Streamside Scavenger Hunt

Objectives:

- Children will identify species and their characteristics.
- Children will describe connections between species and their habitats.

Background:

During this activity, children will take a closer look at the animals and plants that live in the watershed. This activity allows children to connect with nature by exploring a river ecosystem. Children will have the opportunity to work together with their classmate to search for the items on their checklist. For older children, you may want to expand or change the list, but the basic idea can be the same.

Materials: Scavenger Hunt sheet, pencil and magnifying glasses.

Procedure:

1. Gather children and introduce the scavenger hunt activity. Set boundaries for how far children are allowed to travel to gather their information. Remind children to respect the plants and animals in the environment they are exploring.

2. Hand out copies of the scavenger hunt worksheet. Remind children that objects need to be seen but not collected. Send children on their hunt in pairs. Instruct them to check off the items on their worksheet as they find them.

3. As children hunt, provide clues as to where they can find the objects. For example, you can say, “I wonder where we could find some ants. I know they dig tunnels, I wonder where they put all the soil they move from their home.”

4. Step 4: After most items have been found, gather all children in a meeting area. Have children share their findings.

Wrap-up:

Schedule a trip to a nearby park and complete another scavenger hunt in the following weeks. Spend time discussing and comparing the two environments. Did they find the same animals and plants? Was it easier to find the items on their worksheet the second time?

Adapted from the lesson “Streamside Scavenger Hunt” created by Trout in the Classroom (2006)
Look for the following items. When you find them, write or draw a description in the blanks.

1. Three different kinds of leaves. Sketch a picture of them in the space below. Do you know what trees they came from?

2. An insect. Where did you find it?

3. Something living under a log or rock.

4. Something that shows an animal may have passed there (animal track, scratches, droppings).

5. A seed built to float in the air.

6. Sit quietly with your eyes closed for a minute or two. What sounds do you hear? (Ignore people sounds.)

8. Something that is not native to the area. How do you think it got there? (e.g. litter, benches, etc.)

Adapted from the lesson “Streamside Scavenger Hunt” created by Trout in the Classroom (2006)