



# View from the Hill

## Our Mission:

The Friends of Mosquito Hill support, promote and enhance Mosquito Hill Nature Center. We realize this mission through volunteerism, fundraising and our shared passion for nature.

WINTER 2014-2015 • A newsletter for friends and members of Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc.

## Displays and Discovery Planning for the Future

Mike Hibbard, Director

In May of 2012 Mosquito Hill Nature Center lost beloved volunteer and seasonal employee, Brock Calmes, due to complications of pneumonia. His family's wishes for a memorial fund established in his name were to renovate one of the display rooms in the interpretive building. MHNC staff and volunteers brainstormed ideas to replace some of the well used, but well-worn exhibits. Like any remodeling project it took on a life of its own as ideas became more ambitious. Soon it became apparent, as with many DIY projects, that professional assistance was needed. It was determined that any new displays should be professionally constructed as part of a comprehensive display plan for the entire original wing of the interpretive building. The staff and Friends of Mosquito Hill board researched museum and nature center display planning and development firms from around the country. Requests for proposals were sent out to several of the leading firms to develop a concept design plan for new displays for the interpretive building. In early summer of 2014 the FOMH board contracted with Split Rock Studios, a display design and development firm located in St. Paul, Minnesota. In August, a committee made up of MHNC staff, FOMH board members and other volunteers met with the Split Rock team to formulate a concept design plan.

After two or three iterations and several phone conferences, a plan was developed

that took the form of an idea sketchbook containing narrative descriptions and artist renderings of what the newly designed space might look like and what types of exhibits could be developed. The idea sketchbook along with poster

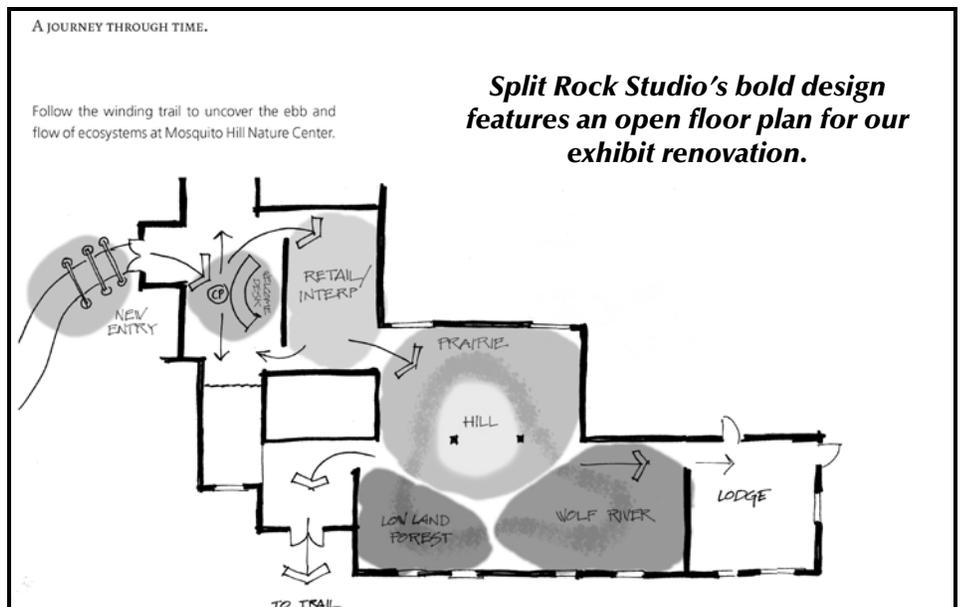
**"...an incalculable opportunity to connect visitors with nature."**

sized artist renderings were unveiled in September at the MHNC 40th anniversary celebration. The sketchbook may also be found at [www.mosquitohill.com](http://www.mosquitohill.com). The overall design process will be phased in over the next several months followed by development of working

drawings and finally, by fabrication and installation. Prior to installation, extensive work needs to be done to the existing structure to accommodate new displays.

Please visit the sketchbook on our website and give us your feedback, but please keep in mind that what you are viewing is a conceptual design of what could be, not a final plan. The final design and blueprints will be formulated over the next several months. Future issues of *A View from the Hill*, e-mail and social media will highlight portions of the sketchbook and we'll be keeping you updated as the project moves forward. Your feedback will be appreciated throughout the process.

— Continued on Page 2



– Discovery • Continued from Page 1

As you can imagine, the project will require extensive fundraising. A dollar amount has not been determined but as plans progress, a budget will be developed and shared widely. A capital campaign is planned and will be rolled out in the near future. Proceeds from future Spring Fever Fundraisers will be allocated for the project as well.

We're very excited about the project and working with the creative and capable folks at Split Rock. Your support can make it possible. A contribution to Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc. can spark imaginative minds through hands-on discovery, multisensory learning and creative play. With your contribution, we can sow the seeds for a newfound and deeper appreciation of the natural world. ❖

## Welcome to New Parks Director



**O**n August 27, Mosquito Hill staff welcomed Loren Dieck, the new Outagamie County Parks Director. Loren replaced long-time director Chris Brandt, who retired in January.

An Antigo native, Dieck graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a B.A. in geography.

After serving as parks caretaker in Greenville, he moved to the Winnebago County Parks Department where he was promoted to assistant director in 2012. He's looking forward to the challenge of taking over an operation Brandt spent more than four decades building.

"Outagamie County has always had a wonderful parks system and that in itself is a testament to the current and former staff members", Loren told us. "I'm excited to work with my new colleagues and start the next chapter in my family's life." ❖

## Conduct Your Business Naturally...

**A**re you looking for a location for your next meeting, retreat or family gathering? Consider Mosquito Hill Nature Center for a natural alternative to a stuffy board room or stark meeting hall. We offer a variety of rooms in a serene, natural setting, away from phones and other distractions. Large or small, we can accommodate your business meeting, day-long conference, bridal or baby shower or family event. (Sorry, we're unable to accommodate wedding ceremonies or receptions.) Our staff of professional naturalists can provide guided nature hikes, snowshoe walks or team building activities for an added dimension to your next gathering. Visit [www.mosquitohill.com](http://www.mosquitohill.com) and click on "Facility Rental" for room descriptions and fee schedule. ❖



**WINTER 2014-2015**

**View**  
*from the* **Hill**

**VOL XL • NO 4**

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Friends of Mosquito Hill  
N3880 Rogers Road • New London WI 54961  
(920) 779-6433 • [www.mosquitohill.org](http://www.mosquitohill.org)

**Interpretive Building Hours:**

Tuesday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**STAFF:**

Mike Hibbard, Director/Naturalist  
Steve Petznick, Assistant Naturalist  
Jessica Miller, Assistant Naturalist  
Mary Swifka, Staff Assistant  
Loren Dieck, Director, Outagamie County Parks  
Pat Lund-Moe, Volunteer Coordinator

**NEWSLETTER:**

Editors - Pat Brown, Ginny Buschke,  
Susan Hankin, Mary Swifka  
Layout & Design - Jennifer Heisler  
NEW Printing, Appleton  
Outlook Graphics, Neenah

# Naturalist's Corner

## Monarch Butterfly Status: An Update

Jessica Miller, Assistant Naturalist

It's no secret that monarch butterfly sightings across the U.S. are at an all time low. Since the migrating monarch population is relative to the number of hectares inhabited in their overwintering grounds in Mexico, biologists must measure those areas occupied annually to update the population status. What they found last winter (2013/14), was staggering: only .67 hectares of the preserves were occupied (about 1.65 acres) which is a 44% decline over the previous year. The average number of monarchs that occupy a hectare is roughly 50 million, so .67 hectare equates to only about 33 million monarchs. While 33 million butterflies are nothing to thumb your nose at, compare that number to the highest estimated population on record, 1 billion monarchs (21 hectares), occurring in 1996/97. In less than 20 years, the migrating monarch population has dropped almost 71%.

The reasons for the decline are plentiful, including recent weather patterns and habitat destruction (in both Mexico and the U.S.), but it appears that the greatest influence has been the loss of milkweed. Milkweed, of all varieties, is the lifeblood of monarch butterflies. Females must search out these plants on which to lay eggs, as their offspring are tolerant only of a milkweed diet. Adult butterflies may nectar from most flowering plants but monarch larvae do not have the luxury of an indiscriminate

feeding plan. They are specialists and without an adequate milkweed supply they will starve. Milkweed populations have also plummeted over the last 20 years, which coincides with the increased usage of herbicides across the Midwest. Historically, the largest numbers of migrating monarchs have come from the Midwest, an area where milkweed thrived alongside corn and soybean fields. With an increased demand for ethanol and soy-based products, herbicide-tolerant corn and soy acreage has increased from 143.5 million acres to 174.4 million acres in less than 20 years. Because these crops have been genetically modified to withstand the effects of herbicides, they flourish while milkweed does not.

Since March, 2014 monarch aficionados have been waiting to see how successful the spring monarch migration would be. Would the weather be favorable to produce multiple generations across the eastern US? Would there be enough milkweed to increase a rapidly dwindling monarch population, ever so slightly? As I write this, I am still holding my breath as monarchs are now en route to their overwintering sites in Mexico. Biologists won't



begin assessing the 2014/2015 population until December, with results announced by early February. In the meantime, let me leave you with some encouraging news. After talking with monarch observers this fall, most have told me that migration sightings are up significantly over last year. Based on our own research done at the nature center, we reared, tested and tagged twice the number of monarchs we did last year. In addition, we did not encounter one monarch this summer that tested positive in our lab for the deadly parasite *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (Oe). This is encouraging though we are not out of the woods yet. Unless we change our views on herbicide use (and pesticide use for that matter), we will continue to see a decline in wildlife numbers across this country. Also, if you haven't already done so, plant some milkweed in your yard. In fact, plant lots of milkweed in your yard, and while you're at it, plant a plethora of native flowers as well. You and the monarchs will be happy that you did. ❖



A visitor prepares to release a tagged monarch. (Photo by Steve Johansen)

# Mosquito Hill Nature Center

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS WINTER 2014-2015

Unless otherwise noted, advance registration and payment are required.

Call 920-779-6433 or e-mail mary.swifka@outagamie.org

Website: www.mosquitohill.com



### Holiday Make & Take

**Saturday, December 13, 9:00 – 11:00 AM or 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**



You won't want your kids to miss this one! They'll make 8 unique gifts and wrap them with the assistance of our volunteer team. Voila! Your

child's holiday shopping is done. This event is most appropriate for K – 5<sup>th</sup> graders. No one younger than 5 years, please.

**\$14/child**

**Call ASAP for openings.**

### Shiocton Christmas Bird Count

**Friday, December 19, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM**



Take a break from the holiday hustle and join nature center staff and volunteers for a day in the field counting birds. We'll break for a potluck lunch, always featuring

warm soups and yummy desserts. Call ahead if you would like to take part.

### Snowshoe Trails Open and Rentals Available

**Tuesdays – Sundays, 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM**



Enjoy the quiet beauty of our lowland forest. We have snowshoes to fit just about everyone, from pre-schoolers on up. Please

call ahead to check on trail conditions and the availability of rentals during the week. Advance reservations for groups of 10 or more are strongly recommended. Families with young children may try out our smaller shoes for age 4 and older, or bring a sled to pull your toddlers.

**Snowshoe Rental: \$3.50/adults, \$2.50/students & seniors; FOMH: no charge**

**Trail Use: no charge**



### Leave No Family Inside: Wisconsin's Owls

**Saturday, January 3, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**



Listening to the hooting of owls has to be one of life's most special pleasures. Learning more about

Wisconsin's owls gives those hoot calls even more meaning. Join naturalist Jessica Miller and staff from The Feather Rehabilitation Center, New London, as they introduce you to owl biology and a number of live owls during an indoor presentation. Afterwards they will take you outdoors in search of these vocalizing nocturnal wonders.

**\$6/person or \$10/household**

**Registration and payment due December 29**

### Serious Snowshoe Sundays

**Sundays, January & February, 12:00 noon – 3:00 PM**

Are you serious about getting in shape this winter? Don't want to do it by yourself? Despite the laid-back sounding name, snowshoeing is a great cardiovascular workout. Naturalists Jessica Miller and Mary Swifka will guide participants each week, not for a leisurely hike, but for a bout of invigorating exercise, increasing our speed and distance each week. Four of the sessions will start with an indoor program focusing on a variety of different topics including proper winter attire, hydration, preventing hypothermia or fatigue, purchasing snowshoes and more. A brisk walk will be substituted in case of poor snow conditions. A light snack and warm



beverage are included.

**\$5/session or \$30/for all 8 classes. Price includes snowshoe rental, if needed.**

**Registration and payment due December 28**

### Torchlight Snowshoe Walks

**Saturdays, January 17 & February 7, 6:30 – 9:00 PM**



Enjoy this self-led excursion through the nature center's lowland forest lighted by tiki torches. Refreshments will be served and all snowshoe equipment is provided. A \$2 discount is available to participants who bring their

own snowshoes.

**\$8/adults, \$5/students, seniors, FOMH or \$25/Household**

**Registration and payment due one week prior to each event**

### Third Thursday Lecture Series: Waking Up in a Park

**January 15, 9:30 – 11:00 PM**



Marti and Bob Schmall spent six years traveling the country in an RV and working at national wildlife refuges, state and national parks, a battlefield, a fort and a monument in the West. Share their sunny experiences in a lecture/slide show and learn about some of America's hidden treasures. What could be better during a Wisconsin winter?

**\$6/person, \$4/students, seniors, FOMH**  
**Registration and payment due January 9**

### 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Mosquito Hill Snowshoe Race

**Saturday, January 24**

Time: Registration opens at 8:30 AM. Races times will be staggered throughout the morning. Check our website for more details: www.mosquitohill.com. The 1-mile, 3-mile, and 5-mile race courses are located in our wooded, lowland forest. All courses are groomed and fairly flat, with the 3-mile and



5-mile courses skirting the Wolf River and Oxbow Ponds. The 800-meter kids' race is a fairly flat, groomed trail near the lowland forest and tall grass prairie. Race fees include a long-sleeved t-shirt, refreshments, a chili lunch, Mosquito Hill goodie bag, prizes to top finishers and admission to Winter Family Fun Day event at 12:00 PM. Entry fees are non-refundable.  
**Cost: Pre-race day fees (before January 24) are \$25 for the 1, 3, and 5-mile races and \$15 for the 800-meter kids' race. Race day fees are \$30 for the 1, 3, and 5-mile race and \$20 for the 800-meter race.**

### Winter Family Fun Day

**Saturday, January 24, 12:00 – 3:00 PM**



After the snowshoe races, join us for a host of family-friendly activities at the annual Mosquito Hill Winter Family Fun Day. Participate in the exciting snow-filled games for fun and prizes. Try your hand at ice bowling. New this year: a human foosball game and our funky hat contest. Young children are sure to enjoy sliding down the otter slide and making a winter craft. Enjoy a leisurely snowshoe hike with your family. When you return, warm yourself by the crackling campfire and roast some marshmallows while sharing stories of the day. Hot food and beverages will be available, so bring your entire family for lunch and stay for the afternoon. The cost is just \$8.00 per carload and includes snowshoe rental. Don't be left out in the cold — join us for this "hot" event.

### An Evening for Sweethearts

**Saturday, February 14, 7:00 – 10:00 PM**



Celebrate Valentine's Day with your sweetheart and be treated to an evening complete with appetizers (you can skip dinner),

beverages and soft music. Enjoy a quiet snowshoe walk and campfire. Take home a small gift as a memento.

**\$45/couple**

**Registration and payment due February 7**

### Leave No Family Inside: Snowshoeing for Beginners

**Saturday, January 31, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**



What a better way to get out and enjoy our Wisconsin winters than to experience it on snowshoes. Join naturalist Jessica Miller as she guides you through

the (easy) process of learning how to snowshoe. A guided hike around the nature center property will give you some practice with the new footwear and a chance to learn about our winter world.

**\$6/person or \$10/household**

**Registration and payment due February 5**

### Third Thursday Lecture Series: A Man, His Dog and the Wilderness

**February 19, 9:30 – 11:00 AM**



MHNC volunteer Don Baumgartner and his husky Nikita recently returned from a 14 day trip through Woodland Caribou Park in

Ontario. Don will share their adventures canoeing and portaging, logging 105 miles in the process.

**\$6/adults, \$4/students, seniors, FOMH**

**Registration and payment due February 12**

### Northern Ecuador: A Travelogue

**Saturday, February 28, 1:00 – 3:00**



Anyone who knows naturalist Jessica Miller is familiar with her love of nature and passion for travel. So it should come as no surprise that when asked to join a bird

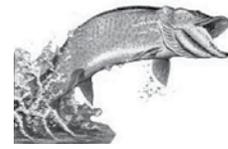
watching tour in Ecuador, not to see just birds, but all kinds of wildlife, she jumped at the chance. Starting in the capital of Quito and ending the two-week journey in the Yasuni National Park (in the Amazon Rain Forest), Jessica will introduce you to Ecuador's history, culture, and the sights and sounds of the northern highlands and lowlands of Ecuador.

**\$6/adults, \$4/students, seniors, FOMH**

**Registration and payment due February 20**

### Musky Magic

**Sunday, March 15, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM**



Our featured speaker is Tony Rizzo. Vendors, pool-side demonstrations, food sales, raffles and

more are planned for this daylong musky fishing expo. Admission is at the door: \$8/person, \$6/youth 14 and younger. The event is held at the New London Middle School, 1000 W. Washington St., New London.

**"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."**

**— John Muir**

### Get Social with Us

Follow Mosquito Hill Nature Center on:



**Twitter:**  
@mosquitohill



**Instagram**



**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/mosquitohillnaturecenter](http://www.facebook.com/mosquitohillnaturecenter)

### CANCELLATION POLICY

Unfortunately, MHNC is not immune to the current economic challenges. Therefore, we find it necessary to adhere fully to the following policy:

MHNC staff reserves the right to cancel a program if minimum enrollment has not been met by the registration deadline. If we need to cancel a program, your payment will be refunded in full. If you need to cancel, please notify us at least 48 hours before the class. If we are able to fill your spot, you will be refunded in full; if not, we will refund 50% of your fee. If you cancel less than 48 hours before the class, your entire registration fee will be forfeited.

Please help us ensure the success of our programs by registering and paying before the deadline. We cannot guarantee your place in a class unless payment has been received. Thank you for understanding.

# The Power of a Matching Gift

*Chris Worzalla, FOMH President*

All contributions to Friends of Mosquito Hill provide important support dollars for the wide variety of programs supported by the organization. Through the years FOMH has helped to enable a significant number of improvements to the facilities, programs and support for a part time volunteer coordinator. We sincerely thank you for your past contributions.

Are you aware that many area employers offer a matching gift program? Companies such as Thrivent, Bemis, Kimberly-Clark and Miller Electric, just to name a few, all have matching gift programs. Typically there are a few requirements for the donation to qualify for a match. Usually the donation needs to be made to an organization with a 501c(3) status, which FOMH has, and designates the group as a non-profit organization. Some companies also require a minimum donation.

Eighteen years ago, I lost my first wife and I was able to leverage the matching gift program at my company to establish an endowed memorial scholarship at Michigan Tech. (our alma mater and where we met)! It has been very rewarding

and a great way to preserve her memory to see a new student awarded her scholarship every year. Without the power of the matching gift, I would not have been able to contribute enough to reach the endowment level.

The Calmes family was able to take advantage of an employer's triple-match program to fund an exhibit renovation project at Mosquito Hill in memory of their son Brock, who passed away in 2012.

If you have made a recent contribution or plan to make one before the end of the year, please take a moment to check with your employer about a matching gift and take the steps needed to ensure your gift is matched. It's an easy way to double, or in some cases, triple your generosity. ❖

## REMINDER

**Memberships  
Expire  
Dec. 31, 2014**

A friendly reminder: FOMH memberships expire on December 31. Your renewal may also qualify for an employer match.

## Why Don't You Allow Pets at MHNC?



It's a reasonable question and one we answer often, so we thought others would be interested in why pets, specifically dogs, are not allowed at the nature center.



Let's get the legal-eagle stuff out of the way: Outagamie County prohibits domestic animals on the Mosquito Hill Nature Center property, unless the animals are service dogs or part of a special event, like Harvest Moon Festival. The rationale behind that 40-year-old ordinance can be difficult to appreciate by folks who are looking for a location to enjoy the outdoors with their dogs that doesn't involve concrete sidewalks and fenced-in lawns.



Our staff is charged with maintaining healthy wildlife populations on this property and, unfortunately, even the friendliest and most well-behaved dogs can harass and harm wildlife, especially if they are off-leash. Likewise, dogs can be killed by wildlife and are vulnerable to diseases transmitted by wild animals.



We wish we could have it both ways and open the trails to people walking their dogs (hey, if that were the case, our dogs would be out here too), but the fact is our mission to protect wildlife precludes this property from being a pet-friendly area. Your understanding and compliance with the ordinance is most appreciated. ❖

## Wish List

- Apple grinder (for our apple press)
- Folding pruning saws
- Pumpkin carving tools

Please contact staff for details on brand, size, amounts, etc. or how you may make a contribution to purchase any of these items. More items may be found on our wish tree located in the lobby. Thanks!

## WELCOME!

### NEW MEMBERS

- Pat & Jan Enright
- Dave Wroblewski
- Mark & Julia Fenlon

Please consider supporting Friends of Mosquito Hill with your membership. See back page for details.

# The Volunteer Voice

*You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give. – Winston Churchill*

## 2014 Reflections

*Pat Lund-Moe, Volunteer Coordinator*

As we look back on 2014, I am amazed and grateful for all that we have been able to do here at Mosquito Hill. It is a fact that none of our events would be possible without our dedicated team of volunteers who are always ready to do whatever it takes to make an event or program successful.

Our volunteers are a diverse group with a vested interest in our nature center. As I checked in with them at Harvest Moon Fest, it occurred to me that the value of volunteering is being taught, if not intentionally, by just “doing” together. A father worked alongside his son and daughter, a grandmother and granddaughter painted faces, two fathers and their sons drove tractors and a couple who befriended a young adult woman brought her with them to volunteer. Isn't the best way to teach by showing, and then working together?



I also look at our volunteer team and realize that many of us are “maturing”, if you know what I mean! How can each of us let the next generations realize the importance of volunteering? Can each of us find someone to work alongside us as we show them how vital volunteers are to maintaining so many of the programs they enjoy? Let's challenge each other to add this to our resolution list. Encourage someone to give volunteering a try *with* you, wherever that may be. We will all be richer because of it!

“We heard this is the last year for your Butterfly House. Why?” Our loyal Butterfly House volunteers answered this question many, many times this past summer. Change is hard, but at the same time can re-energize as we open the door to new and exciting possibilities. As we plan for next summer, we are asking for your ideas. What would be a great new way to get people out to our nature center? Program ideas, events and new permanent fixtures are all open for discussion. Share your dreams, thoughts and ideas with a staff member. MHNC belongs to all of us, so let's have fun with the future.

Although winter at Mosquito Hill is a



bit quieter than other seasons, we are by no means resting! Volunteers assist with snowshoe rentals, torchlight snowshoe walks and *Winter Family Fun Day*. Please check the calendar and jump in.

Just a reminder: we are busy planning our Spring Fever Fundraiser and would really appreciate some new energy to solicit sponsorships and raffle prizes. FOMH is also seeking board and committee members. We all have gifts to share with others. Please consider a new challenge and adventure for the new year by saying “I can do that.”

2014 has been a fantastic year. Thank you to all our wonderful, dedicated volunteers for giving your time, sharing your talents, and most of all just being you. Mosquito Hill Nature Center is an extraordinary place because of you. ❖

Since March 2014, staff and volunteers have hosted a Memory Café in our library. The Fox Valley Memory Project ([www.foxvalleymemoryproject.org](http://www.foxvalleymemoryproject.org)) sponsors Memory Cafés in locations around the Fox Valley for those experiencing early stage dementia, mild memory loss or cognitive impairment, and for family and friends of those affected. It's a great opportunity for lively discussions, information gathering, refreshments, camaraderie and lots of creative fun thrown in! A gerontology professional is on hand to answer questions and an enormous wealth of experience among participants

is shared. Please let your friends and family know about this resource. It's a wonderful way for people living with memory loss and their partner or caregiver to get together and share an enjoyable afternoon.

Memory Café at MHNC is held on the second Wednesday of the month beginning at 1:00 PM. Future dates are December 10, January 14, February 11 and March 11. There is no fee and no pre-registration is required; simply drop in as you are able. ❖

Published by  
 Friends of Mosquito Hill, Inc.  
 Mosquito Hill Nature Center  
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**Enjoy these benefits:**

- ✓ Receive our quarterly newsletter.
- ✓ 10% discount at our bookstore.
- ✓ Discount on programs.
- ✓ Complimentary snowshoe use on our trails.
- ✓ Knowing you make a difference!

# Join Friends of Mosquito Hill

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:**

(please check one)

- Senior Citizen/Student—\$15
- Individual—\$20
- Family—\$35
- Business/Organization—\$50
- Patron—\$50
- Supporting—\$200
- Benefactor—\$500
- Add'l gift: \_\_\_\_\_

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