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For immediate release

Natural-Areas Field Trips Slated for May *Opportunities to learn from Parks Natural Areas Program Staff*

Milwaukee, WI (May 4, 2015) – Warblers and wildflowers, reptiles, walks off the beaten path, and invasive species will be the topics of field trips led by Milwaukee County Parks Natural Areas staff in May.

Through the field trips, pre-registered participants will accompany staff to discover the ecological diversity of the natural areas. The small group size of only 15-20 participants will allow for hands-on experiences in addition to observations. Participants are encouraged to wear hiking shoes, because trails may be unpaved and muddy.

Wednesday, May 13, from 5-6 p.m., participants will visit Jacobus Park for the program, “Migratory Birds and Spring Wildflowers.” Migratory warblers and spring ephemeral flowers are expected to be at their peak. Over 90 species of birds have been documented at Jacobus Park, and the Natural Areas Program staff and partners have documented 157 native plant species here. Participants will also learn how their observations as citizen scientists can contribute valuable data for trend analysis. This event will stay on the paved paths of Jacobus Park for hiking of easy to moderate difficulty.

Saturday, May 16, from 10-11:30 a.m., the program in Grobschmidt Park, “Reptile Discovery Day,” will focus on the identification of different species of turtles and snakes, and their adaptations for survival in urban natural areas. Participants will learn proper handling techniques and can have a hands-on experience if interested. This event will take place off of the gravel hiking trails. Participants are encouraged to wear hiking boots.

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Tuesday, May 19, from 9-11 a.m., participants will meet at Warnimont Park for “Exploring the Forked Aster Hiking Trail System,” a program featuring a walk along the park’s bluffs, ravines, and fens to learn about the plants and wildlife here. Due to the diversity of habitat types and the proximity to Lake Michigan, Warnimont Park should offer an excellent bird hike, with 170 species seen in the park to date. The walk will cover some areas of moderately steep terrain.

Saturday, May 30, from 9-11 a.m., the program in Brown Deer Park, “Invasive Species Workshop, will look at the spread of invasive species and its effect on wildlife habitat and native plant communities. Participants will learn about identification of common invasive species and the control techniques used by Natural Areas staff. Instruction will include proper equipment and herbicide choices and techniques that can be adapted for use on private property. Walking will be kept to pavement or turf areas for easy to moderate difficulty.

Field trip programs will be offered through October. Areas to be explored include upland and bottomland forest, fens, oak savanna, remnant wet-mesic prairie, shrub-carrs, open marsh, lagoons, pollinator gardens, and surrogate grasslands.

Registration and payment must be received at least three days before the program date. The program fee is \$15 per person over 12; \$10 per person age 2-12 or 60 and better. Children under 2 are admitted free. Credit card payments may be made by phone at (414) 257-6521 or in person at Parks Administration, 9480 Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa. The Public Services Office at Parks Administration will also accept payments of cash or check.

For more information, contact Brian Russart, Natural Areas Coordinator, at (414) 257-6521 or brian.russart@milwaukeecountywi.gov

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