

# LET'S GO!

1

## Design A Predator

As you start your hike, notice the sign near the trailhead warning that you are "Hiking in mountain lion habitat." Mountain lions are predators and must hunt for food. Fox, coyote and hawks are other predators living here. Predators use their quick reflexes, powerful jaws, and good eye sight to track down prey.

What makes a predator good at hunting?  
Design and draw a predator below.

Draw your predator here!

What does your animal eat?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Nature Detectives Club mystery guides can be found at:

- 1) Agricultural Heritage Center
- 2) Betasso Preserve
- 3) Caribou Ranch Open Space
- 4) Carolyn Holmberg Preserve
- 5) Meyers Homestead Trail at Walker Ranch
- 6) Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat
- 7) Heil Valley Ranch
- 8) Mud Lake Open Space
- 9) Pella Crossing

Drop your completed mystery guide 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

Don't forget to 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org)

Printed in 2012



# NATURE DETECTIVES CLUB



## MEYERS HOMESTEAD AT WALKER RANCH

*A mystery awaits, in a 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 three of the nine mystery guides (see full listing of parks on back cover) we'll send you a nature sleuthing tool -- something useful, for your future outdoor adventures.

♥ All right, detective, let's go!

(For ages 11 and under)

Start Here!

## SLEUTHING GUIDE:

- ♥ Take this Nature Detectives activity page and a pen or pencil with you as you explore. To complete your Nature Detective Training at this park, complete 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 grownups on this, but remember, you are the creative genius! This page is yours to write your observations and draw pictures. The more thoughtful, the more artistic-- the better!

### YOUR CASE: MEYERS HOMESTEAD

Coyote, deer, black bear, mountain lion and wild turkey can be found here. Elk migrate here from higher elevations in the winter. In 2000, the Eldorado Fire burned 1,062 acres here on Walker Ranch.

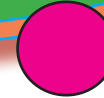
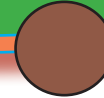
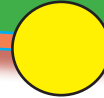
## ANYWHERE AT MEYERS HOMESTEAD...

2

### Color Map

Nature is full of many colors. Sometimes colors blend together and make new colors. Hike for the next 5 minutes putting a check in the boxes below each time you see that color in nature. Why do you think there are different colors in nature? Why isn't everything just one shade of green or brown?

Keep a Tally!



3

### Meet a Tree!

Trees may seem to be all the same when you first look at them, but just like people, trees are each different in their shape, size, and color. Here's a fun way to "get to know" a tree a little better:

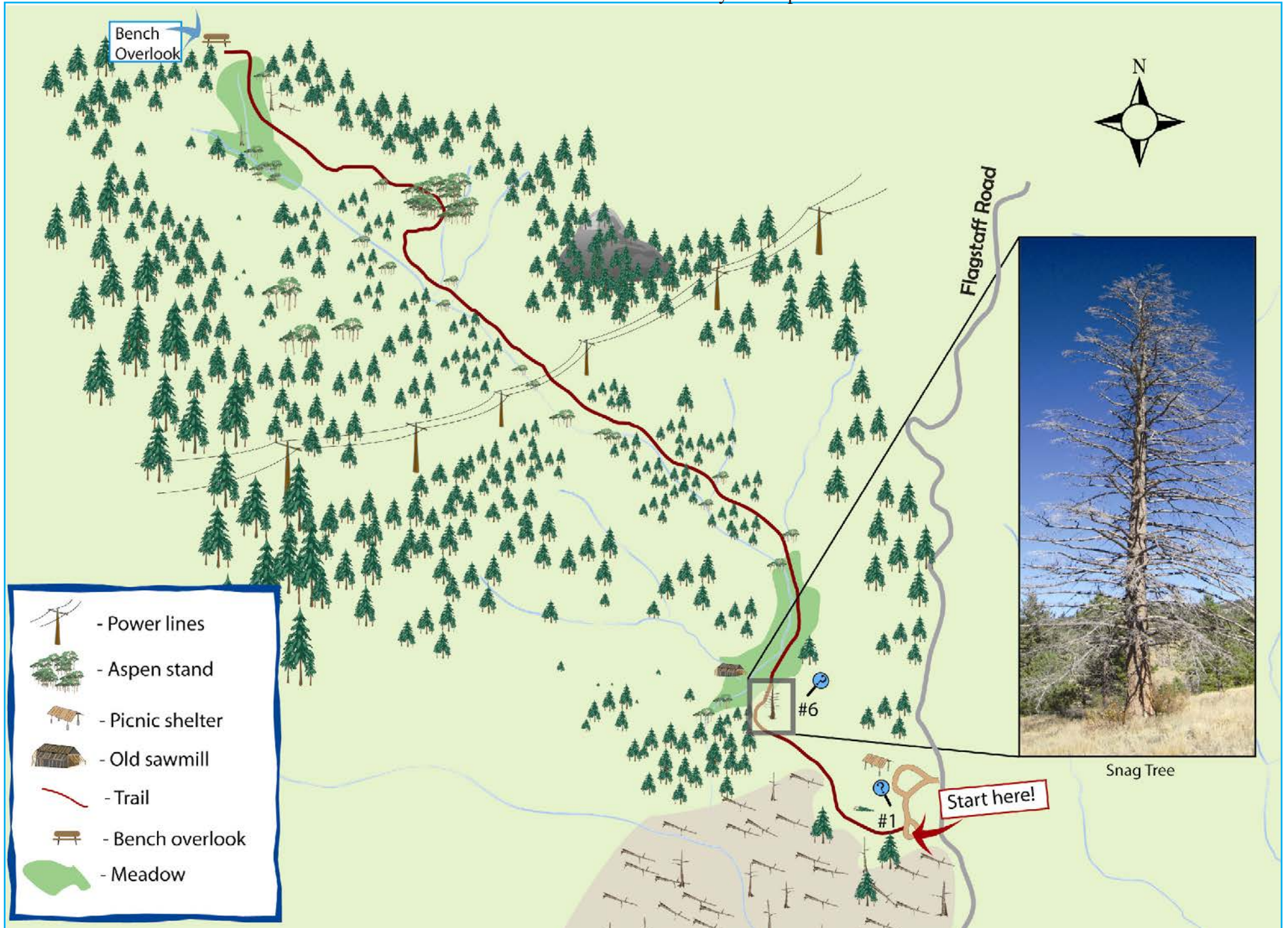
Find a spot to the side of the trail where there are a lot of trees. Pair up with an adult partner. Close your eyes, and let your partner guide you slowly and carefully around the area until he or she finds a tree for you to meet. Keep your eyes closed, and use your other senses to get to know it – feel the trunk and branches, smell it . . . etc.

When you think you know your tree, have your partner lead you back to the start spot. Open your eyes, and then see if you can find your tree again!



# MEYERS HOMESTEAD NATURE DETECTIVE'S MAP

Feel free to write or draw on your map!



# MAP ACTIVITIES

4



**Let Your Nose Do The Walking!** Nature is full of different smells. As you hike the trail let your nose guide your path instead of your eyes. Get close to the ground, smell the flowers, grasses and rocks. What do the trees smell like? How many different smells can you find, detective? Put a check in the box below each time you find a new smell.

Keep a Smell Tally!

--

Why do you think plants smell good to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6

## Who Lives Here?

Keep your eyes out for dead trees near the trail as you hike. There is a photo of a dead tree on the map above. This kind of tree is called a “snag.” It is important to many animals that live here. Look closely at snag trees. Can you think of any animals that might make it their home? Draw a picture of an animal at home in a snag!

## Super Sleuth Challenge (for detectives with bikes):

While looking out from the Bench Overlook (marked on your map) can you figure out what force carved out the canyon below?

\*Fill in the missing letters to reveal the answer: “W \_ \_ E R”

5

## Fire Ecology

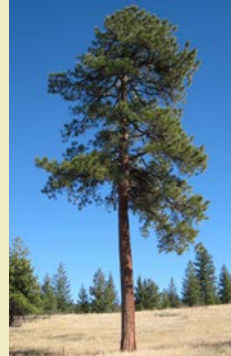
Many trees here are ponderosa pines. These trees are very well adapted to fire and in fact depend on forest fires to stay healthy! They have adaptations that allow them to survive frequent small ground fires. Look closely at a ponderosa pine. Circle two adaptations listed below that you think help protect the pine tree from fire.

Thick Bark

Pine Cones

High Branches

Big Leaves



### Extra credit:

In 2000 a fire burned through this area leaving behind black burned marks on the lower bark of some of the trees. Look for these burn marks as you hike and try to see if the scars are mostly on the uphill or downhill side of the tree. Can you guess why the scars would be darker on one side?

Draw-In!