



Girl Scouts Love State Parks 2026

Lead the Way By Caring for
Your Parks!

September 12-13 or September 19-20, 2026

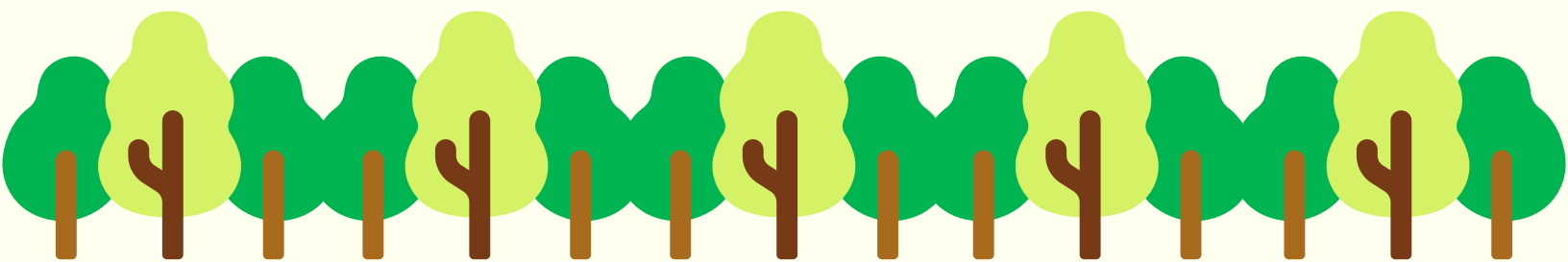
It's time to lead the way at your favorite state parks and help create a better planet for all! How?

By heading out to explore your local state parks during this year's Girl Scouts Love State Parks Weekend! Every year, on the second or third weekend of September, you can participate in self-guided tours, family hikes, watersports, stargazing, and more.

Whether you're joining in person or virtually, your FREE passport activity sheet will guide you toward adventure! So download our activity sheet, unlock a new patch, and remember you have everything it takes to lead the way!

Given the high temperatures, before you head out, remember to be safe by bringing water, sunscreen, and a hat, and using the buddy system during your outdoor activities.

Girl Scouts Love State Parks is offered in partnership with the National Association of State Park Directors.



Girl Scouts Love State Parks

Packet 2026

Activities for You and Getting the Patch

Please use this packet to check out activity details of Local State Parks. Details include Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana programming, park programming and park amenities, resources, and self-guided activities.

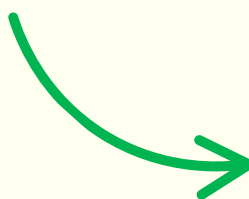


Head out to explore your local state parks during this year's Girls Scouts Love State Parks Weekend! Every year, on the second weekend or third weekend of September, you can participate in self-guided tours, family hikes, watersports, stargazing, and more, all while fostering a clean environment for everyone to enjoy with Pick Up America.

Participating in this initiative supports the steps to earn you Girl Scouts Love State Parks Patch.



Scan her to purchase the patch
or visit bit.ly/3UKcVYO



For questions email jgarner@gskentuckiana.org

GIRL SCOUT	PLANTS	WILDLIFE
STATE PARK	BIRDS	HIKER
LOVE	RANGER	OUTDOORS
FUN	PATCH	GREEN
ADVENTURE	TREEFOIL	LEAVES

S D I F U N A I A T
 T O L R L P D R T R
 A U D A E L V L C E
 T T L N A A E S H F
 E D I G V N N C B O
 P O F E E T T O I I
 A O E R S S U U R L
 R R H I K E R T D Q
 K S I G R E E N S X
 R C W L O V E G P W

Ready to discover your local state parks? Contact your council to join in on some unforgettable outdoor fun! After your adventures, find and circle the words that describe your experience.

Love State Parks Word Search

FOLD AND STAPLE BEFORE CUTTING

OUTSIDE

FOLD

FOLD, THEN STAPLE HERE

1. Know before you go
2. Stick to trails and camp overnight right
3. Trash your trash and pick up dog poop
4. Leave it as you find it
5. Be careful with fire
6. Keep wildlife wild
7. Share our trails and manage your pet

Check Them Out:

To show their respect for nature, Girl Scouts always practice the seven principles of Leave No Trace.

LBetaovree - NYoo Tur-agcoe Checklist

FOLD AND STAPLE BEFORE CUTTING

Get Outside with Girl Scouts!



Lead the way during Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend to explore outdoors. Share your experience with #gsLoveStateParks.

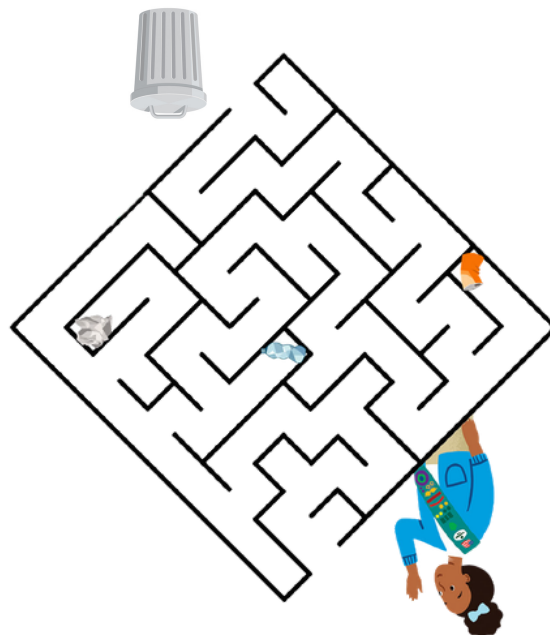


Key
 TRAILHEAD
 WILDLIFE
 EXPLORATION
 ADVENTURE
 BUTTERFLY
 EARTHWORM
 ANTS

____ ← NATS
 ____ ← RTERHWAOM
 ____ ← RYTFEBTLU
 ____ ← URDENAVTE
 ____ ← TANIPXREOLO
 ____ ← FEWDILL
 ____ ← AAHETDRIL

Every state park offers so much to explore! With each visit, you're likely to stumble across something new and exciting! Unscramble the endless list of possibilities you might find during your next outdoor adventure.

Outdoor Unscramble



Help pick up garbage to keep our state parks clean and beautiful. Share on social with #becauseofgirlscouts #getoutdoors to document your contribution!

Pick Up Trash Maze

INSIDE

Before-You-Go Checklist

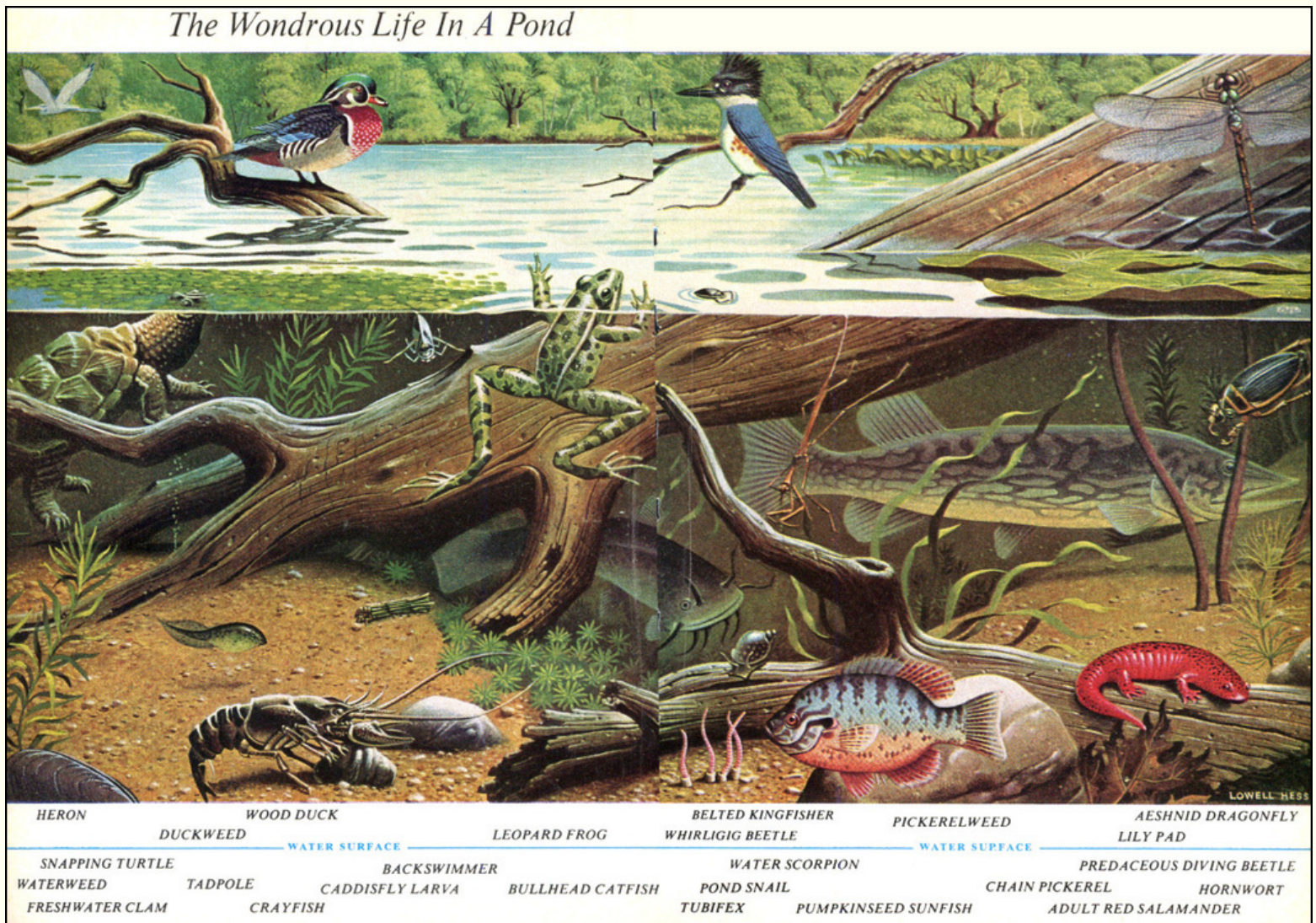
Girl Scouts are always prepared! Before heading outdoors, remember to plan ahead. Here's a simple checklist of items to consider packing for your adventure.

- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Bug repellent
- ☐ Field guides
- ☐ Antibacterial gel
- ☐ Sun hat
- ☐ Phone or camera
- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ This activity passport

Take a minute to observe your surroundings. Sketch something you want to remember from today's state park visit.

Aquatic Critter Seek

Activity: Visit a water body (pond, lake, stream or a river) and carefully monitor the critters you see, in and around the water. Freely record and use tools like aquatic nets, binoculars, magnifying glasses and anything else to help explore water systems.



Aquatic ecosystems are a great place to observe a variety of life forms, including macroinvertebrates, fish, mammals, and birds, where their roles are crucial in maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity.

BioBlitz at the Park

Activity: Use tools like binoculars, magnifying glasses, and cameras to help find and log the wildlife you see at the park. Need help? Use additional tools like Field Guides or the Seek App to better understand the wildlife you find.



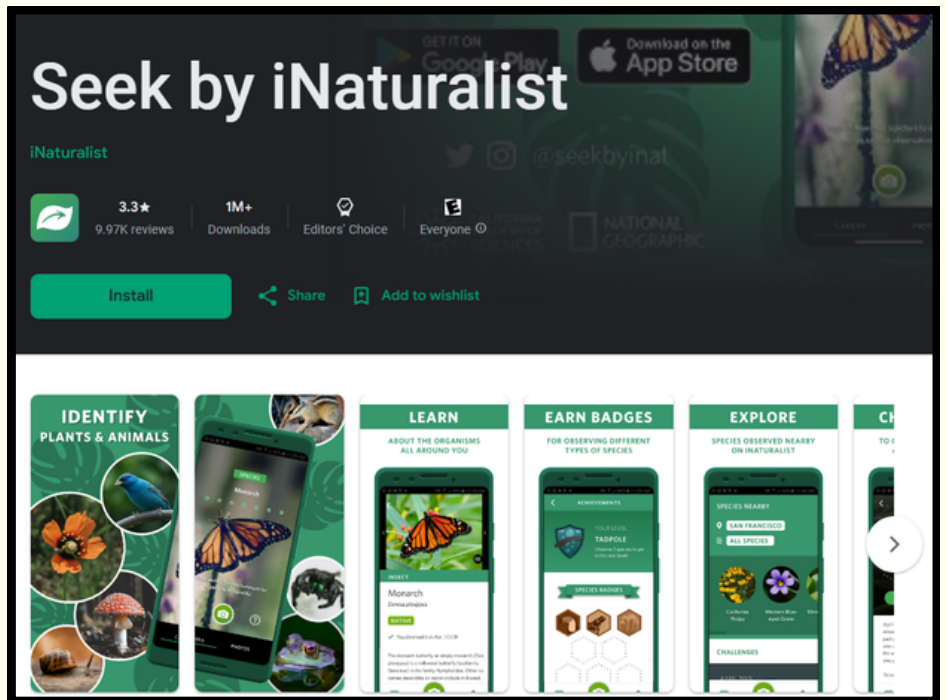
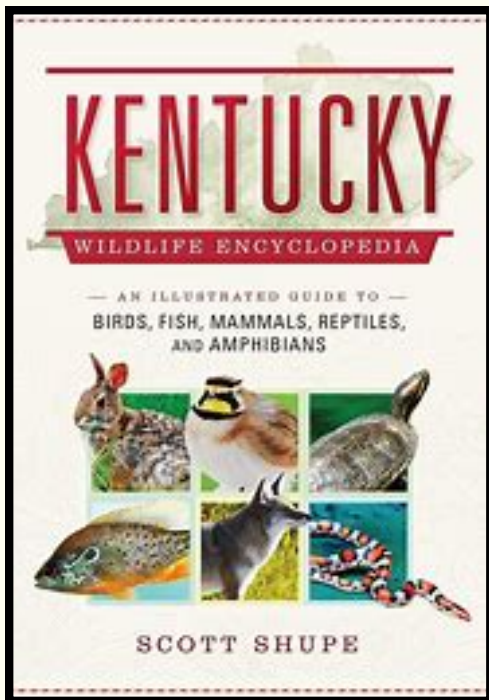
Animals



Plants



Fungus



A bioblitz is a timed event where scientists, nature enthusiasts, and volunteers collaborate to catalog as many species as possible in a specific area.

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt

(Park Edition)

Activity: Explore the park system in its transitional period from summer to fall to locate unique aspects of the ecosystem. For this activity, please respect Leave No Trace principles and be safe with the items you find.

Osage Orange Fruit	Monarch Butterfly	Colorful Flower	Crawfish
Red Leaf	Deer Tracks	Green Leaf	Place to sit
Sycamore Tree	Poison Ivy	Fossil	Water fountain
Black Walnut Seed	Turkey Vulture	Beaver Chew	Sunset/Sunrise
Oak Tree Acorn	Daddy Long Legs	Rabbit	Cloud(s)
Pine Needles	Creek Rock	Cardinal Bird	Trail Sign
Pine cone	Tulip Poplar Tree	Poke Weed	Playground

An ecosystem is where non-living and living things, such as plants, animals, and microbes play their roles, interacting in a vibrant community. Each organism contributes to the balance, creating a lively natural network.

Ephemeral Art

Activity: Collect items found in nature, such as fallen twigs, leaves, seed, flower pedals, rocks, and shells to create an artistic image.



Ephemeral art is temporary and fleeting, like sand castles and ice sculptures. Its charm lie in appreciating beauty in the moment, emphasizing the joy of creation over permanence. This art style is rooted in the experience over the final product

Find Those Signs

Activity:

Pick a trail or walk the edge of an open field or water source to search for signs that animals have been in that area.

ANIMAL SIGNS

Chewed Nuts and Stripped Cones
Hollowed nuts and stripped cones indicate the presence of rodents like squirrels, chipmunks and mice, and birds such as nuthatches, crossbills and woodpeckers.

Squirrel Midden
A large pile of cone, nut and plant litter found beneath a favorite feeding spot, often at the base of a tree.

Rabbit
The browsed ends of twigs can indicate who ate them. Rabbits slice off the ends of twigs cleanly at a 45-degree angle. Porcupines leave rows of small bite marks on twig ends. Deer and moose break the ends of twigs and cause the tips to fray.

Porcupine
The browsed ends of twigs can indicate who ate them. Rabbits slice off the ends of twigs cleanly at a 45-degree angle. Porcupines leave rows of small bite marks on twig ends. Deer and moose break the ends of twigs and cause the tips to fray.

Deer
The browsed ends of twigs can indicate who ate them. Rabbits slice off the ends of twigs cleanly at a 45-degree angle. Porcupines leave rows of small bite marks on twig ends. Deer and moose break the ends of twigs and cause the tips to fray.

Browse
The browsed ends of twigs can indicate who ate them. Rabbits slice off the ends of twigs cleanly at a 45-degree angle. Porcupines leave rows of small bite marks on twig ends. Deer and moose break the ends of twigs and cause the tips to fray.

Barked Trees
Porcupines will chew off large patches of bark on the upper parts of trees. Male deer will often rub the bark off the lower extremities of smaller trees with their antlers.

Bird Pellet
Owls, eagles, hawks, ravens and gulls are a few species of birds that commonly regurgitate pellets comprised of undigestible material. The pellets superficially resemble animal scat, but are comprised solely of hair, feathers and bones.

Scratch Marks on Trees
Bears will claw and bite trees as high as they can reach and often tear the bark off the lower trunk to feed on sap. Bobcats sometimes use trees as "scratching posts". Rodents and raccoons leave scratch marks on trees while climbing.

Beaver Lodge
Lodge is constructed primarily of sticks and mud. Size is variable, but is typically over 4 ft. (1.2 m) high and 10 ft. (3 m) in diameter.

Gnawed Trees
Beaver sign.

Squirrel Nest
Round nests of leaves are often located high in the branches of deciduous trees.

Muskrat Lodge
Dome-shaped lodge is constructed of marsh plants and mud. Size is variable, but is typically over 2 ft. (60 cm) high and 3 ft. (90 cm) in diameter.

Guide To Animal Tracks

Animal	Track Pattern	Size
White-tailed Deer		2 1/2" to 3"
Moose		4 1/2" to 5 1/2"
Dog		2 1/4" to 4"
Coyote		2 1/4" to 4"
Red Fox		2"
Gray Fox		1 3/4"
Bobcat		1 7/8"
Lynx		3"
House Cat		1 to 2"
Otter		1 1/2"
Fisher		2 1/4"
Mink		1"
Weasel		1/2" to 1"

TRACKS NOT TO SCALE

Depending on the substrate (snow, mud, dust, sand, etc.) and the speed the animal was moving, tracks may show great variability in their appearance.

F - Front track
H - Hind track
T - Tail marks may be present

TRACK PATTERN

Animal	Track Pattern	Size
Raccoon		4"
Striped Skunk		2"
Porcupine		3 1/4"
Beaver		6"
Black Bear		7"
Opossum		2"
Woodchuck		2 1/4"
Muskrat		2 1/2"
Snowshoe Hare		5"
Cottontail Rabbit		3 1/2"
Gray Squirrel		2 1/4"
White-footed Mouse		1/4"
Crow		2 1/2"
Turkey		4"
Ruffed Grouse		2"

BLUE RIDGE DISCOVERY CENTER

Animals live all around us, often hidden from view, yet they constantly leave behind signs of their presence. These signs, such as tracks, nests, and droppings, offer a glimpse into their unseen world. By observing and interpreting these clues, we can uncover the mysteries of their lives and better understand the intricate ecosystems they inhabit.

Leave No Trace

Activity: Use these 7 Leave No Trace Principles to consider the way you visit State Parks. Also make note of how these principles impact the park itself. Do you notice trash, can you spot erosion, is it difficult to navigate, are there really cool items you find.



Leave No Trace (LNT) is a nationwide program of outdoor ethics used by many organizations such as the National Park Service, the US Forest service, environmental and outdoor education agencies, and youth groups.

Photography Contest: Ripple Effects

Activity: Visit a state park and capture images that mean the most to you. Write a short description of what your favorite photo means. To learn more about the Ripple Effects: Photo Contest go to <https://www.lfpl.org/rippleeffectscontest> or visit www.gskentuckiana.org and search GSK Loves Photography to sign up for a workshop where you can enter a photo for a chance to win \$100.



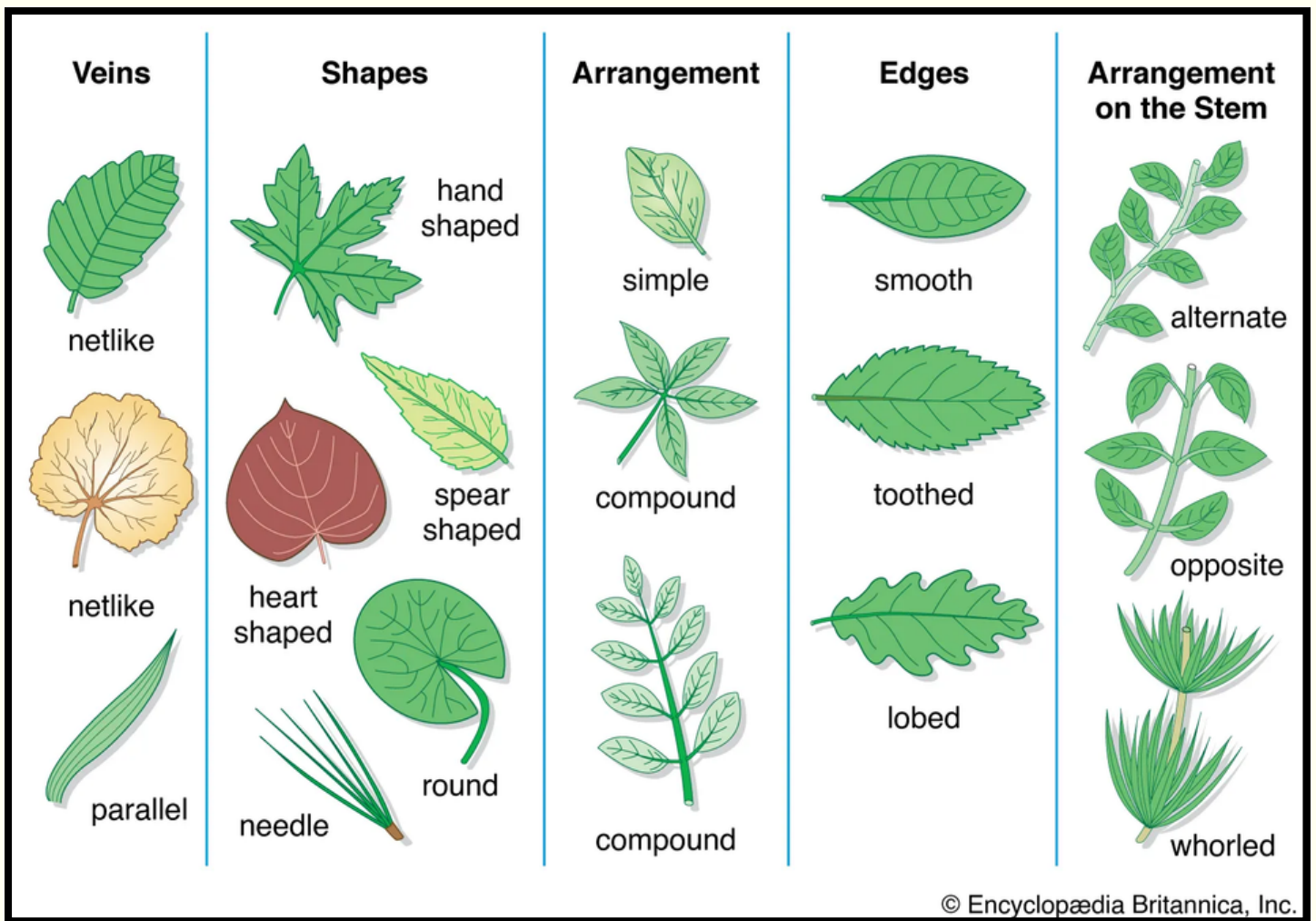
Although competition submissions are for the Louisville Area only, photographing the way water is used in our area by people, wildlife, and systems is a great activity for all in any area.

Ripple Effects: Exploring Water in Louisville Photo Contest invites all K-12 students in the Louisville area to capture images of what water means to them.

What is most beautiful about water in our community? What water-related problems do we need to address? How do we use, recreate in, and interact with water?

Plants: Shapes and Designs

Activity: Use the guide above to notice the type of leaves that plants have in the area. Which are more common? Which leaves stands out to you? How different are tree leaves from bushes, or flowers. Do treess have different leaves from each other?



Understanding plants is a process that varies depending on plant type, what season it is, the location you're in, the species you have, the subspecies there are and the impact the plant has had. Learning the different stuctures a plant has, such as leaves and the way they are formed, can help deepen the understanding of plant species.

Spend Time Sketching

Activity (Inspired by John Muir): Grab a notebook and a writing utensil to note the time, location and the weather conditions. Then spend anywhere from 1-15 minutes making a sketch of the thing happening around you. Use these prompts to inspire your understanding of the environment you see: This reminds me of... I notice... and I wonder...



John Muir Laws is an artist, educator, and naturalist who has dedicated his career to promoting nature journaling as a means of fostering a deeper connection with the natural world. He emphasizes the importance of observation, creativity, and scientific inquiry in his approach to nature journaling.

Take a Hike

Activity: Choose any of the hikes above to take at a state park. Keep in mind the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace. Be sure to stay hydrated, have the right gear, and stay together.

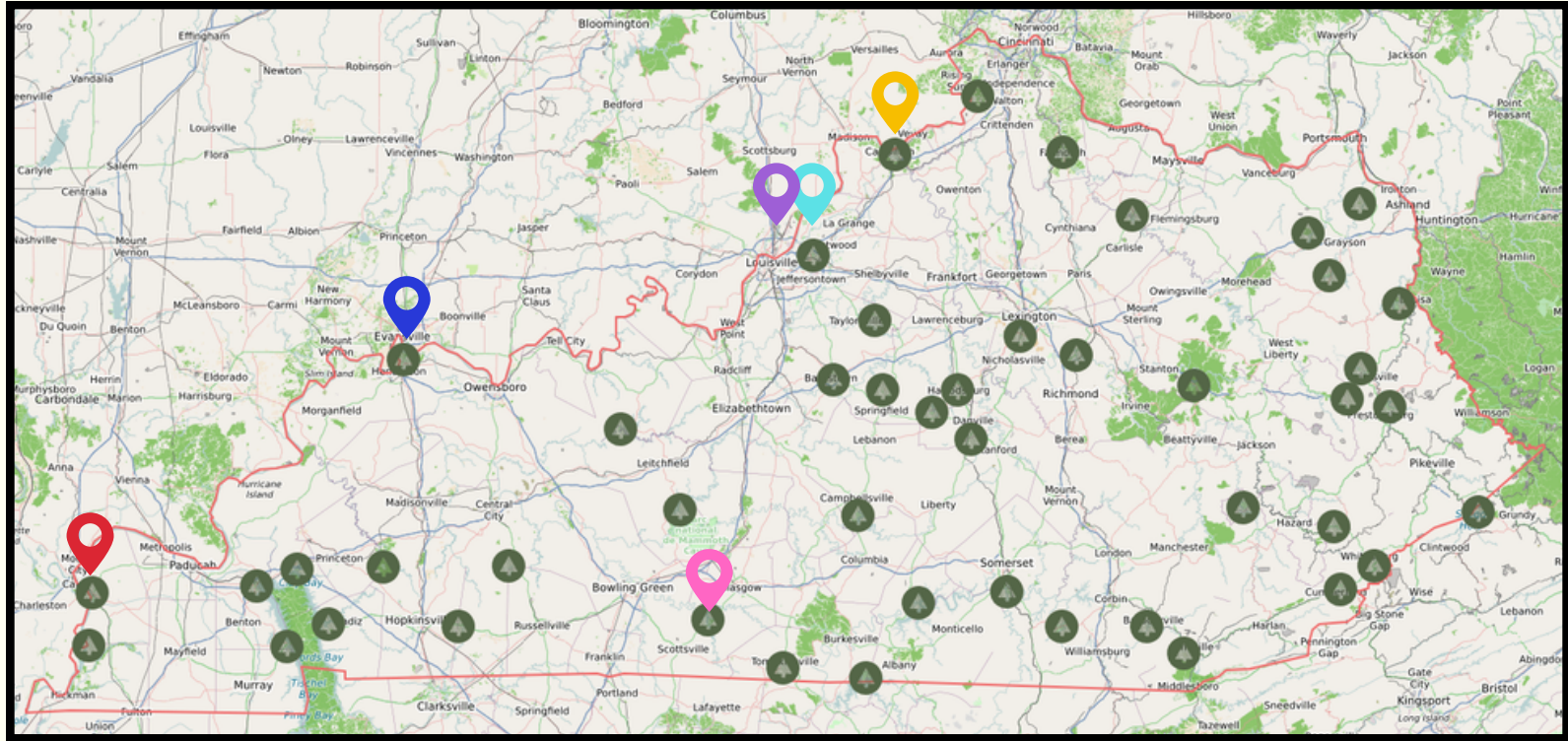
Type of Hike	Hike Description
Silent Hike	The purpose of this hike is to listen. This is hard for girls, and there will be, inevitably, some giggling. Try it at night, or at dusk or very early in the morning, when the surroundings seem strange and mysterious
Bird Hike	Go very early in the morning. If you are quiet, you may see lots of birds. Refer to a book on bird watching
Micro Hike	This is a very short expedition guided by a string 3–5 feet long. Hikers cover the trail inch by inch on their bellies; viewing natural wonders such as grass blades, colorful beetles, and tiny pebbles through a magnifying glass.
Tracking and Trailing	One patrol lays a trail; the second patrol follows the trail signs.
Rainy Day Hike	All decked out in rain clothing, go out for a half-hour walk in the rain.

Hiking is a delightful adventure for the body. Picture leaves rustling, sunlight filtering through trees, and fresh air invigorating your breath. Each step reveals nature's beauty, from birdsong to a babbling brook. Hiking is an excellent workout and a harmonious embrace of daily life, offering a chance to connect with the earth and find serenity.

Girl Scouts Love State Parks

Patch Packet

State Parks to Visit



**Barron River Lake State Resort Park: 1149 State Park Rd,
Lucas, KY 42156 (Kentucky State Park)**



**E.P. Tom Sawyer State Park: 3000 Freys Hill Rd, Louisville, KY
40241 (Kentucky State Park)**



**Falls of the Ohio: 201 W Riverside Dr, Clarksville, IN
47129 (Indiana State Park)**



**General Butler State Park: 1608 Hwy. 227, Carrollton, KY
41008 (Kentucky State Park)**



**John James Audubon State Park: 3100 US Highway 41 N, Henderson,
KY 42420 (Kentucky State Park)**



**Wickliffe Mounds State Park: 94 Green St, Wickliffe, KY 42087
(Kentucky State Park)**