st. Please call 618-457-4836 for more information or to register.

SEPTEMBER

Reptiles and amphibians Saturday, September 5, 1-2pm

Here at Giant City, reptiles and amphibians hold a special place in our hearts. Join Jeremy Schumacher, Forester and reptile/amphibian enthusiast, as he discusses these often misunderstood creatures and, shows off several live species. No registration required.

Journey of the Monarch Entire Month of September

Every fall thousands of Monarch butterflies migrate south to Central Mexico! Giant City State Park is a great stopping point for these small creatures. Come out and help the University of Kansas track these insects by participating in a tagging program. Anytime between 8am-2pm, stop by the Visitor Center for a quick tutorial on the Monarch butterfly, the correct way to catch them and, ideas on where to find them in the park. After the tutorial, head out to the field to try your hand at catching a Monarch or two. Bring your Monarchs back to the Visitor Center to tag and release. Nets, butterfly cages, instructions and tags will all be provided. Please call the Giant City Visitors Center at 618-457-4836 for more information.

OCTOBER

Waterfowl Identification Workshop Saturday, October 3, 1-2

Waterfowl identification is often difficult for both new and experienced enthusiasts. Fortunately, waterfowl are fairly large birds and with clues such as size, silhouette, flight patterns, vocalizations and plumage identification will be a snap. No reservations required.

Hike with a Homeless Dog Saturday, October 10, 10am-Noon

Giant City is partnering with Wright Way Animal Rescue to get our four legged and two legged friends out for a hike together! Participants will have the opportunity to walk either the moderate one-mile Giant City Nature Trail, or the easy 1/3 mile Devil's Standtable Trail. The first hike will run from 10 to 11am and the second hike will run from 11am-noon. What a great way to give our canine friends a little exercise and, maybe, help them find a fur-ever home. This program is free and open to the public but registration is required and begins on October 1st.

Amazing Mammals of Giant City Saturday, May 23, 6-7pm

Head out to Giant City to join Bev Shofstall from Free Again Wildlife as she introduces us to some amazing mammals that you may find in the wild at Giant City! This program is recommended for all ages and will be held outdoors at Shelter #3 by the Giant City Nature Trail. No registration required.

JUNE

Junior Naturalist Day Camp Friday June 5, 12,19 and 26, 9am-Noon

Designed for kids ages 7-11 years old, this program of nature fun will explore creeks, woods and rocks looking for insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and flowers! Each Friday will be a different theme and will include a game and take-home craft. Reserve a spot for you child for one day or, all four! Reservations are required and space is limited (Reservations can be made starting on May 1st). Please call 618-457-4836 for more information.

Goat Yoga in the Park Saturday, June 6, 9-10 am

Be one with nature, your soul and.....goats! Join us for a free outdoors goat yoga class! This program is about disconnecting from day to day stress and focusing on happy vibes. Goat yoga is designed for beginners but all levels are welcome to attend. Registration is required for this event and will begin on June 1st. Please call 618-457-4836 to register or for more information.

Fabulous Ferns of Giant City Thursday, June 18, 5-7pm

In summer, Giant City is a lush green environment full of many different species of ferns. This program, conducted by Extension Forester Chris Evans, will give a hands-on approach to learning all about these green beauties. Join us as we head out to the two-mile Trillium Trail to identify some live species. This program is free and open to the public. Please register by calling 618-457-4836.

Bowfishing 101

Saturday, June 27, 1-2pm

If you have been interested in learning more about this rapidly growing sport, the equipment needed, and how it can help with conservation efforts on our waterways in the battle against Asian

Owls of Giant City

Saturday, October 17, 2-3pm

Whoooo said Giant City has owls? I do, that's whooooo! Join Beverly Shofstall from Free Again Wildlife Rehab as she introduces us to some live owls that you may find at the Park. Arrive at 1:30pm to dissect an actual owl pellet before the presentation! This will be a weather dependent outdoor program. No registration required. We will meet at shelter #3.

Trek N' Treat

Saturday, October 31, 2-4pm

Come to Giant City as we kick off Halloween in the park! Hike the Devil's Standtable trail for an easy, self-guided hike through the beautiful forest. Along the trail your family will meet our creature characters who will teach you about some of the wonderful and most misunderstood creatures that call Giant City home! Treats for all of the hikers! Trail is roughly 1/3 of a mile, and will take 20-30 minutes. No registration required. Arrive at the Devil's Standtable anytime between 2 and 3:30.

NOVEMBER

Forest Hike

Saturday, November 7, 1-3pm

Join Community Forester, Jennifer Behnken, on the Giant City Nature Trail as she discusses tree identification, Illinois forests, wood products, cultural history, and invasive species. This will be a fun interpretive hike focused on trees and forests. No registration required. Meet at Shelter #3 parking lot.

Beginning Watercolor Painting with Fall Colors

Sunday, November 8, 1-3pm

An introduction to using landscape and nature themes in watercolor by local artist, Marie Samuel, will cover several ways to simulate texture in a two hour guided step-by-step lesson suitable for all levels of experience. Dry brush, wet into wet, use of salt and rubbing alcohol for unusual textures, and wax resist will be explored. An impressionistic way to simulate fall leaves will be demonstrated. This program is free but registration is required and will start on November 1st. Please call 618-457-4836 to register.

carp, you won't want to miss this program! Participants will enjoy not only an interesting program that explains bowfishing methods, equipment, regulations, and ethics, but following the presentation participants will have an opportunity to do hands on learning with bowfishing equipment and fish targets. This program is free, geared for beginners, and is suitable for ages 5-105! Registration is limited. Please call 618-457-4836 to register. *Instructor Dwayne Durr is a certified Hunter Safety instructor, avid bowfisher, and IL State Representative for Bowfishing Association of America.*
Instructor Gretchen Steele is an avid bowfisher, bowfishing instructor, and IL State Representative for Bowfishing Association of America.

JULY

Sunup Hikes

Friday, July 10, 24, 31, 6:30-8am

It's summer in southern Illinois and even though it's hot and humid, that's no reason to stop hiking! Roll out of bed and join the Park Natural Resources Coordinator as we get some exercise and take in the early morning woods on one of the 8 park trails. Trails will vary from 1-3 miles and will be moderately difficult with some steep stair climbing. Meet at the Giant City Visitors Center. No registration required.

Flora of Kinkaid Lake

Sunday, July 26, 2-3pm

There is a lot of public land to explore around Kinkaid Lake in northwestern Jackson County, Illinois and many botanical treasures await the intrepid naturalist. Over 670 plant species were observed during a survey in 2019. Come listen to botanist Chris Benda highlight the neat plants and interesting animals found in this area. No registration required.

AUGUST

Identifying Grasses Made Easy

Saturday, August 15, 10am-Noon

Identifying grasses can be tricky! Join Erin Garrett with the U of I Extension to learn tips and techniques to help you identify 30 different grasses in southern Illinois. After the presentation, take a hike with Erin to identify grasses in Giant City. Please register by calling 618-457-4836.

Storytime in the Park: Terrific Turkey

Saturday, November 14, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join park volunteer Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive nature story about Turkeys. After the story, stick around to make an easy nature themed craft. This program is open to all but geared towards children ages 3-8. No registration required.

DECEMBER

Illinois Botanizer's Best of Illinois Nature 2020

Sunday, December 6, 2-3pm

Botanist Chris Benda aka "Illinois Botanizer" travels throughout Illinois every year, visiting nature preserves, leading nature tours for the public, and encountering all kinds of neat plants and animals. Join him as he presents photographs highlighting his best nature encounters of 2019. No registration required. Meet at the Giant City Visitors Center.

Storytime in the Park: Wonders of Winter

Saturday, December 12, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join park volunteer Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive nature story about Winter. After the story, stick around to make an easy nature themed craft. This program is open to all but geared towards children ages 3-8. No registration required.



All programs will take place at the Giant City Visitors Center unless otherwise noted. Please call 618-457-4836 for more information.