



Fox Cities Passport to Nature

Launch Date: May 17 & 18, 2008

with Kickoff Events at Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, 1000 Islands Environmental Center, Bubolz Nature Preserve and Gardens of the Fox Cities

(see page 2 for details)

Fox Valley Nature Centers, High Cliff State Park, Gardens of the Fox Cities, area Public Libraries and Park and Recreation Departments of area municipalities are collaborating to introduce a new summer program entitled, **Fox Cities Passport to Nature**. This program will give area youth an incentive to spend well needed time outdoors with family and friends and start drawing children back out into nature.

It is well known that today's children spend too much time inside. Research shows that children who spend quality time outside are healthier, have lower stress levels, develop stronger immune systems, experience fewer symptoms of ADD and ADHD, have more imagination, and have a greater respect for themselves, others and the environment. Taking inspiration from the **Richard Louv's** book, **Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder** (<http://www.nrdc.org/onearth/05sum/reviews2.asp>) and the concept of "No Child Left Inside" (www.eeNCLB.org), program planners are committed to bringing children outdoors and into fun. We are estimating that more than **5,000 families** will take part in this program through the **public libraries' "Catch the Reading Bug"** summer reading program.

The participating organizations include:

1,000 Islands Environmental Center
Heckrodt Wetland Reserve
High Cliff State Park
Gardens of the Fox Cities
Bubolz Nature Preserve

Appleton Public Library
Kaukauna Public Library
Little Chute Public Library
Menasha Public Library
Neenah Public Library
Kimberly Public Library

City of Appleton Park & Rec
City of Menasha Park & Rec
City of Neenah Park & Rec

The program runs between **Memorial Day and Labor Day**. Children will be able to pick up a passport at any of the participating libraries or nature centers free of charge beginning **May 17**. The passports will direct children and families to **nine outdoor sites** around the Fox Cities where they can take part in suggested activities or come up with their own. Children will be encouraged to stay active by noting down observations they make at each site. The sites will include the **five outdoor centers listed above (in blue)**, the **Trestle Trail in Menasha, CE Trail, Memorial Park in Neenah and Lutz Park in Appleton**.

Participants will be encouraged to visit at least five sites throughout the summer. When they complete each visit, they will receive a **sticker** for their passport from staff members or volunteers at each site. Stickers for the locations that are not staffed can be obtained at any of the participating libraries. After at least five sites have been completed, passports can be turned in at any of the outdoor centers for a **"Passport to Nature" pin**.

This program is funded through a grant from the *Environmental Stewardship Fund*, a field of interest within the **Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region** as well as in-kind contributions from all participating organizations and the Winnefox and Outagamie-Waupaca Library Systems.

For additional information, please contact project coordinator Debra Nowak, 1000 Islands Environmental Center, info@1000islandsenvironmentalcenter.com, 766-4733

Kick-Off Events for Passport to Nature

Heckrodt Wetland Reserve

Prairie Meadow/Arboretum Dedication and Nature Expo

Sunday, May 18

1:00 – 4:00 pm

1305 Plank Road, Menasha

Dedication of Prairie at 2pm with butterfly release; other activities include self-guided walking tours; hands-on activities; live birds of prey; visit with Prairie Partners and refreshments. For information and to RSVP: 920 720-9349 www.heckrodtwetland.com

1,000 Islands Environmental Center

Nature's Images Fine Art Fair – sponsored by the Friends of 1,000 Islands

Sunday, May 18

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

More than 50 artists will display their nature related paintings, prints, photography, woodcarvings and sculptures to the general public. Bring the family for food and fun at this 240-acre site along the river.

High Cliff State Park

A Hunting We Will Go!

Saturday, May 17

10:00 am

Join the naturalist to learn about questing, a form of scavenger hunt, and spend some time on the High Cliff Quest!

Gardens of the Fox Cities

Spring Garden Festival

Saturday, May 17th

8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

1313 E. Witzke Blvd., Appleton

Visit the children's activity booth for hands on activities and to learn more about the No Child Left Inside program taking place this summer.

Bubolz Nature Preserve

Spring Kick off

Saturday, May 17th

1:00-3:00 pm

4815 N. Lynndale Dr, Appleton 54913 920 731-6041

www.bubolzpreserve.org

Birding backpacks, pond exploration gadgets, and an ongoing "Stump the Naturalist" station inside the nature center building will be offered. Get a free "Simple Things to Save the Earth" book if you ask the naturalist a question she cannot answer – or get a free book for asking a nature question, anyway! Trails open sunrise to sunset, nature center open 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.