

RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST

JUNIOR RANGER NEWSPAPER



How to Become a Junior Ranger

You will learn more about the Rio Grande National Forest in this Junior Ranger Newspaper. Complete some of the activities to earn your Junior Ranger Badge.

Bring your completed activities to a Forest Service Office to get your badge. If you are unable to come to an office have an adult help you take a picture of your completed newspaper and email it to SM.FS.R2_RioGrande@usda.gov.

- If you are 5 years old or younger complete 5 of the activities.
- If you are 6 to 8 years old complete 10 of the activities.
- If you are 9 to 11 years old complete 15 of the activities.
- If you are 12 years old or older complete all the activities.

There are many activities you can do on the Forest. These activities also count towards earning your Junior Ranger Badge:

- Visit a Museum — Museum name: _____
- Go for a hike — Trail name: _____
- Collect a bag of litter — Adult signature: _____
- Visit a reservoir — Reservoir name: _____
- Stand on the Continental Divide — Location: _____

Each activity is rated by how hard it is. Choose activities that are the best fit for you. Try something harder for a challenge!

Easier

Medium

Harder



San Juan Mountains Association
EXPLORE ♦ LEARN ♦ PROTECT



This newspaper was created by the San Juan Mountains Association in partnership with the Rio Grande National Forest. Learn more at sjma.org.

Junior Ranger Pledge

As a Junior Ranger, I promise to learn about the plants, animals, and history of our National Forests and to enjoy and respect our public lands.

Name: _____

Where are we?

The Rio Grande National Forest covers mountains, forests, meadows, creeks, and rivers. The Forest is 1.8 million acres or about the size of Delaware so there is a lot of land to explore! A few popular spots are labeled on this map. You can add more places as you explore the Forest!

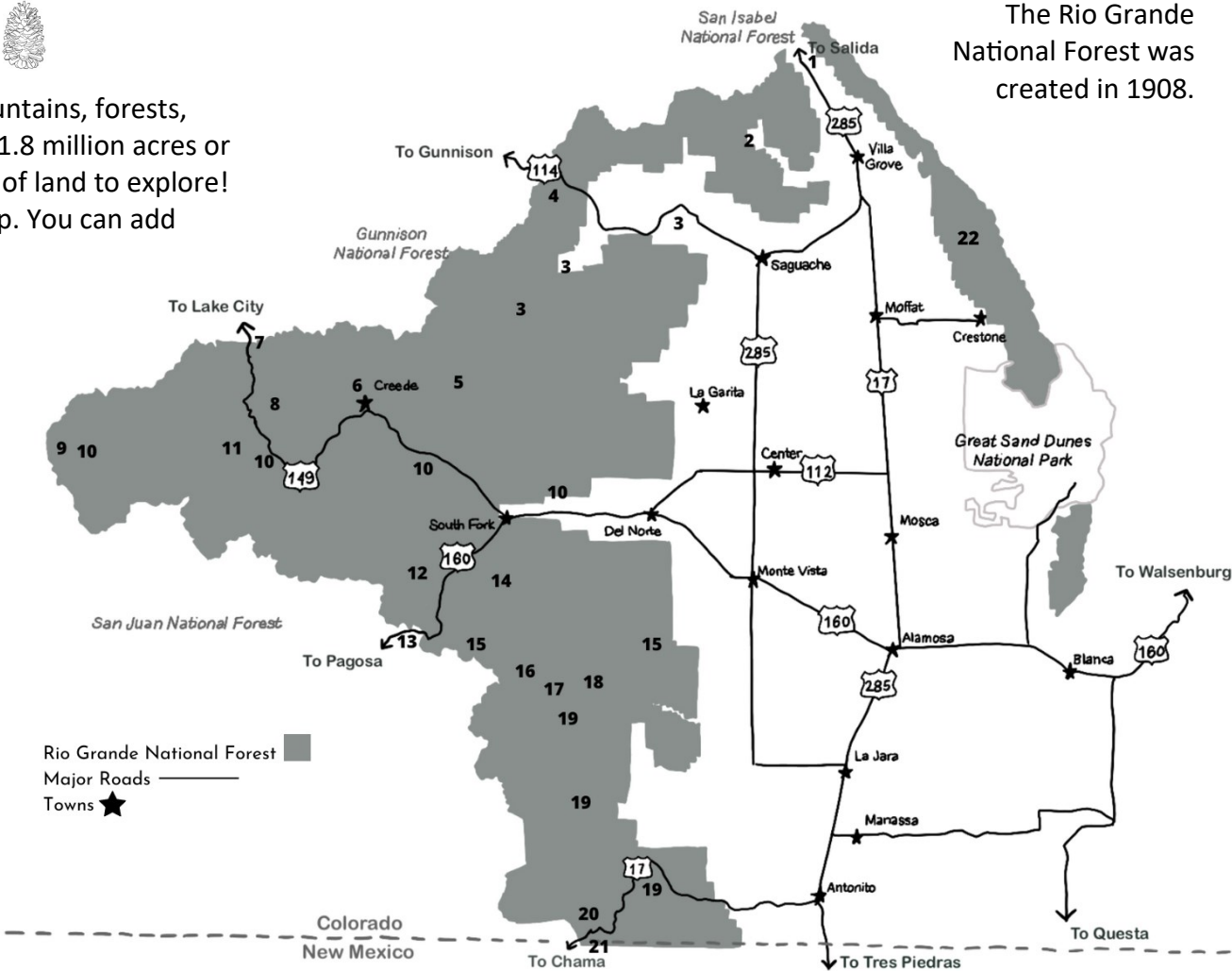
Find number 14 on the map! Now find it in the list of places.

There is a water drop and a footprint listed next to # 14, Beaver Creek Reservoir. Use the key to figure out what these symbols mean.

The symbols show there is a hike and a reservoir in that area!

Name 3 places you can find mining sites

Find #13. What is located there? And what is something you could do there?



Lakes/Reservoirs

Rivers

Mining Sites

Passes

Points of Interest

Hiking

1. Poncha Pass
2. Bonanza
3. Saguache Creek
4. North Pass
5. Wheeler Geologic Area
6. Bachelor Loop
7. Spring Creek Pass
8. North Clear Creek Falls
9. Stony Pass
10. Rio Grande River
11. Rio Grande Reservoir

12. Big Meadows Reservoir
13. Wolf Creek Pass
14. Beaver Creek Reservoir
15. Alamosa River
16. Summitville
17. Platoro Reservoir
18. Platoro
19. Conejos River
20. Trujillo Meadows Reservoir
21. Cumbres Pass
22. Sangre de Cristos

Circle the places you want to go

Put a triangle around the places you have been.



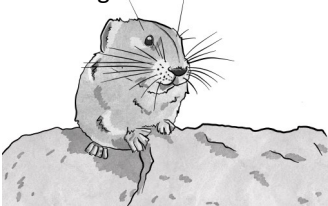
The Rio Grande National Forest was created in 1908.

Junior Ranger Word Search

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

- alpine
ATV
backcountry
bear
bird
boating
camping
coyote
creek
- dirt bike
elk
fir
fishing
flower
forest
hike
park
peak
- Pika
pine
ranger
Rio Grande
snow
spruce
stream
trail
valley

Words may be across, down and diagonal.

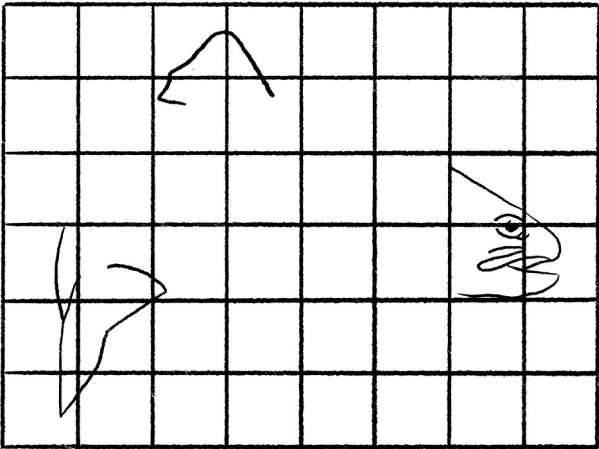
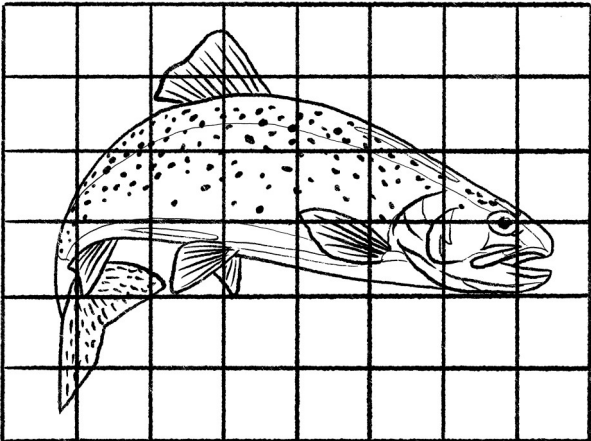


Pika are little rabbits that live high in the mountains on rocky slopes.

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

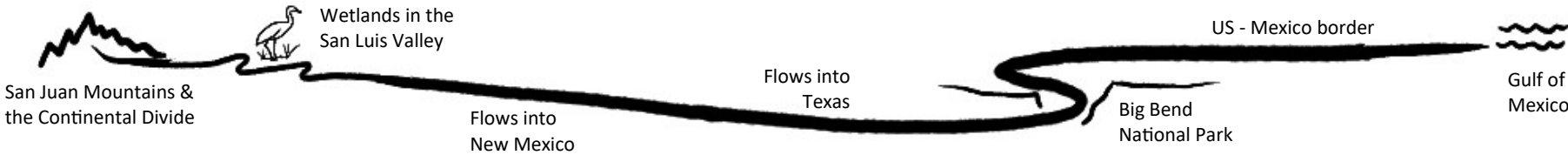
Color in the trout or try drawing your own below!

The Rio Grande cutthroat trout lives the furthest south of any cutthroat trout species. They only live in the Rio Grande and Pecos River drainages. This means they only live in the Rio Grande or Pecos River, or rivers that flow into them. There are not many of these special fish left so many people are working to protect them. The trout like to live in cold water streams and lakes in the mountains.



The Headwaters of a Great River

The Rio Grande River starts here on the Rio Grande National Forest. The start of the river is called the headwaters. This river flows through 3 states and 2 countries.



History

Read about the history and then put the events in order.

The first people to live in the area were Paleo-Indians (11,000 years ago). Later the San Luis Valley area became the homeland of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. This area is also a homeland of the Navajo, Apache, and Comanche.

Indigenous peoples lived by hunting animals and gathering plants.

In the 1500s Spanish began exploring the area.

Gold and silver were then discovered in the late 1800s. Many people moved to mining towns. They hoped to find silver and gold and get rich.

In 1908 the Rio Grande National Forest was created. The forest was used for grazing, logging, and hunting. Today, we still do many of the same things on the forest.



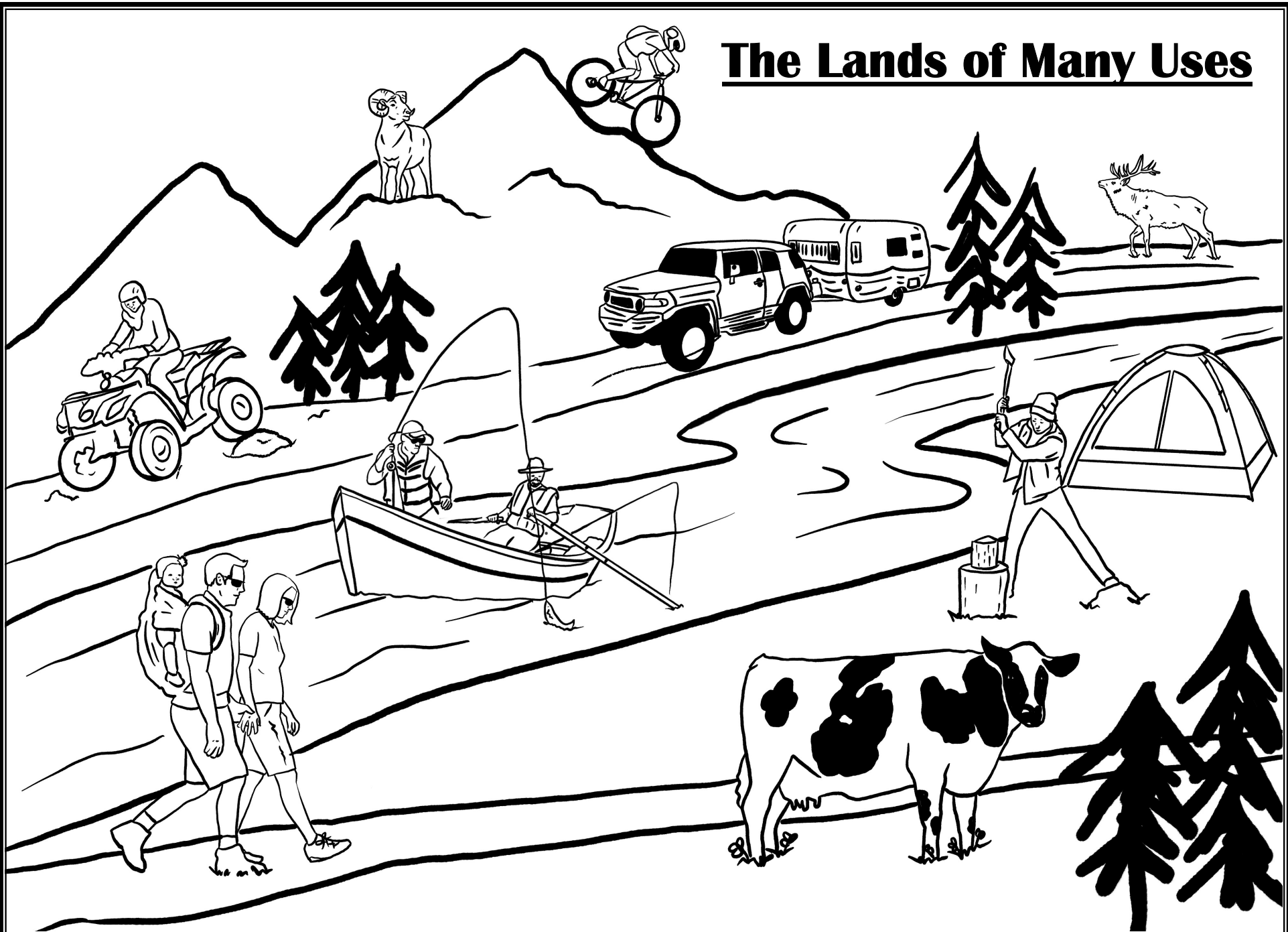
Order the events. #1 happened a long time ago and #5 happened recently.

- ___ Mining
- ___ Exploring
- ___ Creation of the Forest
- ___ Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- ___ Logging

Scavenger Hunt Bingo

See if you can get bingo by finding all these things on the Forest. Once you get bingo, try finding them all!

 A tree with needles	 A smooth rock	 Mud	 A wild animal	 A wildflower
 A hiker	 Running water	 An animal home	 A white rock	 A dead tree
 An animal that isn't wild	 A stick shaped like a letter	 Free	 A tree with leaves	 A jeep
 A forest sign	 A bird	 Smokey Bear	 An insect	 A piece of litter (throw it away!)
 Something fuzzy	 A map	 A picnic table	 A lake or reservoir	 An animal track or sign



The Lands of Many Uses

National Forests are the Lands of Many Uses!

There are many different activities that happen on the forest, from mining and hunting to camping and swimming. Some public lands are **preserved** to protect the plants and animals from being used or hunted. National Parks help preserve public lands. This means we don't harvest, hunt, or take anything from preserved lands.

National Forests are lands that are **conserved**. Conserving means that there may be **sustainable** and responsible use of nature. For example, we use wood from cutting trees on the forest to build our homes but foresters also make sure there are trees left for animal habitat.

Nature makes many things we need, but we must make sure we use it wisely and responsibly.

What can you do on the forest?

Find the different uses in this picture. How many different uses can you see? _____

Draw three more activities that happen on the National Forest!

Color in the picture!

Key Words

Conserve: We may use resources like plants and animals, but we use them carefully and sustainably.

Preserve: We protect resources, like plants and animals, from being damaged, hurt, or losing them.

Sustainable: We only use a certain amount of resources so there will always be some left in the future.

My _____ Hike! A Mad Lib By: _____

Fill in the blanks to complete the story.

An adjective is a describing word, a verb is an action word, a noun is a person, place, or thing.

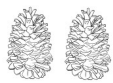


I took a _____ hike _____ days ago on the Rio Grande National Forest. It was a very _____ hike. While I was walking I saw a _____, a _____, and a bighorn sheep. Then I saw _____ more bighorn sheep because they live in herds. They had _____ horns and _____ fur.

I got tired and took a break by a _____. There were lots of _____ trees around me. In one tree I saw a bird. I watched it _____. I kept hiking and saw a person wearing a _____. When I reached the top of the mountain I turned around to hike _____ miles back to my car. On the way down I saw three _____. When I made it back to the trailhead I was _____. Tomorrow, I am going to tell my friends all about the _____ hike I took.

Spruce Beetle

Learn about the Beetle



Why are there so many dead trees?

You may see many dead trees on the forest. A spruce beetle killed these trees. There was an epidemic (a fast spread of beetles) in the last 20 years that killed many trees.

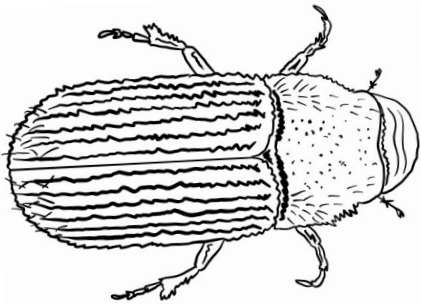
How does the spruce beetle kill the trees?

The spruce beetles lays eggs under the bark. They lay there eggs in the part of the tree that makes wood on the inside and bark on the outside. When the eggs hatch, the larvae eat the tree phloem (sap). When the tree doesn't have any healthy bark, it will die.

Sometimes the beetles also bring in fungus. When the beetles make holes in the tree it is like breaking the tree's skin. This means the tree can get an infection. The fungus can make the tree sick or sometimes even kill it.

What will happen to the dead trees?

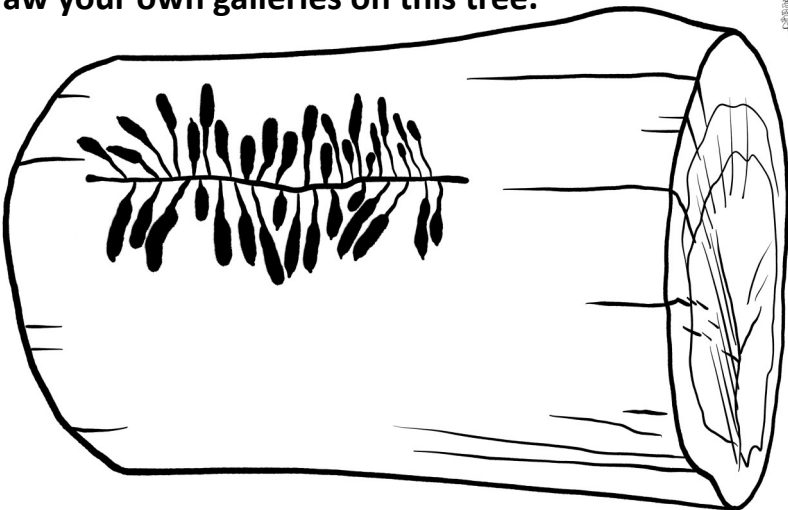
Some people cut the dead trees for firewood. Other trees are cut down to make lumber. Many dead trees are homes for woodpeckers, insects, squirrels, and other animals. Some trees will fall, then rot and turn into soil. Look closely, there are still many little trees growing in the forest.



Galleries of Spruce Beetles

When a spruce beetle arrives at a tree it tunnels into the tree and makes tunnels called galleries. The female beetle lays eggs in these holes. Look for these galleries while you are exploring.

Draw your own galleries on this tree.



What do you think the forest will look like in the future?

Tree Rings

Each year a tree makes a new ring. When a tree is cut down you can count the rings to see how old it is. Tree rings can tell us many things about the tree's life.



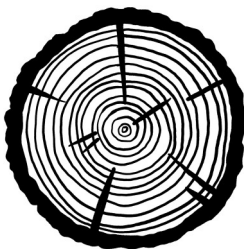
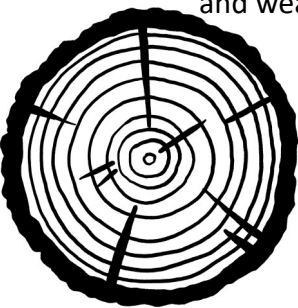
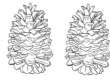
Make an estimate (guess)! How old do you think this tree is? _____ Then **complete the maze** to get to the center of the tree!



Now **count the rings**. How old is the tree? _____

Grow Slow, Grow Fast

Some trees grow slowly and make narrow rings. Other trees grow quickly and make wide rings. Water, sunlight, nutrients, and weather can all determine how fast a tree grows.



Make a guess!
Draw a star next to the tree you think is the oldest.

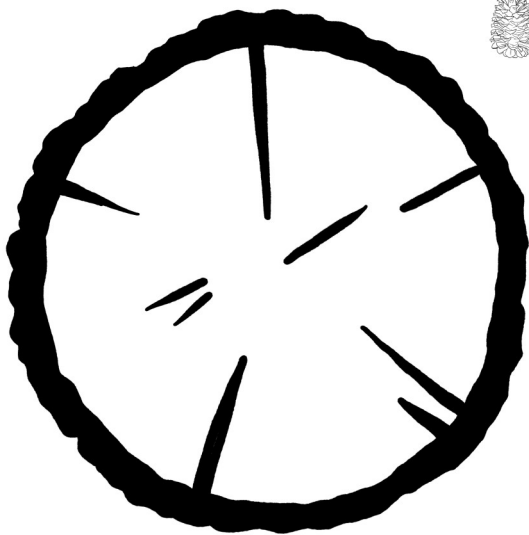
Circle the tree that grew fast. How old is it? _____
How old is the tree that grew slowly? _____

Visit the Oldest Tree on the Forest

Hike the Big Tree Trail to check out a massive Douglas fir tree.

The trail starts just south of the Cross Creek Campground at the end of Beaver Creek Reservoir.

It is over 17 feet around. How old do you think it is? _____



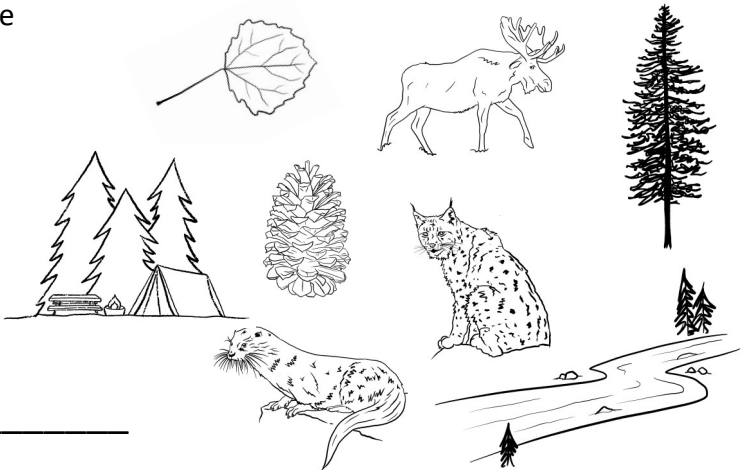
Draw rings on this tree so it is the same age as you!

Forest Scramble



Unscramble the letters to find some things you might see on the forest.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| EFLA _____ | NEPI ONCE _____ |
| OSMOE _____ | IRO RGAEDN _____ |
| ECKRE _____ | GMAICPN _____ |
| TTORE _____ | XYNL _____ |
| E RET _____ | |



Leave No Trace



How can you take care of the Forest and lands you are visiting? By following the Leave No Trace principles! (Principles are like rules). There are many things we can all do to help the environment and the natural world around us. We can recycle, pick up litter, conserve water, and more. While you are visiting the Rio Grande National Forest make sure you follow ‘Leave No Trace’!

Fill in the words to complete each Leave No Trace principle. Then use the numbers that match each letter to solve the riddle below.

1.

15

8

11

4

a

1

5

5

7

plan and be

16

10

4

16

8

10

4

7
2.

2

10

8

3

19

Stay on the
3.

16

8

18

11

Pack it in,

5

14

2

it
4.

9

3

20

7

Leave what you
5.

8

19

12

8

17

13

be careful with

9

3

10

4
6.

10

4

13

16

4

18

2

wildlife.
7.

11

3

20

7

Be

21

3

13

3

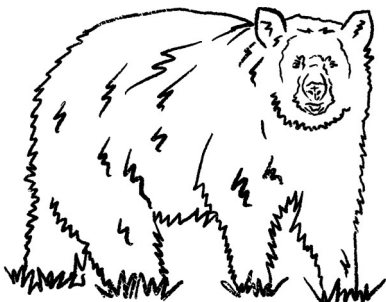
2

5

10

13

to other



Get Ready!

Before you take a trip you should make a plan and tell someone where you are going.

Draw what you would need in your backpack to be prepared for a hike.



What has

20

5

9

3

20

1

4

10

13

but

15

8

20

17

10

3

20

1

13

?

A

2

10

4

4

!

Stay the Trail

Circle the family being safe and following Leave No Trace rules.

What do you help protect by staying on the trail or road?

Many Uses!

Lots of people play and work on forest! List some activities or jobs you might see people doing on our National Forest.

Pack it in,
Pack it out!

So what is ‘it’?
‘it’ is your trash!

Circle all the things this family should throw in the trash at their campsite.

Don’t forget toilet paper is trash, too.
Make sure you put it in the trash.

Rule of Thumb

It is important to respect wildlife. You can help by giving animals space. Try using the Rule of Thumb to see if you are the right distance from an animal. Hold your arm out straight with your thumb up. If you can cover the animal, you have given it enough space. Try it with friends or pets!

Smokey Bear's Best
Campfire Soup Recipe

Ingredients:

• Campfire

• Shovel

• Lots of water

Directions:

1. Add water to your campfire until it looks like soup.

2. Use your shovel to stir the water and ashes together. Mix well. Don't forget to get the ashes deep down!

3. When its all mixed feel your campfire soup with the back of your hand. (Don't taste it!) If it is still warm you need to repeat steps 1 and 2!

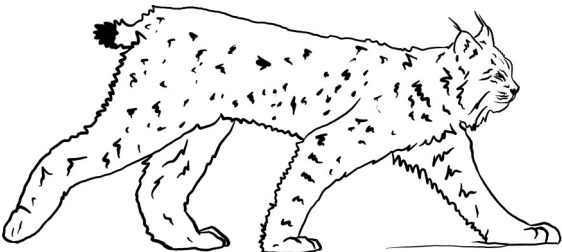
4. Double check your campfire soup. When it is cold enough to touch, it is cold enough to leave.

5

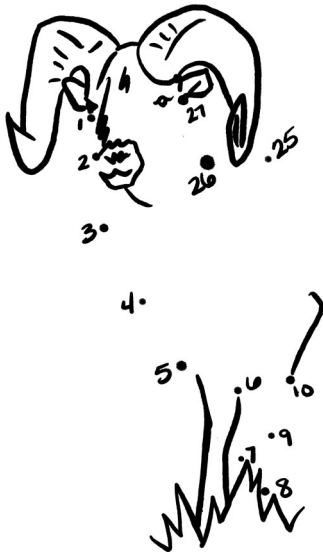
Wildlife of the Forest

Return of the Snow Cats

Lynx are wild cats that love to live in cold, snowy areas like our mountains here in Colorado. They have big paws to help them walk on top of snow, like snowshoes! Lynx were hunted and lost habitat (places to live) until there were no lynx left in Colorado. Many people then worked to bring these cool cats back! Lynx were caught in Canada and then released in Colorado. These reintroduced lynx liked their new home. Now their kittens have grown up and are living in the forests today!



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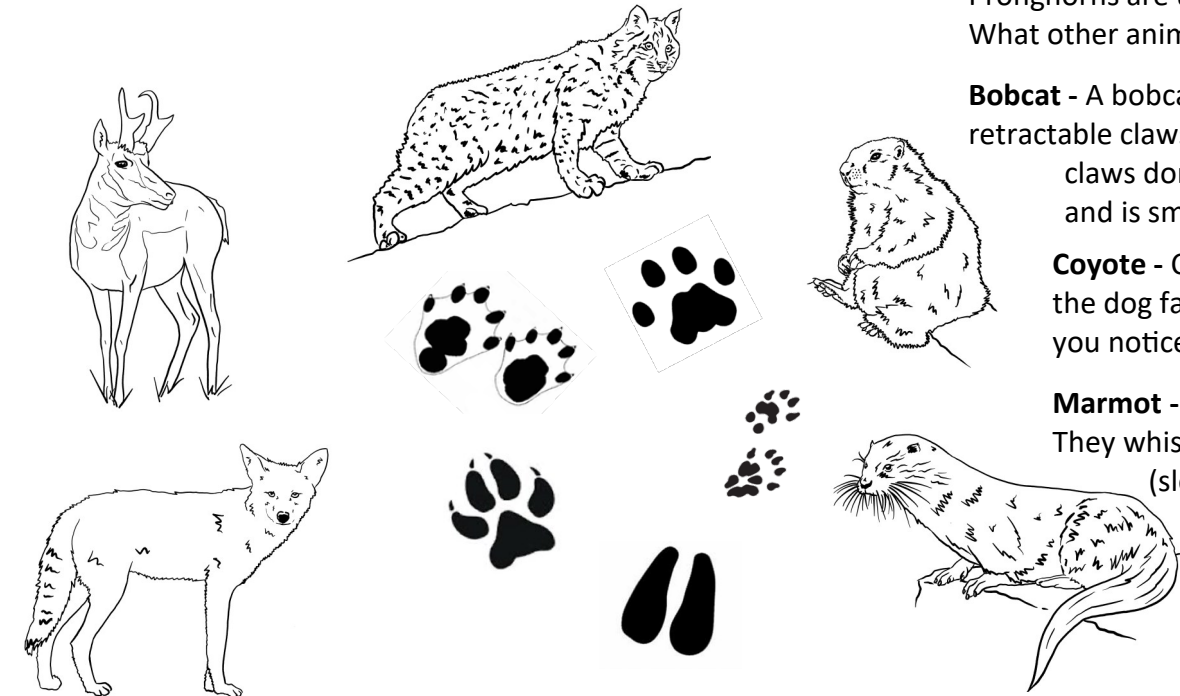


Connect the dots!

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep are the state mammal of Colorado. They are named for their big horns. If you are lucky, you might get to see one. They live in rocky areas like the mountains. They can climb where their predators can't.

Animal Tracks Matching

Draw lines to match the tracks to each animal.



Pronghorn - Did you know pronghorn are the fastest land animal in North America? They can run up to 60 miles per hour. Pronghorns are ungulates (ung-gue-let), animals with hooves. What other animals with hooves might live on the forest?

Bobcat - A bobcat is a member of the cat family. Cats have retractable claws (able to pull their claws in). This means their claws don't show in their tracks! A bobcat has a short tail and is smaller than a lynx.

Coyote - Coyotes like to hunt mice and rabbits. They are in the dog family. Dogs do not have retractable claws. Have you noticed the difference between cat and dog tracks?

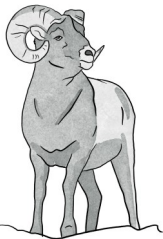
Marmot - Marmots live in the mountains and rocky areas. They whistle when they sense danger. Marmots hibernate (sleep) through the winter.

Otter - Otters love swimming in rivers and reservoirs. Ducks and geese also like to live in the water. Do otters and ducks have similar feet?

Rio Grande Crossword

ACROSS

4. A native animal with horns that likes steep mountain sides.
6. A job that brought many people to Creede hoping to strike it rich.
8. A place where water is stored on the forest.
11. It is important to ___ on the trail or roads to help protect our soil and plants.
13. In the summer months thunderstorms bring ___ and hail to the mountains.
15. A tree with white bark and leaves that turn yellow in the fall.
17. The insect that killed many of the trees on the forest



DOWN

1. The name of the major river that starts on the National Forest.
2. The largest ungulate (animal with hoofs) on the forest.
3. This animal is a member of the cat family and is adapted to cold and snowy winters.
5. When you put out your campfire you first drown it, then you ___ it, and finally feel it to see if it is still hot.
6. Many different activities happen on National Forests. They are the lands of ___ ___. (2 words)



7. Farm animals you may find grazing on the forest.
9. In the spring and summer this melts to feed the creeks and rivers.
10. Wolf Creek ___ and Stony ___ are places you can go over the mountains on a road. (1 word)

12. The Rio Grande cutthroat ___ is a species of fish only found in this area.
14. Where a bird lays its eggs.
15. Trees create oxygen which we need when we breathe ___.
16. The Rio Grande National Forest is the homeland of this indigenous tribe.

