Activity Guide

Take this guide home with you!

Return this pack to the

- ❑ Interpretive Center
- ❑ Park Office
- ❑ Other _____

By _____ AM/PM, _____ 20 ____

Checked out by: _____

This Discovery Pack contains items that will help you explore and discover nature and have fun outdoors. We hope the contents of the pack along with this booklet and your own imagination will lead you towards many fun outdoor adventures.

What can we do?

Included in this booklet is a collection of activities and ideas for you to try using the contents of the pack, but we hope the pack is just the beginning of your family fun outside.

The Discovery Pack Journal

Before you return the Discovery Pack, take a few minutes to share with us (and future families who will be using the pack) something about your adventures in the Pack Journal (the yellow notebook). For example, what did you see or do? What did you enjoy most?

Take this Activity Guide Home

Please take this guide home with you. Many of the activities could be just as fun in your own back yard as they are at High Point State Park. There is also a list at the back of suggested books and websites that you may find useful and enjoyable.

Returning the Pack

Please make sure to return your pack to the location and at the time that were specified on the adjacent page of this booklet when you checked it out.

What's in the Pack?

- ❑ Park Map
- ❑ Trail Guide
- ❑ Discovery Pack Guide
- ❑ Pack Journal
- ❑ Pond Net
- ❑ Insect Net
- ❑ Folding Binoculars
- ❑ Magnifier
- ❑ "Bug" Box
- ❑ Thin Crayons
- ❑ Thick crayons
- ❑ New Jersey Wildlife
- ❑ New Jersey Trees and Wildflowers
- ❑ Pond Life
- ❑ Paintbrush
- ❑ Bandana
- ❑ Six-inch Ruler
- ❑ Clipboard
- ❑ Flying Ring
- ❑ Dish
- ❑ Cup
- ❑ Mini-Flashlight
- ❑ Whistle

Caution: Some items in the Discovery Pack may pose a choking hazard to children under the age of three.

Fun Things to do Outside

Use your imagination and have fun. There's lots you can do outdoors with (and without) the items in the Discovery Pack. Pack contents are in bold. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Practice being a careful observer.

Find a grassy or wooded area that is relatively free of shrubs. Toss the **flying ring**. Follow it to where it lands, get comfortable (sit or lie down) and carefully observe the plants and critters inside the circle. How many different kinds are there? Use the **magnifier** to take a closer look. Can you draw what you see inside the ring? Not a very interesting spot? Toss the ring and try again.

Use the bandana to play a memory game.

Here's how: one person collects and hides five to ten small items underneath the **bandana**, then lifts the bandana and gives the other player(s) 30 seconds (or so) to observe the items, then covers them with the bandana again. The other players(s) must now remember everything that was under the bandana and search to find matching items nearby.
Adapted from *Sharing Nature with Children* by Joseph Cornell.

Go wading in a stream or pond.

Go on a hole hunt.

Shine the **flashlight** into holes to see what's inside. How many different holes can you find? How big? How small? (It's not a good idea to put hands or fingers into holes, without looking first!)

Bring out the hidden beauty of High Point's rocks.

Fill the **cup** with water and use the **paintbrush** to "paint" the rocks. When wet, many rocks, especially the pebbly Shawangunk Conglomerate that makes up this ridge, show pretty colors you don't see when they're dry.

Go on a size scavenger hunt.

Use the **ruler** and see how many things can you find that are exactly one inch long. How about two inches? Can you think of any other ways that you could measure things?

Lie on your back and watch the clouds.

What shapes do you see? Did any birds fly by?

Make a sound map.

Find a spot where you can sit comfortably and quietly for five to ten minutes. Using the **crayons** or **pencil**, Draw an "X" in the middle of a piece of **paper** on the **clipboard**. That's you. As you sit and listen, draw what you hear around you. For example, if you hear a bird sing in the distance to your right, draw something that represents the bird song to the right of the "X" near the edge of the paper. If you hear leaves rustling close to your left, then draw something that represents that sound close to the "X" on the left side. Adapted from *Sharing the Joy of Nature* by Joseph Cornell.

Spy on the treetops.

Lie on the ground and look up, or stay upright and use the **mirror**. Draw a picture of what you see using the **paper** on the **clipboard** and the **crayons**.

Find ten things small enough to fit on a penny.

Make an elf house.

Find a cozy nook between the roots of a tree, next to a rock, under a bush–any spot that looks appealing to you, and then set up an elf-sized home. Use your imagination and search for pebbles, mosses, pinecones, seed husks, acorn caps, twigs, and leaves...whatever materials you can find to furnish your pint-sized hide-away. Adapted from *Nature's Playground: Activities Crafts and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors* by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield.

Search for insects.

Sweep the **insect net** over the grass (short or long), and see what appears in your net. Use the **magnifier** to take a closer look. A couple of warnings: try to avoid shrubs and branches as they can rip the net and use caution if you are sweeping the net over flowers, as you might catch a bee. You can also search for insects underneath the bark of dead trees, or under logs and rocks. If you turn over a log or rock, put it back when you're done and leave the critters' homes in tact.

Search for colors in nature.

Find something that matches the color of each of the **crayons**. Or try to find things that mach the color of your clothes. Or see how many different shades of green you can find.

Read Outdoors

Reading stimulates the imagination, and can be even more fun if you're sitting under a tree, perched in a tree house, or on a beach. Adventure stories and books in which the characters spend time playing outdoors are especially good. Books by Elizabeth Enright or Jean Craighead George can be a good place to start. Adapted from *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv (expanded edition).

Make a leaf rubbing.

Select a leaf and lay it under the a sheet of **paper** on the **clipboard** making sure that the roughest side of the leaf with the veins is facing up. Choose one of the chunky **crayons**, turn it on its side, and rub it gently over the paper and watch the details of the leaf appear. You can also try this with tree bark, rocks…use your imagination!

Explore one of High Point's lakes, ponds, or streams.

Put a little water in the dish and swish the green aquatic net around in the water and see what you find. Can you catch a fish? A frog? A newt? If you stir up the leaves at the bottom you may find some of the many aquatic insects that live in the lakes and ponds. Transfer your finds from the net to the dish so you can observe them for awhile before putting them back in the water. Take a closer look with the **magnifier**. The ***Pocket Naturalist Guide to Pond Life*** may help you identify some of the plants and animals you find in or near the water.

Calculate the age of a tree.

Find a cut tree stump and figure out how old the tree was by counting the rings. (The **magnifier** may help you see them.) Are all the rings the same width? In years when the growing conditions are good, the rings will be wide, if conditions were poor (drought, insect infestation, cold year, etc.) the rings will be narrower. Can you find a tree the same age as you?

Watch a sunrise, sunset, or moonrise.

The Monument and the observation platform on the Appalachian Trail (AT) are good places to see all three. The top of the Blue Dot Trail that connects the AT to the Sawmill Campground is a challenging climb, but a beautiful spot to watch the sunset. The **binoculars** might help you enjoy the view or take a closer look at the moon. (Do NOT look directly into the sun!)

Go on an alphabet hunt.

Try to find something in nature that starts with each letter of the alphabet. "A" is for ant, "B" is for bark, and so on. (You may have to get a little creative with more difficult letters, like "X.")

Track the seasons.

Keep a journal at home and record your observations of seasonal changes on a daily or weekly basis. (You can always include other neat things you might notice too!). An nature journal can be downloaded for fee from *www.greenhour.org/content/activity/detail/1525*.

Make a mud pie.

Make a dandelion chain.

Pick several dandelions, getting as much of the stem as possible. Remove the flower and insert the narrower end of the stem into the wider end, making a circle. Make a chain by linking the circles together. Adapted from *Talking to Fireflies, Shrinking the Moon: Nature Activities for All Ages* by Edward Duensing.

Make a giant collage.

In autumn, collect fallen leaves, sticks, pieces of bark, or anything else non-living that catches your eye and use the materials to design a giant collage or "magic carpet." This type of artwork won't last forever, so if you want to remember your creation take a picture! Adapted from *Nature's Playground: Activities Crafts and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors* by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield.

Go to the beach and build a sand castle...

...Or another type of sculpture. How about a sand ladybug? Or a sand frog? In winter, try making a snow sculpture.

Stalk a turtle.

In the warmer months it's common to see painted turtles sunning themselves on rocks and logs around the edges of lakes and ponds. They usually slide into the water before anyone gets too close. Be as sneaky and quiet as you can and see how close you can get before the turtle dives.

Play a game of frisbee.

Find an open area and play a game of frisbee with the **flying ring**.

Become a tracker.

Many of the animals that live at High Point are difficult to see, but signs of their activities are all around. Try out the "Signs of Wildlife" scavenger hunt (located in this booklet) and see how many signs you can find. If you find a track in the snow, sand, or mud, use the **ruler** to measure both its length and width, and draw a sketch of its shape. This will help you look it up in a field guide or on-line and figure out what kind of track you found.

Practice using senses other than your sense of sight.

This works best with two people: one person blindfolded, the other acting as a guide. Roll or fold the **bandana** to form a blindfold, and tie it over your eyes. Take a moment to reach out with your other senses. What do you feel, smell, hear? The guide should carefully lead the blindfolded person to an interesting object (tree, boulder, etc.) to examine using his/her senses other than sight. Then the guide leads the blindfolded person away. Once you remove the blindfold see if you can find the object you were led to. If this is too easy, the guide should turn the blindfolded person around a couple of times before taking the blindfold off.

Go on a hike.

You can use many of the tools in this pack to explore while hiking one of High Point's Trails. A **map** and a **trail guide** are included in the pack. If you'd like advice about the trail, ask at the Interpretive Center or the Park Office. You may want to wear insect repellent and bring water to drink. A snack can make a trip down the trail more fun.

If you think you are lost...

Blow the **whistle**. A whistle is an excellent safety item for children to have with them when exploring outdoors. The sound of a whistle carries much farther than that of the human voice and children should learn to blow a whistle if they think they are lost or in danger (but NOT at any other time).

Look for a four-leaf clover.

Think creatively.

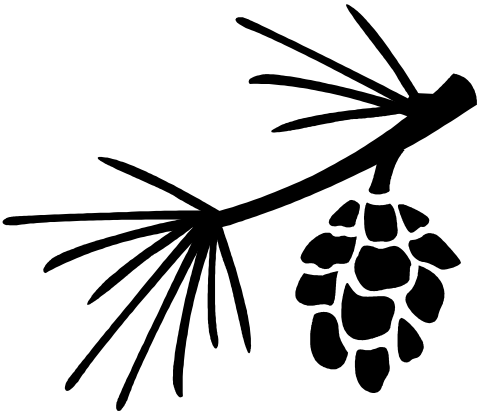
A **bandana** is a useful item to have in your pack. How many different things can you think of to do with it?

Go to the highest spot in New Jersey.

The diagram of the view in this booklet will help you figure out what you're looking at. Is the weather different at the top of the mountain? How about the plants? Do you see any birds? There are often turkey vultures soaring nearby. In fall, many hawks, falcons, eagles, and monarch butterflies migrate along the Kittatinny Ridge.

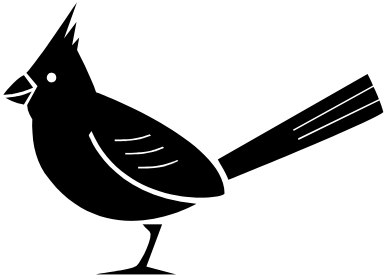
Invent a nature game.

You could play an outdoor version of "I Spy" or "Twenty Questions" or see who can find signs of ten animals first. Adapted from *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv (expanded edition).



BE A BIRDER

Can you find a bird that is...



- ❑ flying
- ❑ resting
- ❑ singing
- ❑ eating
- ❑ drinking
- ❑ bathing
- ❑ walking or hopping on the ground
- ❑ hopping from branch to branch
- ❑ swimming

STUDY A PLANT

- ❑ Stem (Trunk if you're looking at a tree)
- ❑ Roots
- ❑ Leaves
- ❑ Buds
- ❑ Flowers
- ❑ Seeds

Find all the plant part for two different kinds of plants.
How are they same?
How are they different?

SENSORY SCAVENGER HUNT

Can you find...

- ❑ something that smells good?
- ❑ something that feels soft?
- ❑ something that feels hard?
- ❑ something that feels squishy?
- ❑ something that feels sharp?
- ❑ something that feels rough?
- ❑ something that smells bad?
- ❑ a sound that air makes?
- ❑ a sound that a plant makes?
- ❑ a sound that an animal makes?
- ❑ a sound that a person makes?
- ❑ something that feels warm?
- ❑ something that feels cool?
- ❑ something that feels wet?
- ❑ something that feels dry?
- ❑ something that feels smooth?
- ❑ something that is round?
- ❑ something that is square or rectangular?
- ❑ something shaped like a triangle?
- ❑ a sound that you like and can imitate?
- ❑ something that is only one color?
- ❑ something that is many colors?
- ❑ something that you can feel and hear but not see?

SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF WILDLIFE

Evidence of animals eating

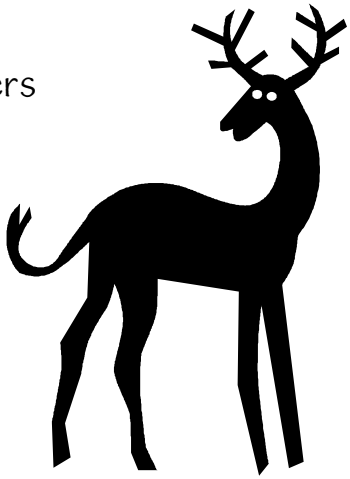
- ❑ Nutshells
- ❑ Chewed Twigs
- ❑ Bones
- ❑ Feathers
- ❑ Fur
- ❑ Tree holes
- ❑ Bark scraped off trees
- ❑ Digging
- ❑ Rocks and logs turned over

Evidence of animals moving

- ❑ Trails
- ❑ Tracks
- ❑ Marks on trees

Evidence of animal shelters

- ❑ Nests
- ❑ Holes
- ❑ Dens
- ❑ Lodges



Other signs

- ❑ Scat
- ❑ Bark scraped of tree
- ❑ Other mounds and markers
- ❑ Scrapes on the ground
- ❑ Fur, feathers, quills
- ❑ Bones

For information about nature programs for children and families at High Point State Park, go to www.highpointpark.blogspot.com.