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Dig Deeper into Mackinac Island’s History with Trio of Events

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — Mackinac State Historic Parks’ interpretive staff will host a trio of events that will dig deeper into the history of Mackinac Island: Exploring Ancient Mackinac Island, led by Park Naturalist Kyle Bagnall on Tuesday, July 16; A Walk Through the Mackinac Island Cemeteries, led by Interpretation Coordinator Jack Swartzinski on Wednesday, July 17; and a War of 1812 Bike Ride with Chief Curator Craig Wilson on Saturday, July 20.

Exploring Ancient Mackinac Island is an afternoon ramble that will reveal some of Mackinac Island’s most ancient wonders. Beginning at the Fort Mackinac Avenue of Flags at 4:00 p.m., the group will follow winding pathways up to the “turtle’s back,” viewing Skull Cave, Point Lookout, Sugar Loaf, and Fort Holmes. The adventure will cover about 1.75 miles over roads, trails with uneven terrain, and descending 141 stairs. This is a free event, but donations are welcome.

A Walk Through the Mackinac Island Cemeteries is a casual evening walk that begins at the Fort Mackinac Avenue of Flags at 5:00 p.m. On the walk, Swartzinski will guide guests through the Catholic, Protestant, and Military cemeteries, explaining their histories and pointing out historic graves in each. The tour will follow a paved road into the cemeteries, but terrain in the cemeteries may be uneven. This is a free tour, but donations are welcome.

The War of 1812 Bike Ride will visit key sites related to Mackinac Island's role in the War of 1812. Starting with Fort Mackinac itself, the tour will make stops at Fort Holmes, the site of the August 4,

1814 Battle of Mackinac Island, and end at British Landing, where the war started in the upper Great Lakes in July 1812. This is an opportunity for visitors to see the actual spots where historic events occurred, rather than just talking about them in an abstract sense. Meet at the Fort Mackinac Avenue of Flags at 5:30pm. Participants must provide their own bicycles. This is a free event – donations welcome.

Mackinac Island State Park, which dates to 1895, makes up more than 83% of Mackinac Island, with more than 70 miles of roads and trails, natural curiosities such as Arch Rock, Sugar Loaf and Skull Cave, and historic treasures such as Fort Mackinac.

Funding for many special programs at Mackinac State Historic Parks comes from Mackinac Associates, friends preserving and sharing Mackinac's heritage. Additional pictures available upon request. More information on special events can be found here. A downloadable version of this release can be found here.

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, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State 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 online at www.mackinacparks.com.

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