



CONTACT: Dominick Miller
millerd44@michigan.gov
Mackinac State Historic Parks
Phone: (231) 436-4100
www.mackinacparks.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 15, 2019

2019 Education Outreach Session Set to Begin

MACKINAW CITY, MICH. — Mackinac State Historic Parks closed for the 2018 season in early October and will not reopen until early May for 2019. However, that doesn't mean MSHP has stopped interpreting its history to the youth of Michigan.

Each year, historic interpreters from Mackinac State Historic Parks visit hundreds of students throughout Michigan with its Education Outreach program. 2019 marks the 31st year of Historic Mackinac on Tour, an overview of Michigan history through the lens of Mackinac, and the 26th year of Water, Woods and Wildlife, a natural history program led by MSHP Curator of Natural History Jeff Dykehouse.

“While Mackinac State Historic Parks sites are closed for the winter, our costumed interpreters go to schools across the entire state of Michigan to engage students all year long,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Deputy Director. “Students experience the Great Lakes watershed, the fur trade, and, one classroom at a time, students learn the cultural and natural history of Michigan that makes our state great.”

Historic Mackinac on Tour began in 1988. Two historical interpreters - one British redcoat and one civilian - engage students in Michigan history using Mackinac as the common theme. Students learn about the Native Americans who called Mackinac home, the fur trade, and the British military presence up to the American Revolution.

Water, Woods and Wildlife has been presented since 1993. Students learn about the natural history of Michigan, including the Straits of Mackinac and its location in the Great Lakes Watershed, the

variety of wildlife, and the habitat required for the survival of that wildlife. This program runs in both fall and winter/spring.

The outreach programs are presented throughout northern Michigan. Distance programs for 2019 include stops in Marquette, Grand Rapids, Cadillac and Southeast Michigan. On average, about 130 programs are presented each year reaching nearly 8,000 students.

Mackinac State Historic Parks' education outreach programs are made possible, in part, by the generosity of Mackinac Associates, the friends group to MSHP.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, Historic Downtown Mackinac, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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