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## NEWS RELEASE

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For more information

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### **Parks Foundation launches Nature Explore Club**

VANCOUVER, Wash. — The Parks Foundation of Clark County, in partnership with Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, is launching a Nature Explore Club program.

A Nature Explore Club is a group of friends and family members that commit to meet at, and explore, a new park or trail at least once a month throughout the summer. There are no set rules, except what individual club members develop to meet their interests and schedules.

“The Nature Explore Club is a fun, free way to enjoy the parks, trails, and open spaces in our county,” said foundation Executive Director, Cheri Martin. “We’re excited to offer tools that will encourage people to enjoy outside time with family and friends.”

The new program, which is set to kick-off May 20 at Leroy Haagen Community Park, includes monthly events hosted by Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation and other community partners. The first event will be the National Get Outdoors Day celebration at the Water Resources Education Center on June 11. Other events will be scheduled for July and August. A club wrap-up day, bringing all of the clubs together at the Marshall Community Park to share stories and ideas for future programs, will take place in September.

“Nature Explore Clubs allow people to identify where their park and trails are located, learn new skills, and get themselves and their kids outside and moving,” Martin said.

Community groups, neighbors, faith-based groups, and friends are encouraged to form a club. The commitment is to attend monthly department events, arrange at least one club outing to a new park, trail, or open space each month, and keep a journal of the club’s adventures. The journals can include pictures, drawings, stories, poems, and notes contributed by all club members.

A number of businesses and community members have come together to make this program possible, including Columbia Sportswear, REI, Waterford Press, Chuck's Produce, and Backyard Bird Shop. The businesses have donated supplies for the Nature Explore Club backpacks that will be available to club leaders throughout the summer. The backpacks are filled with field guides, magnifying glasses, activity kits, compasses, journals, first aid kits, and the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department Discovery Guide and Trails map. There is a limited supply of backpacks available. Backpacks will need to be returned to the foundation at the September event.

To learn more about the Nature Explore Club program and/or apply to serve as a club leader, visit the Parks Foundation website, [www.parksfoundation.us](http://www.parksfoundation.us), or call 360-487-8370 for more information. Applications are due May 16, 2011.

For more information visit [parksfoundation.us](http://parksfoundation.us) or [vanclarkparks-rec.org/Parks & Trails/Nature Play](http://vanclarkparks-rec.org/Parks%20&%20Trails/Nature%20Play).

**About the Parks Foundation**

The Parks and Recreation Foundation of Vancouver and Clark County was established in 1999 to accept and administer donations, gifts and bequests for the enrichment and enhancement of our communities' parks, trails, and recreational programs.

The mission of the Parks Foundation is to raise funds through public and private partnerships for parks, trails, and recreational programs throughout Clark County. The Foundation is a 501 C 3 non-profit corporation and all gifts are tax deductible. The Foundation is governed by a board of directors comprised of local citizens who oversee, invest and administer donations made to the Foundation.