



# Warm Up

All of your hard work; using your imagination, playing outside, going on hikes with family, field trips and vacationing has really paid off. Your training as a Nature Adventurer is almost complete and you are now prepared to take up this challenge and play the Nature Games! Test your skills as you meet each Nature challenge and learn even more about the Nature in your community. If you succeed, your name may go up on the podium!

Make sure your imagination muscle is warmed up and ready to go. Play Animal Forms to begin.

- 1) Stand in a circle and everyone think of your favourite animal. Don't tell anyone.
- 2) Each person takes a turn in the middle acting out their animal.
- 3) The others are challenged with guessing the animal.
- 4) The person who guesses correct is the next one in the middle to act out their animal.



Now that everyone's warmed up... **Let The Games Begin!**

Name your team. Come up with a good nature name for your group. As a suggestion, the first word could be an action word and the second word can be an animal.

Once you have a cool name, huddle up and everyone places a hand to touch in the middle. Give a cheer for your team and raise your hand in the air (write the name in the blanks):

"Go, Go, Go \_\_\_\_\_ !"

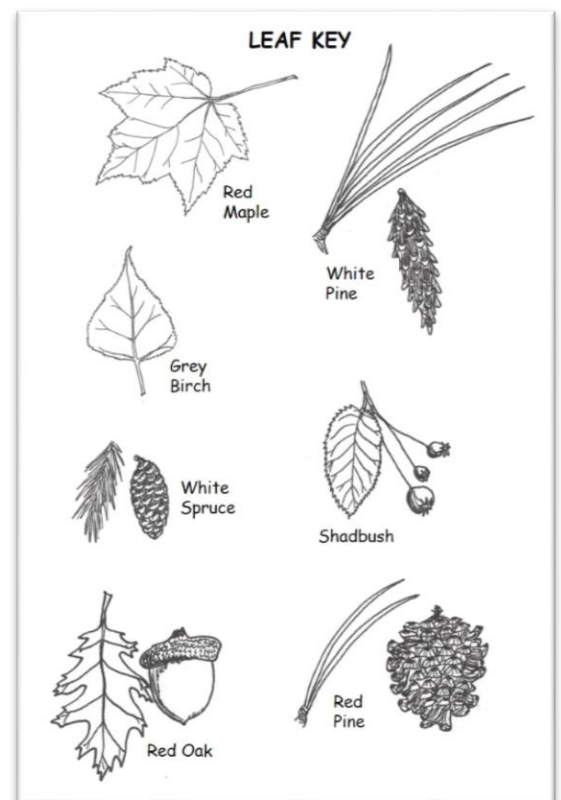
## 1. Tree Root Race

- ⇒ From the edge of the lot parking facing up hill, beside the storm drain, walk 5 m up into the trees and start at the bottom of the wooded hill.

The trees here have strong roots they use to hold onto this hill. The tree roots are connected underground through tubes that share the food with all of the trees. Be tree food and race through these tubes from tree to tree. Use the leaf key at left to help you identify the trees you are standing under.

- 1) In a row, everyone stand on a root or a rock at the bottom of the hill under the trees.
- 2) When someone says go, jump from root to root (or rocks if no roots are available) to the top of the hill. Designate a tree to tag at the top as the end.
- 3) See who can hop to the end tree first.
- 4) Challenge yourself by calling out the tree you are under as you hop. Use the tree leaf key to help you identify the tree.

After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"



## Trees Share with each other

The trees are all connected underground. Trees grow best when they live in a community with other trees. A forest community of trees, with different ages and sizes, protect each other from wind storms. A way that a forest shares the nutrients (food) available in the soil with all of the trees is through tiny tubes called **mycorrhizae**. These are thin fungal roots that direct where the nutrients and water go underground. When a tree needs nutrients, the mycorrhizae share with the roots of that tree and the roots carry nutrients, minerals and water into the tree.

## 2. Greet your Fans

⇒ Facing up hill, turn left and walk 25 m along the tree line above the road to a big pine tree.

Meet and greet your fans who are cheering you on for the Nature Games. Their faces are in the trees. They have been watching you compete and are so excited to meet you and get your autograph! You are their hero!

- 1) Take out your frame tool and hold it out in front of you.
- 2) Look at the trunks of the trees around you and search for their faces.
- 3) Can you tell what your fans are feeling?
- 4) Find faces that are:
  - Happy
  - Silly
  - Sleepy
  - Scary
  - Angry
  - Sad
  - Scared



- 5) Show the other team members your favourite fan faces.

Your fans want your autograph. Trace your name with finger onto the trunks of the tree faces.

After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

## 3. Hawk vs Vole - Camouflage Tag

⇒ Continue walking along the edge of the road 30 m until you see a set of stairs across the road to the left. Carefully cross the road and walk down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs there is a Y in the path and turn right. Keep on this path and walk 65 m to the bottom of the hill at a Y in the path. Go right 10 m until you see some big trees in the woods at right and walk 10 m into the woods just off of the path.

You are a Red-tailed Hawk sitting in a tree here at this spot. This tree gives you a great view of the land so you can spot the voles scurrying around on the forests floor. You are hungry and need to feed your young so try to find as many voles as you can. But voles have a way to avoid being caught, they have brown fur and are camouflaged to the brown leaves on the ground.

- 1) Find a good strong tree to perch in.
- 2) One person is the hawk touching the tree at all times and the others are the hiding voles.



- 3) The hawk closes their eyes and counts to 30 for the first round, to give voles a chance to hide.
- 4) Voles should hide close to the tree since they need to tag the tree between each round.
- 5) After the time is up, the hawk searches with its keen eyes to find the voles hiding close by.
- 6) If the hawk spots a tasty vole, they call the name of the vole or what it is wearing and the vole comes back to the tree to wait until the next round.
- 7) Once the hawk cannot find any more voles, they shout “camouflage” and close their eyes again to count to 25 seconds this time (Each round gets shorter by 5 seconds).
- 8) All hiding voles are hungry and since their food is under the hawk’s tree they run to tag the tree before finding a new spot to hide and all of the caught voles run to find a better hiding place this time.
- 9) The rounds continue until 10 seconds is counted and the voles who have never been tagged win!
- 10) Take turns being the Red-tailed Hawk in the tree after each round.

After the challenge, give your cheer: “Go, Go, Go .....!”

### **Red-tailed Hawk (AllAboutBirds.org)**

The Red-tailed Hawk is one of the most common hawks. They are smaller than Bald Eagles and have a red tail that distinguishes them. They soar above open fields, slowly turning circles on their broad, rounded wings looking for prey. Other times you’ll see them atop telephone poles or trees, with their eyes fixed on the ground to catch the movements of a vole or a rabbit. Voles are like mice with short tails. The Red-tailed hawk makes a classic raptor-like sound. Make their “Psh” sound by making the “sh” part drawn out and gradually getting lower in sound. Try It!

## *4. The 25 meter Slow Fox Race*

- ⇒ Go back to the path and continue along 30 m to stop at the corner where the path turns to the left.

It’s race time! But this is not a fast race. It is a slow race. Sometimes animals in the forest need to be quiet and slow in order to avoid predators, sneak up on prey or even to steal food from someone else! Be a sly fox as you fox-walk slowly and silently to the finish line where your dinner awaits.

- 1) Across the path, scrape a starting line in the dirt with a stick.
- 2) One person walks 25 m to the next corner turning right and mark the finish line by either scraping another line across the path or placing a water bottle or other object there.
- 3) One person is the announcer and judge and everyone else races.
- 4) Racers line up along the starting line.
- 5) When the announcer/judge says go, the racer slowly and carefully step along the trail like a stalking fox walking slowly and quietly.
- 6) Try to be as silent as possible when you step.
- 7) Try to be as slow as possible.
- 8) The last person to reach the finish line wins.
- 9) No racer can stay still during the race and will need to jump ahead 3 times if the judge sees them stop.



The slowest and most silent fox-walker stalking their prey wins the dinner! You all must be hungry after that race. Now everyone have some of your snack and water.

After the challenge, give your cheer: “Go, Go, Go .....!”

## 5. Deer Bounding High Jump

- ⇒ From the finish line of the slow race, walk 30 m to an intersection in the path. Turn right and walk 55 m to where a path turns down to the right. Take this right path and walk 15 m to the Rail Trail. Turn left onto the Rail Trail.

Deer are fast and powerful. They have muscular legs that propel them high to escape predators such as coyotes. Be high jumping deer to escape predators.

- 1) Scrape a line across the trail with a stick for the starting line. The gate 105 m ahead is the finish line.
- 2) Run and jump as high as you can along the trail.
- 3) The goal is to jump as high as you can.
- 4) Jump high until you get to the gate.



After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

## EARTHWORKS

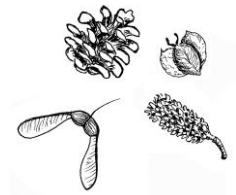


*Deer, coyotes, plants, insects and all other creatures in forests and wetlands affect each other, no matter what they do. When deer leave droppings behind, they fertilize the soil, helping plants grow. When coyotes eat deer, the carcass is food for insects and other creatures. When insects fly over water, fish jump up and eat them. The fish and trees are linked, though you wouldn't think so at first. The trees shade the pond and keep the water cool for the fish. Each creature meets its own needs while helping the others meet theirs.*

## 6. The Great Scavenger Search

- ⇒ Just past the gate take the path to the left. Walk 3 m and take a path to the right up a little hill to a cleared area.

Play the great Scavenger Game. Can you find all of the things listed below? Use your keen eyes to spot special items along this rough path just below the soccer field. Put the following "loose-parts" of nature in your pocket for later use making a sculpture masterpiece. **Find and collect:**



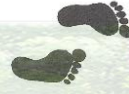
- 1) 3 crooked sticks
- 2) 2 neat leaves
- 3) A flower
- 4) 3 seeds or cones
- 5) 2 cool rocks
- 6) A tuft of grass

- ⇒ Walk along 80 m until you see a steep dirt path up to the left and you see a soccer backstop net. Carefully, using all four paws, scramble up to the field and walk right 65 m along the outside of the field until you see a blue picnic table overlooking other soccer fields.

After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

**Fuel Break:** Increase your energy level and brain power by having a snack and drink.

## Earth Steps



Here are some things you can do to help keep forests and natural spaces healthy in Nova Scotia:

- Buy wood that is harvested sustainably without clear cutting. Clear cutting is not good for forest systems not only because it destroys habitat for animals but because large mechanical harvesting practices tear up the land which causes erosion of forest soil into local streams, rivers and lakes; depleting the land of good soil and choking waterways with mud.
- Save trees by writing on both sides of paper and recycle paper.
- Support efforts to restrict clear cutting in Nova Scotia - The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society have a campaign to reduce clear cutting in NS <http://cpawsns.org>.

### 7. *Who has the Keenest Coyote Nose?*

⇒ Continue walking along the trail another 100 m to where you see the trail open up to the corner of the field. Stay at the forest edge.

There is a contest to see who can find the best smells. Use your keen noses just like the Coyote to search out the best ones. There is a trick below for getting the most out of your sniffer! Ever wonder why everything smells stronger after a rain? Or why a dog's nose is wet? Tiny water droplets in the air help carry smells up your nose!



- 1) Look for something neat to smell: a leaf, twig, bark, plant, grass, dirt etc.
- 2) From your water bottle, put some water onto your fingers and dab it on your nose. Moisture will help the smells attach to the smell-receptors in your nose!
- 3) Scratch the surface of the object with your fingernail.
- 4) Sniff the object where you scratched.
- 5) Scratch and sniff at least 5 neat smells.
- 6) When you come to a particularly excellent smell give a coyote howl ... "Awoooooo!" ... to show how much you like it.
- 7) Share your favourite smells with someone else.
- 8) Everyone decide which smells are the best.

After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

### 8. *The Mountain Building Challenge*

⇒ Walk down 30 m to the sandy spot just outside the beach volleyball area.

Test the laws of gravity! How big can you make the mountain before the forces of gravity pull on it?



- 1) Outside of the volleyball area, use your hands to push and pull sand into a mountain.
- 2) See who can make the biggest mountain.
- 3) If you make a bigger base, can you make it higher?
- 4) Once the mountains are made and measured, jump on them to flatten them down again for next time.

After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

### How are mountains really formed?

The top layers of rock, soil and even the ocean floor is called the crust of the earth, just like the top crust of an apple pie. The earth's crust is made up of separate pieces like a jigsaw puzzle called plates. Mountains are most often formed by movement of these plates on the Earth's surface. Great mountain ranges like the Himalayas often form along the boundaries of these plates where they push against each other and buckle up just like when you push sand up into a mound. The Earth's plates move very slowly. It can take millions and millions of years for mountains to form.

## 9. *Sculpt a Masterpiece*

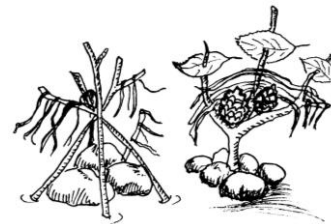
⇒ From the sand, walk up to the 3 boulders on the hill. Turn right at the boulders and walk 100 m until you come to an intersecting trail to the left and stop at the big oak.

Using the items you have collected (and anything else you can find) make a masterpiece for all to see. Find a place in the woods just off the trail to build it. Build it on the ground, hang it from a tree limb or balance it on a stump. It is up to you! Let your imagination run wild!

After all pieces are complete, have an art show! Everyone views each sculpture and the artist explains why they made each piece and what it means to them.

Judge which sculptures win the prize for:

- 1) Creativity
- 2) Balance
- 3) Fun
- 4) Thoughtfulness
- 5) Craziiness



After the challenge, give your cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

## 10. *Fearless Pollinator Watch Challenge*

⇒ From the big oak tree on the trail, walk along the trail 25 m and take the next trail to the right. Walk 40 m up to and onto the hill.

This challenge is the toughest. How fearless are you? Can you sit still and quiet in a field of pollinators? The bees and butterflies will totally ignore you and go about collecting pollen and nectar if you are absolutely still. See who can sit the longest.

- 1) Everyone find a comfy spot on the hill 10 m apart from each other.
- 2) Sit still and quiet facing down the hill.
- 3) Count the pollinators. How many bees, butterflies or flies?
- 4) Can you let them come close? If you are still they won't even notice you. How close can you let them get?
- 5) You are so brave! After sitting, share with the others what you saw and experienced during this time.



Give your team and the bees a cheer: "Go, Go, Go .....!"

### Perfect Pollinators

Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, flies and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food. They are responsible for plant reproduction and in turn the vegetables and fruit we and our livestock eat. There would not be enough food to eat if there were no pollinators. They also sustain our ecosystems and produce our natural resources by helping plants reproduce. Without the actions of pollinators agricultural economies, our food supply, and surrounding landscapes would collapse and life on earth would look very different.

**You can help pollinators by leaving wild plants like dandelions, goldenrod and asters in your yard and planting butterfly and bee gardens.** Because they are so important, there are groups of people who are concerned about pollinators and want to protect their numbers from declining due to pollution and habitat loss. To learn more about pollinators and what you can do to help them, join the **North American Pollinator Protection Campaign** at the following site: <http://pollinator.org/>

## 11. *Success— Your Name is on the Podium!*

⇒ Walk down and across the hill to the right 50 m until you come to a grassy place under trees.

Go down in History! You finished the Nature Games successfully and your name has been recognized and is up high on the tree podium! To discover it...

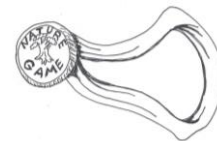
- 1) Find a big friendly tree with lots of branches.
- 2) Lie down under it with your head close to the trunk.
- 3) Look up into the tree branches and find where the branches create the shapes of the letters that spell your name.
- 4) Your name is written in nature for all to see and know that you are a Nature Adventurer!



Now that you have shown how much fun you can have in nature, find more challenges in your own backyard. Be an animal, watch pollinators and build nature art in your own backyard.

Give one final cheer for yourself and for nature:

"Go, Go, Go .....!"





# BEYOND THE ADVENTURE



There are lots of active things to do in and around Lockhart Ryan Park, from baseball, tennis and soccer to playing at the playground and splashing on the splash pad. To learn more about Lockhart and Ryan Memorial Park visit the Village of New Minas website: <http://www.newminas.com/lockhart-ryan-memorial-park/>. The park also has a fun Disk Golf course winding around the trails. Find the links map and score card at New Minus Recreation: <http://www.newminas.com/disc-golf/>.

The Rail Trail adjacent to the park is a great biking trail for getting around and you can also access a lovely wooded path that will take you down to the Cornwallis River just passed the gates.

## MORE ADVENTURES IN KINGS COUNTY

Go to the Kings County for more trail adventures in the Annapolis Valley. <http://www.countyofkings.ca/common/pars/>

### CREDITS:

This document was created by Marina Myra of Wild Roots Nature Education Centre. <https://www.wildrootsnec.com/>. This work was inspired by and adapts material from *Earth Adventures in the Halifax Region 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, by Alan Warner, Janet Barlow, and George Taylor.



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### FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT:

This Trail Adventure Project was made possible with the generous funding and support of the Blomidon Naturalists Society whose dedication to educating the public and connecting people with the natural world is making a difference in our communities. <http://blomidonnaturalists.ca/>



The Blomidon Naturalists Society recognizes the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to develop and promote our cultural resources for all Nova Scotians.



Supported by the Municipality of the County of Kings Recreation Services

