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Boone County Recorder
Community Enviro-Line
Experts Prescribe Spending Time Outside
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February is just not the time of year that makes you want to go outside and commune with nature.

The strangling dreags of our Kentucky winters make me want to slink under a comforter and ignore the ugly gray skies outside by indulging in a week's worth of beach-themed crossword puzzles. Environmental appreciation? What's to appreciate? There's little for me to be pleased with when this soggy, muddy, frosty season slowly crawls towards its springtime demise. In the meantime, I tend to get demoralized. There is nothing more pathetic than an eco-geek who can't stand to step out into the natural world she has so often pledged to defend.

Sadly, while this has become a sort of seasonal anti-outdoors disorder for me, it has become a serious epidemic across our country. Reuters reported on Feb. 4 that "when it comes communing with nature, a growing number of people appear to prefer computer images to the real thing."

Apparently, people across the US are suffering from lock-in pneumonia.

Reuters' statement is based on a new study completed by Oliver Pergams of the University of Illinois-Chicago and Patricia Zaradic of the Environmental Leadership Program and sponsored by the Nature Conservancy. The researchers found that various outdoor activities have seen an 18 to 25 percent decline since the 1980's. By quantifying participation levels of everything from game permits to outdoor sports participation to national park attendance, Pergams and Zaradic were able to chart the sharp diminishment of time spent in our environment.

In a press release from the Nature Conservancy (www.nature.org), Pergams notes that, "We are seeing a fundamental shift away from people's interest in nature, not just in the US but in other countries, too. The consequences of this could be deep and far-ranging for health, for human well-being, and for the future of the planet.

"As a scientist and a conservationist," he reveals, "I find these results almost terrifying."

Zaradic adds, "For the last 20 years we've raised children with less and less interest in nature recreation - we are likely to see the repercussions in conservation and human health for decades to come."

As though this late-winter gloom wasn't depressing enough.

But there is a value to noting these dire predictions of generations alienated from nature. It gives us a chance to recognize that we can have an impact on the public consciousness just by spending time outside our insulated apartments. Those of us who feel compelled to protect this planet of ours probably forged a connection to the natural world in our younger years, Peter Kareiva explains in an essay accompanying Pergams and Zaradic's study. So, it's simply that easy: Go outdoors. Bring an impressionable youth with you. No matter the ugly weather, spending time in our natural environment reminds us of where it is we really live - Not under a comforter in a temperature-controlled cubicle but on a delicate globe that demands our respect.

If you're interested in leaving the house, the Boone County Parks Department offers all kinds of activities to connect you to our County out-of-doors. Visit www.boonecountyky.org/parks to sign up and get a jump on spring. You can also check out on my fancy environmental blog to learn more about the above-discussed study and discover what "videophilia" means. Visit <http://kyecogeek.blogspot.com/>.

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	Yes, recycle it!	Not allowed!	Anything else?
Plastic	Bottles with #1 or #2 on them, including: Soda bottles Detergent jugs Milk jugs Vitamin containers Shampoo bottles	To be recyclable, plastic must have a spout, or an opening that is smaller than the rest of the container. Because of this, we can't allow items like: Butter/yogurt tubs Buckets Food trays Also, no oil jugs. They're gross.	Please take off the lids. They're a different and not recyclable type of plastic. Oh, and if you get a chance, rinse containers out and squash them flat.
Glass	Any color glass bottle or food jar	Widow glass and drinking glass aren't good, nor is broken glass. We've got to help look out for the guys who pick up our recycling.	Once again, no lids! No corks, either! And rinse out the bottle!
Paper	Oh man. We take all kinds of paper.		
Metal			