

Kids need your vote to win national park contest

Kings Mountain National Military Park is competing in the National Park Foundation's 2011 "First Bloom" Youth Design Contest, which challenges First Bloom youth groups around the country to create the best garden design.

The National Park Foundation (NPF), the official charity of America's national parks, designed the First Bloom program to give 4th-6th grade youth firsthand experience in national parks, and teach important conservation lessons including the difference between native and invasive plant species.

Now through May 16, Kings Mountain National Military Park's garden design can be viewed and voted on at www.first-bloom.org

bloom.org

The First Bloom group with the most votes will win a free trip to a national park. NPF is also awarding at random, three NPF prize packages to voters who participate. People are allowed to cast their vote once daily, with each vote increasing the chances of winning.

"Kings Mountain National Military Park is excited to compete in the First Bloom Garden Design Contest because we're putting the knowledge and skills learned in the program to a practical and very beneficial use in the park," said Park Ranger Katherine Lynn. "This experience has also helped our kids grow their love for the outdoors and commitment to

conservation."

The Garden Design Contest is the culmination of a year of project work for the Boys and Girls Club of Gaffney, Kings Mountain YMCA, and Clover YMCA in partnership with Kings Mountain National Military Park, where they have learned important lessons about stewardship and conservation. Kings Mountain National Military Park's First Bloom group is currently one of 24 youth groups participating in the program in 24 national parks throughout the country.

To view a gallery of the First Bloom garden designs, cast a vote for your favorite design and learn more about the First Bloom program, visit www.first-bloom.org



Colorful flags mark where local children have planted and plan to plant native flowers, herbs, shrubs and greenery at the KMNMP's new Victory Garden they helped design in "First Bloom", a national park contest.

Redlair NatureFest kicks off this weekend in Gaston County

Hike, paddle or run to free festival on conserved land

GASTON COUNTY - Catawba Lands Conservancy, lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, will host the 4th annual Redlair NatureFest on Saturday, April 30 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival will be held at Redlair Farm & Forest in Gaston County, a private preserve that features more than 70 miles of hiking trails and river vistas.

The NatureFest site is part of Gaston County's adopted corridor for the Carolina Thread Trail, a fifteen county network of multi-use trails connecting communities throughout the central Carolinas.

NatureFest is free and offers family-friendly fun for all to enjoy, including live music, food and refreshments, local artisans, animals, face painting, crafts

and hayrides. Float trips along the Carolina Thread Trail blueway are available for a small fee during the event.

Visitors are invited to explore miles of hiking trails or enjoy guided nature walks to learn more about the unique habitat and legacy of Redlair. Hikes will be led by educators, botanists and environmental stewardship experts. Hiking experiences include landscape and habitat; wildflower wonder; Twitter and tweets (birds); and Little sunflower on the prairie (endangered Schweinitz sunflower).

This year's festival will feature the 2nd annual Race for the Land. Runners will have the rare opportunity to take to the trails at Redlair for an 8K or half marathon race beginning at 7:30 a.m.

The race benefits Catawba Lands Conservancy's local conservation projects. To learn more or register, visit www.catawbaconservancy.org

The day at Redlair Farm & Forest will include the Conservancy's 20th Annual Meeting at 10 a.m. when Catawba Lands Conservancy's leadership team will review last year's successes and share an overview of priorities for 2011. The meeting also serves as a venue to recognize recent land donors, announce the 2010 Conservation Volunteer of the Year and vote for new board members. All are encouraged to attend.

Directions to Redlair NatureFest:

Take I-85 to Exit 26 (Belmont Abbey College exit.) Turn left (north) at the light on to Old NC 273. Turn left at the first stop light onto

Woodlawn Street. Take Woodlawn until it ends at Hickory Grove Road and turn right. Take Hickory Grove past North Belmont Park on the right, passing Rankin Road on the left. Take the next left on Redlair Lane, and parking attendants will direct you - 144 Redlair Lane, Gastonia, NC.

HOW TO REACH US

Contact the Herald by coming by the office at 700 E. Gold St.; call 704-739-7496, fax 704-739-0611 or Email emily.kmherald@gmail.com

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Harold's Weekly Health Tip...

First Aid Kits

Almost everyone will need to use a first aid kit at some time. Take the time to prepare a kit to have available for home and travel. First aid kits may be basic or comprehensive. What you need depends on your medical training and your distance from professional medical help. Ready-made first aid kits are commercially available, but you can make a simple and inexpensive first aid kit yourself.

Home and Travel First Aid Kits
Home first aid kits are usually used for treating these types of minor traumatic injuries: burns, cuts, abrasions (scrapes) stings, splinters, sprains and strains.

First aid kits for travel need to be more comprehensive because a drug store may or may not be accessible. In addition to personal medical items, the kit should contain items to help alleviate the common symptoms of viral respiratory infections such as these: fever, nasal congestion, cough, sore throat. It should also contain items to treat these ailments: cuts, mild pain, gastrointestinal problems, skin problems, and allergies.

Next week...How to make a first aid kit

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