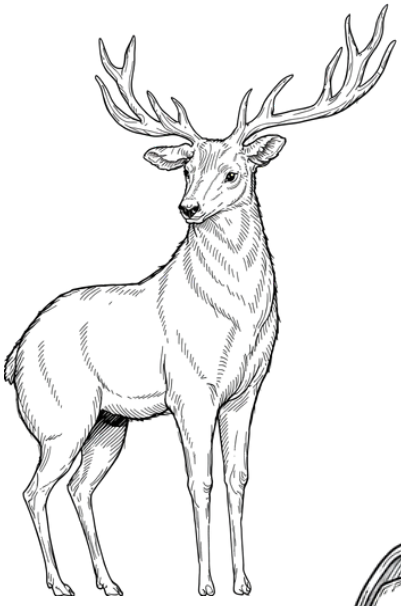
SENECA CREEK STATE PARK

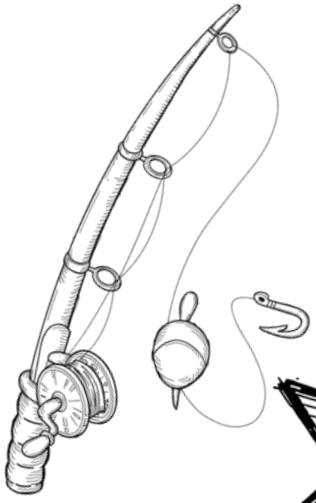
Junior Rangers Adventure Book





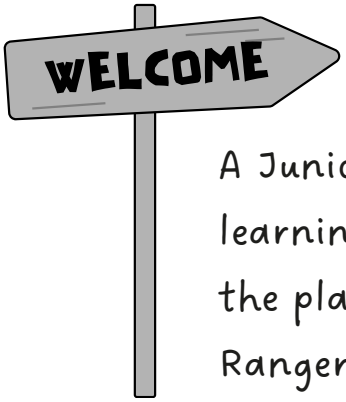








EXPLORE • LEARN • INSPIRE

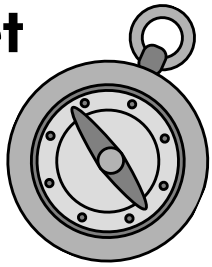


Adventure Awaits!

A Junior Ranger is an explorer just like you! Junior Rangers love learning about nature, helping to take care of the park, and discovering the plants, animals, and history of Seneca Creek State Park. Junior Rangers are curious, responsible, and excited to protect the outdoors.

How to Become a Junior Ranger

1 Complete activities in this booklet



- Ages 6 and under - complete 3 activities
- Ages 7-10 - complete 5 activities
- Ages 10+ - complete 8 activities

2 Show a Park Ranger

- Visit the Park Office Mon-Fri 8 AM - 3 PM to check your work (Park Office is closed on weekends and holidays)
- Or email photos of your completed activities to the park at senecacreek.statepark@maryland.gov

3 Earn your patch and keep exploring!

The fun doesn't end here! Being a Junior Ranger is now a part of who you are - remember to always stay curious and to respect nature in everything you do!

Tips for Parents and Educators

- Encourage observation, not answers—let kids write or draw their own ideas.
- Remind children to follow safety rules (stay on trails, no touching wildlife).
- Take breaks and let them explore at their own pace.
- Discuss discoveries together—ask questions like "Why do you think that plant grows here?" or "What animals might eat that?"
- For younger children: Pair short walks with reading or drawing, use coloring pages, and explore with help from an adult or older sibling
- For older children: Encourage journaling, identifying plants and animals, and recording detailed observations

What's My Trail Name?

Birth Month

January- Wandering
February - Goofy
March - Dancing
April - Stormy
May-Daydreaming
June - Jumping
July - Maple
August - Singing
September - Wild
October - Silly
November - Mossy
December - Misty

Color of your shirt

Green - Clover
Brown - Forest
Yellow - Honeybee
Red - Cedar
Black - Raven
Pink - Hummingbird
Purple - River
White - Rabbit
Blue - Hawk
Grey - Moon
Orange - Creek
Tan - Seed
Camo - Pathfinder
Tie Dye - Feather
Rainbow - Spirit

About the Junior Ranger

Self Portrait

Name: _____ Age:_____

My favorite place in nature is:

My favorite animal is:

My Trail Name is:(use the chart above!)

Visit the park's website to see park maps, register as a volunteer, sign up for our e-newsletter, and explore our monthly program calendars. You'll also find printable activities like scavenger hunts, nature challenges, and more to help you make the most of your visit.

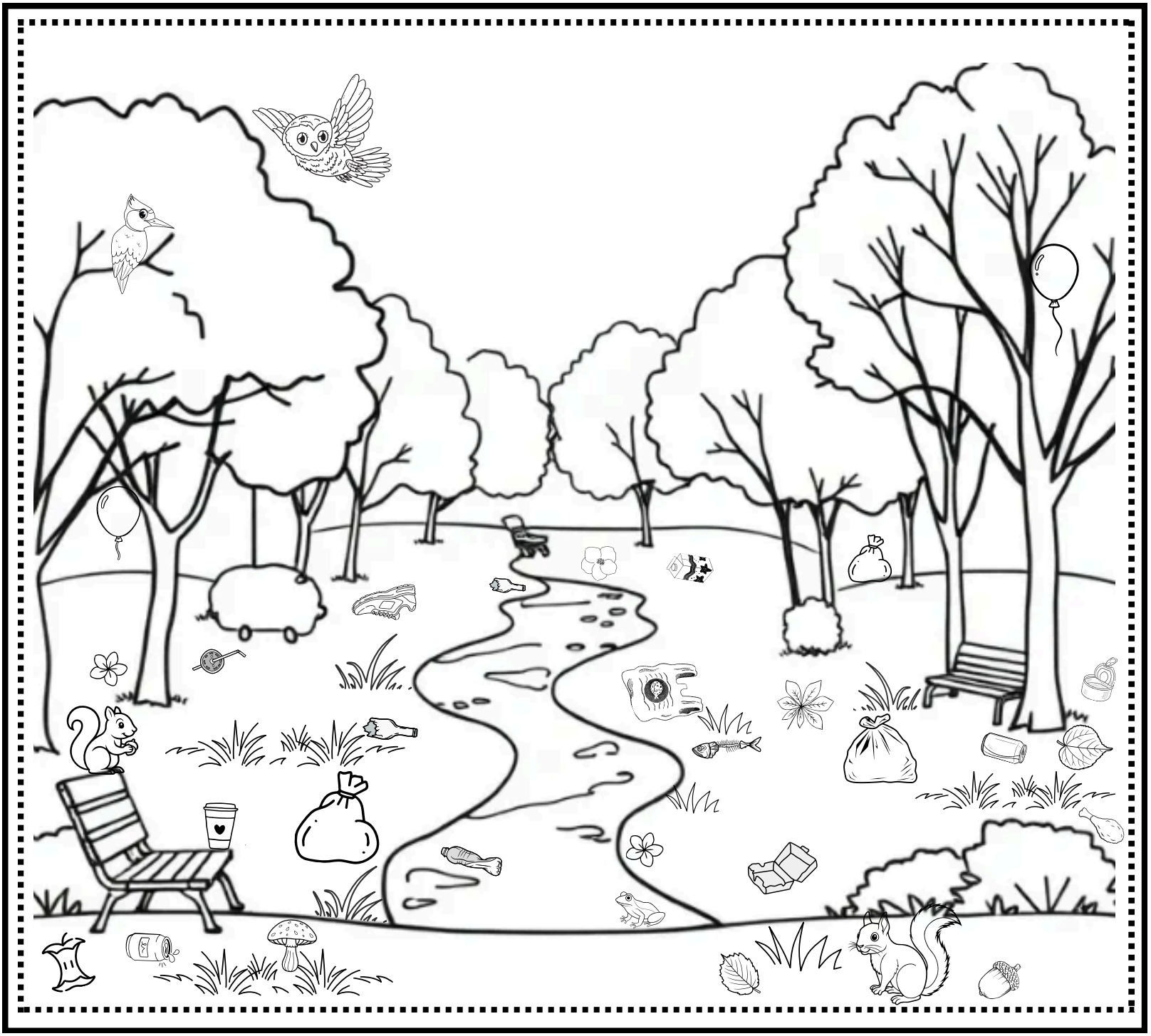
Scan the QR codes below to get started!

Scan here to visit the Seneca Creek State Park website

Scan here for the program calendar

Scan here for trail maps

Litter Lookout! Trash Trouble in the Park



Trash doesn't belong in parks. Litter can harm wildlife that may try to eat it or get tangled in it, and it can pollute soil and water. Trash also takes away from the natural beauty that makes parks special places to explore, relax, and learn.

Uh-oh! The visitors in the scene above forgot to clean up after themselves and left trash behind.

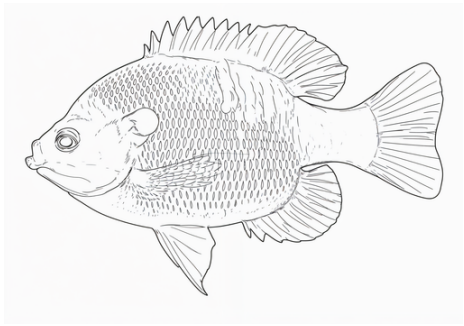
There are 20 pieces of trash hiding in the scene.

Can you find and circle them all before the next visitors arrive?

Fish of Clopper Lake Word Scramble

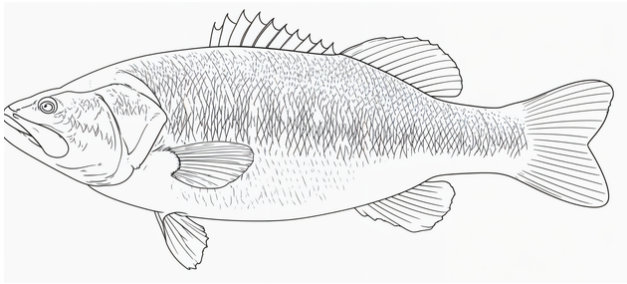
Clopper Lake is home to many different kinds of fish, and each one plays an important role in keeping the lake ecosystem healthy. Can you unscramble the words to reveal the fish hiding beneath the surface? Need a hint? Check out the word bank at the bottom of the page—but, not all the fish in the word bank are included in the scramble!

GULILEBL



_____

AMTHLROGUE BSAS



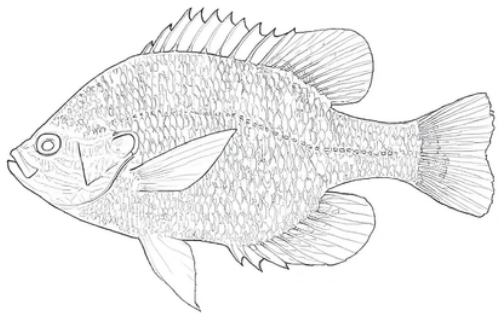
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WLLYEO EPRCH



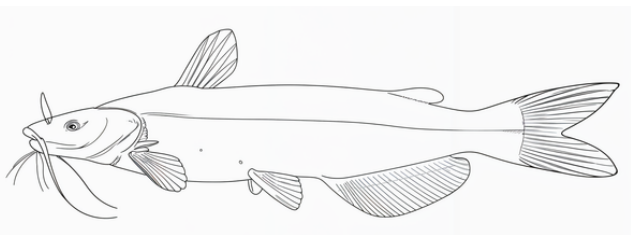
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UMPKINEDSEP



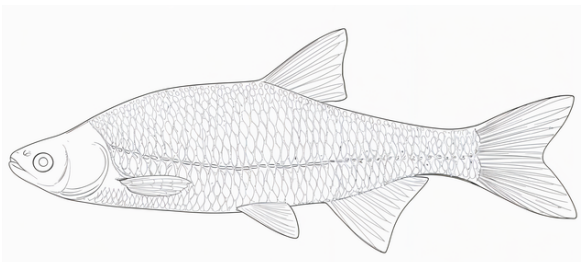
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NLEAHNC HSIFCTA



_____

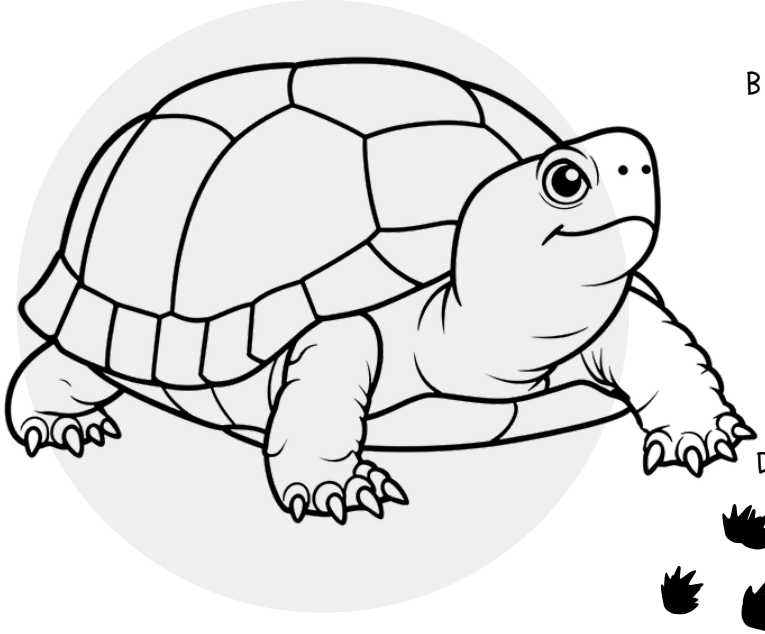
LEGNOD REHINS



_____

Visit https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/fishfacts-index.aspx to learn more about Maryland Fish!

Word Bank: Largemouth Bass Bluegill Common Carp Yellow Perch Channel Catfish Black Crappie Pumpkinseed Redear Sunfish Green Sunfish Golden Shiner



Box Turtle - "Seneca"

Box turtles spend most of their lives on land and rely on forests and fields to survive. They can live for many decades and enjoy eating fruits, plants, and insects.

Box turtles have high, domed shells that they can close up tightly for protection—this is how they got their name.

Did you know? A box turtle's shell is part of its body, so it can actually feel when it is touched!

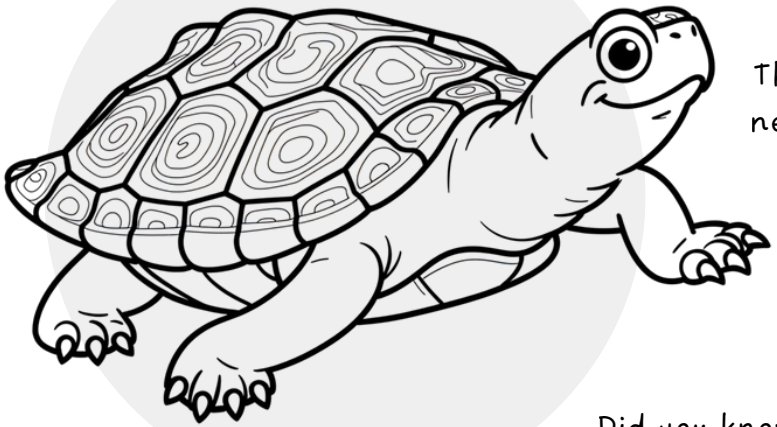
Corn Snake - "Maize"

Corn snakes are non-venomous snakes that help keep ecosystems balanced by eating rodents. They are excellent climbers and use their patterned skin for camouflage.

This snake helps visitors learn that snakes are not scary and play an important role in nature.

Did you know? Corn snakes use their tongues to "smell" the air and find food.





Diamondback Terrapin - "Eleanor"

The diamondback terrapin is a special turtle that lives near brackish water, where freshwater meets saltwater. It gets its name from the diamond-shaped patterns on its shell.

Terrapins remind us how important clean water and healthy wetlands are for wildlife.

Did you know? The University of Maryland's mascot, Testudo, is a diamondback terrapin!

Meet the park's Animal Ambassadors!

These animals live in the Nature Nook because they need special care and would not be able to survive on their own in the wild. Rangers make sure they are safe, healthy, and comfortable, while also helping visitors learn why wild animals should stay wild. Visit the Park Office to learn more and to say hi!

Word Search

Seneca Creek State Park is home to many different habitats, animals, and landmarks. This word search features places and wildlife you can find in the park.
Can you find them all?

L	W	D	B	I	R	R	U	X	G	P	E	G	A	X	O	F
K	X	I	G	R	E	E	M	X	I	L	V	R	Y	W	G	L
O	N	F	B	E	H	K	G	N	I	N	K	A	P	Q	Q	F
H	A	E	Q	V	S	O	E	N	H	X	J	T	W	U	H	A
B	T	A	C	A	I	S	G	M	A	E	K	Z	A	F	N	Z
B	U	R	H	E	F	U	G	P	U	R	M	I	Z	N	B	F
Z	R	A	I	B	G	I	C	L	K	I	L	L	F	J	I	R
L	E	C	C	W	N	E	B	U	N	R	G	U	T	M	B	D
Y	S	C	K	C	I	I	N	K	I	F	F	A	G	F	X	V
A	H	O	A	S	K	W	H	D	U	M	P	N	N	X	S	T
I	A	O	D	T	A	O	G	Z	E	I	E	L	O	I	R	O
C	C	N	E	F	L	E	M	S	N	O	I	L	I	V	A	P
K	K	M	E	L	R	E	T	N	E	C	T	A	O	B	S	N
A	H	W	O	V	O	T	D	I	S	C	G	O	L	F	B	V
P	T	W	Y	Z	Q	W	W	H	P	J	B	R	Z	K	N	W
A	S	S	J	U	H	Q	L	Q	L	W	H	I	V	M	R	U
L	S	R	C	P	E	O	N	Y	G	A	R	D	E	N	C	B

MINK HOLLOW
PAVILIONS
BOAT CENTER
FAWN
ORIOLE
NATURE SHACK
BLUEJAY
PEONY GARDEN
RANGER
DISC GOLF
KINGFISHER
OWL
RACCOON
PINES
CHICKADEE
QUAIL RIDGE
BEAVER
FOX

Hiking Mad Libs: A Wacky Park Adventure!



Find a partner. One person will be the Reader. The Reader asks a partner to provide different types of words to fill in the blanks—but keeps the story a secret!

Once all the blanks are filled in, read the story out loud. Get ready for a wild and silly park adventure—you never know what might happen on the trail!

One _____ morning, I packed my backpack and set off on an adventure at
(ADJECTIVE)

Seneca Creek State Park. The air smelled fresh and the sun shone _____ as I
(COLOR)

spotted a _____ near the _____ creek. It was busy munching on a
(ANIMAL) *(ADJECTIVE)*

_____ while _____-ing, and I couldn't believe how _____ it looked!
(NOUN) *(VERB)* *(ADJECTIVE)*

I followed the trail to the _____, where I decided to _____ across the
(NOUN) *(VERB)*

sparkling water. The view was so _____ that I wanted to stay forever.
(ADJECTIVE)

The _____ sounds of the forest made me laugh as I collected some _____
(ADJECTIVE) *(PLURAL NOUN)*

along the path. I imagined they were treasures from the park, just for me!

By the time I reached the lookout point, the sun was starting to set, casting a

_____ glow over the lake. I took a deep breath, looked around, and shouted,
(COLOR)

" _____! What an amazing day to be a Junior Ranger!"
(EXCLAMATION)



An *ADJECTIVE* describes something. For example, silly, round, sunny, soft.

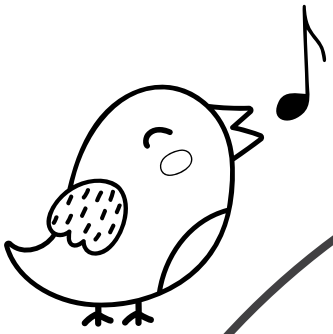
A *NOUN* is the name of a person, place, or thing. For example, mushroom, hummingbird, lake.

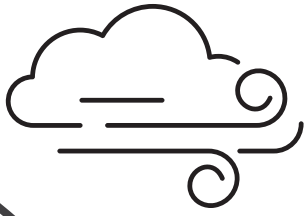
A *VERB* is an action word. For example, swim, run, fly, jump, sleep, eat.

Nature Sound Map

The star in the center of the map is you!

1. Find a quiet place to sit and listen carefully to the sounds around you.
2. Each time you hear a sound, draw or write it on your map. Place the sound in the direction it is coming from—in front of you, behind you, or to the side.Ask yourself: Is the sound close or far away? Is it loud or soft?
3. Stay quiet, listen closely, and see how many different sounds you can discover!





ME





History Time Machine

Did you know that Seneca Creek State Park is full of stories from the past? These pages introduce you to historic homes, mills, and other sites that show how people lived, worked, and played here long before it became the park we enjoy today. Keep reading or visit each site to learn more!

Bonus Challenge: Visit each site and write down one fun fact that you discover about each.

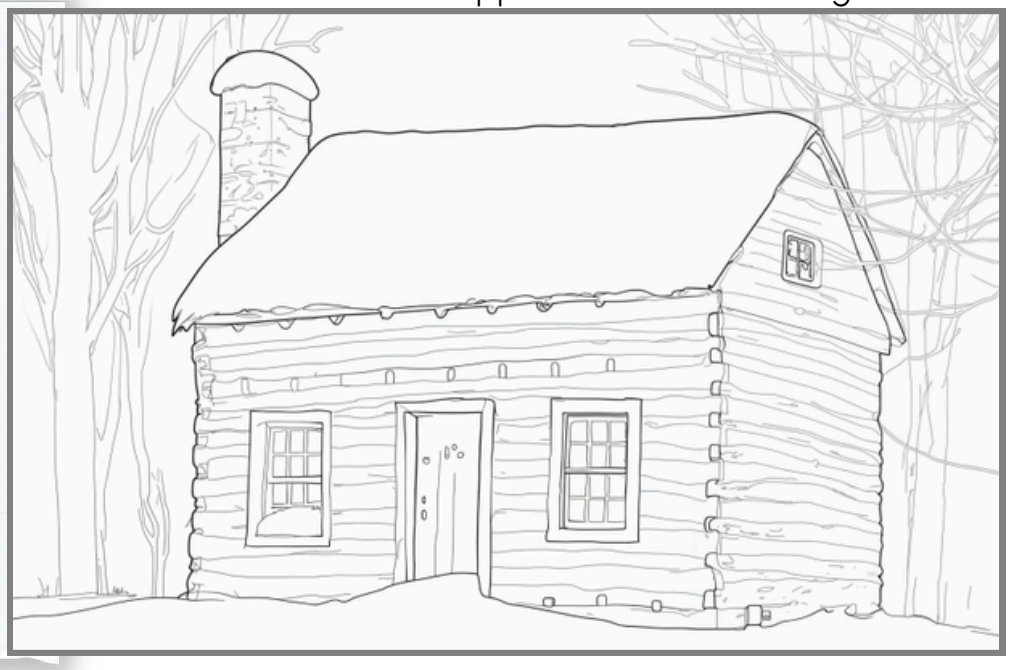
Grusendorf Cabin

Find next to the Park Office
11950 Clopper Road Gaithersburg MD 20878

Built in 1855, the Grusendorf Cabin is one of the last homes left from the original Germantown settlement. In the 1990s, it was moved to the park so visitors can step back in time and see what life was like long ago.

The cabin has two floors - the main living area and an upstairs bedroom the whole family would share. Life here was simple, and families had to work together to cook, stay warm, and take care of the home.

Could you imagine washing clothes by hand and carrying water from a stream every day?



Check our monthly program calendars for open house information.

Seneca Schoolhouse

16800 River Road Poolesville, MD 20837



Built in 1865, the Seneca Schoolhouse was a one-room school for children living along Seneca Creek and the nearby C&O Canal. Students didn't just come from local farms—they also came from barge families who spent the winter on the frozen canal during the era's "mini Ice Age"!

School was very different back then. In exchange for educating their children, families helped provide land, building materials, labor, and even boarding for the young teachers.

Inside the schoolhouse, kids of all ages learned together in a single classroom with a chalkboard, desks, and lots of books—but no computers or smartboards!

Could you picture sharing a classroom with children of all ages and helping out with chores around the school?

Visit https://www.historicmedley.org/visit/seneca-schoolhouse/ for open house and tour information.

Black Rock Mill

16500 Black Rock Road Germantown, MD 20874



Did you know that before the Civil War, Maryland was part of the "breadbasket", producing grain for families and trade?

Built in 1815, Black Rock Mill helped local farmers process their wheat and other grains into flour. The mill was powered by a water wheel, which used the force of moving water in the creek to turn heavy millstones. These stones cracked the wheat and separated the germ, turning grain into flour that could be used to bake bread and other foods.

Visiting the mill today lets you see how farmers and millers worked together long before modern machines.

Can you imagine standing next to the water wheel as it turns the heavy stones?

Open for self-guided exploration 8 AM – Sunset

Time-Travel Thoughts

Imagine you are living in the 1800s, when these sites were full of life and activity.

Use the space below to draw a picture or write about your imagined life in the 1800s.

How would your days be different? What chores, games, or daily routines might you have?

Do you think these sites would be important to your family? Why or why not?

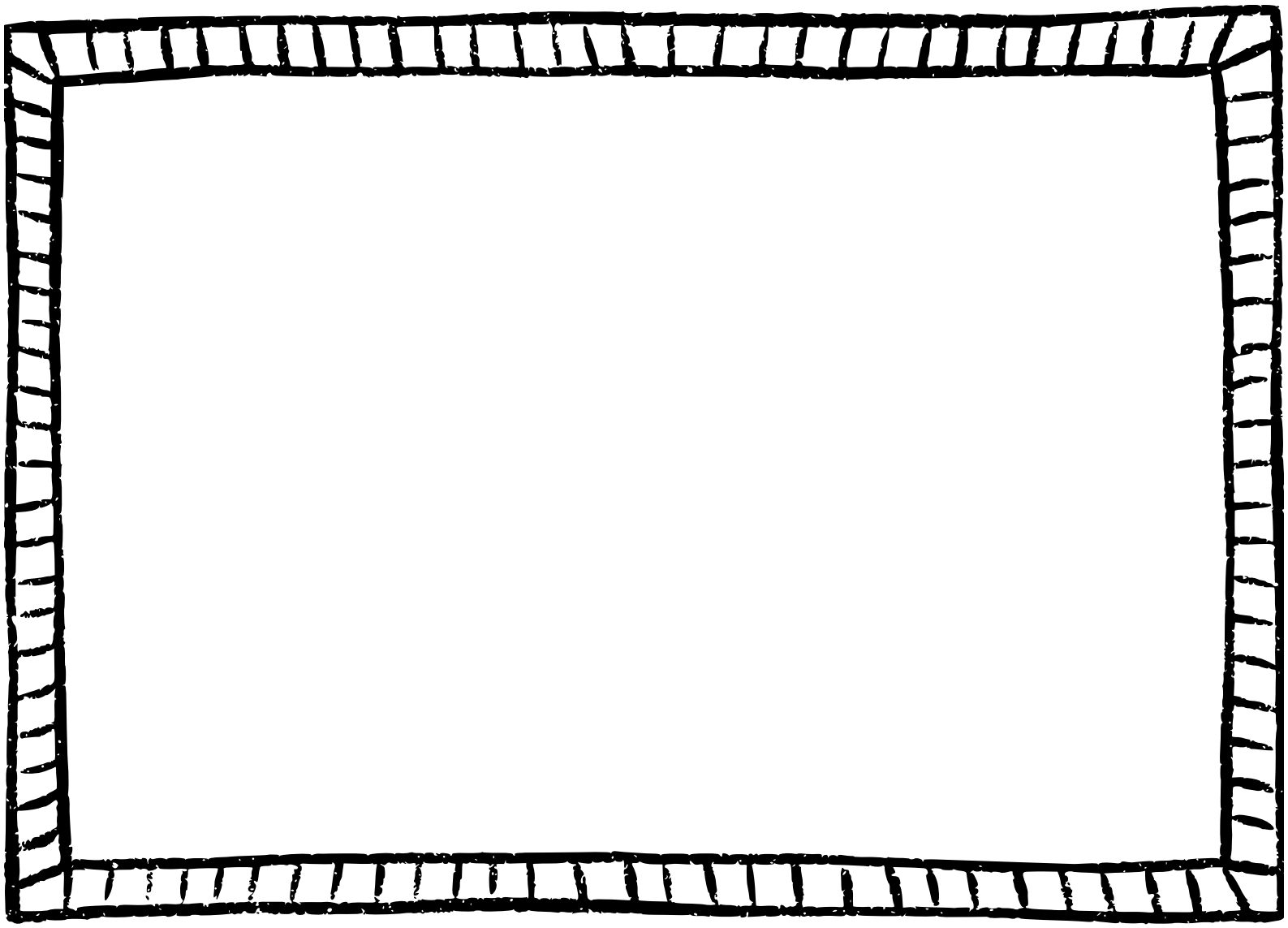
You might discover that life back then was very different, but some things (like spending time with family or working together) are still familiar today!

Science at the Shoreline

Scientists study waterways to learn about the health of the land and water around them. One way they do this is by observing the plants, animals, and insects that live nearby. A shoreline with many different kinds of living things is often a healthy habitat.

<u>Now it's your turn to be an environmental scientist!</u>

1. Visit a shoreline in Seneca Creek State Park—along the Great Seneca Creek, at Clopper Lake, or imagine one in your mind.
2. Look closely and think about what lives in and around the water.
3. Draw or list the plants and animals you see (or would expect to see) in the space below. You might include fish, insects, birds, plants, or even tiny creatures that live in the water.

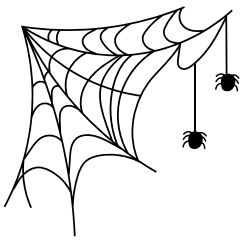
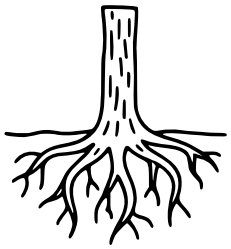
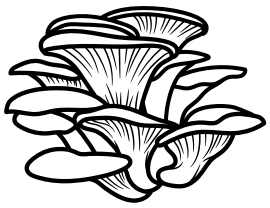
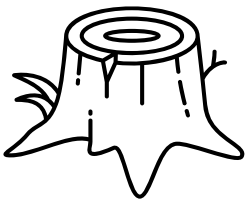
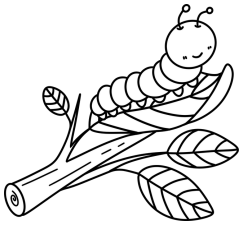
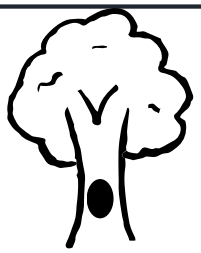
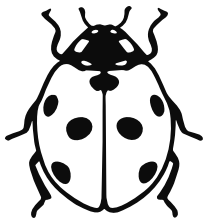
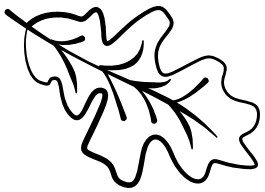
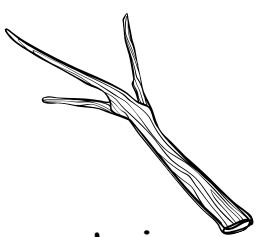


Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

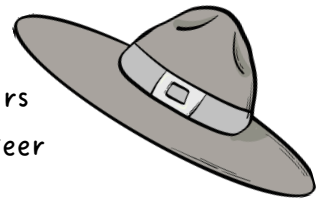
Weather: _____ Other Notes: _____

How many of these common - and some not so common - nature items can you find on and around trees during your visit to the park?

LEAF AND TREE BINGO

 spider web	 tree with no leaves	 rough bark	 ivy	 pinecone
 roots	 log	 maple leaf	 maple seed	 mushrooms
 walnuts	 round leaf	FREE SPACE	 tree stump	 insect
 bird nest	 acorn	 holes	 insect	 oak leaf
 pine needles	 sapling	 flowers	 twig	 bird

Interview a Park Ranger



Park Rangers help protect the environment, care for the park, and teach visitors about nature. Attend a park program and learn from a Park Ranger or Volunteer Naturalist and use these pages to record and reflect on what you learned!

Program Name or Topic: *Date:*

Name of Park Ranger or Program Leader: *Location:*

Draw or write about something new that you learned in the space below!

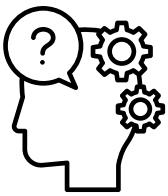
Ask a Question!

I asked: _____

The answer:_____



Think Like a Ranger - Reflection



Why do you think this program is important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you want to learn more about next time you visit the park?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

BONUS CHALLENGE: Can you teach a friend or family member one thing that you learned? Who did you teach?

_____

_____

_____



Try making a nature rubbing from something you find on the ground, like a leaf, bark, or rock.

How to make a nature rubbing:

1. Place your paper over the object
2. Gently rub with a crayon or pencil
3. Watch the pattern appear!
4. Be sure to label your creation!





EARTH HOUR IS YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME A PLANET PROTECTOR!

TAKE ACTION TO HELP NATURE BY COMPLETING A SMALL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT, EITHER AT HOME OR WHILE YOU VISIT THE PARK.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO COMPLETE AS MANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES AS YOU CAN!

PLANT & GARDEN

- ☐ PLANT NATIVE FLOWERS OR TREES – HELP POLLINATORS OR PROVIDE SHADE.
- ☐ CREATE A MINI GARDEN – USE POTS OR A SMALL PATCH OF YARD.
- ☐ COMPOST AT HOME OR IN A GARDEN – TURN FOOD SCRAPS INTO SOIL.
- ☐ LEAF & DEBRIS CLEANUP – COLLECT LEAVES OR STICKS SAFELY.



CLEANUP & REDUCE WASTE

- ☐ LITTER PATROL – PICK UP TRASH ON TRAILS, STREETS, OR YARD.
- ☐ TRASH TO ART – MAKE SOMETHING FUN FROM ITEMS THAT WOULD BE THROWN AWAY.
- ☐ PLASTIC REDUCTION CHALLENGE – SWAP DISPOSABLE ITEMS FOR REUSABLE ONES.
- ☐ PARTICIPATE IN A PARK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY- VISIT THE PARK'S WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO

ENERGY & AWARENESS

- ☐ TURN OFF EXTRA LIGHTS – DO AN HOUR OF EARTH HOUR EACH NIGHT!
- ☐ MAKE A NATURE JOURNAL – DRAW OR WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU NOTICE OUTSIDE.
- ☐ TEACH SOMEONE ABOUT NATURE – WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?
- ☐ WALK OR BIKE INSTEAD OF DRIVING – EXPLORE SAFELY AND REDUCE POLLUTION.



REFLECTION & CREATIVITY

- ☐ NATURE ART – MAKE A COLLAGE WITH LEAVES, FLOWERS, OR ROCKS.
- ☐ WRITE A NATURE POEM OR STORY – CELEBRATE YOUR FAVORITE PLANT, ANIMAL, OR PARK.
- ☐ MAP YOUR LOCAL PARK – DRAW A MAP OF PLANTS, TREES, AND TRAILS.
- ☐ TAKE A NATURE PHOTO – CAPTURE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, UNUSUAL, OR INTERESTING.

WILDLIFE & OBSERVATION

- ☐ SET UP A BIRD FEEDER OR BIRD BATH - PROVIDE FOOD AND WATER.
- ☐ BUILD A BUG HOTEL - HELP POLLINATORS NEST AND LAY EGGS SAFELY.
- ☐ BIRD COUNT CHALLENGE – COUNT HOW MANY DIFFERENT BIRDS YOU SEE IN 15 MINUTES.
- ☐ ANIMAL TRACKING – LOOK FOR SIGNS LIKE TRACKS, FEATHERS, NESTS, OR CHEWED PLANTS.



OTHER FUN WAYS TO HELP THE EARTH (FILL IN YOUR OWN IDEAS!)

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YOUR IDEAS DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT —BIG OR SMALL, EVERY ACTION COUNTS!

Wes Moore - Governor | Anita Brown - Lieutenant Governor
Josh Kurtz - Secretery

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Maryland

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The facilities of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability.

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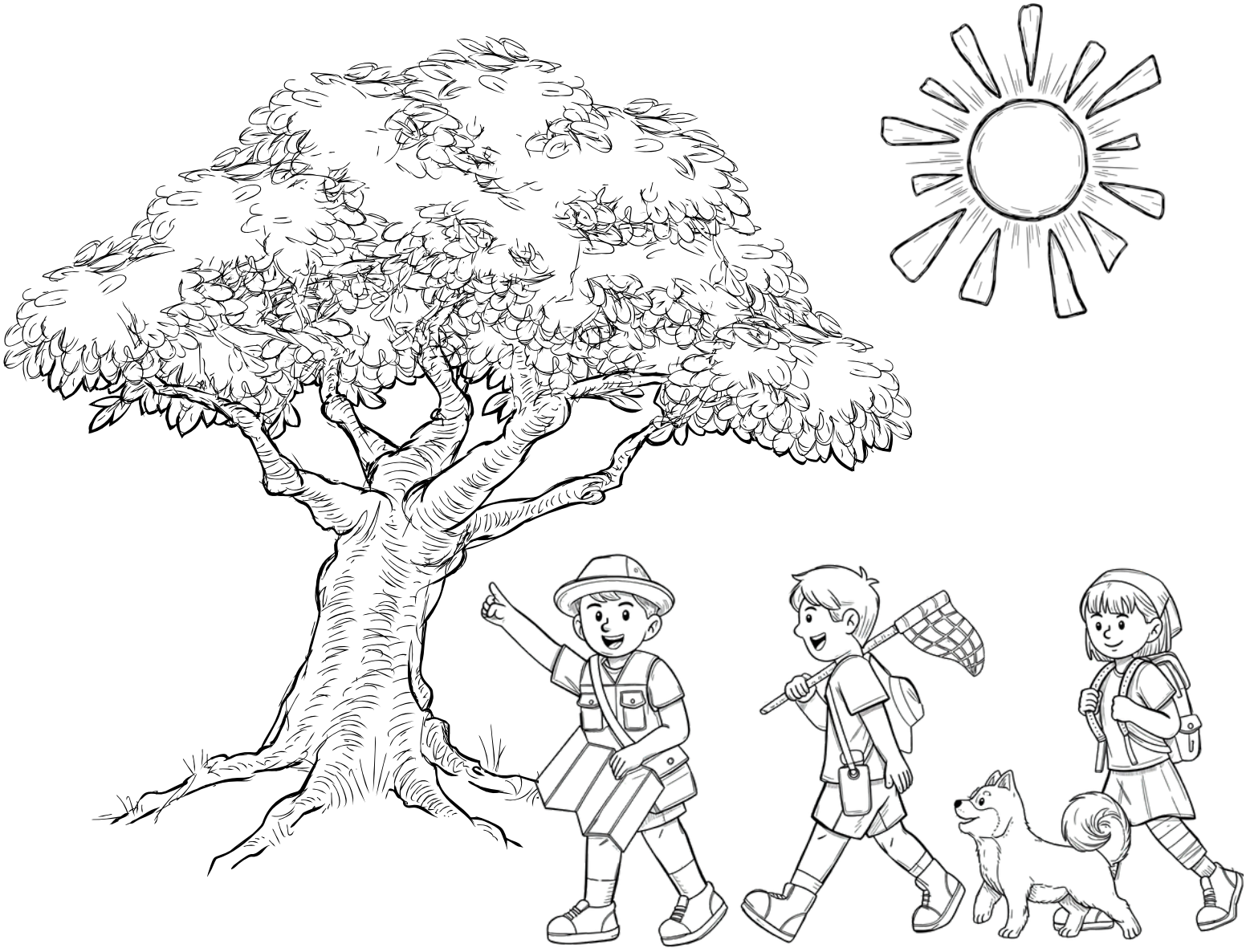
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USE FOR EXTRA OBSERVATIONS, REFLECTIONS, OR DRAWINGS!

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USE FOR EXTRA OBSERVATIONS, REFLECTIONS, OR DRAWINGS!

As a Junior Ranger, I promise to protect, preserve and respect the natural resources of Maryland State Parks. While at home, I will learn about the natural world and I will share what I learn with my family and friends. I pledge to do my part to protect the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources of my public lands for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.



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