

# ANIMAL SIGNS

## LESSON PLAN



**WOLF RIDGE**<sup>SM</sup>  
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

# ANIMAL SIGNS



## CLASS DESCRIPTION: An Animal Ecology Class

Students will learn, by tracking animals outside, the variety of evidence left behind by animals and what we can learn about them from that evidence. During spring, summer, and fall, they will also practice the research techniques of radio telemetry.

**Total time:** 3 hours (two hours outdoors)

**Audience:** 6-20 students, 4th grade through adult

**Activity level:** strenuous

**Travel:** 1 1/2 mile

**Total uphill travel:** 320 feet

## GUIDING QUESTION

How can we use the signs animals leave behind to build a story about what they're doing?

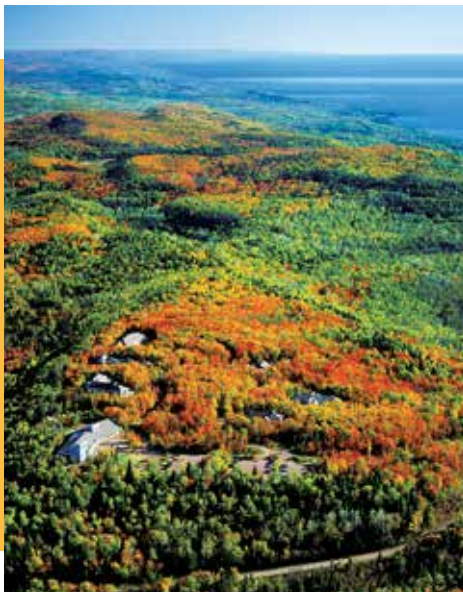
## CONCEPTS

1. Observing and paying attention to direct and indirect evidence are valuable skills for learning that can be practiced.
2. Adaptations and characteristics of animals influence the signs they leave behind.
3. All living and non-living components of an environment interact with one another to form an ecosystem.
4. Humans are animals and leave signs, too.

## OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the Animal Signs class students will be able to:

1. Apply observation skills in finding and identifying animal signs.
2. Examine animal signs and infer the animal's behavior.
3. List animals living in the Wolf Ridge area.
4. Describe how either radio telemetry or motion sensing cameras can be used in wildlife research.
5. Recognize humans as animals and note the abundance of human signs in our world.
6. Describe actions they can take to maintain and enhance animal populations.



**Our mission** is to develop a citizenry that has the knowledge, skills, motivation and commitment to act together for a quality environment.

6282 Cranberry Road | Finland, MN 55603-9700 | [www.wolf-ridge.org](http://www.wolf-ridge.org)

*Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and the USDA are equal opportunity providers and employers.*



## Equipment

- props from lesson bins
- pencil
- plaster tracks
- track transparencies
- latex tracks
- Tom Brown story
- ink pad
- track id sheets
- Whose Scat is That?
- sounds CD
- brochure
- radio receiver & collar
- posters

## Appendices

- Glossary
- Optional Activities
- References
- Spiral Learning Sheet
- Planning Outline

## Set-up (10 min.)

- Classroom/class prep description
- Safety Management

### I. What's the story of animals in the woods here? (15 min.)

### II. What could we look for? (20 min.)

- A. Adaptations Influence Signs: Thistle Porcupine Visit
- B. Types of Signs
  1. Tracks and Trails
  2. Scat and Urine
  3. Eat Marks
  4. Homes
  5. Body Parts
  6. Territorial Markings
  7. Sounds and Smells

### III. What's living here? How can we tell? (105 min.)

- A. Small Group Observation
- B. Observation Practice
- C. Larger Group Observation

### IV. How can we study animals more closely? (15 min.)

### V. What's the story of animals in the woods here? (20 min.)

## Clean-up (10 min.)