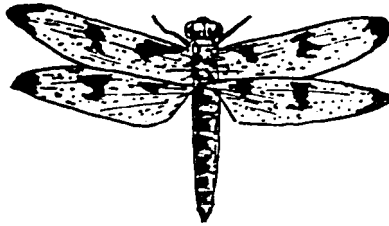


# CHENEY

## State Park



### A Kid's Guide to Giefer Nature Trail

Cheney State Park  
Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks  
16000 NE 50th St.  
Cheney, KS 67025-8487

(316) 542-3664 (Area Office)  
(316) 683-8069 (Regional Office)

**e-mail:** CheneySP@wp.state.ks.us  
**Department Website:**  
[www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us)

# A SENSE OF ADVENTURE

Did you know that you have everything you need to be an explorer? Each of your senses is a tool with which you make discoveries in the world around you. As you walk along this nature trail, imagine yourself on a journey and try to see, hear, smell, and touch new things (no tasting please!).

There are 18 numbered signposts along the trail. At each signpost, stop and find the same number in this booklet for a clue to the mysteries along Geifer Creek Nature Trail.

## 1. LISTEN UP

The babbling creek you hear springs from a hole in the ground nearby. This gurgling sound attracts many different wild animals, including deer, birds, and foxes.

## 2. TREE HOUSES

Can you find any holes in the tree trunks or nests in the branches? Look about in all directions. These holes are shelter for woodpeckers, owls, and squirrels. Small stick nests are homes for birds. Large leaf nests (about the size of a basketball) are homes for squirrels.



squirrel

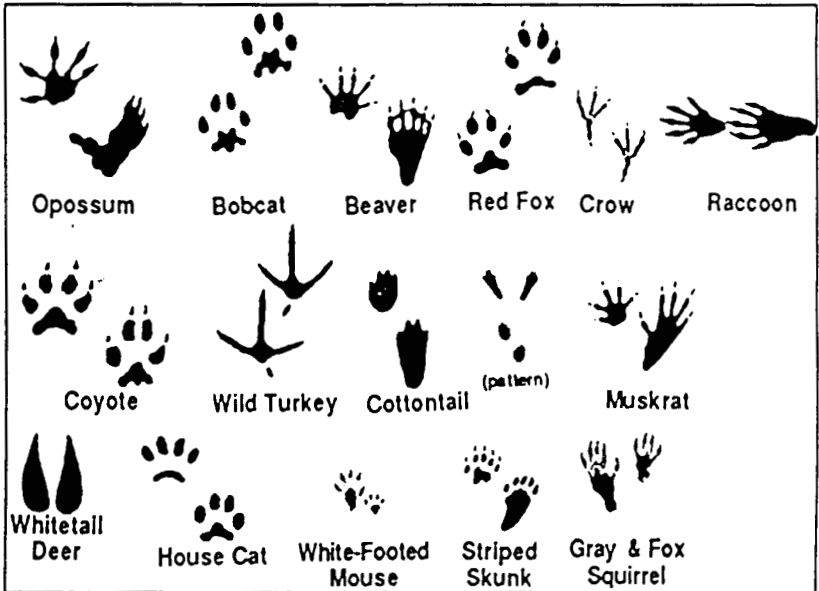
## LEAFLETS 3-LET IT BE

Poison ivy can cause an itchy rash. It has three leaves and reddish stems. If you touch poison ivy, **DON'T PANIC!** Wash with cold water and soap within the first hour.

### 3. ANIMAL TRACKING

Not all animals are awake during the day. Some are nocturnal (active at night). Look for the clues that they leave behind, like tracks in the sand and mud.

Circle the tracks that you see.



#### 4. WHAT'S THAT?

What are those squiggles in the wood of the dead tree? Hungry insects underneath the bark of the tree made these tunnels when the tree was alive.

#### 5. DIFFERENT TEXTURES

Feel the bark of this tree. Its roughness is characteristic of the Hackberry. Compare this to the bark of the Cottonwood behind you.

#### 6. HOT OR COLD?

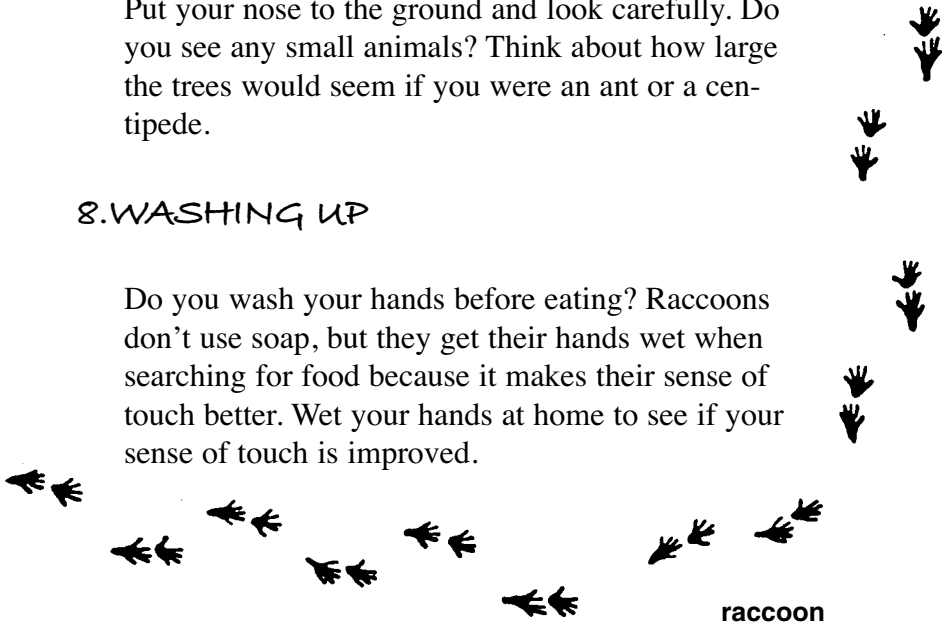
Take a moment to notice the temperature in the woods. Would you rather be here on a hot day or out on the open prairie?

#### 7. THINK SMALL

Put your nose to the ground and look carefully. Do you see any small animals? Think about how large the trees would seem if you were an ant or a centipede.

#### 8. WASHING UP

Do you wash your hands before eating? Raccoons don't use soap, but they get their hands wet when searching for food because it makes their sense of touch better. Wet your hands at home to see if your sense of touch is improved.



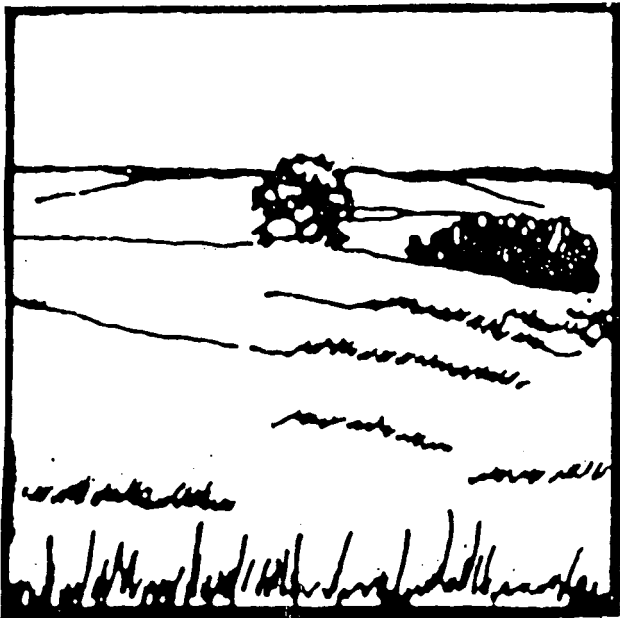
## 9. HOW OLD ARE YOU?

You could live to be almost 100 years old. Many trees live even longer than that, but this Redbud tree, if it's lucky, will only live 25 years.

## 10. PICTURE THIS

Do you have a box of crayons at home? Think of all the different colors in the box and then look out at the prairie. It will take almost all of the colors in the box to create a picture of this prairie.

Color the picture of the prairie below.



## 11. BUZZ OFF!



Even unpleasant creatures need habitat. During cool months of the year there is standing water here that would be a perfect home for baby mosquitoes, called larvae or wrigglers. You would be a juicy meal for a mosquito mother, because she needs a meal of blood before she can lay her eggs.

## 12. A DEAD RINGER

Count each ring, or groove, of this tree stump. Each ring marks one year of life. Could this stump be the remains of a Redbud? Probably not, because Redbuds only live 25 years. How old was this tree when it was cut down?

Tree age: \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. TAKE A PEEK

You brought your own binoculars. Make your hands into “O’s” and hold them up to your eyes. When you peer through them, can you see deeper into the woods? Try this at night when looking at the stars— you can see their colors.

## 14. LOOK BEHIND YOU

Notice how close we are to people’s homes and to the road. Although this woodland is so close to houses, it still provides food and shelter to a variety of animals.



bobcat



### 15. BLACKBERRY PIE

What you see before you are blackberry bushes. Although the berries are edible and tasty, it might be a bad idea to venture in too far—this plant has thousands of thorns.

### 16. CACTUS IN KANSAS?


Look closely at the ground in front of you and you will see prickly pear cacti (plural of cactus). Although we don't live in the desert, this cactus is right at home in the prairie.

### 17. NAME GAME

What's in a name? We often name things by their appearance. Look at the color of the tree's bark for a clue to its name. If you guessed orange, you were right! This is an Osage Orange tree.

### 18. YOUR NOSE KNOWS

Smell this Cedar tree. Does it remind you of anything? The wood of this tree is used as bedding for gerbils and other small pets. It is a natural bug repellent and smells good too.



# Different Perspectives

For a different perspective, turn around and travel through the trail from the opposite direction.

Or, travel the trail during different seasons of the year. Not only will the colors, smells, and sounds be different but the animals present will also change due to migration and hibernation.

Or, take a “Micro-Hike.” Pretend you are an ant—are acorns mountains? Is a raindrop a lake?

Or, hike the trail at sunset. Many animals are crepuscular, which means they only come out at low light times of the day. You will have a better chance of seeing deer at sunrise and sunset than at any other time of day.

This project developed by the  
Kansas Outdoor Americorps Action Team (KOAAT)  
at Cheney State Park (January 2000)



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