

Kids in the Woods

Saturday, July 20, 1-3pm

Are there fairies living in Giant City State Park? Let's find out by creating natural homes for them around the Visitors Center (and one for you to take home). No registration required. Meet at the Giant City Visitors Center.

Illinois Orchids

Sunday, July 28, 2-3pm

Illinois is home to over 50 species of orchids and many are very rare. This program will discuss the natural history of orchids and present photos of all the species native to Illinois. No registration required.

August

Reptiles!

Saturday, August 17, 1-2pm

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



September

Hike with a Homeless Dog

Saturday, September 7, 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 10-11am 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. Please call 618-457-4836.

October

Owls of Giant City

Friday, October 4, 6-7pm

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 6:30pm 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.

Journey of the Monarch

Saturday, October 5, 1-2:30pm

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. There will be a short introduction, and then we will head out to the field to catch and tag as many migrating Monarchs as we can find. This program is free and open to the public. Please call the Giant City Visitors Center at 618-457-4836 to register or for more information.



Fall Photography Workshop

Saturday, October 12, 1-2

The leaves are changing color and the air is cool and crisp! What a great time of the year to dig out the camera and head out to Giant City for a fall photography workshop. Gretchen Steele, local wildlife photographer, will share tips and techniques for taking great outdoor shots! No registration required.

Kids in the Woods

Saturday, October 12th, 6-8pm

Who prowls the night? Meet at the group campground to take a night hike, call for owls and find other nocturnal animals. Enjoy s'mores at the campfire after the hike. No registration required.

Trek N' Treat

Saturday, October 26, 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 2, 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.

December

Illinois Botanizer's Best of Illinois Nature 2019

Sunday, December 2, 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.



Giant City State Park

2019 Calendar of Events



All Programs are free unless otherwise noted. Call or visit the Giant City Visitor's Center for more information. New programs are added throughout the year! For an updated list, please visit the Friends of Giant City Facebook site at: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofgiantcity/>

Giant City State Park, 235 Giant City Road, Makanda, IL 62958, 618-457-4836

January

Hiking the River to River Trail across Southern Illinois

Sunday, January 13, 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.

Winter Walk in the Woods

Saturday, January 19, 10-11:30am

It may be cold outside, but winter is a great time to get some exercise and fresh air as we take in the natural beauty of Giant City State Park. Join the Natural Resources Coordinator as we take a leisurely stroll through the winter woods on the moderately difficult 1 mile Giant City Nature Trail. For more information or to register please contact the Giant City Visitors Center at 618-457-4836.



February

Maple Syrup Program

Wednesday, February 6, 6-7pm

Curious about maple syrup production? Join Chris Evans, University of Illinois Extension Forester, as he covers the basics of tree identification, equipment needs, tree tapping, sap collection, boiling, and finishing maple syrup.

Frogs of Southernmost Illinois: Identification, Surveying, and Monitoring

Saturday, February 9, 1-2pm

What frog is that? Join biologist John Palis at the Giant City visitors center and learn to identify our local frogs by sight and sound. John will also share findings of ongoing frog surveying and monitoring projects he is conducting in southern Illinois. Weather permitting we will visit a pond or two in the Park after the talk to look for frogs. No registration required.

Natural Bee Keeping for Beginners

Saturday, February 23, 10am-Noon

Discover the basics of backyard bee keeping! Join local bee enthusiasts Angie and Colin Kuehl as they discuss getting started with bee keeping. The benefits to beekeeping extend beyond just pollination and honey! Head out to the Visitors Center and find out how you can get started. This program is free and open to the public but registration is required. Please call 618-457-4836.

March

Birding Basics

Saturday, March 2, 1-2pm

Curious about birding but not sure where to start? Dr. George Waring, SIUC Zoology Professor, will share the ABC's of birding. Dr. Waring will discuss native and migrating birds, share easy identification tips and common bird calls. No registration required.

Storytime in the Park

Saturday, March 9, 1-2pm

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

A Day in the Life of a Field Biologist

Sunday, March 10, 2-3pm

Ever wonder what life is like as a field biologist? Join botanist Chris Benda as he presents a program about the challenges and rewards of working outside in nature for a living.

Beginning Watercolor Painting with Spring Wildflowers

Saturday, March 16, 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 as well as an impressionistic way to simulate wildflowers. This program is free but registration is required. Please call 618-457-4836 for more information or to register.

First Day of Spring Full Moon Hike

Thursday, March 20, 6:30-8 pm

The trails at Giant City close at dusk unless you are attending a guided hike with the Natural Resources Coordinator! It's the first official day of spring and what better way to enjoy it than a hike under the magical glow of the full moon. Listen for the occasional call of the Barred owl and the chirps of the Spring Peeper frogs as we hike along the 1/3 mile Stonefort Trail. For more information or to register, please call the Giant City Visitors Center at 618-457-4836.

Hike with a Homeless Dog

Saturday, March 23, 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. Please call 618-457-4836.

April

Kids in the Woods

Saturday, April 6, 6-8pm

Frogs and toads are singing! Learn to identify frogs and toads by the songs they sing. Marshmallow roasting at the group campground after the night fills with sound. No registration required.



Spring Wildflower Walks

Saturday, April 6, 13 and Thursday April 18, 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 13, 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 14, 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 story telling and guitar playing from Curt Carter. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Friends group or the Park is encouraged to attend. *Meet at Shelter #3.*

May

Storytime in the Park

Saturday, May 11, 1-2pm

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

Bike the Park

Saturday, May 25, 9am-1pm

Giant City may not have any bike trails but there are plenty of roads in the park to ride on. To provide a safe environment for bike riders of all ages, we will be closing the Stonefort Road to vehicles from 9am to 1pm. Grab your bike and ride one of the prettiest roads in the park. As you roll along take in the beauty of the spring forest, wildflowers and maybe a waterfall or two. No registration required. Park at Shelter #1 or Devils Standtable parking lot. Length of ride is 3 miles roundtrip.

June

Storytime in the Park

Saturday, June 8, 1-2pm

What better place to hear a story than Giant City State Park! Join Master Naturalist Lorie Allen as she reads a fun and interactive nature story. 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.

Fabulous Ferns of Giant City

Thursday, June 13, 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.

Junior Naturalist Day Camp

June 24-28, 9am-Noon

Designed for kids ages 6-9 years old, this week long program of nature fun will explore creeks, woods and rocks looking for insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and flowers! Each day 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 five! Reservations are required and space is limited (Reservations can be made starting on May 1st). Please call 618-457-4836 for more information.

July

Amazing Mammal Babies

Saturday, July 6, 2-3pm

Head out to Giant City to join Bev Shofstall from Free Again Wildlife Rehab as she introduces us to some of her amazing mammal friends! This program is recommended for all ages and will be held outdoors at Shelter #3 by the Giant City Nature Trail. No registration required.

Sunup Hikes

Friday, July 12, 19, 26, 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.

