



SIERRA
CLUB BC

GREEN SPACE EXPLORATION JOURNAL



What can you find in your neighbourhood?

Illustrations by Amira Maddison

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

BUILD YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

This guide will help you and your children discover what's hiding in your neighbourhood. There are many places to explore. A backyard, a park, green space alongside or in front of apartment buildings, green space next to the sidewalk. Nature exists all around us and we, too, are part of the web of life, relying on countless other beings.

Colour in the pictures as you go. See a list of being names at the end of this journal.

Printing: if you don't have access to a printer, simply follow along on a device and complete activities on blank paper or in a journal.

Take the time to **acknowledge** that the land you live on has been stewarded by Indigenous peoples for millennia before the arrival of Europeans and other immigrants. Indigenous peoples around the world continue to steward the land and waters, benefiting all lifeforms. If you don't know the names of the Indigenous peoples who have traditionally called the area you live home, take the time to read about them online. **Learn** about territories, languages, and treaties in your area at native-land.ca/

Fill in the blank to write the names of the Indigenous peoples who have traditionally called the area you live home:

TAKE ONLY MEMORIES

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

Leave no trace. What does the three-word slogan really mean? Simply put, it is the best practice to follow to enjoy and respect our natural spaces. It means a lot more than just packing out your garbage.

Leave What You Find: Make sure everything from nature stays in nature. Even a decaying leaf plays an important role in the ecosystem. Try giving your child a camera to document their favourite treasures during your time outside. Create a nature journal or slideshow with your pictures to preserve your memories together. Let “take only memories (and nowadays pictures or photographs), and leave only footprints” be your mantra.

Respect all beings: Animal encounters can be exciting and a great learning opportunity for kids. Know before you go which animals you’re likely to encounter and any safety concerns. Observe from a distance and never approach or feed beings. It is best to only observe small beings such as insects and worms, but if you do pick them up, treat them with extreme care and place them gently back where you found them.

Stay on designated paths and trails: Your youngster’s little feet can have a big impact on the surrounding habitat. Help them be conscious of their foot-stepping, and turn this into a game by seeing if they can leave no evidence of footprints. In some parks, you may come across restoration areas (designated by signs) where it is especially important to only walk on designated paths. Point out these areas and read about the species that traditionally live in that particular ecosystem.

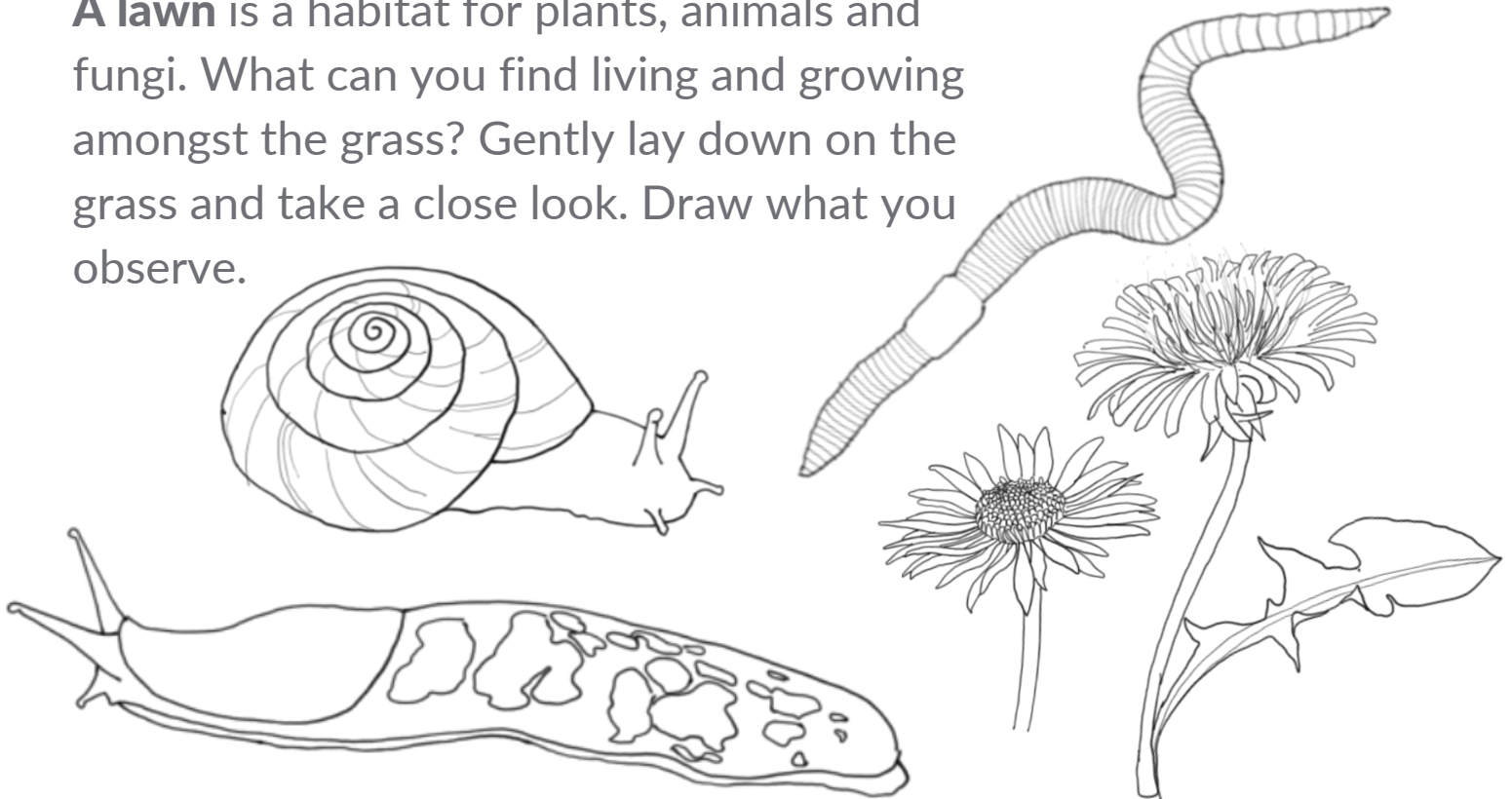
Be Considerate of Others: We share these outdoor spaces with each other. Remind your little one to be courteous to other users, and let the sounds of nature prevail.

WHAT LIVES IN THE GRASS?

LET'S SEE!



A lawn is a habitat for plants, animals and fungi. What can you find living and growing amongst the grass? Gently lay down on the grass and take a close look. Draw what you observe.



DID YOU KNOW?

Mushrooms or fungi are the fruiting body of a fungus. Unlike plants, mushrooms don't make their energy from the sun's energy. They get their energy by decomposing dead or decaying organic material, such as fallen leaves. Mushrooms are a sign of healthy fertile soil! The act of looking for mushrooms is simply called "mushrooming".

CAUTION! Do not eat any mushrooms you find!

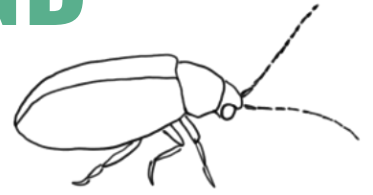


DRAW WHAT YOU OBSERVE

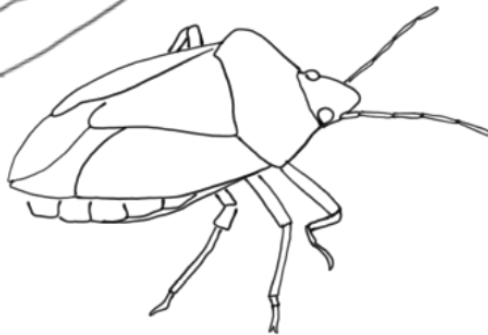
Ideas: Pick a plant and draw it in detail.
Draw the smallest thing you can find in the grass.
Draw a map of the green space you are in.

LIFE IS ALL AROUND

LET'S ZOOM IN!

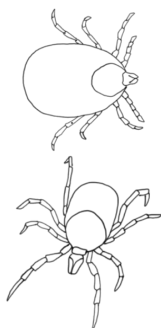
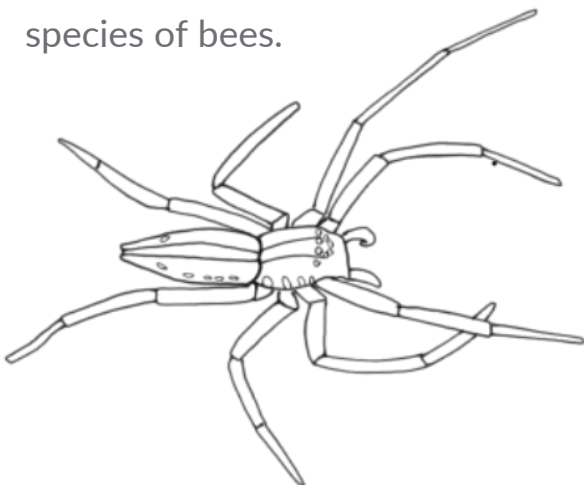


What lives amongst the plants and flowers? Gently take a close look inside flowers, under leaves and on stems or in the bark of trees.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are over **200,000** species of pollinators! Over **70%** of plant species rely on pollinators, including many of the fruits and vegetables you eat. British Columbia has **800+** species of bees.



CAUTION! Do not handle bugs you can't identify. In spring, watch for ticks and check your body after exploring outside.



LIST WHAT YOU OBSERVED

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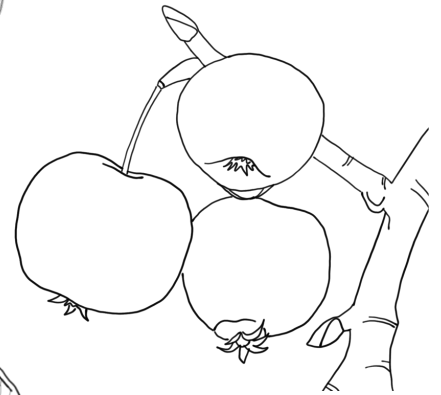
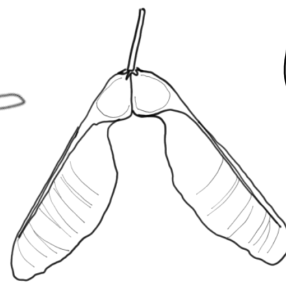
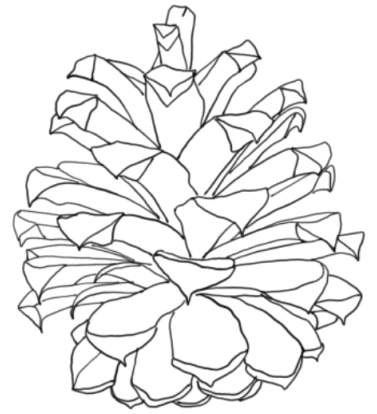
What was your favourite observation? Why?

-

WHAT TREES GROW HERE?

NEARBY TREES

What evidence of trees are there nearby?
Leaves? Cones? Sticks? Fruit? Seeds?



DID YOU KNOW?

The precious **old-growth forests** of British Columbia include some of the rarest ecosystems on the planet. Sadly, most ancient forests have already been clearcut across vast parts of the province. Because of climate change, these forests will never grow back as we knew them—if we cut them, they'll be gone forever. Plants and animals that depend on these threatened forests, like the red-legged frog, marbled murrelets and northern goshawks, are at risk, too. They're losing habitat and can't thrive in areas devastated by logging. Even the areas that are replanted do not provide the same conditions.



CREATE A LEAF RUBBING

1. Go outside with your child to choose leaves: Collect leaves that have already fallen on the ground of many different shapes, sizes and textures. Be careful not to bend or rip the leaves.
2. To do a leaf rubbing, put a piece of white paper over one leaf, veins facing upwards.
3. Using one crayon, pastel or pencil crayon and while holding the paper in place, carefully rub/lightly 'shade' over the paper until the leaf shape comes through.
4. Throughout the activity, make time to appreciate different scents from different leaves.
5. Return the leaves to where you found them so they can decompose.



LOOK UP! BIRDS!

LISTEN CLOSELY

Look over your head. What can you see? In the branches, on roofs, flying by...



Shooka
shooka
shooka

HONK



CLEAR



Chickadee-
deee-deee



CAW
CAW



Cheerily,
Cheer-up,
Cheerio!

DID YOU KNOW?

510 species of birds (65 families) live in or migrate through BC. We can thank the range of habitats (including marine, coastal rainforests, dry grasslands and sagebrush, lakes and wetlands, mountain and boreal forests, and alpine tundra) for this wealth. While some of these birds come to these regions only to breed, most call BC home.

SIT SPOT JOURNALLING

In your outdoor space find a spot for you to sit comfortably: under a tree, in the grass, along the beach. Write what you observe today, and see how it changes during future visits.

Date:

Date:

Date:

Describe where you sat:

.....

.....

How long did you sit for?

.....

.....

How many bird songs did you hear? Were they from the same bird, or many different birds?

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What other sounds did you hear?

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How did you feel while you were listening?

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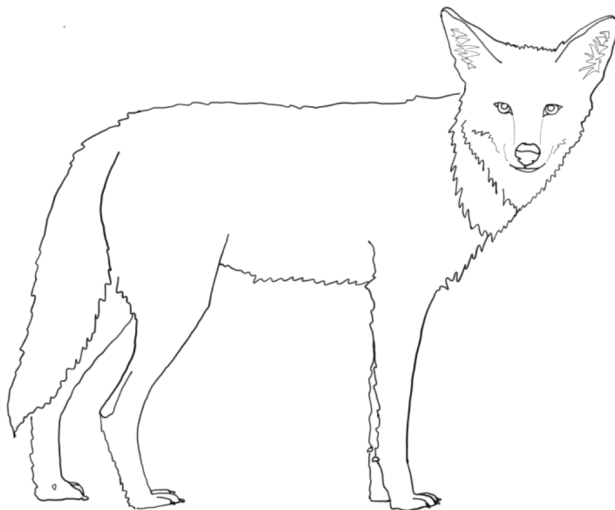
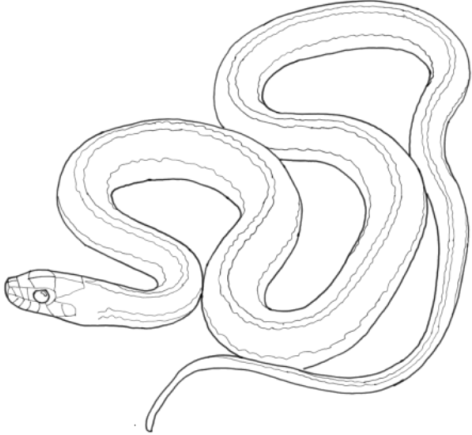
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Note the bird colour and songs you hear, and with the help of birding.bc.ca identify the bird. Confirm your identification by finding the bird call at northwestbirding.com/BirdSongs/

ANIMAL LOOKOUT

WHAT BEINGS CALL YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOME?

Many animals live within town and city limits. What animals can you see from your home?



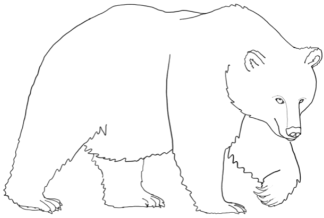
DID YOU KNOW?

British Columbia is the most richly biodiverse province in Canada. Sadly, BC also has the highest number of species at risk; with 278 species at risk of extinction and 1807 species in decline. Iconic animals like central mountain caribou, sturgeon, and steelhead are on the at-risk list, which grows longer every year. More information: bcwf.bc.ca

ANIMAL PRINTS

MATCHING

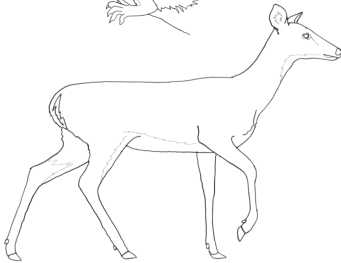
Match animals and their track descriptions on the left with prints on the right



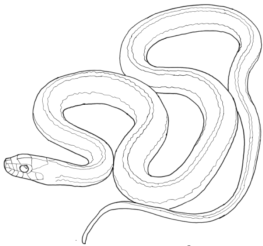
Bear: Large tracks with long claws



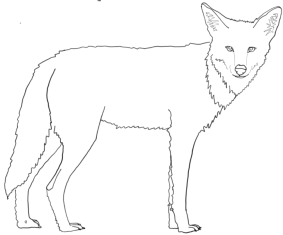
Squirrel: Small tracks. Hind feet are narrow and long



Deer: Tracks look like an upside-down heart shape



Snake: Leaves a smooth S shape along the ground



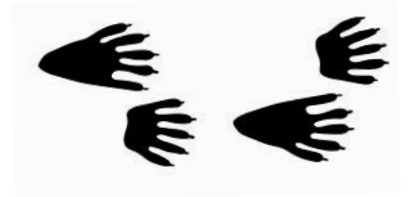
Coyote: Large dog tracks with 4 toes and small claws



Raccoon: Tracks are very similar to a tiny human hand



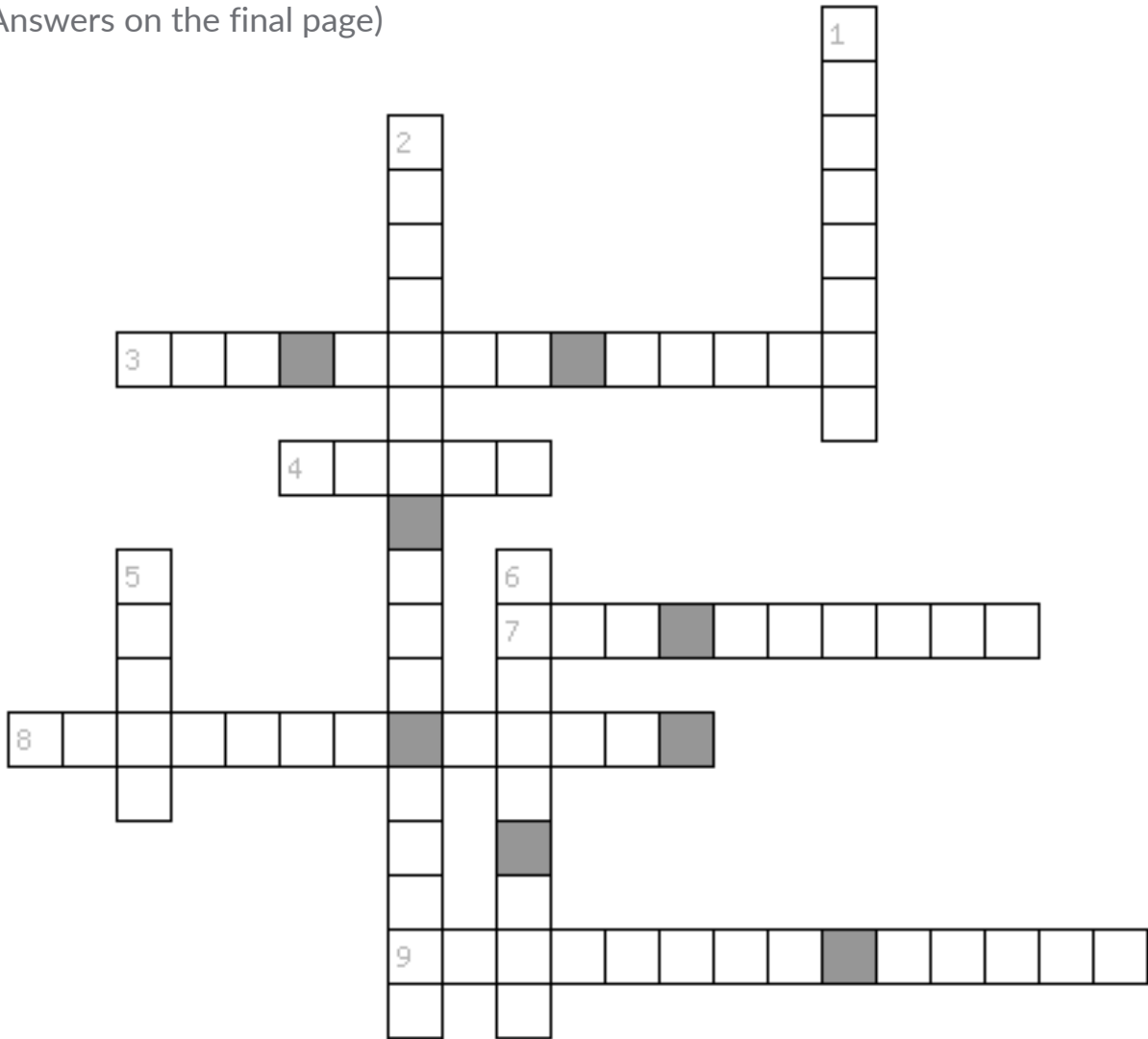
River Otter: C-shaped palm or pad. Hind toes may look webbed



BEINGS CROSSWORD

Use the 'List of beings' page to help complete the crossword! The grey squares show where there is a space between multi-word answers.

(Answers on the final page)



DOWN:


















1. I hide acorns nuts and seeds for winter.
2. I'm a conifer known as the tree of life.
5. I have a spiral shell and can be found in the garden
6. I'm a pollinator that makes a sweet treat

ACROSS:







3. I have the biggest leaves of any tree in BC.
4. I help decompose organic material and am a sign of fertile soil.
7. I'm an ancient forest that supports life of endangered species.
8. I feed on salmon in the fall.
9. I'm a bird with a 'cheery' call.

LIST OF BEINGS







WHAT LIVES IN THE GRASS

-  **Ant** (wood)
 -  **Worm**
 -  **Snail** (terrestrial)
 -  **Banana slug**
 -  **Daisy**
 -  **Dandelion**
 -  **Fungi** (fairy ring)
- ## LIFE IS ALL AROUND!
-  **Flea beetle**
 -  **Butterfly** (Swallowtail)
 -  **Dragonfly**
 -  **Stink bug** (green)
 -  **Lady beetle**
 -  **Lady beetle larva**
 -  **Honey bee**
 -  **Paper wasp**
 -  **Spider** (grass)
 -  **Tick** (Western Black Legged)
 -  **Tick** (Rocky Mountain Wood)








WHAT TREES GROW HERE

-  **Ponderosa pine** cone and needles
-  **Douglas fir** cone
-  **Big leaf maple** leaf and seed
-  **Western red cedar**
-  **Crab apple**
-  **Red alder** leaves and catkins

LOOK UP! BIRDS

-  **Canada goose**
-  **Steller's jay**
-  **Northern Flicker**
-  **Black capped chickadee**
-  **American Robin**
-  **Common Crow**

ANIMAL LOOKOUT

-  **Grey squirrel**
-  **White tailed deer**
-  **Garter snake**
-  **Raccoon**
-  **Coyote**
-  **Grizzly bear**
-  **River otter**

LINKS AND RESOURCES

Visit our EcoMap to try to identify the leaves you used and animals you saw. This tool will help you learn about the fascinating beings that live in BC's various 'Ecoprovinces', including traditional Indigenous uses of and connections to these lifeforms. There is even a glossary with vocabulary specific to nature. sierraclub.bc.ca/ecomap/

To identify some pollinators and learn how to help ensure that these important beings thrive, visit: hat.bc.ca/images/Pollinator-Guide-Web.pdf

Seeing Through Watchers' Eyes – Between the Worlds is an online interactive learning tool that tells the story of the land where the mural lives, on the territory of the Lekwungen speaking peoples (Songhees and Esquimalt Nations). This learning tool is based on the thirty-two foot collaborative mural Through Watchers' Eyes, housed at Spencer Middle School (School District 62), as designed by tSouke member kQwa'st'not (Charlene George).

Built using the Prezi platform with support from Sierra Club BC, this tool is a publicly shareable, culturally rich Indigenous learning tool to support community learners of all ages and backgrounds to see through another's eyes. The mural and online tool help to open our eyes to new perspectives and answer many questions including where to begin in addressing the climate crisis. This tool invites learners into a new way of seeing and relating to the natural world while offering opportunities for learning using various modalities. sierraclub.bc.ca/watcherseyes/

For more place-based curriculum-linked resources, visit sierraclub.bc.ca/education/