

State Historic Sites & Springfield Ald. Shawn Gregory To Provide Black History Month ‘walk, Hike And Bike History’ Tours

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Springfield Ald. Shawn Gregory will present a series of free “Walk, Hike and Bike History”

activities during Black History Month. “Walk, Hike and Bike History” experiences empower participants to connect with must-see museums, landmarks and monuments in the capital city.

“The IDNR is pleased to offer this opportunity for people to get outdoors this February and learn more about Black history and achievements in Springfield,” said Colleen Callahan, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. “These unique tours will help us remember the past and strengthen our understanding of the present.”

All tours are free. Reservations are strongly encouraged and can be made through the IDNR website at historicspringfield.dnr.illinois.gov. Call 217-524-3971 to request additional days and times.

“As we learn more about the history before our eyes in our own communities, we gain a clearer picture of our duties to preserve and celebrate all history – of all cultures – all year round,” Alderman Gregory said. “The words ‘stronger together’ have never had more meaning to me.”

The Black History Month schedule of “Walk, Hike and Bike History” experiences in Springfield includes:

Black History Hike – This 90-minute hike around Oak Ridge Cemetery focuses on the history of Springfield’s Black community, discussing great tragedies and stories of success in the face of severe adversity and prejudice. Hiking shoes are recommended. Hikes will depart from the Lincoln Tomb parking lot at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays during February.

History Bike Tour – Ride your own bicycle following a guide on a casual and easy-paced tour of historic sites in the capital city. This neighborhood-style ride will go past historic sites, including the Dana-Thomas House, the Lincoln Home and the city’s first Black fire house. Information will be provided at multiple stops along the route. The five-mile, round-trip ride – which includes a hot cocoa break sponsored by the Springfield Bicycle Club at the Route History Museum – will take about two hours. Helmets are required and water is recommended. Bike rides will depart from the Dana-Thomas House parking lot at 1 p.m. on Feb. 21 and 26.

All experiences will follow the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

A full schedule of 2022 “Walk, Hike and Bike History” tours will be announced mid-March and continue through mid-November.