



# Animal Signs Post-visit

## Classroom Activities

### **Brief Synopsis**

*Looking for animal signs can be a fun and informative pastime. As animals travel, they leave clues of their lives. Studying animal signs can provide insight into their feeding patterns, migration, nesting habits, and more. As we observe and study wildlife, it is important that we are aware of our impact on their lives.*

*Humans can have a positive or negative impact on wildlife populations. One of the most direct connections that people have to wildlife involves habitat. Humans have the capability to destroy or degrade habitat, as well as the power to create or improve habitat. This activity shows the importance of wildlife corridors in connecting wildlife habitats.*

**Ages:** Designed for 5th–8th grade

### **Time Considerations:**

“Wildlife Corridors” - 25 minutes

### **Materials:**

3 ropes (5-10 feet long), 4 “Animal” cards, 6 “Wildlife Corridor” cards, 18 “Obstacle” cards, 16 “Food” cards

**Vocabulary:** Habitat, Wildlife Corridor

### **Outcomes:**

“Wildlife Corridors”

- Students will participate in a relay race, acting as animals that must face different obstacles as they search for food.
- Students will discuss the positive and negative impacts that humans have on the environment and wildlife.

### **Minnesota Academic Standards:**

- Language Arts:  
5.III.A.1, 6.III.A.1, 7.III.A.1, 8.III.A.1
- Science:  
7.IV.C.1

Revised Mar 2008

### **Background:**

Every form of wildlife needs a combination of environmental components to survive. Together, these form its habitat. For most wildlife, the Earth is full of “habitat islands,” where life is manageable, surrounded by areas where life is harder or impossible. These islands have formed as a result of the human activities around them. A wildlife corridor is a strip of habitat that connects wildlife populations separated by human activities (roads, development, logging, etc). Animals face many obstacles in their daily, seasonal, and yearly travels. When animals leave the safety of their “habitat island” they face serious risks. When an animal reaches an obstacle, like a busy highway, they may spend valuable time searching for a way to cross, exposing themselves to predators. When they do attempt a crossing, it may result in death or injury.

Many people and organizations have realized the importance of establishing wildlife corridors, whether on a small or large scale. Small scale efforts have resulted in “Animal overpasses” built over or under highways. Large scale efforts include collaborations to connect the Rocky Mountain Range as a large wildlife corridor.

### **Activity: Wildlife Corridors**

#### **Procedures:**

1. Gather all materials.
2. Find a rectangular playing area (outdoors if possible), approximately 40’ x 20’. Place one rope 20’, or halfway, down the field. Use the other two ropes for the START and FINISH lines on the ends of the field. Scatter the “Obstacle” and “Wildlife Corridor” cards, face down, in the half that is closest to START. Scatter the “Food” cards, face down, in the half that is closest to FINISH.
3. Explain to the students that they will be participating in a relay race. Their team will be assigned the role of a grasshopper, frog, snake or fox. The objective is for each team member to pass through a wildlife corridor and find their proper food source.
4. Take the students to the playing area. Divide the class into four groups and have them stand in the START AREA. Distribute each of the four animal cards to a team. Explain that each team will be looking for a different type of food in the feeding grounds.



- When the game begins, the first student from each team will enter the playing field. They must pick up a card in the first half of the playing field. If it is a “Wildlife Corridor” card, they can place it face down on the floor and continue to the feeding grounds. If it is an “Obstacle” card, they must place it face down on the floor, return to the back of their team line, and wait for their turn to come again. As soon as one student returns to the line, the next student starts out.
- When a student reaches the feeding grounds, they must pick up one card at a time until they find the food source that they are searching for. After they look at each card, they must place it face down again. When the student has found their food source, they can continue to the FINISH line. As soon as one student is behind the FINISH line, the next student in their team can start out. The first team with all their members behind the FINISH line wins.
- Gather the students together for a conclusion.
- Ask the students: Do they know of any specific examples involving animals facing challenging obstacles? What are the usual results? Do they know of any specific examples involving wildlife corridors? What are the outcomes? Are there places in their community where wildlife corridors may be appropriate?
- Discuss: Although the relay race simplified the concept of wildlife corridors, it should have shown that the animals that found the corridors were able to move quicker. In reality, many obstacles that animals face may cause injury or death, in addition to slowed progress. As wildlife searches for food, water, shelter and space to survive, many obstacles can stand in their way. Although people directly and indirectly cause problems for wildlife, we can also affect them positively. Creating habitat, no matter how small, is very beneficial for wildlife. A small area of shrubs may be enough of a “habitat island” to make the difference in the survival of nearby wildlife.

### Optional Activities:

- Create habitat in the schoolyard or nearby area—put up birdfeeders, make brush piles, etc. Visit the National Wildlife Federations webpage to get involved in their “Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program” or “Schoolyard Habitats” Program.  
<http://www.nwf.org/backyard/>  
<http://www.nwf.org/schoolyard/>
- Research a local animal. Where does it travel to and from? What obstacles do they face? Do people help and/or hinder their movement in any way?

### Teacher Tips

- The sheet with the “Animal” cards on it can be printed out once (so that each team only gets one card to share) or 4+ times (so each team member can carry their card with them the whole time).
- Encourage (or mandate) the students to move how their animal moves. Grasshoppers and frogs must hop, snakes must slither, and fox must walk on all fours in a straight line.
- If resources and time permits, allow the students to create a mask or cap to represent the different animals they will be representing. Necklaces of paper and string can be made with the name or picture of their animal. During the game, they can put on the mask, cap or necklace to complement their actions.
- If extra adults or older students are available, have them stand on the sidelines. When the students find a “Wildlife Corridor” or “Food” card, they can show an adult the card, before setting it back down and moving on.

### Additional Resources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife\\_corridor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor)

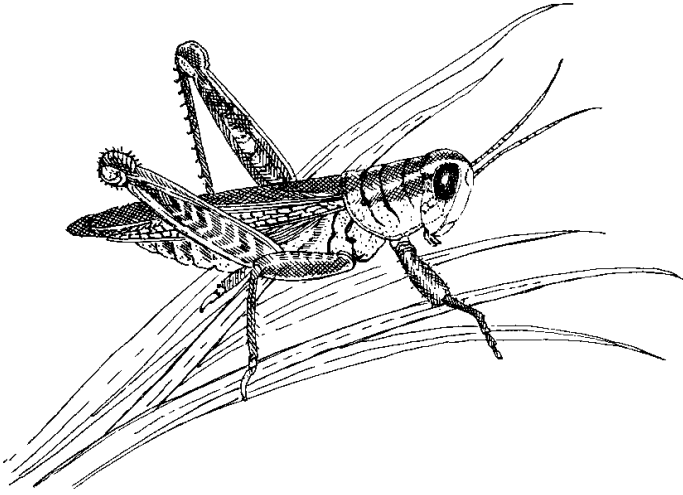
Basic information about wildlife corridors.

[http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/issues\\_facing\\_wildlife/habitat\\_loss\\_and\\_fragmentation](http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/issues_facing_wildlife/habitat_loss_and_fragmentation)

“Safe Passageways for Wildlife,” This 12 minute video, made by the Humane Society, provides information on wildlife corridors and successful projects in the country.

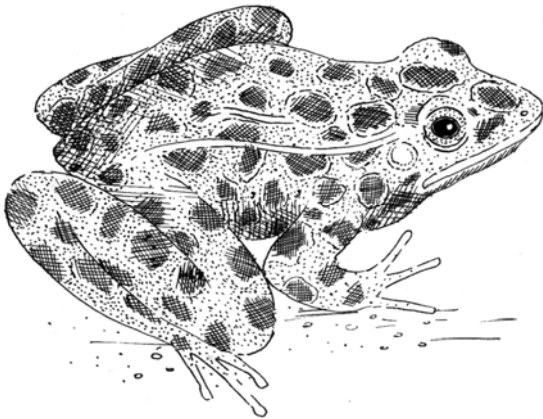
<http://www.y2y.net/>

A conservation initiative for a cross-country wildlife corridor - from Yellowstone to Yukon.



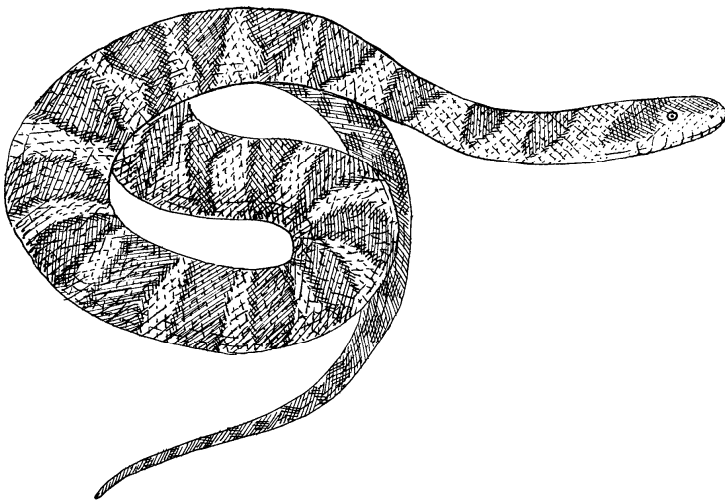
**Grasshopper**

Must find green grass to eat!



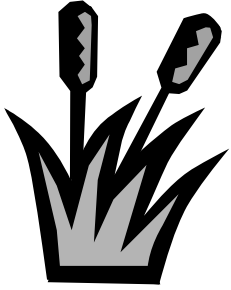
**Frog**

Must find grasshopper to eat!

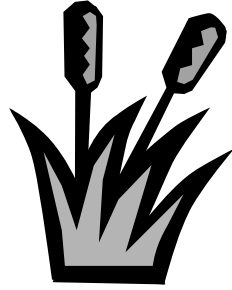


**Snake**

Must find frog to eat!



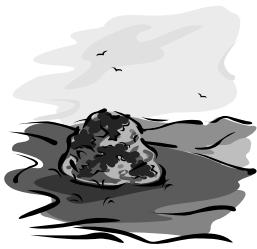
Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...



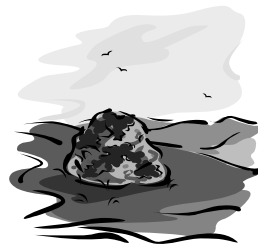
Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!



Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...



Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!



Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...



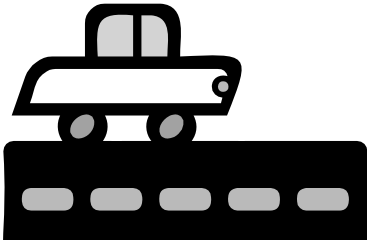
Wildlife  
Corridor  
Found...

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!

You may continue to your  
feeding grounds!

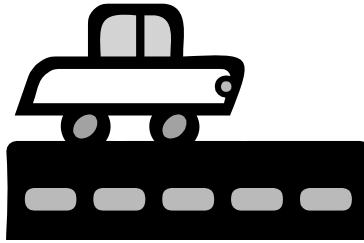
## Obstacle...

Busy highway slows your progress!



## Obstacle...

Busy highway slows your progress!



## Obstacle...

A parking lot has been built over the field where you used to find food!



## Obstacle...

A new housing development is in your old feeding grounds!



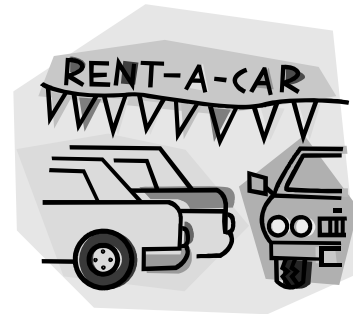
## Obstacle...

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## Obstacle...

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8 "Food Cards"  
- print two pages

