

Start here!

MYSTERY GUIDE

- ♥ Take this Mystery Guide and a pen or pencil with you as you explore. To complete your Nature Detective training at this park, complete at least 3 of the 6 activities.
- ♥ Inside you will find a map of the park, which will serve as a guide. Some activities correspond to locations on the map, , and some activities can be done anywhere.
- ♥ Feel free to get help from grown-ups on this, but remember, these activities are for you! You can write or draw anywhere in this mystery guide. The more thoughtful and artistic, the better!

YOUR CASE: WALDEN PONDS

Walden Ponds is a wildlife refuge, which means it is a safe place for many turtles, frogs, fish, birds, and other animals. Walk along the shorelines of the ponds. You might see red-winged blackbirds, gulls, geese, ducks, and other birds that winter or breed here along with great blue heron, belted kingfishers, and white pelican.

Nature Detectives Club Mystery Guides can be found at:

- 1) Agricultural Heritage Center
- 2) Bald Mountain Scenic Area
- 3) Betasso Preserve
- 4) Caribou Ranch Open Space
- 5) Carolyn Holmberg Preserve
- 6) Heil Valley Ranch
- 7) Mud Lake Open Space
- 8) Pella Crossing
- 9) Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat

Drop completed mystery guides in the Nature Detectives Club mailbox at each park. If you need to finish at home, mail it to us: Nature Detectives Club, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, 5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont, CO 80503

Complete the information below so we can send you prizes and return your mystery guides!

Grown-ups, please provide the following information:

Detective's name: _____

_____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip code: _____

Phone: _____

BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

2016



NATURE DETECTIVES CLUB



WALDEN PONDS WILDLIFE HABITAT

A mystery awaits in this county park full of clues!

- ♥ **Your mission** is to become a young Nature Detective, collecting clues from the world around you, and solving mysteries of the forest, prairie, wetlands, and mountains.
- ♥ After completing a mystery guide we will send you a useful tool for your future outdoor adventures.
- ♥ All right detective, let's go!

(Intended for ages 4-11)

Sounds All Around Us

1

Nature is full of noises that we usually don't hear unless we listen very carefully. Walk silently around a pond for 5 minutes. Listen closely and write down some of the natural sounds you hear. Did you hear sounds you would have normally missed?

Yes or No



Nature Sounds
Heard



1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

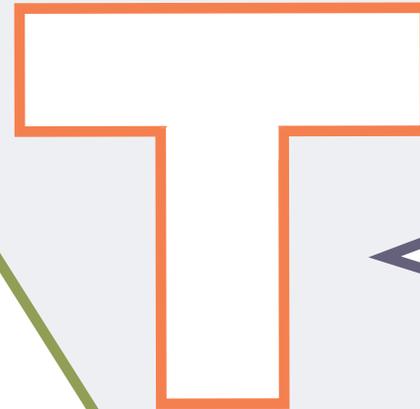
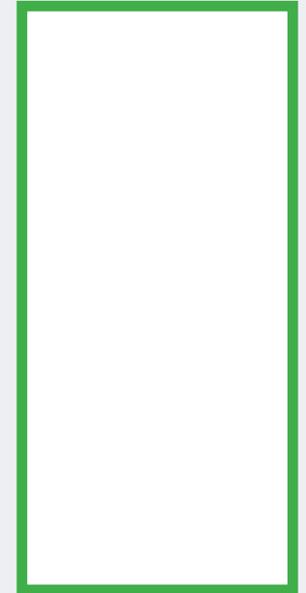
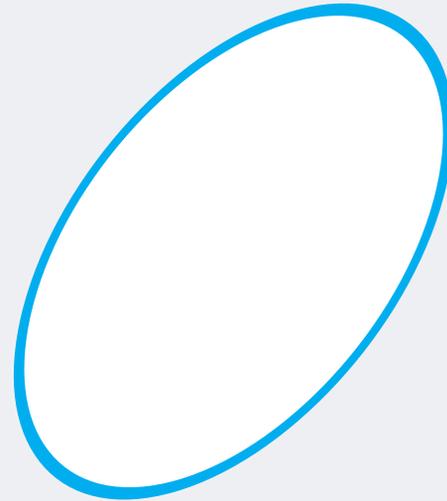
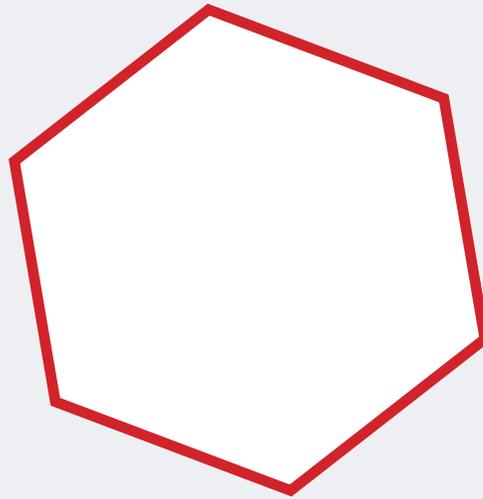
5) _____

6) _____

Finding Shapes in Nature

2

The natural world around you comes in many shapes, colors, and patterns. Some things are square, others are round, and some are a combination of shapes. Your challenge is to find objects in nature that look similar to the shapes below and draw them in. Look long and hard, detective, and you are sure to find a plant, rock, or animal that will fit in all the shapes below!



WALDEN PONDS NATURE DETECTIVES MAP

Feel free to write or draw on your map!



MAP ACTIVITY!

3

Animals Have Homes, Just Like You Do

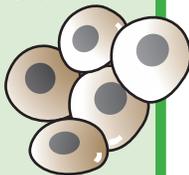
Walden Ponds is home to many animals. As you explore the park today, see if you can find an animal's home. Animals are no different than people, they need food to eat, water to drink, and shelter to hide from harm. When you find one animal home, mark it on the map with an **X**. Tell us what animal you think lives there and why this is a good animal home.

6

Time's Fun When You're Havin' Flies!

Some pond creatures are good at hiding and can only be found when they make noise. Listen very closely, and you might hear the chirping of chorus frogs, or the croak and *kerplunk* of a bullfrog. Leopard frogs lay their eggs in spring, and soon after, tiny tadpoles hatch. Tiptoe quietly and you might find tadpoles swimming in the water next to the boardwalk .

***If you find a frog, do not touch it!**
A frog's skin must stay moist to help it breathe.
Touching frogs damages their slimy skin.*

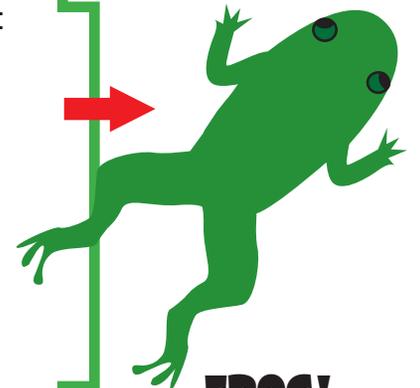


EGGS!



From an egg to a fully-formed frog:
Can you draw the missing stage?

TADPOLE!



FROG!

4

All Kinds of Birds

Draw-in!

Walden Ponds is visited by many different kinds of birds. For the next five minutes, sit quietly and keep a tally of the number of birds you see. After the time is up draw a picture of your favorite bird in the space above and explain why it might like to visit Walden Ponds.

Why might they visit?

Keep a bird tally!

5

Dragonflies

Dragonflies are brightly colored insects that fly very fast, up, down, and even backwards! They catch their prey (other bugs) in mid-air and rest on top of long grasses and twigs. Watch a dragonfly fly around the pond. Why do you think dragonflies like to live near water?
