



# Junior Park Ranger

## Activity Guide



*Experience It!*™

Parks • Arts • Recreation

# Hey Kids and Parents!

## Welcome to Olympia City Parks!

*Our mission: Offer experiences in parks that create an appreciation for our natural and cultural resources.*

Junior Ranger Program: Designed to help kids experience and learn about nature in our parks.

*Experience It!*

Parks • Arts • Recreation

## Become a Junior Ranger!

Complete the activities in this booklet and show it to the Park Ranger to receive your badge! Kids 8 years and under can choose 4 activities to complete.

You can find the Ranger at scheduled Park Stewardship events.

Visit us online at ...

[olympiawa.gov/parkstewardship](http://olympiawa.gov/parkstewardship)





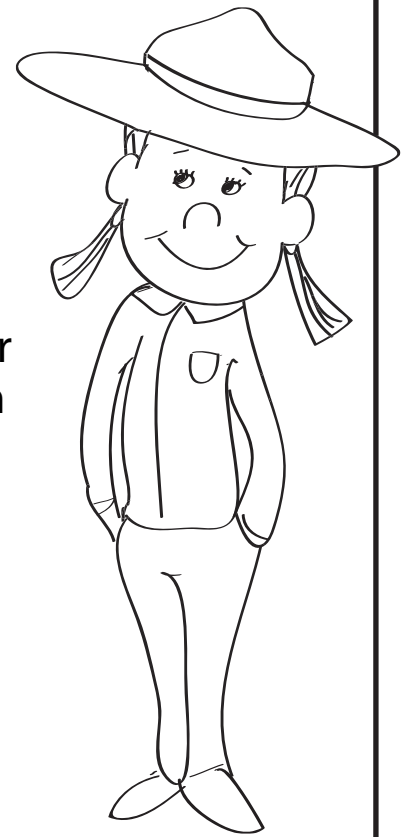
# Rangers Rock!

What are the duties of the City's Park Ranger?

The Park Ranger patrols all 40 City Parks to help keep them safe and clean. However, the Ranger can't do this alone. Everyone must be a good steward, we need your help to keep 900+ acres of park property safe and clean for everyone to enjoy!

**You can make a difference by...**

promising to respect, appreciate and protect our parks and wildlife.



## Tools of the Trade

Rangers do a lot of different jobs each day. These jobs require a variety of tools. Help organize the Ranger's tools by drawing a line from the name to the matching picture!

**Notebook** - to take notes in the field

**Binoculars** - to see things that are far away

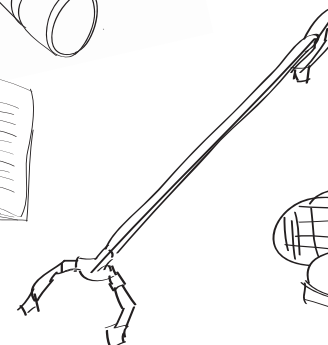
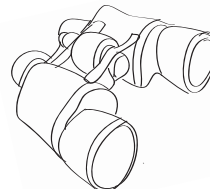
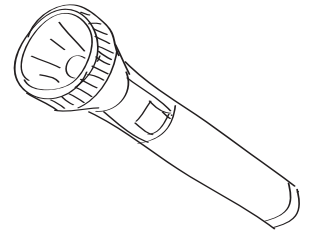
**Nifty Nabbers** - to pick up litter

**Hiking Boots** - for good traction on the trails

**Maps** - to navigate the parks

**Field Guides** - to identify plants and animals

**Flashlight** - to see in dark places



# What is an Ecosystem?

When plants and animals live together in one place and depend on each other for survival, it is called an *ecosystem*. Parks like Priest Point, Watershed, and Grass Lake have their own ecosystems where plants, animals and waterways interact.



## Forest Creatures

Observe a living creature in the park, then answer the following questions. Be quiet and careful when observing, so not to disturb the creature. If you can't find a creature, make one up and imagine what it would do.

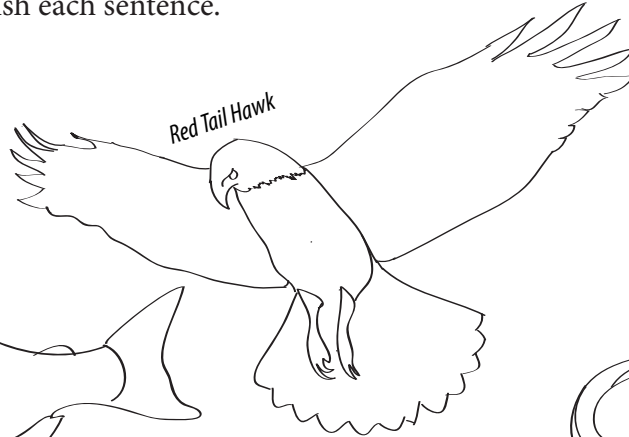
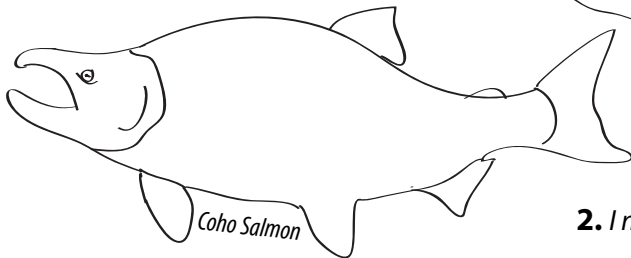
1. My forest creature is a \_\_\_\_\_
2. My creature looks like (draw a picture)
3. My creature finds food in this part of the forest (clearings, shrubs, tree tops, ground, underground) \_\_\_\_\_
4. My creatures makes its home in this part of the forest  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Signs that my creature has been here (nest, tracks, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Hooray for Habitat!

Just like people, animals need a place to live. In addition to shelter, they need food, water, and a place to raise their young. We call this place a *habitat*. Animals rely on many different types of habitat.

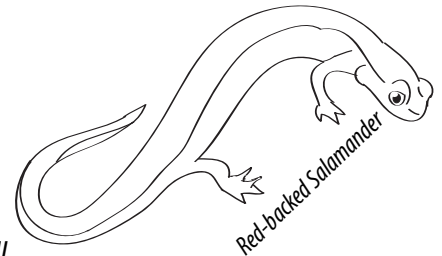
Use the *habitat* word bank to finish each sentence.

1. I need \_\_\_\_\_ with plenty of shady spots and plant cover to survive into adulthood!

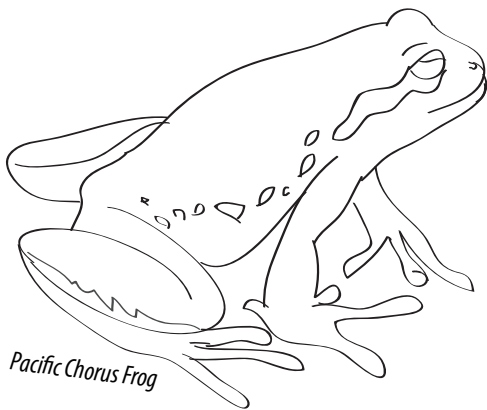


2. I make my nests in the tops of tall \_\_\_\_\_ where I have a great view of the landscape!

3. I live in damp areas on the forest floor under rotting \_\_\_\_\_ and leaves.



4. I can live in many areas but I need to be near \_\_\_\_\_ of water to lay my eggs in the spring!



## Habitat Word Bank

logs - shallow pools - streams  
- grassy fields streams - wetland -  
trees - sunny openings  
lakes - meadow - estuary -  
oak trees

5. I need lots of large conifer and \_\_\_\_\_ with well-connected canopies to thrive!



# What's in a Tree?

A tree makes an excellent wildlife habitat.

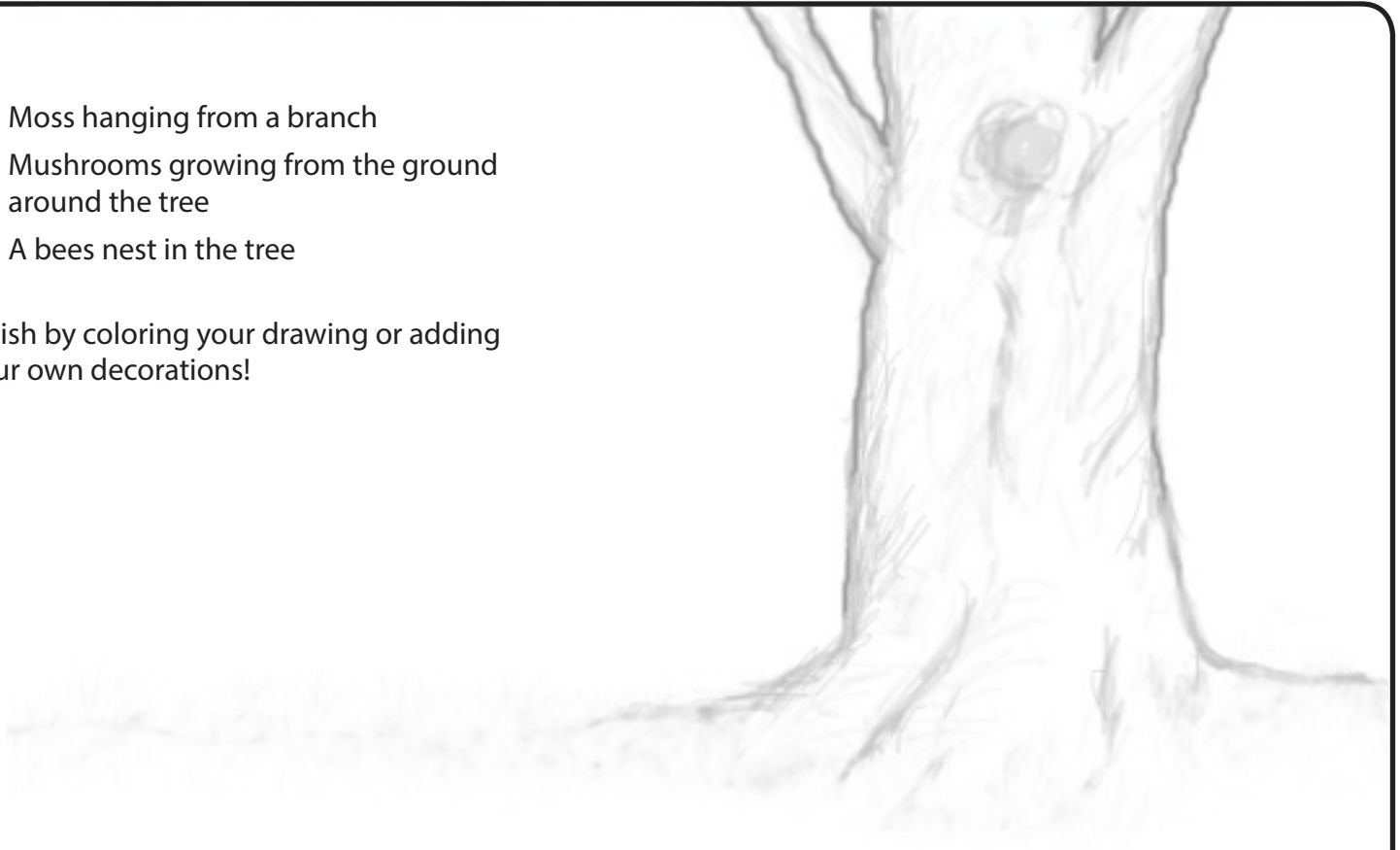
Draw at least five of the items below completing the tree habitat!

- A nest where birds lay eggs and raise their young
- A deer resting in the shade of the tree
- Ferns growing on the tree
- A squirrel eating seeds
- An owl perched in the tree looking for food
- A family of shrew-moles in their burrow



- Moss hanging from a branch
- Mushrooms growing from the ground around the tree
- A bees nest in the tree
- 

Finish by coloring your drawing or adding your own decorations!





# Invasive Species

Invasive plants are a problem in our parks. They are called invasive because they are not originally from our region and they spread very fast. An invasive plant can quickly alter large ecosystems by harming native plants and trees that are important to wildlife.

## English Ivy

- Green vine with green leaves
- Climbs into tree canopy
- Thrives in shade
- Shortens life of mature trees
- Forms thick mats on the forest floor
- Blocks native shrubs and trees from the sun

## Scotch Broom

- Yellow flowers
- Loves dry sunny areas
- Seeds live for 50+ years
- Shades out native grass, shrubs and baby trees
- Green, broom-like branches with small leaves

## Himalayan Blackberry

- Thorny vines with green leaves and dark berries
- Grows into dense, thorny thickets
- Blocks animal's access to food and water
- Prevents growth of native plants

You can help remove invasive plants in our parks by participating in a volunteer work party!

[olympiawa.gov/parkvolunteer](http://olympiawa.gov/parkvolunteer)

# Alien Invaders!

Look carefully at the pictures below. Can you identify the three different invasive plants (English Ivy, Scotch Broom and Himalayan Blackberry)?

**Hint, see descriptions above.**



Now try finding the same plants outside!

# Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship means taking care of the environment. Park *Stewards* are dedicated to protecting the natural and cultural resources in our parks. You can practice stewardship through our volunteer program.

Below is a diagram of a park. If you were a steward, what might you do? Circle 4 things that could be changed to improve the environment and make the park a better place to visit for people and animals.



## Reflection

Visit three different City of Olympia Parks and write and/or draw a picture of something you liked about each one.

Find a Park  
[olympiawa.gov/parks](http://olympiawa.gov/parks)



# Junior Park Ranger

*"I, \_\_\_\_\_, am proud to be a Junior Park Ranger.  
I promise to appreciate, respect and protect our parks. I promise to  
continue learning about plants and animals in these special places.  
I will share what I learn with my friends and family."*



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Is Making a Difference in Olympia's Parks*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Park Ranger, City of Olympia*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*