



Nature Center Update

The MCCB is anxiously getting closer to the dream of building a new Nature Center at Pony Creek Park. After years of planning and pooling finances the dream will soon be a reality. Although we are very close to reaching our financial goal we are still lacking. If you are interested in making a donation on behalf of the building fund please contact us, all donations are tax deductible.



Health and Nature

Spring is such a beautiful time of the year and comes along just in time to help shake the winter blues. Fresh air and sunshine are vital for our happiness and our health. Getting yourself outdoors should be one of your top priorities every day! Just 10-15 minutes of sun exposure a week provides the vitamin D needed to reduce your risk of osteoporosis, cancer, depression, heart attack, and stroke. People that spend time outdoors spend less time in front of the TV or computer and get more exercise. When kids go outside to play they get twice as much exercise as they do playing inside. Simply going for a short walk outdoors helps restore your mind and ability to focus. Fresh air, birds singing, flowers blooming, who doesn't enjoy that? Take advantage of the upcoming nice days and explore some of your county parks. Woodland flowers are blooming and more mushrooms will be popping up soon. Pony Creek Park, West Oak Forest and Kenny's Woods are all great places to visit for beautiful flowers and mushroom hunting. Every trip to the outdoors during the spring will likely bring a new discovery. Today is a perfect time to set a new goal of spending time outdoors at least once a day. Your mental and physical health will thank you.

Meet Your WILD Mills County Neighbors

Stinging nettle, OUCH! Frequently an unwanted neighbor this plant is actually quite interesting. Nettle grows up to 8 feet tall, has an erect unbranched stem and is covered in short bristly hairs. These tiny, hollow hairs cover the leaves and stem of the plant. When you brush against or bump into a nettle plant the hair squeezes an irritating chemical out. Reactions to a nettle sting can range from very mild to a severe, blistering rash. Sometimes the rash will be accompanied by itchy, white bumps that can last up to 24 hours. These plants prefer to grow in moist areas and can be a health hazard if growing in an area that people frequent. IF you get a stinging nettle rash it is recommended that you rinse it with cold water as soon as possible. Antihistamines and aloe will help relieve the itching .

Now for the positive aspects of nettle. Stinging nettle has a long history of use for medicinal purposes as well as a food source. Historically this plant was used to treat urination problems, joint ailments, and skin problems. It might contain ingredients that decrease inflammation and increase urine output, although there is no scientific evidence to support this. Young shoots of nettle are considered excellent salad greens that are high in protein and many people use the leaves to make nettle tea. People must wear gloves to pick and prepare nettle but once the nettle is cooked all the stinging power is dismantled. IF you choose to explore the edible side of stinging nettle please do more research, talk to a edible plants expert and learn how to positively identify this plants. Consuming wild plants can be deadly if you are not 100% sure what it is.



Conservation Matters

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mills County Conservation Board
Spring 2015



Conservation Tip

With the weather warming up many of us are itching to get outdoors and start new landscape and gardening projects. There are some important things to keep in mind as you choose new plants to add to your property. Taking time to research and plan your project will save you money and time in the long haul. Next time that really cool plant at the local greenhouse catches your eye, slow down and make sure it is the best option for your particular spot. Of course, native plants are always the best option because they are adapted to the climate and are not invasive. Even when choosing something other than native plants it is wise to look for climate appropriate and drought tolerant species. One of the most important details to check is if the plant has the potential to become invasive! Invasive plants cost the United States about \$120 billion annually. You don't want to add to an already overwhelming problem. Do not assume that the greenhouse where you are buying plants has done the research to make sure they are not selling potential noxious plants. The Iowa DNR has a website with some of the common invasive plants found around the state, <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/Forestry/ForestHealth/InvasivePlants.aspx>.

Spring Cleaning

In an effort to lessen our impact on the environment, this is a friendly reminder to sign up to receive this newsletter via email. Having the newsletter emailed to you will have more benefits than you probably think. The email version actually contains color pictures, that the print version does not. You can easily save the digital version to keep track of program dates and you will receive email reminders for programs. And of course, you are saving a tree and reducing our use of fossil fuels.

If you are interested in signing up for the email version please send us an email to millsccbia@hotmail.com, include your email address, name and snail mail address so we can remove it from the paper mailing list.

Upcoming Programs

April 11 @ 10am-1pm

Festival of the Young Child
Glenwood YMCA

Come find our table to see native, live animals and learn about local outdoor recreation opportunities.

April 25 @ 11am-noon
"Bird Brain"

Join us at Pony Creek Park as we learn about nest building and what birds like to eat. Kids will build their own nests and practice eating with a variety of "bird beaks". This program will be outdoors. Dress appropriately and sturdy shoes are recommended. Pre-registration is required, call 712-527-9685 to get signed up today!

May 9 @ 10 am-noon
"Canoeing at Mile Hill Lake"

Canoes and life jackets will be provided for families to come out and enjoy the beautiful spring scenery of the lake. Pre-registration is required, please call 712-527-9685 to sign up.

Call 712-527-9685 or email us at millsccbia@hotmail.com



Test Your Green Vocabulary...

E V G G E L F R H Y S F S E C E C R R A
S A Y F L D E P E N G A O O W L X S J L
U M N T W O A U O C G R N E I B H T Y B
E P B L I B B I F E Y S E M G A E N C Q
R I S C Y L S A S L E C A N L W Q E J G
K R C K J S I U L R I T L T E E Z A E V
K E Z Z I J O B V W E S E E S N J V L B
O P Q M Z H Y A A W A R S Z Q E H K B Z
U O E K N I T L Z N N R M O Q R B J A W
Y W C E L I I R N A I L M U F D I Z D F
Q E E Q O M O Z T K A A W I U F O L A K
Z R R N D F C I V L I Z T R N Q F Y R W
G E B B M N V E C U D E R S N G U I G U
M Z B T N E M N O R I V N E U Q E G E H
Q R F N F P O L L U T I O N A S L U D H
D P O U C A R B O N D I O X I D E J O Y
K A E T N I R P T O O F N O B R A C I Y
Q L C P E F Z O Y F K I M I G K W N B W
S H F W Z T R D H K Z L S L G Z P Q Q I
H O W S D H M V H X Q K G S C U M L E X

ALTERNATIVE FUELS
BIODEGRADABLE
BIOFUEL
CARBON DIOXIDE
CARBON FOOTPRINT
CLIMATE
CONSERVATION
EMISSIONS
ENERGY
ENVIRONMENT

FOSSIL FUEL
GLOBAL WARMING
GREENHOUSE GAS
POLLUTION
RECYCLE
REDUCE
RENEWABLE
REUSE
SUSTAINABILITY
VAMPIRE POWER



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