



TIPS FROM METRO EAST PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT FOR CELEBRATING NATIONAL BIKE MONTH THIS MAY

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COLLINSVILLE, IL., May 1, 2012 . In honor of May being National Bike Month, The Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) invites the public to visit the array of trails available throughout Madison and St. Clair counties. MEPRD has worked closely with its many partners over the past decade to support the development of the expansive system of trails that traverse some of the most picturesque areas of the two-county region, and May is a great time of year to experience the system first hand.

"This world class amenity provides a wonderful opportunity for people to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature and it gives families a great venue to engage in healthy activity together," notes Mike Buehlhorn, executive director of MEPRD.

To help those who may not be regular trail users get started, MEPRD offers the following tips:

Plan your Route. MEPRD's website is a great place to start. Cyclists can discover the many trail options available in the area and plan their trip by mapping out their journey using the new Google Bicycling Layer that has recently been added to www.meprd.org.

Focus on safety. When riding any section of the 180 miles of finished trails within the two counties served by MEPRD, it is important that cyclists remember to always wear a helmet. Cyclists also are encouraged to bring a cell phone when they are out on the trails so they have the option to call for help in the event of an emergency or a bike break-down for which they need assistance.

Practice good trail etiquette. When sharing the trails with other cyclists or walkers, remember to stay to the right of the trail whenever possible. Just like when driving a car, cyclists should pass on the left when it is safe to do so, giving a clear warning signal before making their move. Trail users also are reminded to only use trails for the specific activity they are designated for, to avoid disturbing the surrounding wildlife and to always dispose of trash, including pet waste.

Take advantage of the amenities at the MEPRD trailhead. Located at 104 United Drive in Collinsville, the MEPRD trailhead features a range of free amenities to enhance the experience for all trail users, including: trail parking, clean restrooms, water fountains, pet fountains, bike racks, tire air and maps.

Spread the Word. After exploring the system and gaining first-hand exposure to this treasure in the Metro East, MEPRD encourages trail users to spread the word about the great experiences that can be found on the trails.

"The trail system is being developed for the benefit of all residents in Madison and St. Clair Counties, and we hope that as awareness continues to grow, we'll see even more individuals and families taking advantage of it," notes Buehlhorn.

MEPRD invites everyone to come out to the trailhead the weekend of May 18-20, as they continue to celebrate Bike Month by hosting a series of special events during which people can learn more about the organization and enjoy some free breakfast treats. All activities will be held during the morning hours.

To learn more, contact the Metro East Park and Recreation District office at 618-346-4905, visit their website at www.meprd.org, or follow them on Facebook.

The Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) was formed by voters in November 2000, and is responsible for the development of parks, greenways, and trails in Madison County and St. Clair County, Illinois. The District often supplements the efforts of local governments, special districts, and other jurisdictions already engaged in the management of parks and recreation facilities. The park district is the first of its kind in Illinois, serving over half a million residents.