

Junior Naturalist Program

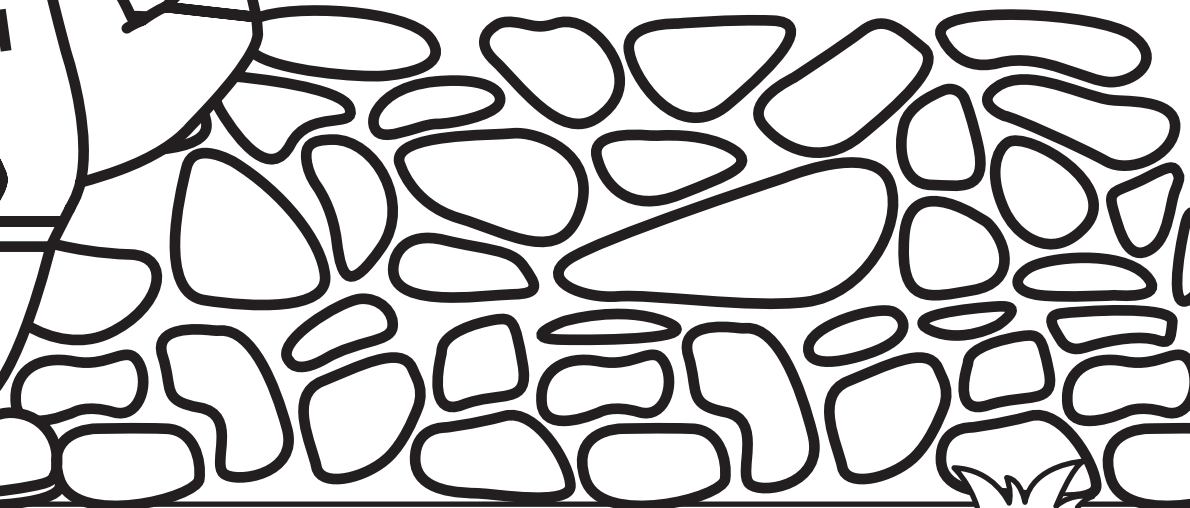
10 and Under

**This Junior Naturalist, Park Steward
Handbook belongs to:**

Junior Naturalist in Training



**Welcome to
Oklahoma
State Parks!**



A Note to Parents & Guardians:

Welcome to

Oklahoma State Parks!

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in the Oklahoma State Parks Junior Naturalist Program! This program is a special opportunity for your child to learn about and help protect Oklahoma's natural, historical, and cultural resources.

There are two parts to the Oklahoma State Park Junior Naturalist Program. Part One is for children 10 and under to become a Junior Naturalist Park Steward. Part Two is for children 10 and up to become a Junior Naturalist Park Interpreter. Even if your child is 10 and up but has not completed part one, they can still complete it and become a Junior Naturalist Park Steward too! If your child is 10 or under, they have a chance to grow with Oklahoma State Parks and become a Junior Naturalist Park Interpreter as they get older. After completing both parts of the Junior Naturalist Program and reaching the age of 16 or older, your child can then become a Volunteer Naturalist.

This booklet outlines the general requirements for attaining the title "Junior Naturalist Park Steward" for children 10 and under. Though all state parks participate in the program, not all state parks offer the necessary Junior Naturalist training sessions year-round. Please contact the Park Manager, Park Naturalist, Park Interpretive Specialist, or the Park Ranger to obtain a current schedule of training opportunities that are offered at each state park.

In order to obtain the designation of Junior Naturalist Park Steward, you need to complete educational and service elements which are described in this booklet. Each state park will have its own specific list of programs and service projects.

Upon completion of the general requirements for this program, your child will be added to the list of official Oklahoma State Park Junior Naturalist Park Stewards. Your child will also receive a Junior Naturalist, Park Steward certificate and a Park Pal patch in honor of their hard work and willingness to protect and preserve Oklahoma State Parks.

As Park Pal would say,
"Protect our parks, they depend on You!"



What's In This Booklet?

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Steps to become a Junior Naturalist Park Steward

1

Complete this Junior Naturalist Park Steward booklet.

2

Attend any type of program offered at an Oklahoma State Park. Fill out page 28 after attending the program.

3

Complete one service project at an Oklahoma State Park. Fill out page 26 when the service project is accomplished.

4

Remember – “Help a Critter – Don’t Litter!”

Become a Park Pal too!

1

Want to help keep our parks clean and protect wildlife habitat?

2

Join Park Pal on some park adventures by completing the Park Pal coloring and activity book.

3

Also become a "Clean Team" member just like Park Pal!

4

Take the "Clean Team" pledge and sign the Park Pal pledge card to become an official Park Pal and "Clean Team" member.

5

Need any help? Just ask a State Park Employee, they are the Real Park Pals.

Safety Tips

At the Park

- Use all tools (hatchets/knives) safely and with supervision.
- Before hiking, tell someone where you are going; take along a buddy.
- Look both ways before crossing any road in the park.
- *Be extra careful near a lake or stream; do not step into the water.*

On the Water

- Always swim in designated swimming areas; always swim with a buddy.
- Never swim around boat ramps.
- Always wear a life jacket while boating or riding on a jet-ski.
- Do not stand up in a boat while it is moving.
- *If the boat overturns on the lake, hold onto it until help arrives.*

Fire Prevention

- Build fires in designated areas only. Do not step on coals; they may be hot.
- Do not leave your campfire unattended.
- Put out fires with water. If water is not available, use soil to cover the fire.
- Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving the park.
- If a person's clothing is on fire – STOP, DROP, and ROLL!
- *Carry fire extinguishers in all motorboats and recreational vehicles.*

Weather Watch

- When arriving in the park, ask the Park Ranger or Park Manager where to go in case of severe weather.
- Watch for changes in the weather and have a radio handy. If you are in a boat and a storm is approaching, immediately head for shore.

Park Rules & Park Courtesy

- Do not pick up plants, wildflowers, and rocks. Do not try to catch park animals. Enjoy plants and wildlife by observing them and taking pictures, not collecting them.
- Do not feed wildlife; to stay healthy and safe, wildlife should not eat human food.
- Keep your pet on a leash, no longer than 10 feet, while in the park. This protects you, your pet, and park wildlife.
- Do not cut down tree limbs or harm trees. They are important for the park and are home for many animals.
- *Be courteous to your park neighbors. Remember quiet time is 11pm-6am!*

**Thank you for staying safe & caring about
Oklahoma State Parks!**

Beware of these Plants & Animals!

Most plants and animals that live in state parks are harmless if left alone. Poison ivy and ticks are two things that can cause trouble if you do not take proper precautions. Here are some tips to help you avoid them.

Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy is a plant that grows throughout much of Oklahoma. It can be a small bush or a vine that grows up a tree. Many people are allergic to poison ivy. Itchy blisters or a rash from the poison of this plant can make you feel miserable. Do not touch this plant or brush against it with your clothing. Do not let your pet run through a patch of poison ivy or you will catch it when you touch your cat or dog. Do not burn tree limbs that have poison ivy vines, or you can breathe the poison ivy that is in the smoke of your campfire. If you touch poison ivy, try to wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can. To avoid poison ivy, stay away from plants that have clusters of three leaflets. Remember: "Leaves of three, let it be."



Ticks

Ticks are small, leathery, animals that live on the blood of other animals. Ticks have eight legs. They look like a small button. Baby ticks look like tiny, moving, freckles. When ticks bite, they can cause a skin rash. Some ticks carry diseases that can cause fever and, in rare cases, death. The best way to keep ticks off you is to apply an insect repellent to your pants, socks,



shoes and around your waist before hiking in the park. Wear a hat, long sleeve shirt, and tuck your pants legs inside your socks. Stay on trails; try to keep from touching plants that grow along the trail. While you are hiking, occasionally check your ankles and legs for ticks. Often you can remove them before they have had a chance to bite you. When you have finished your walk, look closely for ticks that may be trying to attach to your skin. Remember, baby ticks can be very small and look like moving freckles. If a tick is attached to your

skin, there are several ways of safely removing it. One way is to cover the tick with a thick layer of Vaseline, wait a few minutes and then pull it off. You can also use tweezers to grasp the tick and pull it out with a steady, straight motion. Do not squeeze the tick. Do not jerk when pulling the tick out or it may leave its head in your skin. Once the tick is removed, clean the bite with antiseptic. Wash your hands and the tweezers with soap and water. See a doctor if you develop a rash or fever.



Tips for Viewing Wildlife

Be Quiet.

Quick movements and loud noises scare wildlife.

Be Patient.

Walk a little way, then stop, watch and listen.

Look during the **Right Time** of the day. Most wildlife is active in the early morning and late evening.

Look in the **Right Places**. Look for wildlife in their preferred habitats (the places they like to live). One good place is where a forest connects with a grassy meadow or field. This type of place provides wildlife with food as well as a place to hide. Also, look near water!

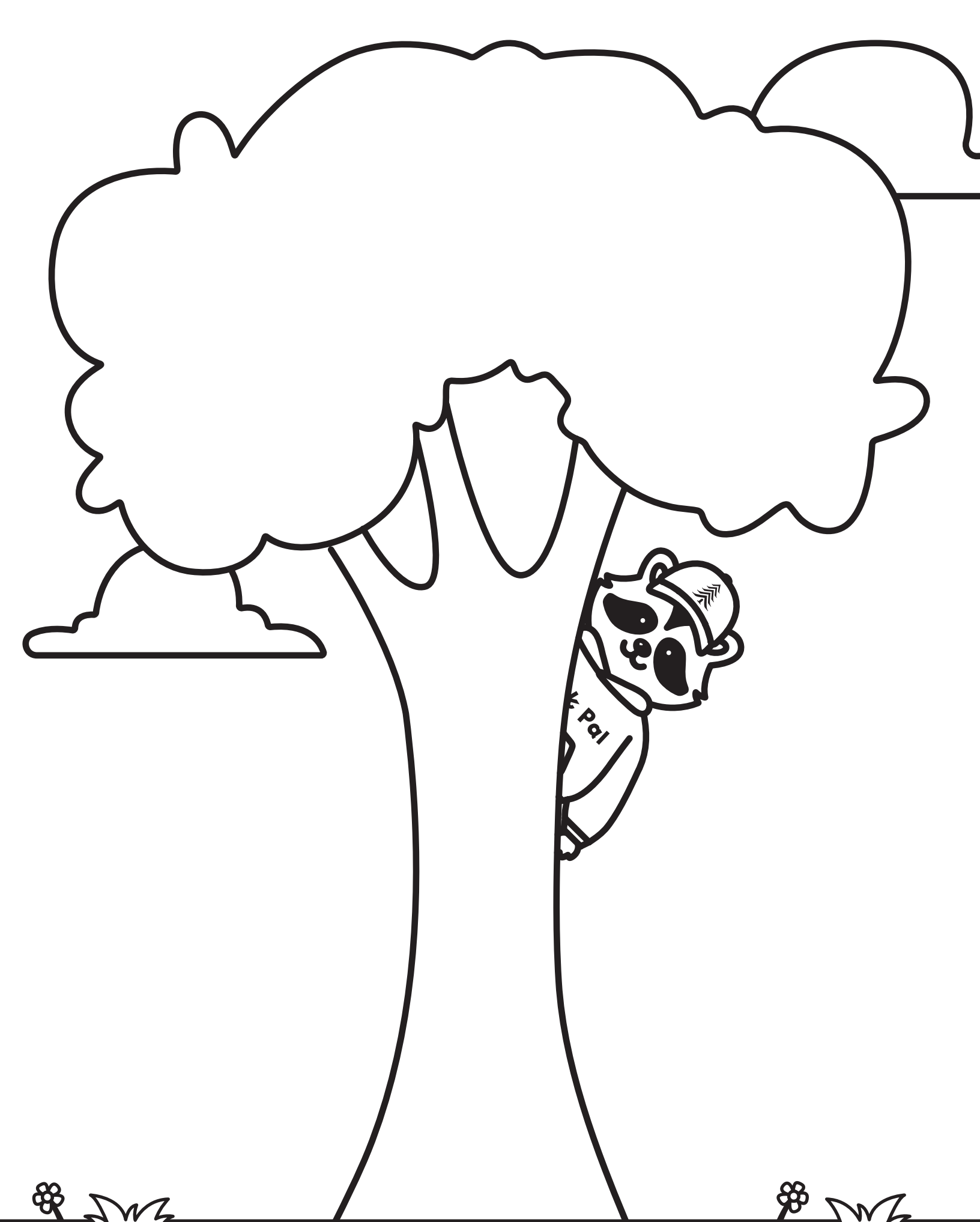
Watch for wildlife during **Good** and **Bad Weather**. Many animals are especially active before and after a storm.

Use field guides to help identify wildlife. Binoculars or spotting scopes will help you see wildlife better.

Be Respectful.

Wildlife will stay in an area if they are not disturbed. Do not feed or try to handle wildlife. Keep all pets on a leash while in a state park. Cats and dogs are instinctive hunters; they may chase or kill wildlife. By putting your pet on a leash, you also protect it from the possibility of being bit by a raccoon, opossum, or skunk. Wildlife can give your pet diseases that can cause them to die.

Respect others who might also be watching wildlife. If you get too close to wildlife, you can ruin everyone's chance to view it.



Wildlife of Oklahoma State Parks

Oklahoma is a great place to observe wildlife. Our state has many lakes, ponds, and streams. Oklahoma has forests and prairie grasslands, and these habitats provide homes for many different kinds of animals. Migratory birds stop in Oklahoma long enough to rest and to eat. Some birds spend their winters in Oklahoma. Other birds only stay in Oklahoma during the spring and summer months.

The following list identifies animals that live in Oklahoma throughout the year, as well as a few kinds of birds that are only here during certain seasons. Many of these animals are found in any Oklahoma State Park. To help observe them, watch out for wildlife tracks and other clues that help you discover what might be around. Wildlife tracks are most easily seen along a lake shore or on trails after a rain. Use the following wildlife tracks—and a few sensory clues—that are paired with some of the animals below to help you in your mission to view wildlife, in addition to the previous tips, while you are visiting any Oklahoma state Park.

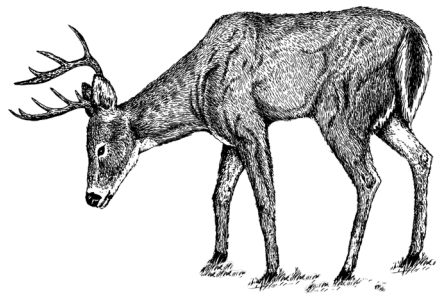
Remember: before searching for wildlife tracks, always tell an adult where you are going. Take along a buddy too!



Wildlife of Oklahoma State Parks

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*

By the early 1900s, nearly all of Oklahoma's white-tailed deer had been killed by hunters. Since that time, through the combined efforts of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, landowners, sportsmen, and other government agencies, Oklahoma now has many white-tailed deer in every part of the state. White-tailed deer feed on acorns, leaves, grains, tender shoots, and grasses. They are most active in the early morning, at sunset, and at night. Look for their tracks on trails and along the shoreline of ponds and creeks. White-tailed deer use the white underside part of their tail to signal when danger is present. Fawns are usually born in May. If you find a fawn, back away from it, and do not touch it. Although you may not see her, the fawn's mother is nearby.



Deer Tracks



Hoof prints are slender and pointed. A few other clues to identify a deer include a medium pile of pellet droppings, a line of leaves eaten off the lower branches of a tree—this is called a deer browse line—and any scrapped or shredded tree bark. That is done by male deer, or bucks, rubbing their antlers on the tree to establish territory.

Raccoon *Procyon lotor*

The raccoon is easily recognized with its black masked face and furry ringed tail. It will eat almost any type of food including nuts, berries, crops, bird eggs, insects, mice, frogs, fish, and crawdads. Where it can, the raccoon also will feed on picnic scraps and from the food bowls of cats and dogs. Raccoons are most active at night. They normally make dens in hollow trees and live in various habitats as long as water is nearby.



Raccoon Tracks



A raccoon track has five toes on front and hind feet. Raccoon scat, or poop, can be found piled up on fallen logs, large rocks, or stumps that raccoons use as latrines.

Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*



This furry mammal is a member of the weasel family. The skunk is not aggressive, but if alarmed, it is quick to defend itself using a strong-smelling spray. It feeds on insects, worms, fruit, bird eggs, and small animals. Primarily a nocturnal animal, it may follow the smell of food into a campground at night. One of the skunk's enemies is the Great Horned Owl. This large owl has no sense of smell, so it does not care if it gets sprayed.

Skunk Tracks

A strong, musky smell and small cat-like scat, with insect parts and seeds, can tell you a skunk may be nearby.



Opossum *Didelphis virginiana*



The Virginia Opossum is North America's only marsupial, or pouched mammal. It is about the size of a cat, gray in color with a white face, and has a long hairless tail. The opossum lives in hollow trees or logs, in rock crevices, or under buildings. Opossum feed on fruits, insects, small animals, and garbage. Not an aggressive animal, the opossum has several ways of dealing with danger. It may climb a nearby tree, stand its ground by hissing and showing its teeth, or "play dead".

Opossum Tracks

Front and hind feet have a "big toe" which slants away from the other toes. Curled scat that looks similar to dog poop might also be a sign that an opossum is nearby.



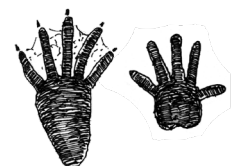
Beaver *Castor canadensis*



The American Beaver is the largest rodent in Oklahoma. Adult beavers can weigh 30 to 50 pounds. The beaver spends most of its time in water, only coming onto land to rest, rear its young, and feed. It cuts down trees that it uses to build a dam across a stream or to construct a beaver lodge. In Oklahoma, beavers also may make a den in the bank of a lake or creek. Beavers eat leaves, twigs, and bark from kind of bush or tree that grows near water, but they prefer cottonwood, willow, sweetgum, and pine trees. They live in family groups usually numbering about four to eight beavers. They are most active at night, in early morning, and at dusk. Beavers warn each other of danger by slapping the water with their paddle-like tails.

Beaver Tracks

Near water, beavers will gnaw the bark off the bottom of trees and cut down small trees with their teeth, leaving sharp pointed stumps. You might find a beaver's lodge in the middle of a pond or its tunnels in the bank of a lake or creek



Squirrel *Sciurus*



Oklahoma has three kinds of squirrel. The most common is the Fox Squirrel, which is reddish in color. The Eastern Gray Squirrel, which is smaller than the Fox Squirrel, lives in eastern Oklahoma. Both of these squirrels are acrobats, using their tails for balance. The Southern Flying Squirrel is nocturnal—which

means it is only active at night—and glides from tree to tree. Webs of skin between its front and back legs act like a parachute. All these squirrels feed on acorns, hickory nuts, and seeds, though if given an opportunity, they will eat bird eggs and baby birds. Squirrels make their homes in hollow trees. They also make leaf nests where they take daytime naps.

Squirrel Tracks

Squirrels can be heard in a tree whenever they make any chirping, barking, or buzzing noises. They may make these noises if they see you to let other squirrels know you are a potential predator. They may even sit and stare at you if they do not know if you are a threat to them or not.



Bobcat *Felix rufus*



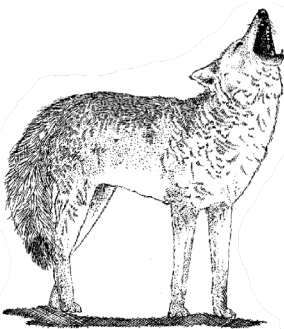
A relative of the housecat, the bobcat is found throughout Oklahoma. Its back, sides, and upper tail are pale to reddish-brown with black spots. It has small tufts of fur on its ears and black on the tip of its tail. Although not usually weighing over 25 pounds, the bobcat is a fierce hunter. It feeds on rabbits, rodents, and ground-nesting birds, like quail and wild turkey. It also preys on young deer. The bobcat can be active both day and night, but it primarily hunts during the hours of dawn and sunset. The female bobcat seeks a hollow log or rock overhang in which to make its den.

Bobcat Tracks

Bobcat tracks are more rounded than that of a coyote; claws do not extend from paw prints. When there are scrapes on the ground near some scat that looks like dog poop, or the scat is partly covered up like a domestic cat, a bobcat could have been in the area.



Coyote *Canis latrans*



The coyote may be light gray, brown, or reddish in color and is about the size of a German Shepherd dog. The coyote has been known to mate with the domestic dog. It often makes its den underneath a large tree or under a rocky ledge. The coyote is very vocal and may often be heard barking, yapping, or howling at the moon. The coyote is able to live near man, even near large cities. While it mostly hunts rabbits, rodents, ground-nesting birds and deer, the coyote will also raid a farmer's chicken house or kill sheep and calves. The coyote has learned that food may also be found in garbage cans.

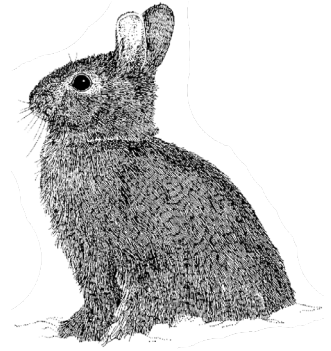
Coyote Tracks

Tracks similar in size to a large dog; nails extend out from paws. Rope-like scat that contains hair and bones can also be a sign of a coyote nearby. Listen for a group of coyotes, or pack, howling nearby at night!



Cottontail Rabbit *Sylvilagus floridanus*

The cottontail is Oklahoma's most common wild rabbit. It lives where there is plenty of food and places to hide, like a thicket or brush pile. The cottontail feeds on grasses, clover, seeds, crops and the bark of trees. Because many predators hunt rabbits, the cottontail has strong legs for a fast escape. It also has excellent eyesight and hearing. The female cottontail often places its young in shallow depressions in a grassy meadow.

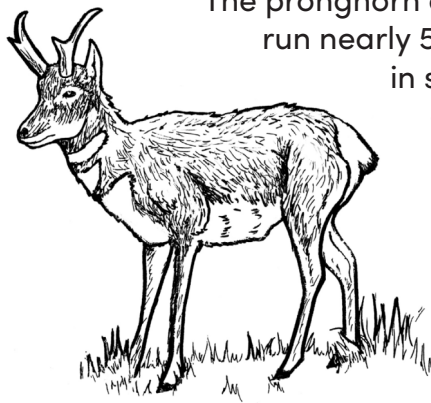


Rabbit Tracks

As cottontails walk, you will see their small front paws together followed by one longer hind paw and then the next longer hind paw. Other than seeing the Cottontail Rabbit, you might find this clue: look for small, round pellets or scat.



Pronghorn Antelope *Antilocapra americana*



The pronghorn antelope is the fastest land mammal in North America. It can run nearly 50 miles per hour as it escapes danger. Pronghorn antelope live in short grass prairie habitats. Here, they feed on shrubs, weeds, and short grasses like gramma and buffalo grasses. Male antelope are called bucks; females are does. Both bucks and does have horns. Unlike deer antlers, antelope horns don't shed. Look for pronghorn antelope in Oklahoma's Panhandle region such as Black Mesa State Park and Black Mesa Nature Preserve. Pronghorn also can be found in Ellis and Roger Mills Counties in western Oklahoma.

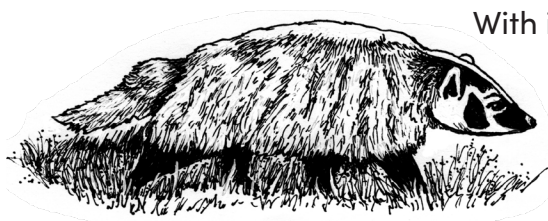
Prairie Dog *Cynomys ludovicianus*

Prairie dogs are burrowing rodents that live in large groups called "towns". A prairie dog town is divided into small family groups. Each family of prairie dogs has their own series of burrows which connect small underground rooms. Their burrows may be 3 to 10 feet deep in the ground. These burrows not only provide safety to prairie dogs, but they are also shelter for other animals like rabbits, swift foxes, burrowing owls, snakes, amphibians, insects, and spiders. This is what makes prairie dogs a keystone species: They help other animals in their community, or ecosystem.

Prairie dogs feed on grasses and soft-leafed plants called forbs. Most prairie dogs in Oklahoma are found in the western half of our state. Prairie dogs are important to the food chain. Coyotes, bobcats, badgers, hawks, and golden eagles are among the animals that hunt prairie dogs for food.



Badger *Taxidea taxus*



With its short and strong legs and long claws, the badger is a powerful digger. Badgers can quickly dig as they hunt gophers, ground squirrels, mice, rabbits, and even rattlesnakes. Badgers prefer to live in prairie habitats. In Oklahoma, they occur in all but the southeastern region of the state. With their sharp teeth,

powerful body and aggressive attitude, badgers are left alone by other predators, such as coyotes and bobcats.

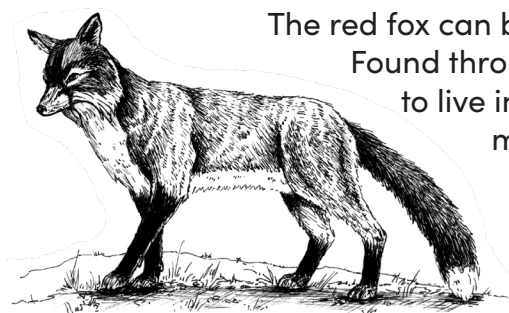
Bison *Bison bison*

Commonly misnamed buffalo, American Bison is the correct name for this important grassland mammal. Before pioneers settled America's prairie regions during the 1800s, as many as 30 million bison lived in North America. Historically, bison provided Plains Indians with food, shelter, tools, and other items and also served as an important part of their spiritual beliefs. Bison remains a most significant part of modern Indian life and culture. Many people value the bison as a symbol of our nation's past and present.



In Oklahoma, large herds of bison can be observed at the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge near Lawton and the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve near Pawhuska. Other bison herds are at Foss State Park near Clinton and Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve near Bartlesville.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

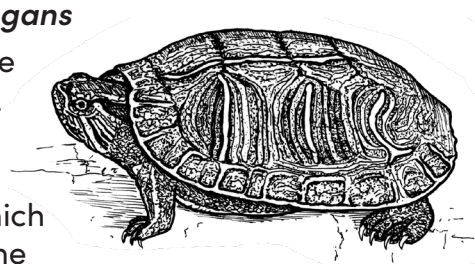


The red fox can be identified by its reddish coat and white-tipped tail.

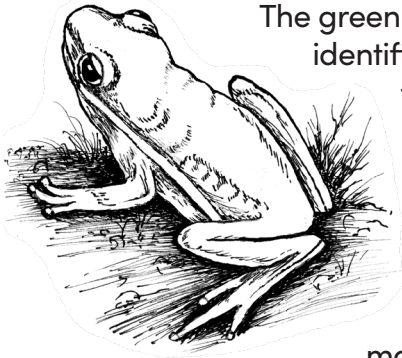
Found throughout eastern and central Oklahoma, the red fox prefers to live in wooded habitats that are near to farmland, streams, or marshes. However, this fox is very adaptable and is often seen in suburbs and cities. The red fox is a skilled hunter of rabbits, mice, and other small rodents. Its den can be in a hollow log or under a fallen tree.

Red-eared Slider *Trachemys scripta elegans*

The red-eared slider is a reptile. It is the most common turtle in Oklahoma and an important part of wetland ecosystems. Adult sliders primarily eat algae and other aquatic vegetation. When a pond or lake has too much algae and other vegetation, these plants remove dissolved oxygen, which fish and other aquatic animals must have to survive, from the water. But in addition to helping, red-eared sliders eat small aquatic animals. Some pet stores sell young red-eared sliders as pets.



Green Treefrog *Hyla cinerea*



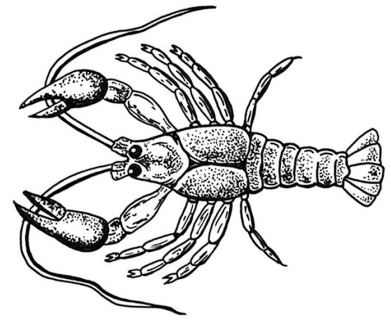
The green treefrog is one of Oklahoma's most beautiful frogs. It can be identified by its bright green skin and the white or yellow line that extends from below its eye to the back of its body. Its toe pads and long legs help it climb and jump. Green treefrogs primarily live in eastern and central Oklahoma near ponds, marshes, and lakeshores.

During summer nights, they may be seen on windows, as they hunt insects that are attracted to a porch light.

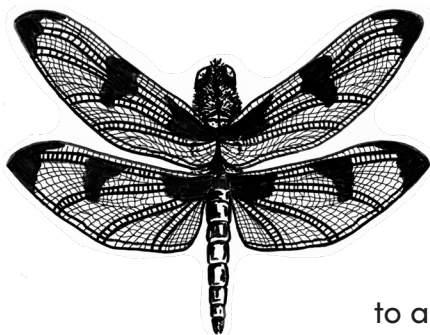
During breeding season, male treefrogs attract their mates by making very loud honking calls. As amphibians, green treefrogs begin their life as eggs that develops into tadpoles. It takes tadpoles about 6 weeks to complete their metamorphosis and become a mature frog. Like all amphibians, treefrogs breathe through their skin, which makes them especially sensitive to environmental changes.

Crayfish *Procambarus clarki*

Crayfish, also called crawdads, are members of the Crustacean group of animals. Crayfish mostly live in water; they are related to lobsters, shrimp, and crabs. Like most crustaceans, crayfish have two primary body parts: a head (thorax) and an abdomen. They use gills to breathe underwater. Their bodies are covered with a hard shell called an exoskeleton. As a crayfish grows, it sheds, or molts, its exoskeleton. Soon, a new and larger exoskeleton forms around the crayfish's body. Crayfish are most active at night as they feed on plants and small aquatic animals. During the day, crayfish hide in their burrows. As a crayfish digs its burrow, it deposits excess mud on top of the ground. These mud balls look like tiny chimneys.



Dragonflies *Odonata Anisoptera*



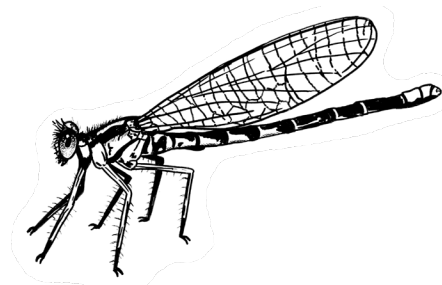
The adult dragonfly is a fast flyer and fierce hunter. Adult dragonflies catch their prey while in flight. They feed on mosquitoes, flies, and other small insects, including other dragonflies. Both the U.S. military and NASA have studied dragonflies' amazing ability to quickly change direction while in flight.

Dragonflies go thru different life stages, from egg to nymph to adult insect. As a nymph, dragonflies live in water. They prey on other aquatic insects and can even overpower tadpoles and small fish. Dragonfly nymphs use gills to breath oxygen.

There are many kinds of dragonflies. Two ways to identify the different species of dragonfly is by their color—which can be yellow, black, orange, red, white, brown, or blue—and by their wing patterns. When resting, an adult dragonfly holds its wings straight out from its body.

Damselflies *Odonata Zygoptera*

Damselflies are predators. As adults, they catch small flying insects in midair and use their spiny legs to capture prey off of stems and leaves. Adult damselflies are smaller than dragonflies and have thinner bodies. When at rest, damselflies fold their wings above their back.



During their nymph stage of life, damselflies live in water, where they prey on small aquatic animals.

There are many kinds of damselflies. Their distinctive and often brilliant colors and wing patterns are helpful ways to identify the different species of damselflies.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*



The American Crow is a common black bird that can be found in almost every Oklahoma State Park. In parts of eastern Oklahoma, the American Crow can be confused with its smaller family member, the Fish Crow. The Fish Crow makes a nasally “uh-oh” call while the American Crow makes a deep and loud cawing call. American Crows tend to roost together in huge numbers during the winter. Crows tend to make their nests out of pencil-thin sticks into a cup shape with any kind of soft material they can get their beak on—fur, doll hair, grass, paper, etc. These nests can be found in anyplace a crow thinks it will be safe—from the overhangs of skyscrapers to window ledges to a tree joint where two or more tree trunks come

together near the ground.

Crow Tracks

All crows like to talk to other crows; listen for the American Crow’s deep, loud cawing call when you see these tracks nearby.



Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*



The Red-tailed Hawk primarily feeds on rabbits, rodents, snakes, and lizards. It is found throughout Oklahoma but is most common where there are open fields with large trees nearby. It likes to build its large nest near the top of tall trees.

Hawk Tracks

During summer months, search the sky, and you may see a large, soaring bird that shows a band of red on its tail feathers. This is a Red-tailed Hawk. These tracks might be more visible in the winter months when migrating hawks join the resident hawks that stay year-round. Whenever you hear a shrill cry that sounds like a Bald Eagle, it is most likely this raptor instead.



Songbirds of Oklahoma

Songbirds that live in Oklahoma Year-Round

A number of songbirds live in Oklahoma State Parks throughout the year. The following birds can be found in most state parks.

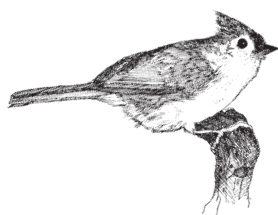


Northern Cardinal

The cardinal is easily identified; the male is bright red, and both the male and female cardinal have a crest on top of their heads. The cardinal's sturdy beak is used to crack open seeds. The cardinal makes its nest in the branches of a bush or shrub.

Blue Jay

This common songbird is found throughout Oklahoma. It is blue-colored and has a crest on top of its head. Blue jays are not bashful in letting you know they are near. Listen as it sings its name: *jay, jay, jay*.

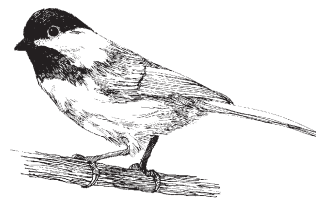


Tufted Titmouse

A small, gray bird with a crest on its head. The titmouse is found in woodlands. Listen for its call: *pee-ter, pee-ter, pee-ter*.

Carolina Chickadee

This small, grayish bird is easily identified. The top of its head and its neck are black; it has white cheeks. An acrobatic bird, it darts quickly from branch to branch. The chickadee often says its name: *chick-a-dee-dee-dee*.



American Robin

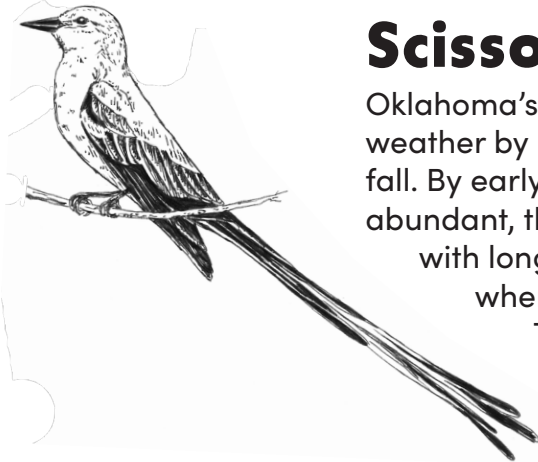
One of Oklahoma's most common songbirds, the robin lives in cities, meadows, and farmland. While robins tend to nest in trees, they can also nest in gutters, eaves, or on outdoor lights. It is easily identified with its bright orange belly and chest. Many robins from northern states spend the winter in Oklahoma.

Northern Mockingbird

This slender gray bird has a long tail and sharp beak. The mockingbird is mostly found where there are meadows or fields. It builds its nest in shrubs and small trees. In the springtime, the mockingbird often sings throughout the day and night.



Songbirds that live in Oklahoma Part of the Year



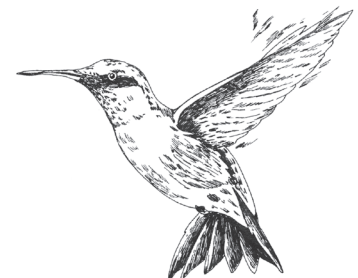
Scissortail Flycatcher

Oklahoma's state bird, the scissortail flycatcher escapes cold weather by migrating south into Mexico and Central America each fall. By early April, as the weather warms and insects become more abundant, the flycatcher returns to Oklahoma. A gray-colored bird with long tail feathers, it is easy to recognize. It is most common where there are fields and grasslands rather than forests.

The scissortail perches on fence posts and utility lines as it searches for insects. Grasshoppers are its favorite food.

Hummingbirds

A tiny bird, hummingbirds travel more than 2,000 miles each year from their winter home in Central America to spend the summer in Oklahoma and other places in North America. This bird feeds about every 10 minutes and eats about one-half of its body weight in insects and nectar every day.



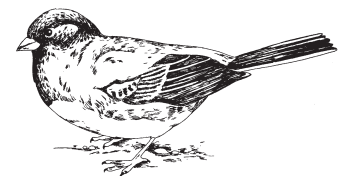
American Goldfinch

Although some goldfinches live in Oklahoma year-round, most spend only the winter here. In the spring and summer, the male goldfinch is bright yellow with black wings and head. In the winter, it is more brownish-gray in color. The goldfinch likes to eat sunflower and thistle seeds.



Dark-eyed Junco

Often called the snowbird, the junco spends only the winter in Oklahoma. It has a dark gray head, back, and tail with a white belly. It feeds mostly on seeds that are on the ground.



Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace® is a nonprofit organization that was created to help promote outdoor stewardship ethics and solve environmental problems like trashed public areas, damage to plants and wildlife, and other negative human impacts to the environment. One way to help educate others about Leave No Trace is through their seven principles. By using these seven principles any time you visit any Oklahoma State Park, you can become a good Park Steward in no time! Here is a list of the seven principles, what they mean, and ways you can apply them when you visit any Oklahoma State Park.



1

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Getting ready for your visit to any Oklahoma State Park before you go is very important to getting the best park experience and helping protect the park you visit. Make sure your family has made camping reservations and have reviewed the Oklahoma State Parks Rules and Regulations to ensure a safe and fun trip.

2

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

No one wants to damage or hurt any wildlife habitat or water features while they camp outdoors in an Oklahoma State Park. By camping in your designated reserved campsite, as well as hiking in designated trail areas, you can help keep other parts of the park preserved for wildlife to feel safe. After all, many animals call Oklahoma State Parks their home.

3

Dispose of Waste Properly

In order for both humans and animals to enjoy the outdoors safely, we cannot litter our parks with trash. We need to dispose of our trash responsibly. "Pack it in, pack it out:" On your next hike, if you eat a granola bar, make sure to bring the wrapper back with you to throw away into a trash can. On your next camping trip, make sure to use a trash bag for all your trash and throw it into a dumpster when you leave. Help Park Pal keep our Oklahoma State Parks clean!



Leave What You Find

“Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but pictures:” While you are out exploring at any Oklahoma State Park, do not pick or take home with you any artifacts, rocks, plants, or animals. It is illegal to collect nuts, berries, wildflowers, alive or dead animals or animal parts, any cultural artifact, and rocks. Leaving anything you find in a State Park allows others to see it too. Take pictures, write in a nature journal, or draw what you found while exploring Oklahoma State Parks.



Minimize Campfire Impacts

To help protect Oklahoma State Parks from wildfires, only build your campfire in the designated campfire ring in your campsite and make sure the fire is 100% out before leaving. When you use a designated grill to cook on, make sure you properly take care of your coals, and make sure the fire is completely out before you leave. Buy firewood from a gas station or grocery store close to the park you are visiting so you do not transport harmful insects that can damage the park’s trees.



Respect Wildlife

Any Oklahoma State Park is a home to many types of wildlife. They get scared of someone coming into their home without them knowing. Respect wildlife by observing them with binoculars or from a distance. Do not try to touch or feed any wildlife—it is prohibited in all Oklahoma State Parks, and it is for your safety. Wildlife may try to bite you if they feel threatened. If you bring your pets with you when camping, please make sure they are on a leash no longer than 10 feet.



Be Considerate of Others

All Oklahoma State Parks are a great natural, historical, and cultural resource to enjoy for all visitors. Please respect other people by following the quiet hours (11 p.m.–6 a.m.), keeping music turned down, not crowding onto other visitors next to your campsite, and other park rules and regulations. We want everyone to enjoy the outdoors safely and help preserve all Oklahoma State Parks for future generations to come.

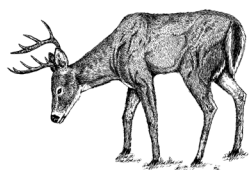
Help Park Pal be a good Park Steward with these seven principles! Thank you for being a polite park guest!

Oklahoma's State Symbol

Many states in the U.S. have different symbols that helps represent the importance of that state's cultural, historical, and natural resources unique to it. These symbols are adopted by the state through legislation and is written into a bill as state symbol. Here are many of Oklahoma's State Symbols with a brief description.

State Animal *American Bison*

The American Bison is native to Oklahoma and is important in Native American culture. A bison has heavy curved horns, can stand up almost six feet, and can weigh up to 2,000 pounds.



State Game Animal *White-tailed Deer*

The White-tailed Deer is thought of as Oklahoma's most prized animal. Male deer can weigh more than 200 pounds.

State Bird *Scissortail Flycatcher*

Mainly gray in color with some orange under its wings, the Scissortail Flycatcher has a deeply forked tail that can be up to nine inches in length. This tail, which looks like a long pair of scissors, gives the bird its name—as does the fact that it catches insects in midair.

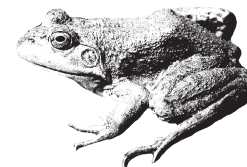


State Reptile *Eastern Collared Lizard*

To help blend into the rocky areas where it lives, the Eastern Collared Lizard has a yellow head and neck with black stripes (hence the name *collared*) to help its beautiful turquoise color from standing out too much.

State Amphibian *American Bullfrog*

The American Bullfrog was adopted as a state symbol because it is thought of as the amphibian that represents all amphibians and their importance to Oklahoma's ecosystems.



State Fish *White Bass*

Also known as the 'Sand Bass,' this native fish can be found in many Oklahoma lakes, with its dark blue-green top, black horizontal stripes, and a white belly. This bass mainly eats minnows, insects, shad, and crustaceans.

State Insect *Honeybee*

The Honeybee plays a vital role in helping plants reproduce and allows us to eat a variety of healthy fruits, vegetables, and other crops.



State Rock *Rose Rock*

Taking after the state flower, this rock looks like a rose in full bloom and is reddish-brown in color. It is formed by the mineral Barite and sand. The Rose Rock is also represented in an old Cherokee legend about the Trail of Tears.

State Soil *Port Silt Loam*

This is most common type of soil and in Oklahoma is good for growing crops as well as helping support forests, pastures, and native wildlife.



State Tree *Eastern Redbud*

Typically growing twenty to thirty feet in height, this colorful tree has heart-shaped leaves and is known for its reddish-pink blossoms in early spring. The Eastern Redbud normally grows in the valleys and gullies of Oklahoma.

State Floral Emblem *Mistletoe*

As a plant that grows and lives on trees throughout Oklahoma, the Mistletoe has white berries in the fall and can be seen with dark green leaves on trees that have shed their leaves in the winter.



State Wildflower *Indian Blanket*

As a symbol of Oklahoma's scenic beauty and Indian heritage, this wildflower has bright red petals with bright yellow tips.

State Grass *Indian Grass*

Growing in every country of Oklahoma, Indian Grass is one of the most productive growing native grasses that can grow up to five feet tall and can be found within the Tallgrass Prairie.



Activity #1

Are you a Wildlife Detective?

One way to identify which animals live in a state park is by observing their footprints or tracks.

Match the animal with its track. Draw a line connecting each track with the correct animal.



White-tailed Deer



Raccoon



Coyote



Bobcat



Cottontail Rabbit





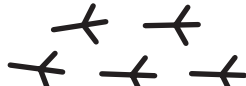




Virginia Opossum



Crow



Now go on a guided hike with a Park Naturalist, Park Interpretive Specialist, Park Manager, or Park Ranger and check off all the things you see from the list below. If needed, a self-guided hike with your family can do too.

 <input type="checkbox"/> Leaf chewed by an insect	 <input type="checkbox"/> Insect buzzing nearby	 <input type="checkbox"/> Animal tracks of any kind	 <input type="checkbox"/> Scat - animal droppings
 <input type="checkbox"/> Spider web	 <input type="checkbox"/> Animal tunnel or den/ A hole in a tree	<small>Look, do not touch. It is illegal to collect bird feathers!</small>  <input type="checkbox"/> A bird feather	<input type="checkbox"/> Add your own observation!

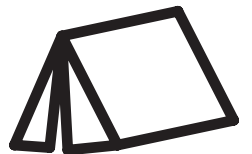
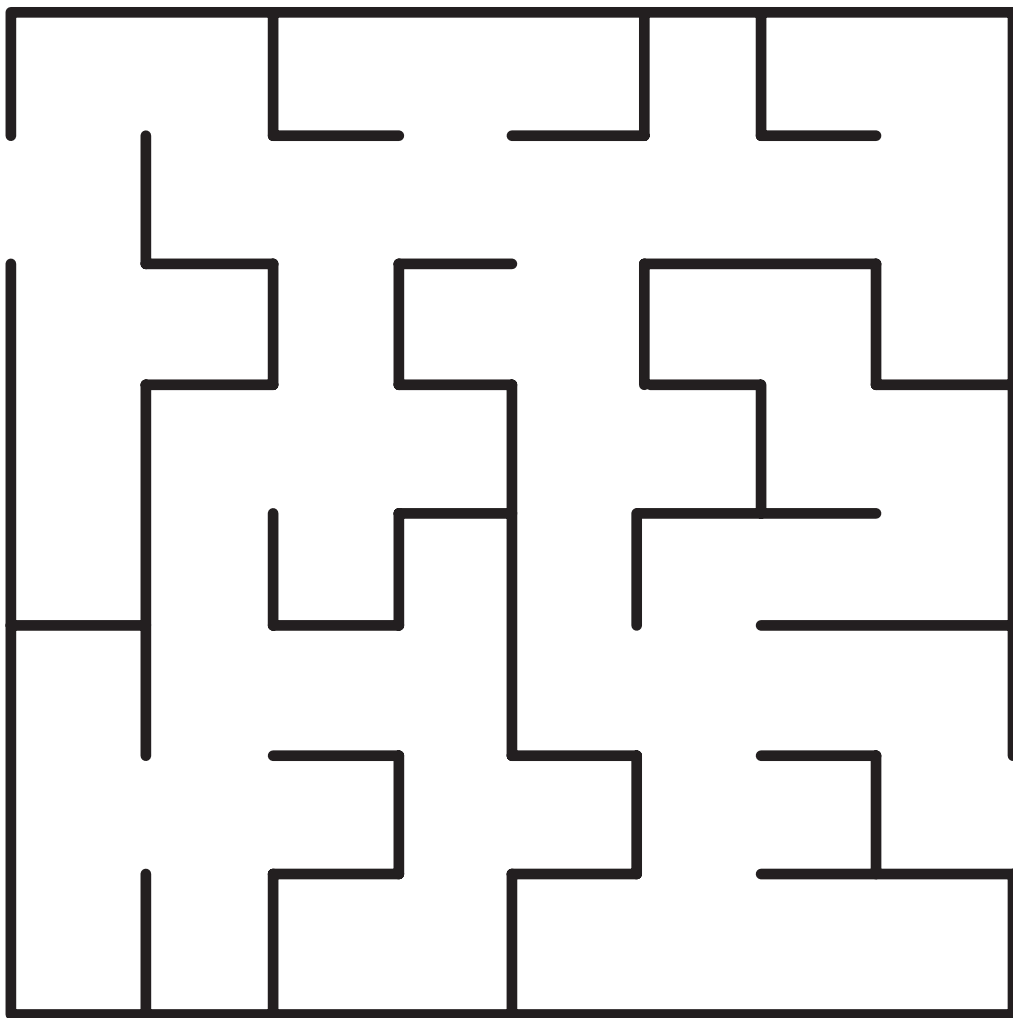
Activity #2

Park Pal Made Two Big Mistakes!

- 1 Park Pal forgot to tell someone he was going on a hike in the forest.
- 2 Park Pal also forgot to have a buddy to hike with him.

Please, never make these mistakes. Always tell your parents or someone in your family whenever you want to go for a walk in the park. Also, always have a buddy to go on the walk with you.

Help Park Pal find his way back to the campground.



Activity #3

Leave No Trace

Do you know what you should do when you are about to go on a camping trip to any Oklahoma State Park? Remember to leave no trace and help Park Pal leave no trace too!

What should Park Pal do to get ready for the camping trip? Circle what Park Pal should do to practice the seven Leave No Trace principles.

1

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Goes camping without a reservation.

Reviewed the park's rules and regulations before camping.

Takes risks when on the camping trip.

2

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Hikes on designated trails in the park.

Camps anywhere, even if not designated.

Goes exploring in gated areas of the park.

3

Dispose of Waste Properly

Misses the trash can when throwing away a wrapper and does not pick it up.

Picks up an empty water bottle left on the trail.

Leaves trash at campsite when leaving.

4

Leave What You Find

Chased after a lizard to pick up and take back to the campsite.

Collected a pretty red and yellow flower seen on the trail.

Took a picture of some cool looking berries near the campsite.

5

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Makes a fire outside of the designated fire ring.

Leaves campsite knowing the fire is 100% completely out.

Brings wood from house 2 hours away.

6

Respect Wildlife

Sees a lizard basking on a rock and observes from a distance.

Tries to feed the geese on the beach.

Lets their pet dog run lose along the shoreline.

7

Be Considerate of Others

Has music turned up loud because it is a good song.

Sets up tent right next to the neighbor's picnic table

Whispers around the campfire because it is midnight.

Activity #4

Oklahoma State Symbols

Could you describe what each of these Oklahoma State Symbols are?

Match the state symbol picture with its name by drawing a line to connect them.



Rose Rock

Is formed by the mineral Barite.

Eastern Collared Lizard

Lives in rocky areas.

American Bison

Has heavy curved horns.

Eastern Redbud

Has heart-shaped leaves.

White Bass

Found in many Oklahoma Lakes.

Scissortail Flycatcher

Catches insects in the air.

Indian Blanket

Has bright red petals dipped with bright yellow tips.

Mistletoe

Has white berries.

Port Silt Loam

This soil is good for growing crops.

Indian Grass

Can be found within the Tallgrass Prairie.

Activity #5

Where Do They Live?

Draw lines to match these animals and the places where they most often make their nest or den. Clues were given in the descriptions of each animal. Some places may be used more than once.



Cottontail Rabbit



Red Fox



Raccoon



Bobcat



American Robin



Squirrel



Coyote



Northern Cardinal



Honeybee



American Crow

Inside a hallow tree.

In a nest on the
branches of
a bush or shrub.

In a nest in gutters, eaves,
or on outdoor lights.

Under a rocky ledge
or under a large tree.

In a nest on an overhang of a
skyscraper in the city.

In a hallow log or
under a fallen tree.

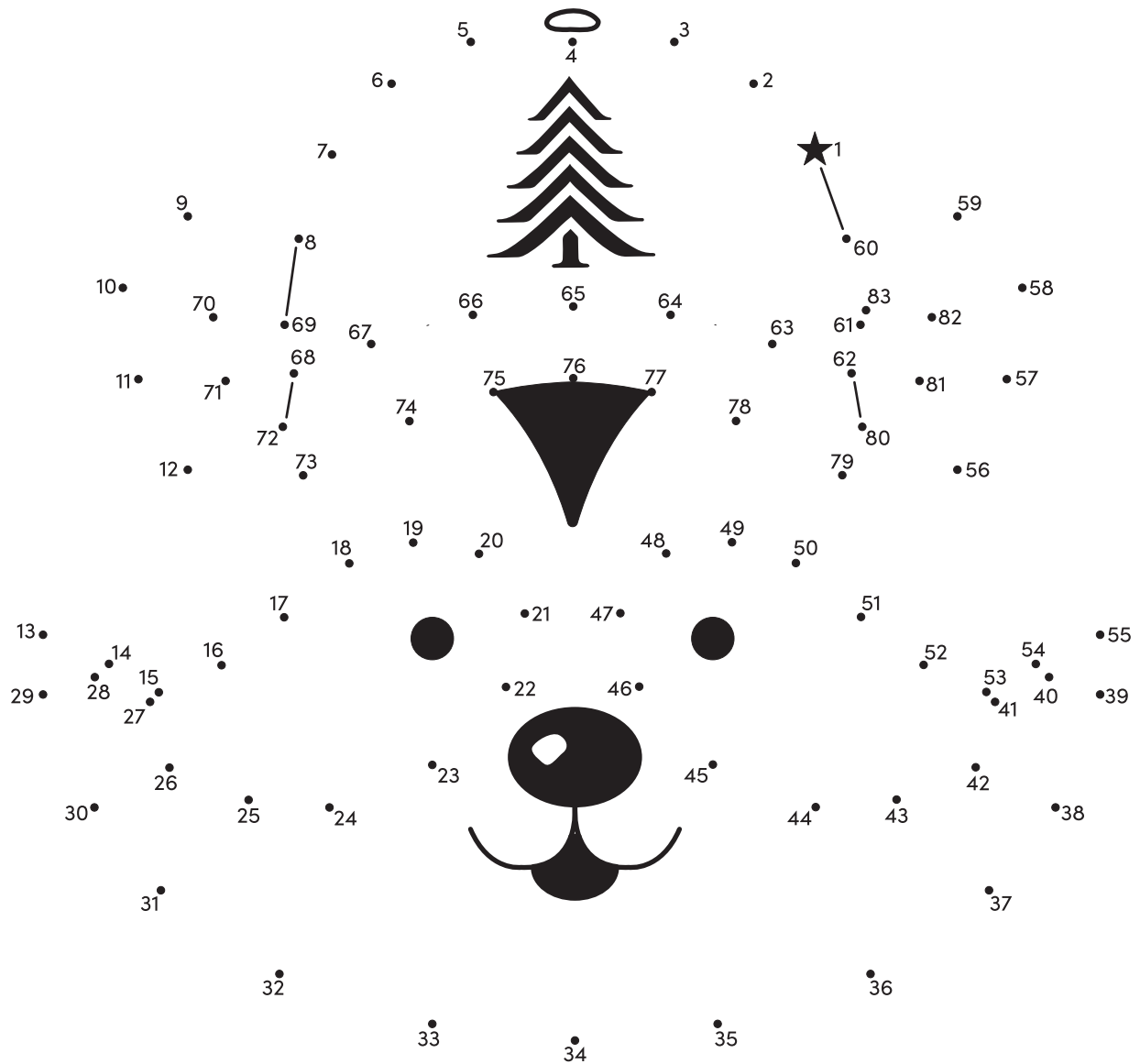
In a hive inside a tree.

In a hallow log
or rock overhang.

A thicket or shallow depression
in a grass meadow.

Connect the Dots with Park Pal!

★ Begin at the star



Junior Naturalist Service Project

To help Park Pal become a good Park Steward too, complete the following service project.

On the next page, list five items that you found and draw a line to where the item should go – either trash, recycle, or compost. Then, draw the most unique item you found in the box below!

Name of State Park: _____

Date of the Project: _____

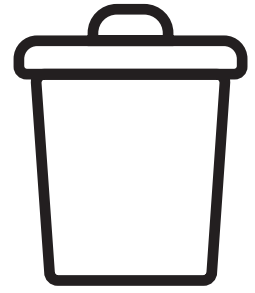
1

2

3

4

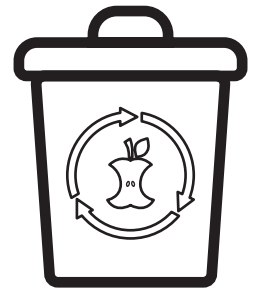
5



trash can



recycling bin



compost bin

My most unique item was:

Junior Naturalist Program Attendance

Evening campfire talks, guided nature hikes, and nature center activities are some examples of the programs which are offered at many Oklahoma State Parks. Please check with the Park Manager, Park Naturalist, Park Interpretive Specialist, or Park Ranger regarding the schedule of programs that are offered during your park visit.

Below, please list one state park program which you have recently attended. At the conclusion of this program ask the Park Manager, Park Naturalist, Park Interpretive Specialist, or Park Ranger to sign your booklet.

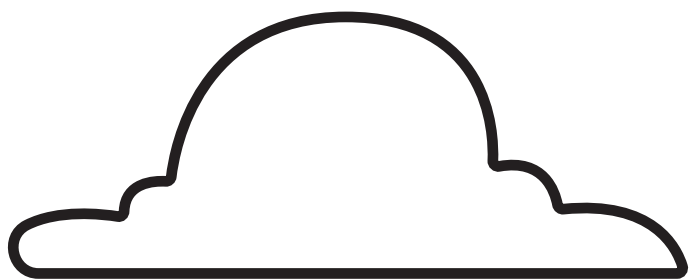
Park Program Topic:

Name of State Park: _____

Date of the Program: _____

Signature of Park Employee: _____

What did you learn from the program?



Fun Activities to be Completed at Home

Multi-Color Leaf Prints

Materials

9"x12" white paper, color markers, scissors, Styrofoam dinner plates, pencils, handi-wipes, and a leaf pattern (optional).

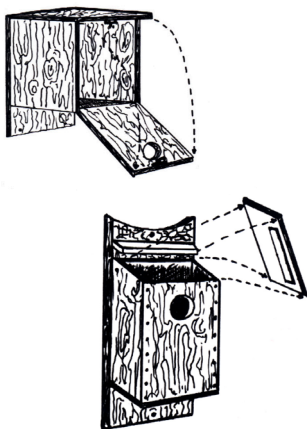
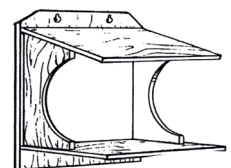
- 1 Using a pencil, draw a leaf on a Styrofoam plate. This workbook has some pictures of tree leaves that you might use to make a leaf pattern. If you make a leaf pattern, just use it to trace the outline of the leaf onto the Styrofoam plate.
- 2 Next, carefully cut out the Styrofoam leaf. Using a color marker, color the leaf and then quickly press it onto a sheet of white paper. Using a handi-wipe, wipe off the marker color from the Styrofoam leaf and apply another color. Again, press the Styrofoam leaf on top of the first leaf print, making sure it fits exactly on top of the first image. You can color this Styrofoam leaf as many times as you wish, making sure to wipe off each color after it has been pressed onto the paper.
- 3 After you have added as many colors as you wish, you can write the name of the tree on the back of the multi-colored leaf.

Build a Birdhouse

There are many kinds of birdhouses that can be constructed out of simple and inexpensive materials. Ask an adult to help you when building and mounting any of these birdhouses.

Nesting Platform

This simple type of birdhouse is used by robins. The platform should be about 6 inches wide and 8 inches long, with a back and top. One or more sides should be open. The platform should be mounted from 6 to 10 feet above the ground.



Bluebird House

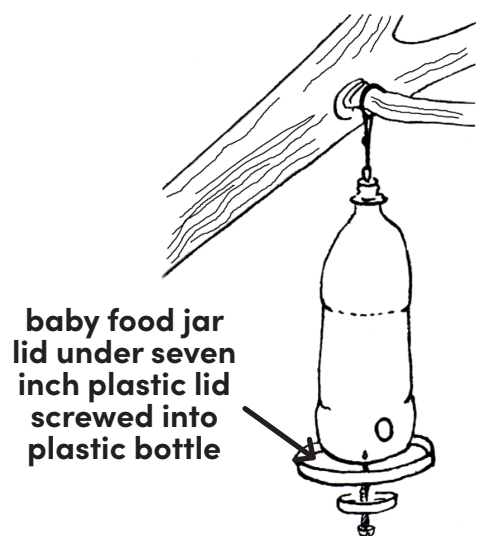
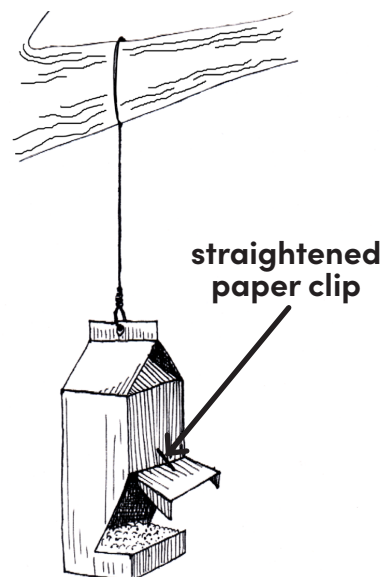
See the illustration to build a bluebird house. This type of birdhouse requires a piece of pine or fir that is 1" x 8" and 8 feet long. The front wall is 51/2" wide and 97/8" high. The back wall is 51/2" wide and 161/2" high. The side walls are 4" wide, with a front edge of 93/4" and back edge of 103/4". The bottom of the box is 4"x4". The top of the box is 61/2" across and 7" deep. The entrance hole is exactly 11/2" in diameter and 11/8" from the top of the front wall. Use 13/4" galvanized wood screws to attach each part. Mount the birdhouse on a pole or post that is 3 to 5 feet above the ground. Place the birdhouse in an open, sunny location. The entrance hole should face east, away from a north or south wind.

Make Bird Feeders!

There are many kinds of bird feeders that can be made by using things you might have at home. Here are some ideas for building your own bird feeder.

Milk Carton Feeder

Cut-out part of the side of a milk carton (see illustration). Use a straightened paper clip to attach this cut-out piece to the carton. Be sure and rinse out the carton before filling with wild bird seed or sunflower seed.

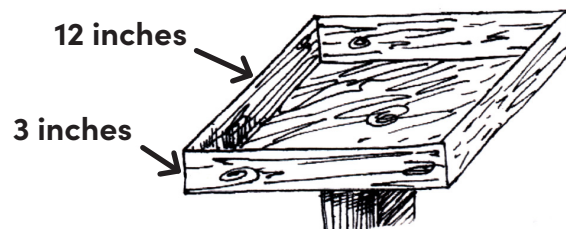


Plastic Pop Container

Rinse out a plastic pop container. Attach a 7-inch-wide plastic lid on the bottom of the container. Also, place a baby food jar lid under the plastic lid (see illustration). Have your parent drill a large screw through the two lids and into the bottom of the plastic container. Cut several holes in the sides of the container, near the bottom. Cut two holes at the top of the container; run a sturdy wire through these holes (so the container can hang from a tree branch). Fill the feeder with sunflower seed or a wild bird seed. Re-attach the container lid. Attach the feeder to a branch.

Wooden Tray Feeder

Nail four pieces of wood (each piece is about 3 inches wide and 11-12 inches long) to the edge of a piece of wood that is 12 inches square. Place a wood post (5 to 6 feet long) in the ground (make sure the post is not on top of a utility line or buried TV cable). The post should be about four feet above the ground and one to two feet in the ground. Make sure the post is sturdy in the ground. Nail the bottom of the feeder to the wood post. Fill with bird seed, sliced orange, apple wedges, or raisins.



Plant a Butterfly Garden - Help a Pollinator!

The monarch butterfly, honey bees and many other pollinators are in trouble. Their numbers are decreasing. There are many reasons for this problem. Some of the causes are the increased use of pesticides and herbicides on lawns and farmland, insect disease, and non-native pests that attack pollinators.



How Can We Help? Plant a Butterfly Garden!

Butterflies need both host plants and nectar plants. Host plants provide a place for female butterflies to lay their eggs; their caterpillars eat the leaves of the host plant.

Flowers have nectar which is food for adult butterflies.

Monarch Butterflies must have milkweed plants to survive. Monarchs lay their eggs on milkweed; their caterpillars feed on the milkweed. Milkweed contains a chemical that makes the Monarch taste bad to birds and other predators.

Try These Plants in Your Garden

Butterfly Species

Monarch Butterfly

Anise Swallowtail

Black Swallowtail

Skippers

Painted Lady

Host Plants

Milkweed Plants

Butterfly Weed
Prairie Milkweed
Swamp Milkweed
Green Antelope horn Milkweed

Fennel

Parsley

Dill

Fennel

Hollyhock

Mallows

Yarrow

Hollyhock

Mallows



Nectar Plants

Blooming Period

Springtime

Summer

Late Summer/Early Fall

Flower Species

Lanceleaf Coreopsis, Black-eyed Susan, Ohio Spiderwort, Crimson Clover

Zinnia, Salvia, Lantana, Sunflower, Cosmos, Gaillardia, Penta, Purple Coneflower, Verbena

Aster, Goldenrod, Maximillian Sunflower, Autumn Sage



Your Next Nature Steps!

Here are some fun ideas for exploring and connecting with nature near you!

- 1 Plant a micro-garden** Plant a seed and help it grow. This could be your little vegetable garden, flower garden, or even seed you find in nearby nature.
- 2 Nature Crafts** Use materials from nature like leaves, pinecones, rocks, etc. to create art.
- 3 Backyard Birdwatching** Keep close watch out the window to see what birds you can see. What are they doing?
- 4 Outdoor Reading** Choose books about nature and read them outside. This can be a fun way to learn about different plants, animals, and ecosystems.
- 5 Nature Photography** Take photos of plants, animals, or landscapes around your home.
- 6 Nature Scavenger Hunts** Make a list of natural objects and invite friends to help find them.
- 7 Insect Observation** Flip over a log or stones – can you spot any bugs? What do you notice about them? Carefully cover them up again and check on them next week.
- 8 Start a Nature Journal** Record your observations, feelings, and thoughts about the natural world in a journal. You can draw, write, paste pictures, or even press leaves and flowers in it.
- 9 Rainwater Collection** Set up a system to collect and use rainwater for watering plants.

Thanks for the fun adventure! Keep exploring, connecting, & protecting!

Oklahoma State Parks

Participating Oklahoma State Parks

The following Oklahoma state parks are participating in the Junior Naturalist Program.
Children can obtain the Junior Naturalist booklet at these locations.

*Alabaster Caverns
Arrowhead
*Beavers Bend
*Bernice Area at Grand Lake State Park
Black Mesa
Boiling Springs
Cherokee Area at Grand Lake State Park
Cherokee Landing
Fort Cobb
Foss
Great Plains
Great Salt Plains
*Greenleaf
Honey Creek Area at Grand Lake State Park
Keystone
*Lake Eufaula
*Lake Murray
*Lake Texoma
*Lake Thunderbird
Lake Wister
Little Sahara
McGee Creek
Natural Falls
Osage Hills
*Quartz Mountain
*Robbers Cave
*Roman Nose
*Sequoyah
Sequoyah Bay
Spavinaw Area at Grand Lake State Park
Talimena
*Tenkiller
Twin Bridges Area at Grand Lake State Park

*State Parks that have a Nature Center or Park Naturalist or a Park Interpretive Specialist.

Check List for Becoming a Junior Naturalist

Your Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Age _____

Grade level entering next school year _____

State Park where workbook was provided _____

State Park where completed workbook is verified _____

Date of workbook verification _____

Requirements

- ☐ 1. Complete the tasks and activities listed in this workbook while at a state park.
- ☐ 2. Attend a state park program.
- ☐ 3. Complete the service project on page 27 and 28 at a state park.
- ☐ 4. Review and follow safety tips and park rules.

Verification of Completion of Requirements

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

Have your parent or guardian sign above and complete the junior naturalist evaluation form
(on other side).

Return this completed sheet and the junior naturalist evaluation form to any state park office
for final verification.

Your certificate and a patch will be mailed to you.



Junior Naturalist Evaluation Form

An evaluation form to be completed by a parent or guardian.

1. How did you become aware of the Junior Naturalist program?
2. Which activity did your child most enjoy? Why?
3. Was there an activity that could be improved? Which one and how could it be improved?
4. This workbook could be better if:
5. Any other suggestions?

Thank you for responding to this survey. By completing this evaluation, you help us make the Junior Naturalist program beneficial to the youth who visit Oklahoma's state parks. Thank you for your help!



