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NEW BUG REPELLENT IDEAL FOR TREKKERS

BARTOW – While organizers of the Trek Ten Trails Program agree the summer months are probably not the *best time* of the year for participants to begin its hiking challenge, posts to the www.geocaching.com website indicate that many are just getting started. Interestingly, it is not the heat or surprise of an unexpected afternoon shower that most geo-cachers log as horrendous – instead, those pesky mosquitoes! A review of its “Before You Go – Hiking Safety Tips” has prompted an unprecedented revision to include a product endorsement for the new OFF© Clip-on™ Repellent. Clipped to a belt, band on a hat, or backpack, the quiet fan circulates repellent all around the wearer and lasts for up to 12 hours. No messy or disgustingly-smelling creams or sprays, and refills are available.

The Trek Ten Trails Program is an initiative of the all-volunteer Friends of the Parks Foundation. The year-long program begins each fall and is designed to inspire residents and visitors to become involved and active in the outdoors. Trek Ten Again in 2009 features 15 sites within Polk County’s more than 125-mile trails system. All trails include approved geocaches which can be located with or without a GPS unit. Instructions for all hikes, including walking directions for finding cache hides, are posted on the Friends of the Parks website and available for downloading from www.friendsoftheparks.net. Each geocache includes a self-inking stamp which trekkers use to validate their hike. Official validation game cards are available online, at Polk Outpost 27, and all Polk County public libraries. Validated game cards must be received by October 5 to be eligible for prize drawings and a certificate of completion for Trek Ten Again in 2009. There is no fee to participate, although donations to the Foundation are always welcome.

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BEFORE YOU GO . . . Hiking Safety Tips

There's nothing quite like the sounds of nature – birds singing and animals scurrying through the underbrush. But the experienced hiker knows to beware of munching mosquitoes, itching ivy and other encounters that may cause discomfort while trekking unpaved trails through the woods as well as urban sidewalk trails.

First and Foremost – STAY HYDRATED!

Always drink plenty of water. For the guided tours on our Trek Ten schedule, we recommend one quart per person. And be smart with the snacks you choose to take along. A couple of granola or energy bars should be sufficient as none of the Trek Ten hikes extend into the noon meal period. However, if you travel a distance and feel you need a sandwich before heading home, keep these food types in tightly sealed containers.

Say “Good-bye” to Pesky Mosquitoes and Gnats!

An alternative to messy and disgustingly-smelling creams or sprays, the new OFF® Clip-on™ Insect Repellent can be clipped to belt, band on hat, or backpack. The quiet fan circulates repellent all around the wearer and lasts for up to 12 hours. Refills are available.

BE CAREFUL how much you pack!

Nothing spoils a trek faster than too much stuff to carry. A beginning trekker generally becomes exhausted carrying a sack full of trail munchies, games, a portable CD player and a video camera. Consider a light-weight or disposable camera. Remember water is essential and add from there. Take regular breaks and especially make sure kids are drinking lots of water.

WATCH WHERE YOU STEP.

Keep an eye on the trails in front of where you are walking and always consider your path before bounding forward. Close-toes shoes are recommended. Stop moving long enough to take pictures of wildlife or research in a field guide. Take care not to trip over a tree root when resuming your trek. Take along a small tube of first-aid cream and band aides, especially if little ones are trekking.

AVOID SUNBURN.

Wear a hat and light-weight arm coverings, and by all means use sun block.

NEVER TREK ALONE.

NEVER venture into the woods by yourself. You could sustain an injury, become lost or suffer from heat exhaustion. Outdoor adventures are always more fun anyway with your family or a group of friends – even a leisurely trek around an urban trail like Lake Hollingsworth.

PACE YOURSELF – put slowest trekker in front.

This works great in a group of differing ages! With fast trekkers in front, someone small at the back becomes exhausted trying to keep up. Encourage kids not to exhaust themselves early in a hike. They like to run in the beginning, run out of steam and have to be carried.

ALWAYS CARRY OUT WHAT YOU CARRY IN – and nothing more, unless it's trash.

The first rule when interacting with nature: Leave it as you find it. Show respect for Mother Nature. If everyone works together to preserve our parks and trails, future generations will also be able to enjoy breathtaking treks.

HAPPY TREKKING!
www.friendsoftheparks.net