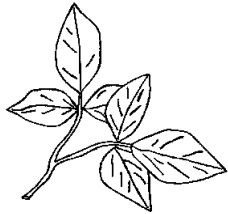


# WALKING ON THE WILD SIDE

## Natural Hazards at Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve

**Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve is a natural area set aside as a safe haven for native plants and wildlife where humans are visitors.**



Poison ivy is abundant! If you are allergic, wear long pants, socks, and tennis shoes or boots. Although poison ivy can be irritating to humans, many animals especially birds enjoy feeding on the plant's white berries. The best way to protect yourself is by being able to recognize the plant and avoiding it. Poison ivy grows in many different forms, but all have the characteristic three leaves. Ask the staff or a volunteer to point it out to you before your hike, and remember, "If it's three, let it be."

In the spring, summer, and fall, many insects visit the preserve, most of which we don't even notice. There are, however, two notorious insects worth noting: ticks and mosquitoes. You can avoid these 'bugs' by wearing insect repellent, long pants, and long sleeved shirts.

Ticks have small oval bodies. They sit on vegetation with their legs extended waiting for an unsuspecting host to pass by. They bite the skin and gorge themselves on blood. Ticks can carry disease, so care should be taken to check for and to remove them from your hair, skin, and clothing after visiting the preserve.



If you get mosquito bites, do not scratch them. They will go away sooner if left alone and could become infected if scratched.

**You can avoid many of these hazards by dressing appropriately for the outdoors. Wear light-colored clothing that covers your skin (long pants, long-sleeved shirt, closed toed shoes, & a hat) and insect repellent.**

**Arm yourself with knowledge and enjoy all the preserve has to offer!**