

Lutsen Resort Announces Grand Opening of New Spa

LUTSEN, MINN. (August 4, 2017) - Nestled in the woods of Northern Minnesota, Caribou Highlands Lodge is thrilled to announce the opening of their new Woodlands Spa that is serving guests and locals alike.

After continual requests for more services than just massage, Caribou Highlands has completely rebuilt their previous massage space to accommodate additional spa services such as body wraps. Not only did they want to tailor this new spa to their out of town guests but it was also very important to keep locals in mind.

In addition to new services, Caribou Highlands has hired a local favorite and very talented Massage Therapist, Brigette Nies to manage the new spa. Nies has been practicing healing therapies for over two decades and is an experienced yoga instructor, master herbalist and Reiki Master.

"I feel inspired by the beauty of the lake and the nature that surrounds us," said Nies. "And I enjoy incorporating natural elements into services to create unique healing experiences for my clients."

Woodlands Spa at Caribou Highlands is the place to unplug and reconnect with nature. Spa services include massage and body work, body treatments such as mud wraps and shea butter wraps and vital enhancements. It is the best place to take the time to tend to your well-being with the perfect balance of health and relaxation. In addition, Woodlands Spa offers several yoga classes throughout the week.

"The space is cozy, inviting and filled with amazing art by local artist, Heidi Sobanja," said Nies. "We use high quality handcrafted organic products and strive to connect with each guest and structure the service to meet their needs."

Guests can also come in early or stay afterward to relax in Caribou Highlands' indoor and outdoor pools, sauna or hot tub while enjoying the spectacular view of Moose Mountain.

Woodlands Spa is offering Cook County and Lake County residents a 10% discount on all services at the spa. To redeem this discount, locals can go to this web address: <http://caribouhighlands.com/localspa> or type LOCAL in the message field when reserving an appointment online.

Annual Gitchi-Gami Trail Association Bike Ride Celebrates 17 Years and 17 Miles

(Two Harbors, MN) The 17th Annual Gitchi-Gami Trail Association (GGTA) North Shore Bike Ride will take place on Saturday, August 19, on the Gitchi-Gami State Trail (GGST) and connecting roads, with 8-mile, 28-mile, 37-mile, and 55-mile route options. The recreational ride will once again begin and end in Gooseberry Falls State Park on scenic Hwy 61.

This year's ride celebrates 17 – not only the number of annual rides since construction of the GGST began, but also the number of continuous miles of trail that will result when two segments of completed trail are finally joined. The long-awaited paving of the trail on the West Road in Beaver Bay, together with the completion of a new bridge over the Beaver River with a dedicated bike lane, will result in the joining of the 14.1-mile segment between Gooseberry Falls and the Beaver Bay Wayside with the 2.3-mile segment between the West Road and the city of Silver Bay. When the trail is complete between the Beaver Bay Wayside and the terminus of the trail on the West Road a half-mile inland from Highway 61, the 17 miles of trail between Gooseberry Falls and Silver Bay will become the longest continuous section of the GGST.

Another new feature of the 17th Annual Ride is a new 8-mile "family ride." The 8-mile route, like the other routes, begins at Gooseberry Falls, with a destination kid-friendly rest stop at Twin Points Wayside and Safe Harbor. In addition to fun activities for kids, families can enjoy short hikes to the "twin points" overlooking Lake Superior that were part of a family resort of that name decades ago. The trails lead to Iona's Beach Scientific and Natural Area, named after the resort's matriarch, with its unique expanse of pink rhyolite stones.

The 28-mile route is entirely on the GGST, from Gooseberry to Beaver Bay and back again. Because it is an "out-and-back" ride, bikers can turn around at any point to return to the starting point.

The 37-mile option adds a loop on county roads north from Beaver Bay and into Silver Bay, returning on the trail between Silver Bay and the West Road in Beaver Bay. This route incorporates over a half-mile on gravel road (the West Road), which will finally be paved this year.

The 55-mile option follows the GGST to

Beaver Bay and adds a challenging loop north and east on county roads and state highways, returning through Silver Bay to Beaver Bay. Both of the longer loops return to Gooseberry on the GGST.

The 17th Annual GGTA Ride begins at 9:00 a.m. Riders are requested to depart by 10:30 a.m. Parking for the ride is in a lot inside Gooseberry Falls State Park. Vehicles will need an annual state park vehicle sticker or a daily vehicle pass. A daily pass will be provided by the GGTA as part of the registration fee, and is also good for entry to every other state park on ride day.

All riders must wear helmets and agree to liability waivers. Snacks and refreshments will be provided at rest stops and post-ride. Mechanical, emergency, and sag support will be available. All adult riders will receive t-shirts, and younger riders will receive water bottles.

This year's ride t-shirt features beautiful artwork commissioned by the GGTA, a bicycle-themed painting by Cloquet artist Adam Swanson. Riders and others will have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win the original painting.

More information is available on the GGTA website, www.ggta.org. On the website, riders can register for the ride online and can also download mail-in registration forms. Ride brochures with registration forms are also available at tourist destinations along the North Shore, and at informational kiosks along the GGST.

Registration for the ride is \$45. Members of the GGTA receive a \$10 discount, and riders can join the GGTA when they sign up for the ride. Registration for a kid under 17 years old is \$5 with a paid adult. Riders are welcome to sign up on the day of the ride, but t-shirts will be given out only as long as they last.

Proceeds from the ride benefit the GGTA, a nonprofit organization working with the DNR, MnDOT, and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission in the planning, construction, maintenance, and promotion of the GGST.

When completed, the GGST will be an 89-mile non-motorized, multi-use, paved recreational trail between Two Harbors and Grand Marais, paralleling Lake Superior's

Dark Chocolate Is Good For Your Brain

By Kate Jackson

Brain fog, it's a real thing. No one quite agrees on where it comes from but we know this for sure: dealing with it is a serious drag. But a recent study out from the University of South Australia's Nutritional Physiology Research Centre might provide a tasty solution to the problem. Chocolate.

Researchers have found that eating chocolate at least once a week or more may increase your cognitive function. Good news for those of us (everyone?) looking for an excuse to eat more chocolate.

The study followed more than 1,000 people over the course of 35 years, tracking their chocolate intake and recording its impact on "visual-spatial memory and organization, working memory, abstract verbal reasoning, scanning and tracking and overall cognitive functioning." said the study.

Psychologist and epidemiologist Dr. Merrill Elias of the University of Maine was

part of the research team. "We did not follow cognitive function over time and see any rise in intelligence," he said, "What we did find was that people who ate chocolate on a regular basis performed better on cognitive functions than people who did not."

It's important to point out that the chocolate in question is dark (presumably 60% cacao) with little to no added sugar or other ingredients. Not to be confused with milk chocolate which, while being super tasty, is firmly outside of the health food category.

So, why is (dark) chocolate good for our brains?

According to the University of Michigan, chocolate "contains flavonoids called procyanidins & epicatechins; flavonoids are part of a group of antioxidants known as polyphenols and are found in a variety of foods including dark chocolate, tea, red wine, and various fruits and vegetables."

Cocoa flavonoids may help you think more clearly much in the same way that they help your heart, by increasing blood flow to important areas of the brain, including those that involve learning and memory, and promoting the creation of new blood vessels.

It has long been known that antioxidants can increase cognitive function in the elderly, potentially staving off conditions like dementia, but this extensive study shows that we can all benefit from eating a little more of this brain superfood.

"Adopting dietary patterns to delay or slow the onset of cognitive decline is an appropriate avenue..." said the study, "The present findings support recent clinical trials suggesting that regular intake of cocoa flavanols may have a beneficial effect on cognitive function, and possibly protect against normal age-related cognitive decline."