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Leaflet

Your Connection to Nature  Medina County Park District

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Strolling with Snakes

By: Natalie Dubiel, Naturalist

Imagine walking down a trail on a warm, sunny, fall afternoon. There's a spring to your step, and, perhaps, you're even whistling a tune as you soak up some much-needed Vitamin D. You notice a stick on the trail out of the corner of your eye and continue on your way when suddenly . . . the stick moves! EEK! The spring in your step deflates, the whistling stops, and you do, too, as you jump back to observe the sudden movement. The stick in your path turns out not to be a stick at all but, rather, a snake!



Northern redbelly snake

If you've found yourself in this predicament, you are not alone. It is more common to find snakes on trails during cooler days or seasons. The reason they find themselves in this potentially precarious position is purely biological and not intended to be remotely vicious in nature. While it may feel that the snake is sitting and waiting for an unsuspecting foot to appear, it is actually trying to fulfill a physiological need and hoping no unsuspecting feet appear during the visit. Much like snakes and turtles in ponds will travel out of cool water to rocks or logs in order to soak up the sun, snakes on land will travel to sun-exposed places like trails. This behavior of leaving a cooler place and moving to a warmer one to control a snake's body temperature is called basking. The sun warms the surface of the trail, and as a snake lays on the trail, it is able to warm its own body (think nature's equivalent of an electric blanket). As an animal that is not warm-blooded, the snake is unable

to maintain a steady body temperature. This warmth during cooler times can be the difference between life and death. A warmer animal can move faster to catch prey or escape a predator. A warmer animal can also digest food faster. All of these things can be vital in the survival of a small animal as winter draws near.

So, if you find yourself sharing the trail with a scaly friend this fall, I'll leave you with this final thought. Just remember that the snake was having the same lovely fall afternoon, soaking up the sun, hissing into the breeze, and warming up on the trail before the giant bipedal mammal screamed "eek!" and jumped back, thus scaring the snake off of the trail. Wildlife encounters aren't uncommon in our parks. We hope you'll take advantage of unique opportunities like these to observe and, perhaps, even document your adventures on the trail.

Experience the Rewards of Trekking Through Autumn

Medina County Park District's self-guided hiking program, Trekking Through Autumn,



is the perfect opportunity for families and individuals to get out and experience the crisp days and spectacular colors of fall. Hikers complete the walks at their own pace and on their own schedules. To participate, pick up a Trekking Through Autumn form at Medina County Park District Headquarters, Oenslager Nature Center, or simply print one at www.MedinaCountyParks.com.



23rd Annual
Nature Art Fest
Saturday, November 9
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, November 10
12 to 4 p.m.
Oenslager Nature Center
FREE ADMISSION
No registration is required.

Join us for the 23rd Annual Nature Art Fest featuring unique items inspired by nature from professional artists! From paintings to stained glass, you'll find unique holiday gifts for everyone on your list.

FOTP Launches a New Website!



Thank You

Friends of Medina County Parks (FOTP) is excited to announce its new website sponsored by Westfield. Developed over the last several months, the site provides information on the organization and offers opportunities for residents to get involved with the group.

The public can visit the website at <https://friendsofmedinacountyparks.org/> to:

- Donate to the Endowment Fund
- Become a member of Friends of Medina County Parks
- Purchase a tree in honor or memory of someone
- Learn about funded and current projects such as the Brown-Trump Homestead (where Hope Recovery Community farm is located), Shotwell Gardens at Lake Medina, and Rivendell Nature Preserve
- Donate to the Connecting Children and Nature Fund

Westfield donated in honor of its 175th anniversary to help preserve land and history for future generations. Westfield's donation was inspired by recently donated properties that encapsulate Medina County history:

- The future Rivendell Nature Preserve (located a half-mile from Westfield's headquarters)
- Chippewa Lake and the Brown-Trump Homestead, both are home to historic structures dating to the time of Westfield's founding

Westfield believes a healthy park system improves the quality of life in any community. Of Westfield's \$100,000 donation to support the unprecedented growth of the park district in recent years, a portion was used for this new website. The website will make it easier for residents and visitors to support these unique assets.

Since 1972, Friends of Medina County Parks has been dedicated to supporting the mission of Medina County Park District. Funds raised by the Friends through membership and other activities assist the park district in many ways including sponsorship for park programs, funds for land acquisition, and financial assistance for park projects. To make a donation visit, friendsofmedinacountyparks.org. For questions, please contact Development Coordinator Natalie Peacock at npeacock@medinaco.org.