

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Giving snakes a wide berth in parks and trails pays off

PROSPER (April 25, 2016) A walk or jog in one of the Town's parks or trails can be very invigorating and refreshing, especially if care is taken when dealing with the occasional snake encounter, says William Mitchell, Parks and Recreation Manager.

"We share nature with all types of critters, including snakes," he said. "But the infrequent encounter with snakes, nature's rodent and insect controller, doesn't have to end in anything other than a casual avoidance."

There are seven types of venomous snakes in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, according to herpetologists from the University of Texas at Arlington. These include: Copperhead, Cottonmouth, Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, Timber Rattlesnake, Massasagua, Pigmy Rattlesnake, and Texas Coral Snake.

"Snakes are actually very timid, and do not want to interact with humans," he said. "But, sometimes either their habitat is disturbed, or they enter a defensive stance when approached. Often these occurrences happen inadvertently."

This can be especially true after a heavy rain as snakes will seek higher ground, displaced from low-lying, waterlogged crevices. Similarly, snakes tend to navigate along areas of high grass, searching for prey. Hikers should stay on trails and cleared paths to lower the risk of unintended encounters.

When encountering a snake, venomous or not, here are some safety tips:

- Do not attempt to capture, handle or kill venomous snakes or any snake whose identity is uncertain.
- Wear shoes and appropriate clothing when walking through habitats in which snakes may live.
- When hiking, always pay attention to the ground and visually check logs, rocks, and other objects before stepping over them.
- Watch where you place your hands and avoid placing your hands into rocky crevices, hollow logs, holes in the ground or any such location.
- When lifting objects in places where snakes may live, move boards, logs or rocks with caution.
- If you encounter a venomous snake in the wild leave it alone and move away.

If a snake bite occurs, medical attention should be sought immediately. Depending on the species of snake involved and the severity of bite, treatments can range from the administering of a pain killer to several days of hospitalization and anti-venom therapy.

"Statistics from the National Centers for Disease Control reveal that snake bites rarely result in death or serious injury," said Mitchell. "In fact, in 2014, only two people were reported to have succumbed to snake bites in the entire country."

Nevertheless, snake bites can be very painful. A healthy respect for our slithering friends, including alertness and avoidance, can help make that walk, hike or jog worry-free.

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**ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER** – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 17,800 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper's vision is to remain a "Place Where Everyone Matters."