

**MAKE TIME
TO EXPLORE!**

portageparkdistrict.org



OWLBERT'S JUNIOR RANGER BOOKLET



Welcome!

The mission of the Portage Park District is to conserve Portage County's natural heritage and provide opportunities for its appreciation and enjoyment.

Acknowledgments: We'd like to thank Nancy Smith for her help in designing this program and curating these activities to help young minds explore Portage Parks. We are eternally grateful.

What is a Junior Ranger?

Someone like you who completes activities and promises to help care for and learn more about our parks and trails. It's an important job!

Junior Ranger Activities

As you complete the activities you will learn about some of the places and stories that make the Portage Parks unique. Your Junior Ranger Activities will be a part of your wonderful adventures in the natural world.

Reminders from Owlbert

As you observe wildlife always remember that this is their home and that you are a guest in it.

- Be gentle and kind as you observe.
- Always observe creatures from a safe distance and never approach a wild animal.
- If you lift a rock or log to see what lives under it, be sure to carefully replace it so that you do not crush the inhabitants.
- Please don't pick the flowers. Leave them for others to see and for next year's growth.



Activity

On your park adventures when you see something in a square, check it off. Check five squares in a row and you have BINGO!

Wild Flower	Forest	Sledding Hill	Pond	Vine
Butterfly	Ski Trail	Stream	Animal Tracks	Indian Mound
Water fall	Hollow Tree	Add your own	Picnic Place	Bike Trail
Pine Trees	Bird	Train Tracks	Wetlands	Insect
Meadow	Bridge	Trail Sign	Hiking Trail	Nest

This activity has been completed _____

Activity



Look for signs of Seneca Sam the Beaver

Go to Seneca Ponds and look for signs of beaver. Look for chewed-off trees--they look like pencils. If you are lucky you might see a beaver swimming in the evening. Did he slap his tail to warn others of you? Did you see the beaver lodge in the water near the Swan Trail? Can you see the stored sticks of food nearby? Imagine it is winter and a beaver is swimming under the ice from his underwater lodge door to his sticks for lunch. He has his own refrigerator! What did you see? Make sketches.

Tracking Your Activities

When you complete an activity page, have an adult initial and date the activity page for you. Once you have 16 activities complete - you earn a wooden Junior Ranger badge and can attend a ceremony to get your badge!

After you become an Owlet Junior Ranger be sure to continue exploring and completing new activities as they are added!

The parks and trails in Portage Park District have many different habitats. You will find woodlands, pine forests, brushy places, small lakes, creeks and meadows, and some lawn areas. Find your own special areas to explore. You may want to visit your special places at different times: early morning, evening, after a rain event, or even in different seasons.

Be Prepared

Here are some useful and fun things to put in your backpack to take on your adventures in the Portage Parks:

- This Journal
- Regular Pencils
- Colored Pencils
- A Pencil Sharpener
- A hand-held Magnifier
- A Measuring Tape or small Ruler
- Binoculars

Looking for Nature Information?

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, has some free pamphlets.

Dial 1-800-WILDLIFE. You may ask for up to 3 pamphlets be sent to you:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Amphibians of Ohio | Reptiles of Ohio |
| Mammals of Ohio | Common Birds of Ohio |
| Spiders of Ohio | Butterflies and Skippers of Ohio |
| Spring Wildflowers of Ohio | |
| And more! | |

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Learn to identify Poison Ivy

Find out what poison ivy looks like, and find some growing in a Portage County Park. DON'T TOUCH IT! Make a sketch of a leaf. (Remember the leaf is compound with three leaflets.) Sketch its flowers or berries if you see them. If you see a fat poison ivy vine growing up a tree, sketch a piece of the vine showing its fuzzy rootlets. Both the vines and the leaves are poisonous to the touch in all seasons.



New Leaf



Mature Leaf



Climbing Vine

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Scavenger Hunt

Go outside and become a detective. Search high and low. See if you can find everything on the scavenger hunt.

Write what you find in the squares.

Something younger than you	Something important	Something smaller than your thumb
Something older than you		Something that flies
Something taller than you	Something funny	Something with an odor
Something you've never seen before	Something that needs air	Something with spots

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Walk like a bear: Practice the way different animals move

Get down on all fours and pretend you're an animal. Your hands are front feet and your knees (or feet) are rear feet.

- Now 'walk' by first moving your right front foot and your left rear foot at the same time . . . next move your left front foot and your right rear foot . . . and so on. That's how all cats, dogs, and hoofed animals (such as deer) move when they travel at normal speed. They're known as diagonal walkers.
- Now try another one. First move your right front foot and right rear foot at the same time, next move your left front foot and left rear foot, and so on. Now you're walking like a bear. (Bears and other wide-bodied animals (such as porcupines, raccoons, opossums, and beavers) are pacers. They seem to waddle when they walk. Opossum and raccoon tracks look like a hand. The opossum's rear foot has a thumb sticking out.
- Bounders include most members of the weasel family. They more or less bounce from one place to another. To imitate a bounder, first, move both your front feet forward at the same time with a kind of lunging motion, then quickly bring your rear feet up just behind the front feet. Then move the front feet forward again, then the rear, etc.
- Rabbits and most rodents, including squirrels, are hoppers. First, move both front feet ahead, next move both back feet in front of and to either side of the forefeet. Now move the front feet ahead again and the back feet beside and ahead of the front feet, etc.

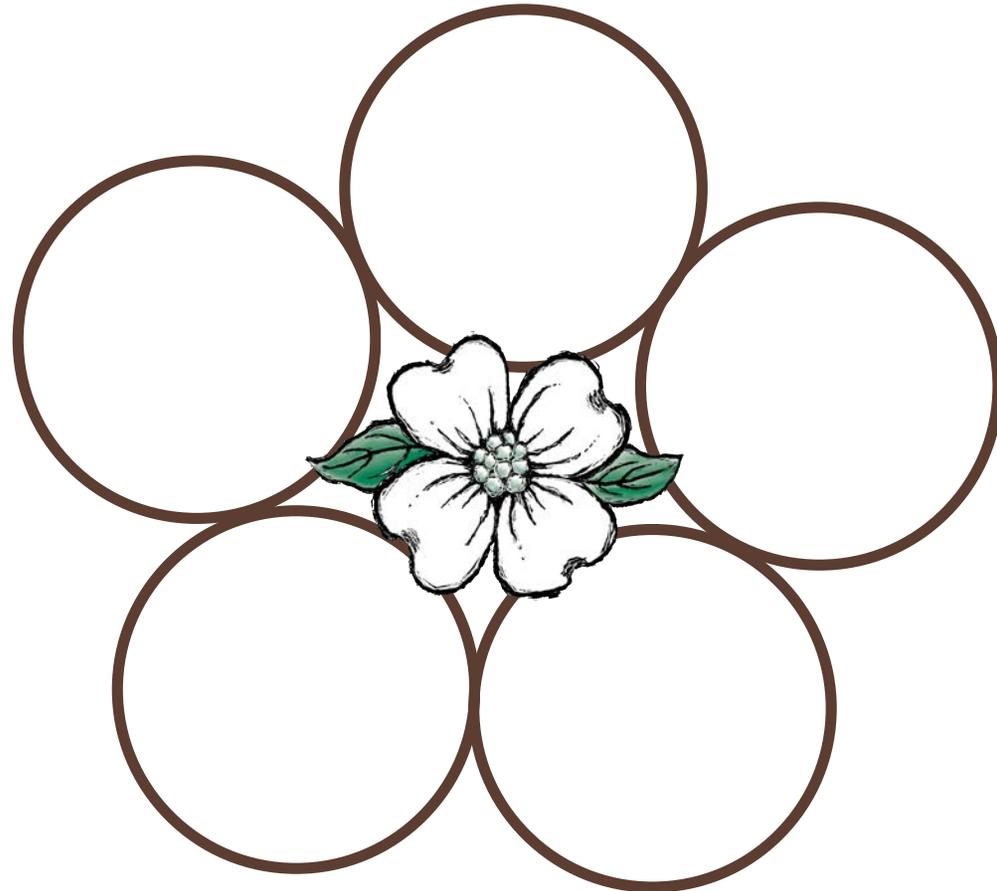


This activity has been completed _____

Activity

My outdoor place

Find an outdoor place that you like. Quietly look and listen. Find and sketch five signs of animals large and small. You might find animal tracks, a bird chirping, a spider web, holes in a leaf or a hole in the ground.



This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Towner's Woods: The Hopewell Mound

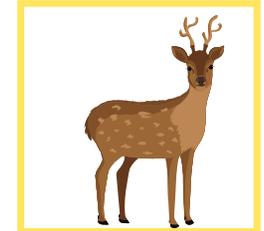
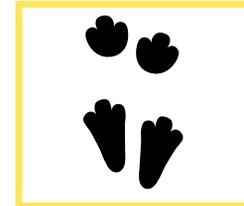
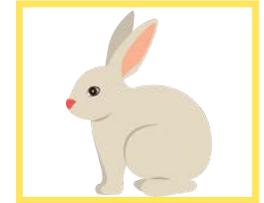
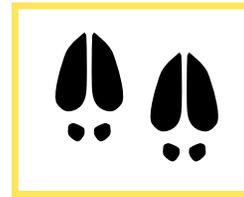
Go to Towner's Woods. Check the Towner's Woods kiosk to learn the path to Towner's Hopewell Indian Mound. Go to the mound and read the information carved on the rock. How long have people been coming to this place? Imagine how it might have looked when the Hopewell Indians were here. What might have changed? What might be similar? How long has the Portage Park District protected this area? How is this important? You might want to read some information about the Towner's Hopewell Mound and the Hopewell culture on the internet. Share some of what you have learned:

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Match the tracks and wild animals

Match the tracks and wild animals. Draw a line from the track to the animal that made it. Outside, find animal tracks and follow them.



This activity has been completed _____

Activity



Waterfall

Go to Headwaters Trail. Park at 10480 St. Rt. 700, Garrettsville. Hike West to Asbury Road and back. It's best to go after a rainy event. Look for the small waterfall on your left. Sit on a rock by the waterfall and/or walk along beside the falls.

The first thing I noticed at the waterfall was:

This is my description of the waterfall:

Sounds all Around--These are the sounds I hear:

This is what I want to remember about this place:

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Where they go in Winter

Winter can be a hard time for lots of animals, and they've adapted different ways to deal with the cold and lack of food. Animals can either go into hibernation, tough it out, or migrate. Check the box to indicate which one each of these Portage Park District animals will do when winter comes.

Animal	Park or Trail	Where it might go in winter
		
		
		

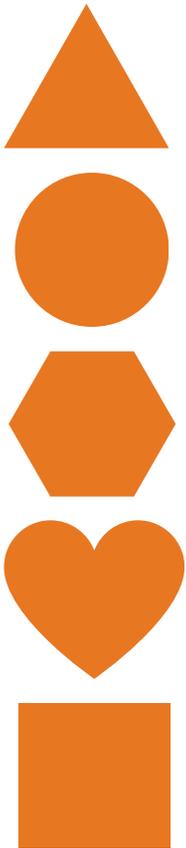
This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Shapes in Nature

Explore outdoors. See what shapes you can find in nature. Sketch the things you find.

Shapes



Shapes I found in nature

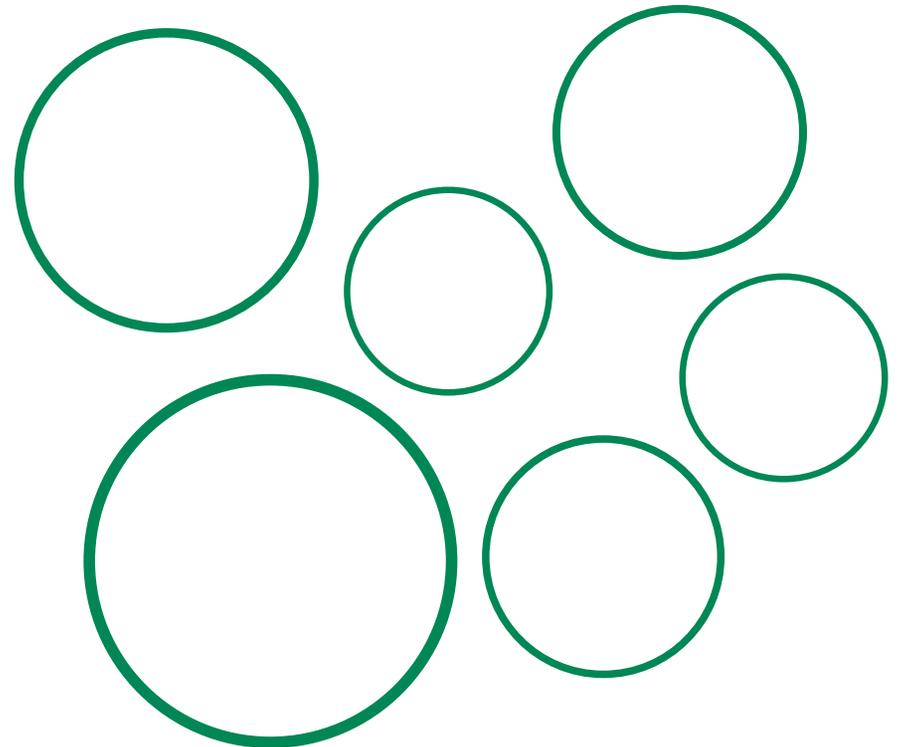
This activity has been completed _____

Activity

My Favorite Meadow

Find a meadow in a Portage Park. The Meadow Trail at Morgan Park is very nice. A meadow is for small things: a hopping grasshopper, a flitting butterfly, a colorful flower, a patient spider on his web, or a fluffy seed floating through the air. Look closely. A meadow is a busy place.

Try to find and draw things the size of these circles.



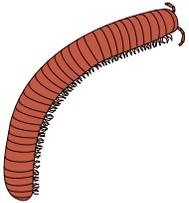
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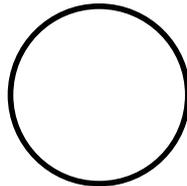
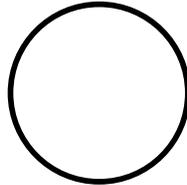
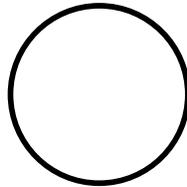
Fallen Leaves are Recycled

Find out what lives in the leaf litter or soil underneath a tree. Gently pull back the leaf litter and search for decomposers. Decomposers are organisms that break down matter so that the nutrients and materials can be recycled in an ecosystem. Earthworms, millipedes, and pill bugs are all great decomposers.

Which decomposers did you see?



How many did you see?



This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Bird Watching

Look for birds everywhere you go . . . your yard, our parks, a mall. Look carefully at the birds and what they are doing. Put a star by the bird activities here. Does every circle have a star?

A FLOCK OF
BIRDS FLYING

A BIRD WITH
WEBBED FEET

A BIRD IN A
TREE

A BIRD FEEDING
ITS YOUNG

A BIRD WITH A
LONG BEAK

A BIRD
WALKING

A BIRD
HOPPING

A BIRD
MAKING A
NEST

A BIRD TAKING
A BATH

You might see water birds at Berlin Lake Trail. If you're lucky, you might see an eagle at Trail Lake Park.

This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Nature Poem

Visit your favorite park and sit at a picnic table. Try writing a poem using each of the letters from the word nature to start.

N

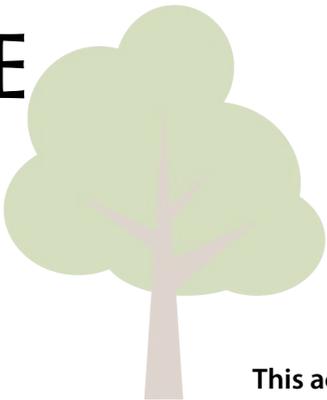
A

T

U

R

E



This activity has been completed _____

Activity

Why do Plants have Leaves?

The leaves on a plant are an external structure that assists in its survival. Leaf veins provide structure and support to plant leaves while also transporting water, nutrients, and energy to the rest of the plant.



Make a leaf rubbing

- Pick a leaf from the ground.
- Lay down your leaf so the veins are up.
- Arrange the page over the leaf.
- Rub a crayon firmly back and forth on the paper over the leaf.

Can you see the leaf outline and its vein pattern?

This activity has been completed _____