

Be Outside

TRAIL WALK

*Field Experience Guide for
Teaching a Trail Walk*



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The trails we walk in Cache Valley are the homeland of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, who are still here today. We remember that this land was taken from them through violence. As we walk, we honor their history and care for this land.



WHAT TO EXPECT

 **Arrive:** Check in with quick breathwork or a short meditation before you begin.

 **Watch:** Watch the film once, just to take it in.

 **Watch to Learn:** Watch again and fill out the foldable(s).

 **Reflect:** Journal how you feel now that you've finished the field experience, and what you learned.

 **Go Outside & Create:** Make art, photos, film, or other outdoor media wherever you are.

 **Share:** Show your project to your peers, a teacher, and a parent.

 **Bonus:** A poem for two voices to read aloud with a partner, a little gift to send you off.

Lesson 1: I Notice...

Grade: 3-8

Materials: Trail walk film and screen; I Notice foldable; pencils and colored pencils

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Observe nature closely by looking from new angles and taking their time
- Draw and label what they notice



BREATHE & ARRIVE: Trail Breath

1. Find a spot where you feel steady, sitting or standing. Plant your feet like roots.
2. Rest your hands wherever feels good: on your heart, your belly, or your knees.
3. Let your eyes go soft on one spot, or close them.
4. Breathe in slowly, like you're smelling the air at the trailhead. Breathe out, like wind moving through the willows.
5. Take three of these breaths together.
6. On the last breath out, let your shoulders drop.
7. Open your eyes and look around. Notice one thing in the room you didn't notice before.



CONTENT PRESENTATION

- Watch the film once, just for fun.
- Introduce noticing: we can look closely, look from new angles, look deeper, and take more time to sit with nature.
- Watch again. Pause on anything that deserves a closer look. Rewind and rewatch.



LEARNER PARTICIPATION

- I Notice foldable: Notice, draw, and label 2 different plants or trees.



ASSESSMENT

- Walk around, look around, and talk around.
- Check each foldable for 2 different plants or trees, drawn and labeled.

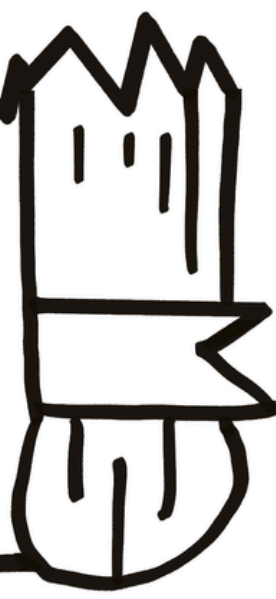
FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Notice one plant near your home or school the same way. What do you see that you missed at first?

Nature Journal



Name: _____



1. Fold the page in half along the dotted line.
2. Take the top layer and fold it back up to the top edge.



I notice...

What can you see? Hear?
Touch? Smell?

What else can you notice when
you think you can't notice
anything more?

Pause and describe as much as
you can with words and
pictures. Use color!



Lesson 2: I Wonder...

Grade: 3-8

Materials: Trail walk film and screen; I Wonder foldable; Old Neighbors and Newcomers reading (Grade 3 or Grades 6-8 version); pencils

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Turn what they notice into questions
- Use a reading to find answers to their own questions



BREATHE & ARRIVE: Trail Breath

Lead the Trail Breath from Lesson 1. For the last step: Open your eyes and think of one thing from the film you're curious about.



CONTENT PRESENTATION

- Rewatch the film.
- Model wondering: turn a noticing into a question. "I notice the willows grow by the creek" becomes "Why do willows grow by the creek?" Try question starters like why, how, and what if.



LEARNER PARTICIPATION

- I Wonder foldable: Write 5 questions about what you saw that you could research later.
- Read Old Neighbors and Newcomers. Next to each question, write what you learned. Circle any questions the reading didn't answer.



ASSESSMENT

- Walk around, look around, and talk around.
- Check each foldable for 5 questions, with at least one answered from the reading.

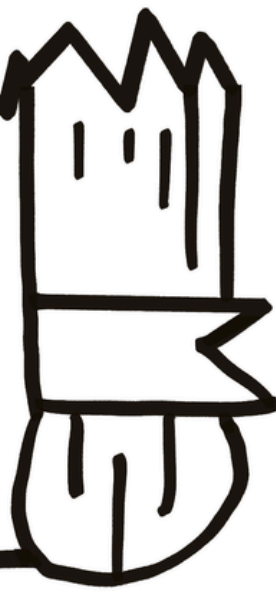
FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Research one circled question at home, in the library, or online.

Nature Journal



Name: _____



1. Fold the page in half along the dotted line.
2. Take the top layer and fold it back up to the top edge.



I wonder...

Why does nature have patterns?

Why is this plant/animal/bug even in this place?

Pause and describe as much as you can with words and pictures. Use color!



Old Neighbors and Newcomers

Some plants on our trail have lived in Cache Valley for a very long time. We call them old neighbors. Other plants came from far away. We call them newcomers.

Willows grow by the creek because they love water. Long ago, the Shoshone people named this valley Sihiviogoi. That means Willow River. They used willows to make baskets and to block the winter wind.

The Shoshone also picked chokecherries. They dried the dark berries to eat in winter. Never eat berries on the trail without an adult. The pits can make you sick.

Junipers are tough trees. They grow on dry, rocky hills. The juniper on our trail is about 200 years old! Birds eat its blue berries.

Milkweed is food for monarch butterflies. Baby monarchs, called caterpillars, eat only milkweed.

Old Neighbors

willow
chokecherry
Utah juniper
milkweed
big sagebrush
maple
aspen
cottonwood

Newcomers

sweet-briar rose
St. Lucie cherry
smooth brome

Trail Facts!

Aspen is Utah's state tree.

Aspens and cottonwoods are cousins. Both are poplars.

Sweet-briar rose leaves smell like apples!

A dead tree is a home for bugs and mushrooms.

Old Neighbors and Newcomers

MORE OLD NEIGHBORS

Big sagebrush is gray-green. Rub a leaf and smell your fingers!

Maple leaves turn red and orange in fall.

Aspen has white bark and leaves that shake in the wind. It is Utah's state tree.

Cottonwood is a kind of poplar. Its bark is dark and bumpy. Its leaves are long and skinny. Cottonwoods grow near water, just like willows. Aspens are poplars too, so they are cousins!

NEWCOMERS

Sweet-briar rose came from Europe. Rub a leaf. It smells like apples!

St. Lucie cherry came from Europe too. People used its roots to grow cherry trees. Some of it escaped and now grows wild.

Smooth brome is a grass. People planted it as food for cows.

A TREE THAT IS STILL WORKING

The old dead tree is not done yet! Bugs live inside it. Mushrooms grow on it.

Little by little, it turns into soil for new plants.

Words to Know

- caterpillar: a baby butterfly
- poplar: a tree family that includes aspens and cottonwoods
- soil: the dirt where plants grow



Back to your I Wonder foldable: Did this reading answer any of your questions? How can you tell if a plant is an old neighbor or a newcomer?

Old Neighbors and Newcomers

Walk this trail and you'll pass two kinds of plants. Some are native: they grew in Cache Valley long before settlers arrived, and the animals here depend on them. Others are introduced: people brought them from other continents, on purpose or by accident. Learning to tell them apart is one way to read the land.

Willow crowds the creek banks because its roots need steady water. The Shoshone name for Cache Valley, Sihiviogoi, means Willow River. For generations, the Northwestern Band of Shoshone used willow branches for baskets and as windbreaks during winter.

Chokecherry produces dark, tart berries that were a staple food for many Native nations. Shoshone families dried them, made them into syrup and pudding, and pounded them into pemmican, a high-energy trail food. The pits and leaves contain a compound that can be poisonous, which is why traditional recipes involved careful preparation.

Utah juniper survives where little else can: on dry, rocky, alkaline slopes. The juniper on this trail is about 200 years old, which means it sprouted before Utah was a state. Utah junipers can live 650 years or more, and birds depend on their berry-like cones for food in fall and winter.

Native

willow
chokecherry
Utah juniper
milkweed
big sagebrush
maple
aspen
narrowleaf cottonwood

Introduced

sweet-briar rose
St. Lucie cherry
smooth brome

Words to Know

native: grew in a place before settlers arrived

introduced: brought to a place by people

staple food: a main food people depend on

pemmican: a dried, high-energy trail food

graft: to join part of one plant onto the roots of another

Old Neighbors and Newcomers

MORE NATIVE PLANTS

Milkweed is the only plant monarch caterpillars can eat. Without milkweed, monarchs can't survive.

Big sagebrush, maples, and aspen fill out the native community. Sagebrush roots reach deep for water. Maples turn the canyons red in fall. Aspen, Utah's state tree, usually grows in groups connected by one shared root system, so a single aspen is often one part of a much larger living thing.

Narrowleaf cottonwood is the creek's other native tree. Its dark, furrowed bark looks nothing like aspen's smooth white bark, but the two are close relatives: both belong to the poplar family, *Populus*. Cottonwoods need water near their roots, so they grow along creeks and canyon mouths, often next to willows. In early summer, their seeds float through the air on fluffy white fibers, which is how the tree got its name.

THE NEWCOMERS

Sweet-briar rose came from Europe. Crush a leaf and you'll smell apples, which come from tiny sticky glands on its underside.

St. Lucie cherry has a stranger story. Orchards used it as the root system for grafted sweet and sour cherry trees. Sprouts growing from those roots produced fruit, birds spread the seeds, and the tree escaped into Utah's valleys, wherever there's water.

Smooth brome is a grass that people planted for livestock feed and to hold soil in place. It spreads easily and can crowd out native plants.

A TREE THAT IS STILL WORKING

The old decaying tree may look finished, but it's busy. Insects tunnel through it, fungi break it down, and birds hunt for food in its bark. Over many years, it becomes soil that feeds the next generation of plants.

READ THE LAND

Newcomers aren't always "bad." Some feed wildlife, and some just blend in. But when introduced plants spread fast, they can crowd out the natives that animals depend on. Look around: which plants are winning on this trail? What might happen if nothing changes?



BACK TO YOUR I WONDER FOLDABLE

Did this reading answer any of your questions? Next to each question, write what you learned. Circle any questions still unanswered to research later.

Lesson 3: It Reminds Me Of...

Grade: 3-8

Materials: Trail walk film and screen; It Reminds Me Of foldable; pencils and colored pencils

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Connect what they observe in nature to their own lives
- Put their observations into their own words



BREATHE & ARRIVE: Trail Breath

Lead the Trail Breath from Lesson 1. For the last step: Keep your eyes closed and picture an outdoor place that matters to you.



CONTENT PRESENTATION

- Rewatch the film.
- Model making connections: share something from the film that reminds you of your own life, like a place, a person, or a memory.



LEARNER PARTICIPATION

- It Reminds Me Of foldable: Write or draw 3 ways what you saw connects to your own life.



ASSESSMENT

- Walk around, look around, and talk around.
- Students share one connection with a partner. Check each foldable for 3 connections.

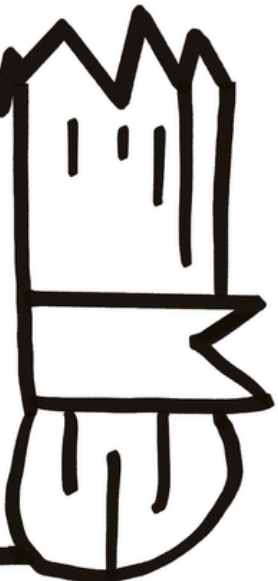
FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Ask a family member about a plant or outdoor place that matters to them.

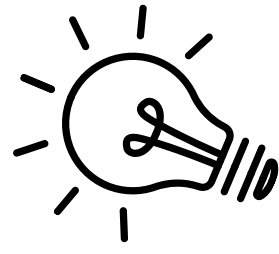
Nature Journal



Name: _____



1. Fold the page in half along the dotted line.
2. Take the top layer and fold it back up to the top edge.



It reminds me of...

What connections do your observations have to your own life?

How can you make sense of what you notice and put it into your own words?

Pause and describe as much as you can with words and pictures. Use color!



Lesson 4: Be Outside!

Grade: 3-8

Materials: Nature Journal page; all three foldables; art supplies (watercolor, pencil, markers) or a camera

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Reflect on what they learned from noticing, wondering, and making connections
- Use all three skills to make a detailed piece of outdoor art



BREATHE & ARRIVE: Trail Breath (outside if you can)

Lead the Trail Breath from Lesson 1. For the last step: Open your eyes and listen for 3 different sounds.



CONTENT PRESENTATION

- Review the three foldables: noticing, wondering, and making connections.
- Show what a strong final project includes: 3 labeled details, 3 questions, and 1 connection.



LEARNER PARTICIPATION

- Journal: How do you feel now? What did you learn from noticing, wondering, and making connections?
- Go Outside & Create: Take your favorite art materials outside, wherever you are. Pick one thing in nature and draw it with as many details as you can. Photography, film, or other outdoor media work too. Include at least 3 labeled details, 3 questions, and 1 connection.



ASSESSMENT

- Walk around, look around, and talk around.
- Students share their project with peers, a teacher, and a parent. Check it for 3 labeled details, 3 questions, and 1 connection.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Draw a plant, a tree, and a rock, animal, or bug. All of these are out there, even when it's snowing.

NATURE JOURNAL

Date:

Time:

How's the weather?

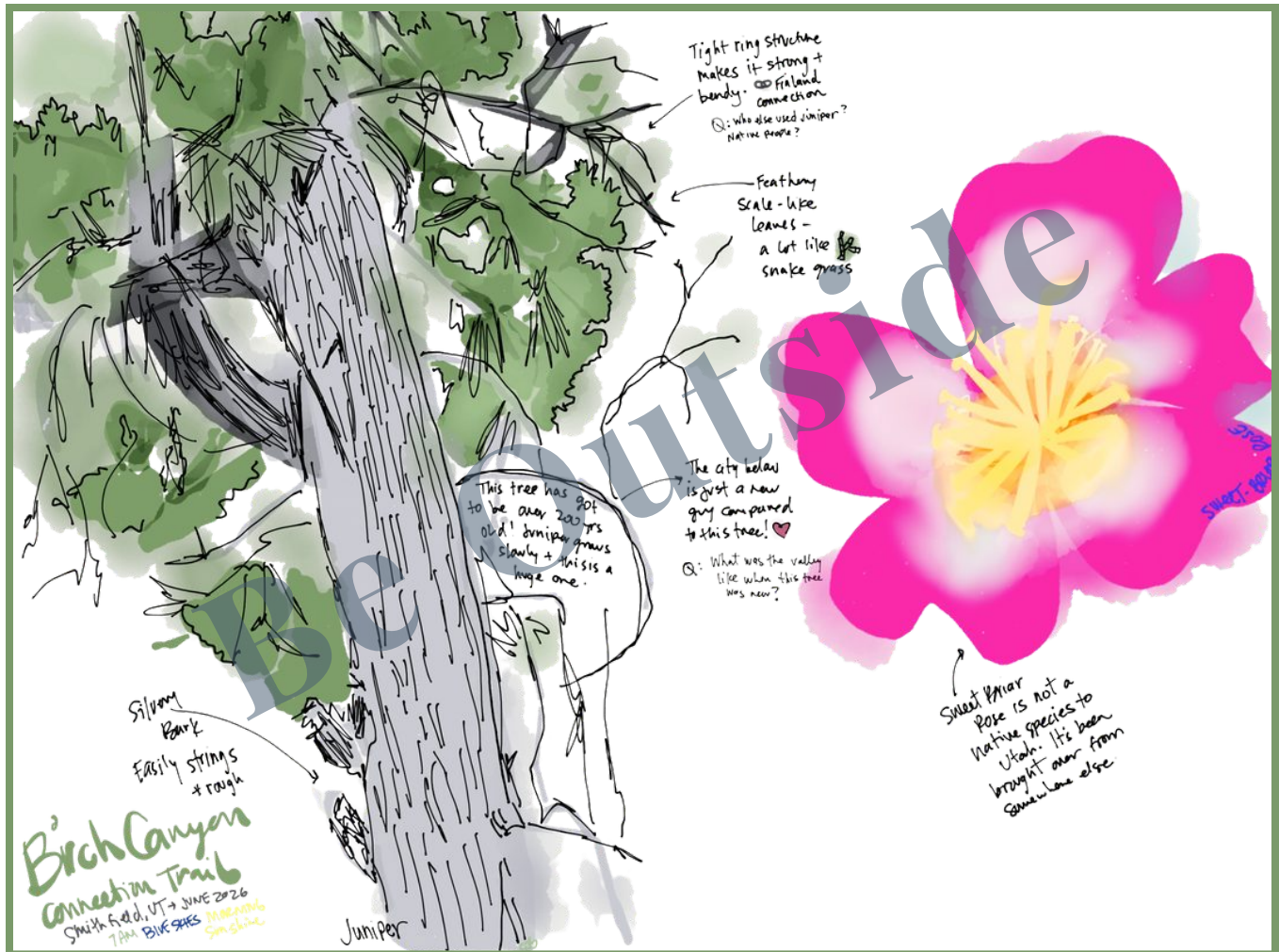
What do you notice?

What do you wonder?

It reminds me of...

Circle the observation type: Ground, Eye-Level,
Overhead, Whole Landscape

Example: A Nature Journal Entry



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

📌 Labeled details: silvery bark that strings easily • feathery, scale-like leaves • tight ring structure • the sweet-briar rose

❓ Questions: Who else used juniper? Did Native people? • What was the valley like when this tree was new?

🔗 Connections: the leaves look a lot like snake grass • a connection to Finland • the city below is "just a new guy" compared to this tree

📍 Header: the place, date, time, and weather (Birch Canyon Connection Trail, June 2026, 7 a.m., blue skies)

A POEM FOR TWO VOICES

🎁 Bonus: Read It Together

A poem for two voices is meant to be read aloud by two people. One reads the left column, the other reads the right, and when a line appears on both sides, read it together. Try it with a colleague, a friend, or your kids before you head out on the trail.

Whenever we're asked
If we climb up the trail
we answer

To be sure

Whenever we're asked how
often
we notice our surroundings

We answer

Nothing escapes our eye.

Quite easy

Most of the time

Should we be told
It can't be done
We reply
Balderdash!
Rubbish!

Whenever we're asked
If we climb up the trail
we answer
Of course.

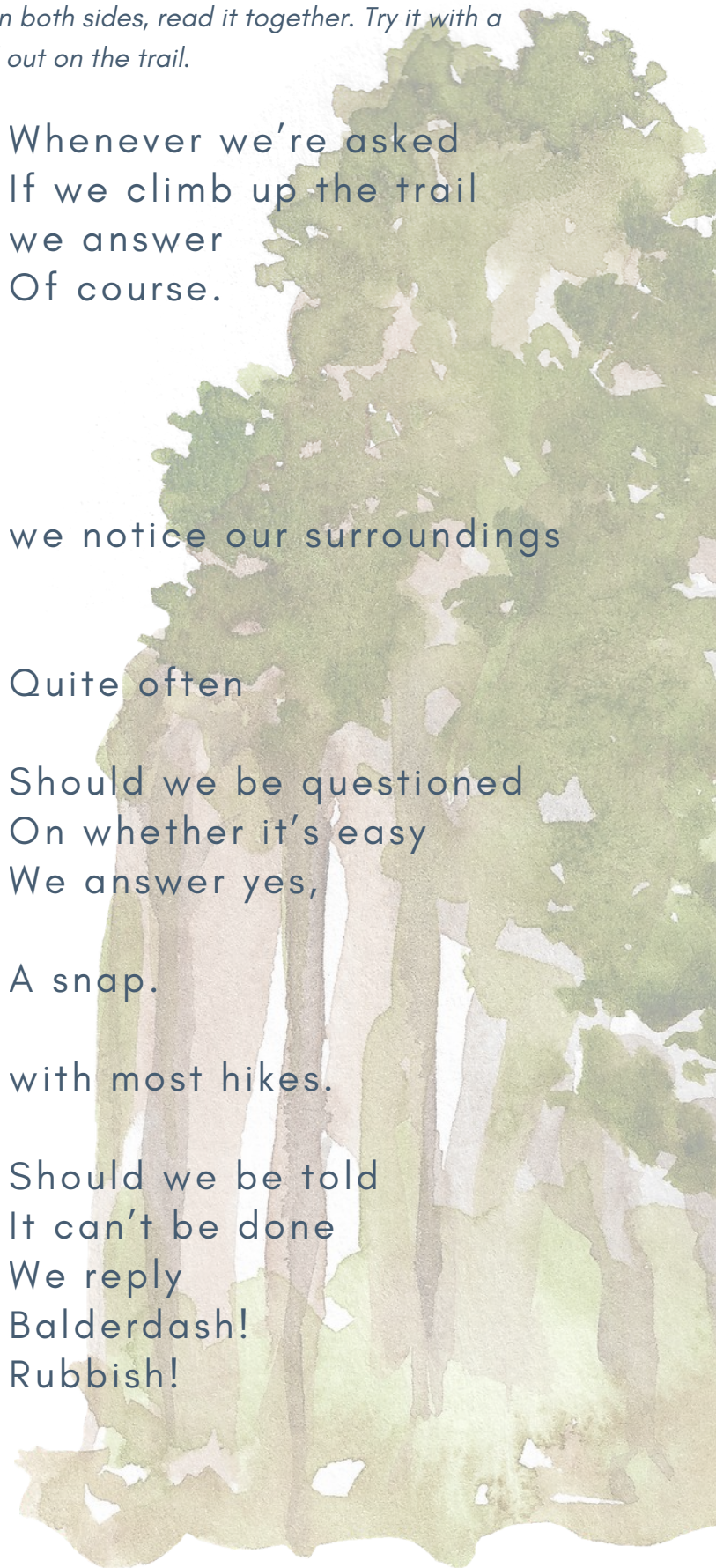
Quite often

Should we be questioned
On whether it's easy
We answer yes,

A snap.

with most hikes.

Should we be told
It can't be done
We reply
Balderdash!
Rubbish!



Whenever we hikers
Have choice,

see others climb

We smile

again

Believe me, there's no call
At all to be nervous

Bring the right shoes

Don't pack too much in
your pack

Write, draw, and connect!

Log your miles

**Is
exhausting**

Find our voice

Boldly to the summit

We cheer

We have courage to hike
again

Believe me, there's no call

As long as you

Bring the right shoes

and bring a journal to
Write, draw, and connect!

with words.

the view from the top

**Is
breathtaking**

- Shannon Rhodes & Stu Baggaley



A Note to Teachers and Parents

Teaching and parenting are hard. The days are long, burnout is real, and the sincere thank-yous are rare compared to all the worry and work you put in.

Be Outside wants to help. These lessons are built to calm and regulate kids, and to give you a minute to slow down and enjoy the outdoors too.

And don't let a lesson be your only trail. Find a hike near you. Get out of the classroom or the house and get lost in nature for an afternoon. Everything will still be waiting for you when you get back.

— *Stu Baggaley, Be Outside*

ONE LAST BREATH: Three-Part Breath

1. Rest one hand on your heart and the other on your belly.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose and let your belly fill. Watch your hand rise.
3. Keep breathing in, letting the air rise into your chest.
4. Sip in one last little breath, all the way up to your collarbones.
5. Pause at the top.
6. Exhale and let it all go. Soften your jaw and let your shoulders drop.
7. Notice how you feel.

Keep Exploring



CARE FOR THE LAND

We walk these trails as guests. Take only pictures, leave only footprints, and leave each place a little better than you found it.



MORE BE OUTSIDE EXPERIENCES ARE ON THE WAY

- Mt. Naomi: alpine meadows and high-country plants in the Bear River Range
- San Juan River: canyon walls, cottonwoods, and river stories



Find new experiences, share what your kids create, or start a conversation at

beoutside.life