

Bear Creek Nature Center's

JUNIOR NATURALIST

FIELD JOURNAL

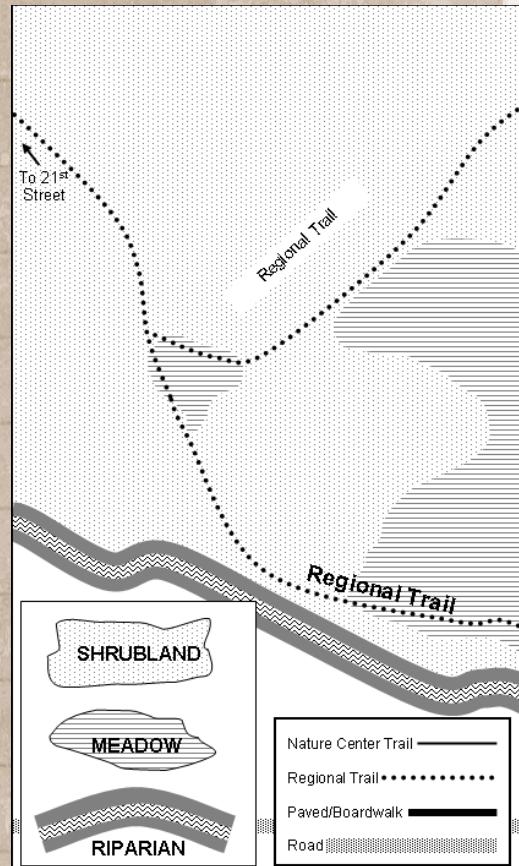
Recommended for children ages 7-12

Welcome to Bear Creek Nature Center!

Bear Creek Nature Center is an incredible place to explore the ecosystems of Colorado Springs' foothills. With three separate habitats to discover, you'll have no trouble keeping your hands, ears, and eyes busy as you hike along the nature trails. Use this field journal to record where you go and what you find during your time here!

How to Become a Junior Naturalist:

- ◊ Take a hike on one of the Nature Center trails
- ◊ Complete at least 5 activities
- ◊ Share your journal with a Bear Creek Naturalist, take the oath, and receive your Junior Naturalist Badge!



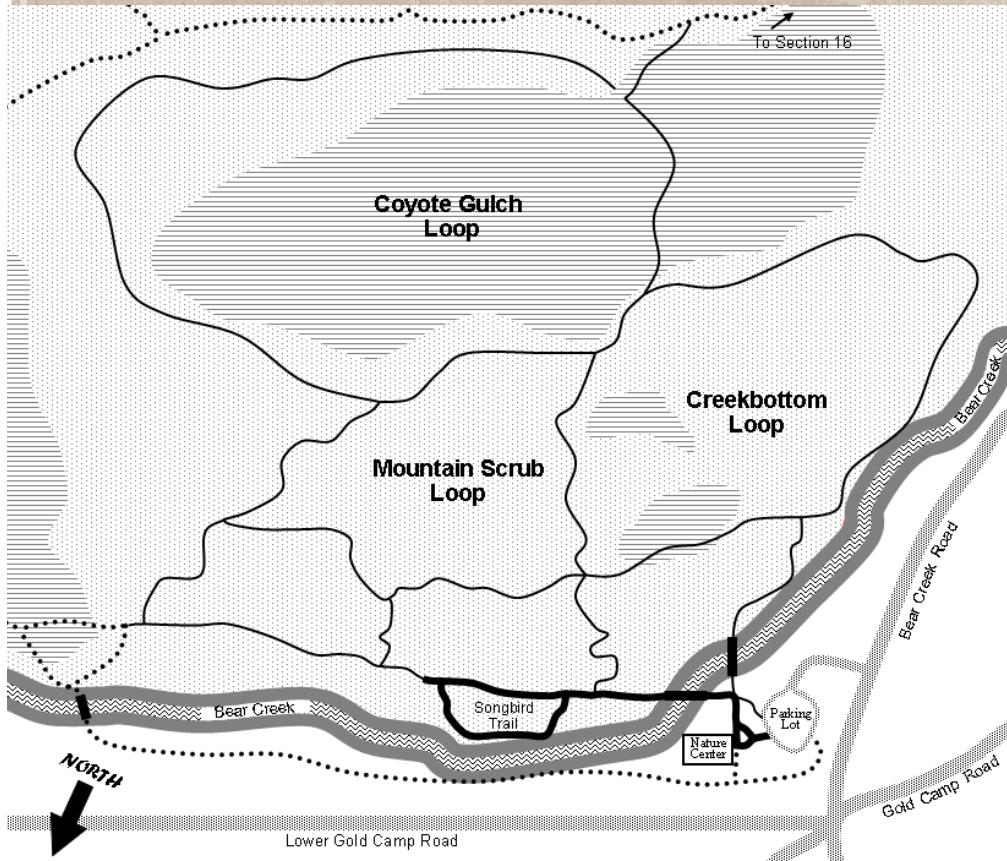
Park Rules

1. Always leave nature in nature! Leave natural things the way you found them.
2. Watch wildlife from a safe distance! Do not approach animals, do not throw items at animals, do not yell at animals.
3. Stay on the trail.

Designed by Vecteezy

**Record Your Explorations on
the Map!**

- Trace the trails you hiked
- Mark your wildlife clues and sightings with an X



Describe the weather during your adventures at
Bear Creek Nature Center:

The Habitats of Bear Creek Nature Center

MEADOW

An open area with grasses and other non-woody plants is called a meadow habitat. Meadows are sometimes named grassland or prairie habitat. The meadows at Bear Creek also have cacti and yucca plants, so watch your step!



RIPARIAN

Any land next to lakes or streams is called a riparian habitat. The riparian habitat of Bear Creek features tall cottonwood trees and lush undergrowth. The combination of water, shade and food attracts mule deer and many other animals to Bear Creek's riparian zones.



SHRUBLAND

Shrubland habitats are dominated by scrub and brush plants, such as the Gambel oak. It also includes grasses and flowers. The thick growth of this habitat provides important shelter for many animals at Bear Creek.



Junior Naturalists are SCIENTISTS!



Choose a habitat to explore. While you're there, record what you notice around you and what questions you have about this place. Remember to use your sense of smell, hearing, touch and sight. Making observations and asking questions are the first steps in the scientific method!

I notice...

I wonder...

The scientific method:

Make observations

Ask a question

Form a hypothesis
(a scientific guess!)

Conduct an experiment

Study your findings &
come to a conclusion

Communicate your
scientific discovery!

Make more observations!

Don't forget an important step of the scientific method: communication!
At the end of your visit, return to the Nature Center to share your findings and record them in our nature log!

Junior Naturalists are STEWARDS!



A steward is
someone who cares
for and protects
their environment.

The Seven Leave No Trace Principles:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

**Check off the boxes for
the ways you protected
this place during your
explorations!**

Picked up litter

Left natural objects where you found
them

Stayed on designated trails

Put all trash and food waste in the
garbage

Gave animals space

Read trail map and planned your
hiking route

Be Bear Aware!

Black bears are frequent visitors to Bear Creek Nature Center. They can be seen munching on acorns and apples in preparation for winter. While hiking in black bear habitat, it is important to make noise by talking with your hiking partners or clapping your hands to alert any bears to your presence. If you do see a bear, remember to **stay calm**, avoid eye contact and slowly leave the area.



How can YOU keep bears safe?

Bears will eat anything they can get their paws on and have the ability to smell food from up to five miles away! Check out these guidelines for your home and neighborhood to help keep bears safe.

1. Bring your garbage in at night
2. Keep all cars clean of any food or garbage
3. Don't feed bears
4. Keep all bear-accessible windows and doors locked
5. Pick fruit before it ripens and clean up fallen fruit
6. Bring in bird feeders at night

Brainstorm ideas for how you can keep bears safe in your neighborhood:

Junior Naturalists are DETECTIVES!



Look for animal clues as you hike
and draw what you find!

Some clues you might find...

- Tracks • Nests
- Scat • Burrows
- Fur • And more!

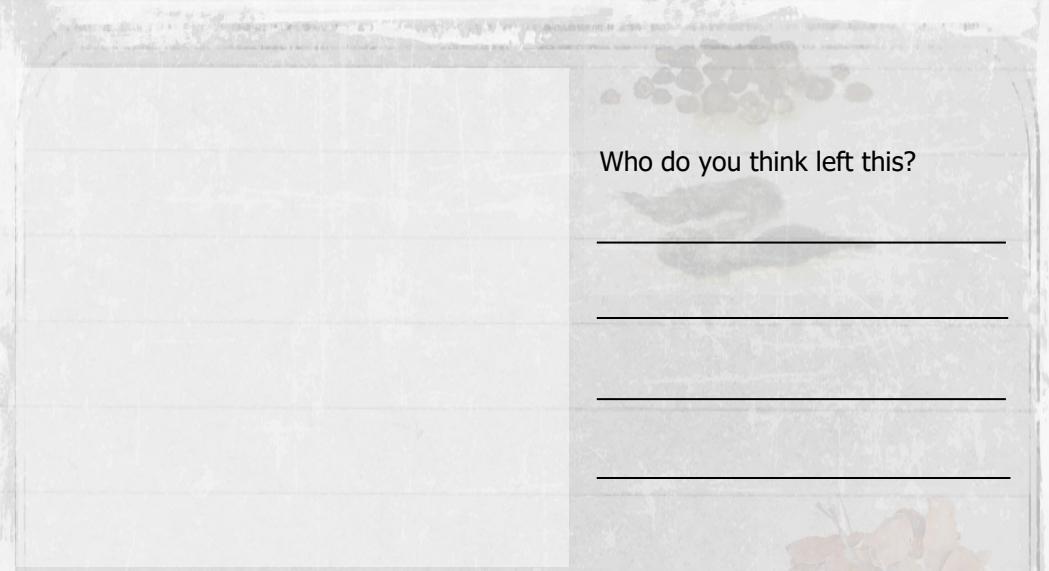
Who do you think left this?

What do you think they were doing?

Who do you think left this?

What do you think they were doing?





Who do you think left this?

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Who do you think left this?

What do you think they were doing?

What Trees Are These?



Use the Tree ID guide to identify two trees you find while at Bear Creek Nature Center. Draw the trees here and record their names!

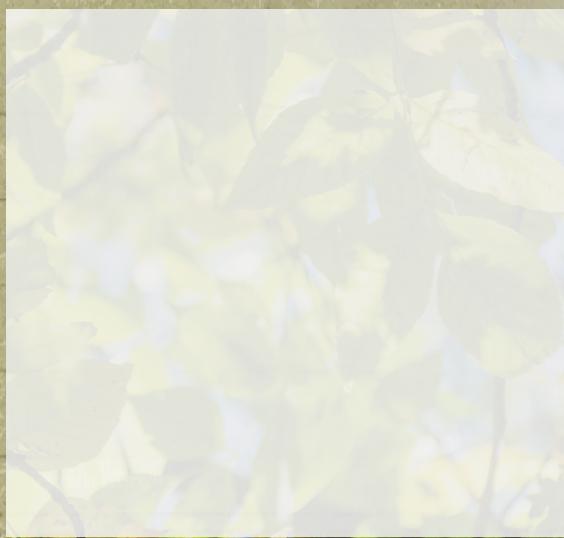


What tree is this?

What habitat did you find it in?

What tree is this?

What habitat did you find it in?



Whose Tracks are Those?

Use the guide to Tracks and Scat to identify any that you may find while hiking the trails at Bear Creek. Use the spaces below to draw any tracks or scat you see or any you think you might find the next time you visit!

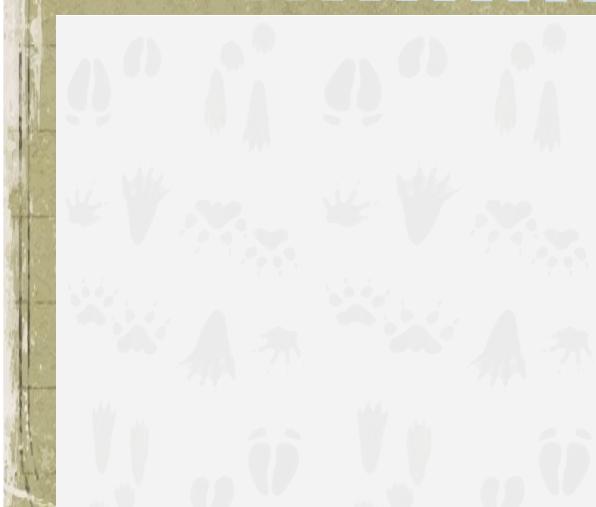
Whose track or scat is this?

What habitat did you find it in?

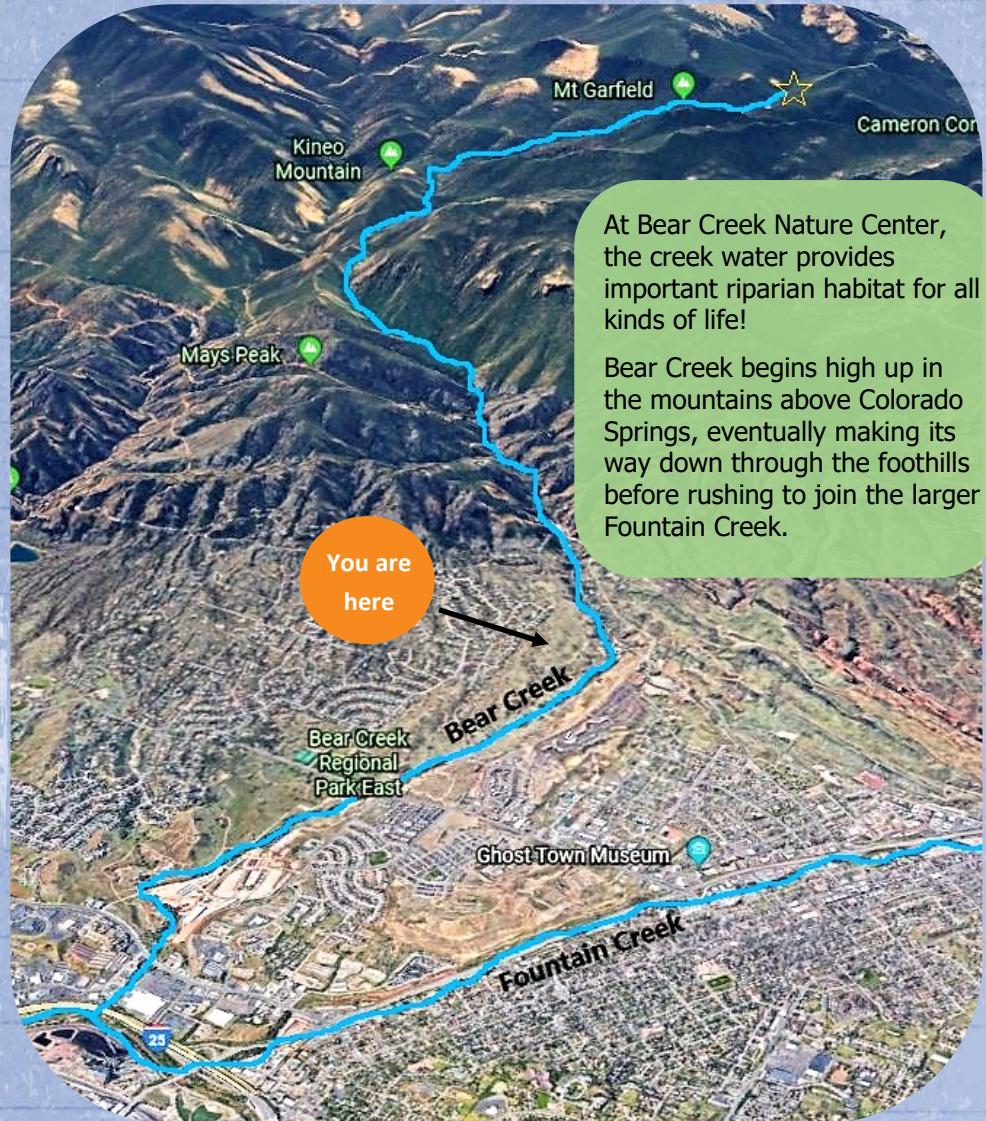


Whose track or scat is this?

What habitat did you find it in?



Where There is Water, There is Life!



At Bear Creek Nature Center, the creek water provides important riparian habitat for all kinds of life!

Bear Creek begins high up in the mountains above Colorado Springs, eventually making its way down through the foothills before rushing to join the larger Fountain Creek.

A Day as a Drop



Imagine you are a rain drop that just fell in the riparian habitat near Bear Creek. Where do you land? Where do you go next? Does a thirsty mule deer drink you up, or do you sink deep underground? Anything could happen in the life of a water drop! Write or draw your own story in the space below.

Nature Journaling



Nature journaling is a great way to record your observations while outside! You can journal by writing down what you notice or by drawing the things that you see. Try describing the way the clouds look or draw a leaf up-close. You may use this space however you like!



The Junior Naturalist Pledge

A Junior Naturalist I pledge to be,
I will work to protect our trees.
My hands will always pick up litter
And my ears will listen as birds twitter.
My new knowledge I will communicate,
And all my friends I will educate,
About the importance of Leave No Trace
And the beauty of this special place.





This is to certify that

has completed the requirements to become a

JUNIOR NATURALIST

at



Park Naturalist

Date