Please enjoy the variety of activities to do, both on the trails, and at home, while the interpretive center is closed to the public.
Animal Tracks Checklist

While walking through the woods, look out for signs that animals have been there before you. Check the soft ground like sand, mud or snow, for animal tracks. Mammals of the dog and cat families walk on four toes. You can see the claws in dog's prints, but cats retract their claws. Bears, raccoons, and rodents walk on five toes. Some animals have human-like hands, and others have hooves.

The animals pictured below are all North American Animals.

When you go on hikes, carry this checklist and check off the animal tracks you see.
Create a Frog Band

Listen to frog calls and try to imitate them. You can find things around your house that make excellent frog calls, along with your own voice.

Once you have all your frog calls around you see if you can identify which frog call belongs to which frog! For extra fun, play all of your frog calls together and make up a song.

**Materials:**
Plastic Comb
Marbles
Balloon (or rubber band, plastic cup, paperclip, & Scissors)

- **Chorus frog**—To imitate this call, drag your fingernail along the teeth edges of a plastic comb.
- **Cricket frog** – Hitting two marbles together will replicate the "glick, glick, glick" sound of this species
- **Crawfish frog** – The call sounds like a loud, long snore
- **Bullfrog** – The bullfrog’s call is "jug-o-rum, brr-um."
- **Leopard frog** – This call can be replicated by dragging the bottom of your thumb across an inflated balloon. It works best if the thumb is dipped in water before you start. You can also take a plastic cup. Poke a hole in the bottom, string through a broken rubber band. Tie the rubber band to a paperclip on the bottom of the cup. Hold onto the cup and wet your forefinger of your other hand. Take the rubber band between your forefinger and thumb and tighten the grip and pull down, letting the rubber band sort of slide through your fingers!
- **American toad** – Make a “purring” noise by trilling your tongue but make it high pitched!
- **Spring peeper** – A high-pitched “peep, peep, peep,” will imitate their call
Habitat Map

Choose a nearby outdoor space to map out (a yard, garden, local park, etc.) First, spend time just observing what is there. Are there trees, gardens, structures, or water? Are there flowering plants, shrubs, lawn, bird feeders? Can you identify any of the plants? (If not, that’s ok!) After an initial survey of the yard, draw and label a map of the space. Be as detailed as possible! You can create multiple habitat maps from different places on separate sheets of paper and compare them. Afterwards you can draw in anything that might live in the habitat too!

Draw your map!
Sense Your Walk

Use your senses as you walk along the nature center trails. See what different items you can smell, touch, see, and hear! (sorry, no tasting!) Draw or write what your senses told you on your walk today.

Our nature walk!

I see...

I smell...

I feel...

I hear...
Know Your Birds’ … Food?

You can tell a lot about a bird just by looking at it. Like what it eats by the shape of the bird’s beak! See if you can match the bird to the food it would eat.

- Cedar Waxwing: berries
- Song Sparrow: seeds
- Brown Pelican: fish
- Common Yellowthroat: insects
- American Robin: worms
- Mallard: water plants

ANSWERS

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Fun Trail Activities & Games!

Check out this list of fun activities and games you can do while enjoying the trails here at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

**Tree Huggers**
This is kind of like hiking musical chairs, with tree identification built in. One person serves as the Tree Master. As you are hiking, the Tree Master calls out the name of a tree (oak, for example). Everyone then has to run and hug an oak tree. Last one to hug an oak is out. Continue until only one person remains. That’s your new Tree Master. We can play this for miles.

**Flood**
A great game played with little children. Pretend that the pathway is lazy river that you are walking down. Every so often as you walk you will yell out the word FLOOD and that means the river/trail has “flash flooded” and in order to not be swept away you have to grab hold of something close (a tree, bench, bush, sign, etc.) until the leader has said the flood has stopped and you can continue on the path. Its great fun for the kids who do not know the next time you are going to yell FLOOD as it might even be in the middle of the conversation!

**Close-Ups**
Have someone with a camera or smartphone walk ahead on the trail and take a macro—or super close-up—shot of an object along the trail: a mushroom, a knot in a tree, a crack in a rock. The close-up should focus on part of the object rather than the whole thing. (If you take a picture of the entire object, it will be too easy to find!) When the rest of the group catches up to the photographer, define a small 10-by-10-foot area—and then it’s a race to see who can find the object first. It takes just minutes to play, but the fascination of finding hidden objects in the woods makes it fun and keeps you moving!

**Twenty Questions**
The classic. The one that started it all. One person thinks of a person or a place; the others get 20 yes-or-no questions to guess what or who it is.

**ABCs**
This is great for kids who are learning their alphabet. Starting with the letter “A,” everyone has to find something along the trail that begins with “A” before moving through the rest of the alphabet.
Fun Trail Activities & Games Continued!

Check out this list of fun activities and games you can do while enjoying the trails here at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

Trail Bingo
Everyone picks one object you’re likely to spot on the trail; for example, a stream, a hiker with blue shorts, a squirrel, and a red backpack. After everyone has chosen an object, play begins.

- The game works like Bingo: Everyone is looking to find the same objects, but only one person can claim each sighting.
- If you come across a hiker wearing blue shorts (or a squirrel, a stream, et cetera) the player who sees the object first should say, “BINGO! Blue shorts!” You must say BINGO first!
- No one else can claim those blue shorts. They must spot and call out other blue shorts. If you find a group of something, like a group of several squirrels, that sighting counts as only one squirrel. Only one person can claim squirrels; everyone else must find another squirrel or group of squirrels.
- The first person to find and call “bingo” for all of the objects chosen by the group wins.
- Make sure the objects you choose are neither too rare nor too common. If you’re trying to find a tree while on a hike, the game will end instantly. Try finding a birch tree or a dead tree.

Essence
One person thinks of someone whom everyone in the group knows. It could be a friend, a teacher, a family member, or a celebrity. The players try to guess the identity of the person, but unlike 20 questions, you can only ask rhetorical questions rather than yes or no questions. All questions must follow the format: “If this person were a ______, what type of ______ would they be?” Fill in the blanks, asking what type of car, food, weather, city, geographic feature, animal, et cetera the person would be. The first couple of answers sometimes reveal the identity of the person, so we have a rule that you must ask at least five questions before guessing. The real fun of the game is figuring out the “essence” of the person you are trying to guess.

Categories
Think of a specific category, such as state capitals, foods, countries that begin with “M,” sports teams, et cetera. Everyone takes turns naming something that fits into that category. Play rotates through the group until a player can’t think of something within a 5-second time limit or an answer gets repeated.
Hiking Trail Maze

Help the hiker get through the nature center trails to see all the cool plants and insects scurrying along the ground!

Start Here

End Here

[Image of a maze]

[Image of a flower]

[Image of an ant]

[Image of a beetle]
Hiking Trail Maze Part II

Want a bigger challenge? When the hiker was admiring all of the cool insects, they left the trail and got lost! Can you help them find their way back home?
Spring Time Word Search
Can you find all the words of things that you might see in the Spring in the word search below?

Word Bank

AIR
BIRD
BUD
CLOUD
FLOWER
GROW
PLANT
RAIN
SPRING
SPROUT
SUN
WIND

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