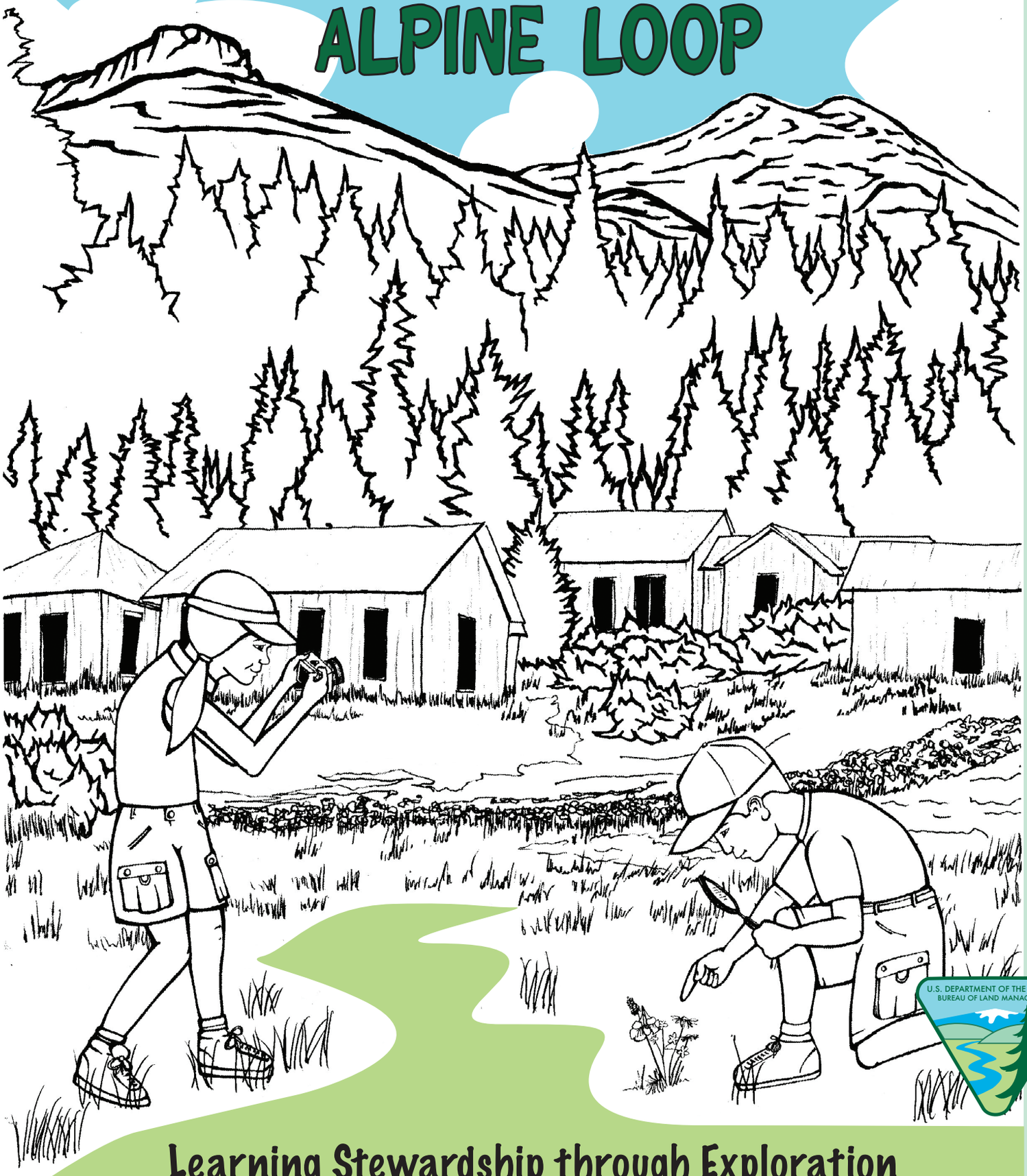
JUNIOR EXPLORER
ALPINE LOOP



BLM

Alpine Loop Recreation Area

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

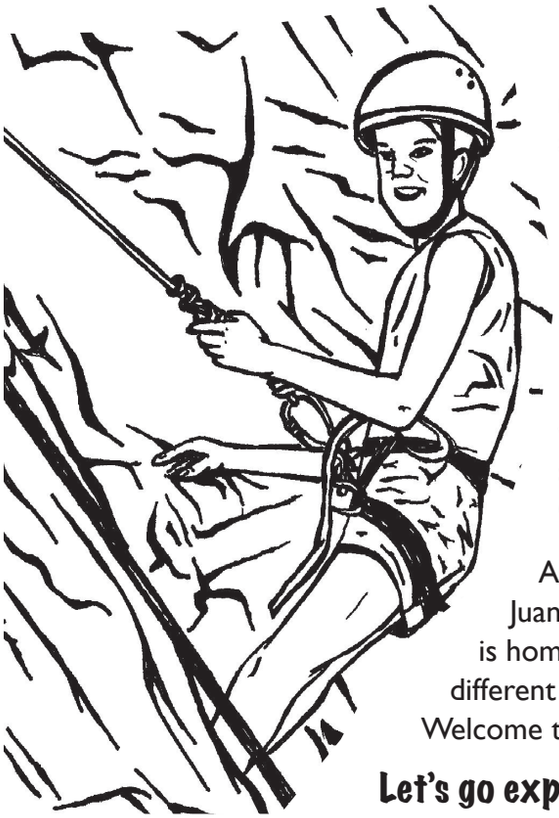
Learning Stewardship through Exploration

WELCOME TO THE ALPINE LOOP!

By completing activities in this booklet and making a pledge, you will become an official Bureau of Land Management Junior Explorer!

To become a Junior Explorer, complete as many of the activities in this booklet as you can. If you are a beginner explorer, you can ask your parents to help read and answer the activities. When you are done, take this booklet to the Visitor Center information desk in Lake City or Silverton where you can say the Junior Explorer Pledge and receive your badge!

WHAT ARE PUBLIC LANDS?



More than 600 million acres of the land in the United States are Public Land. This land belongs to all of us! Our public lands are made up of forests, lakes, mountains, seashores, deserts, grasslands, and rivers. Public lands are used for many things:

- The plants provide feed for wildlife and livestock
- The forests provide wood products
- Oil, gas, coal, and other minerals come from these lands

But one of the best things about public lands is that it is a place where we can go to do the things that we love to do outside such as: hiking, fishing, camping, rock climbing and 4-wheeling. Our public lands have something for everyone to do.

As you travel the Alpine Loop, you will be travelling through the San Juan Mountains, the highest mountain range in the Rockies. This area is home to many different kinds of wildlife, and over the years many different people have come and gone. Now, this land belongs to YOU! Welcome to the Alpine Loop.

Let's go explore!

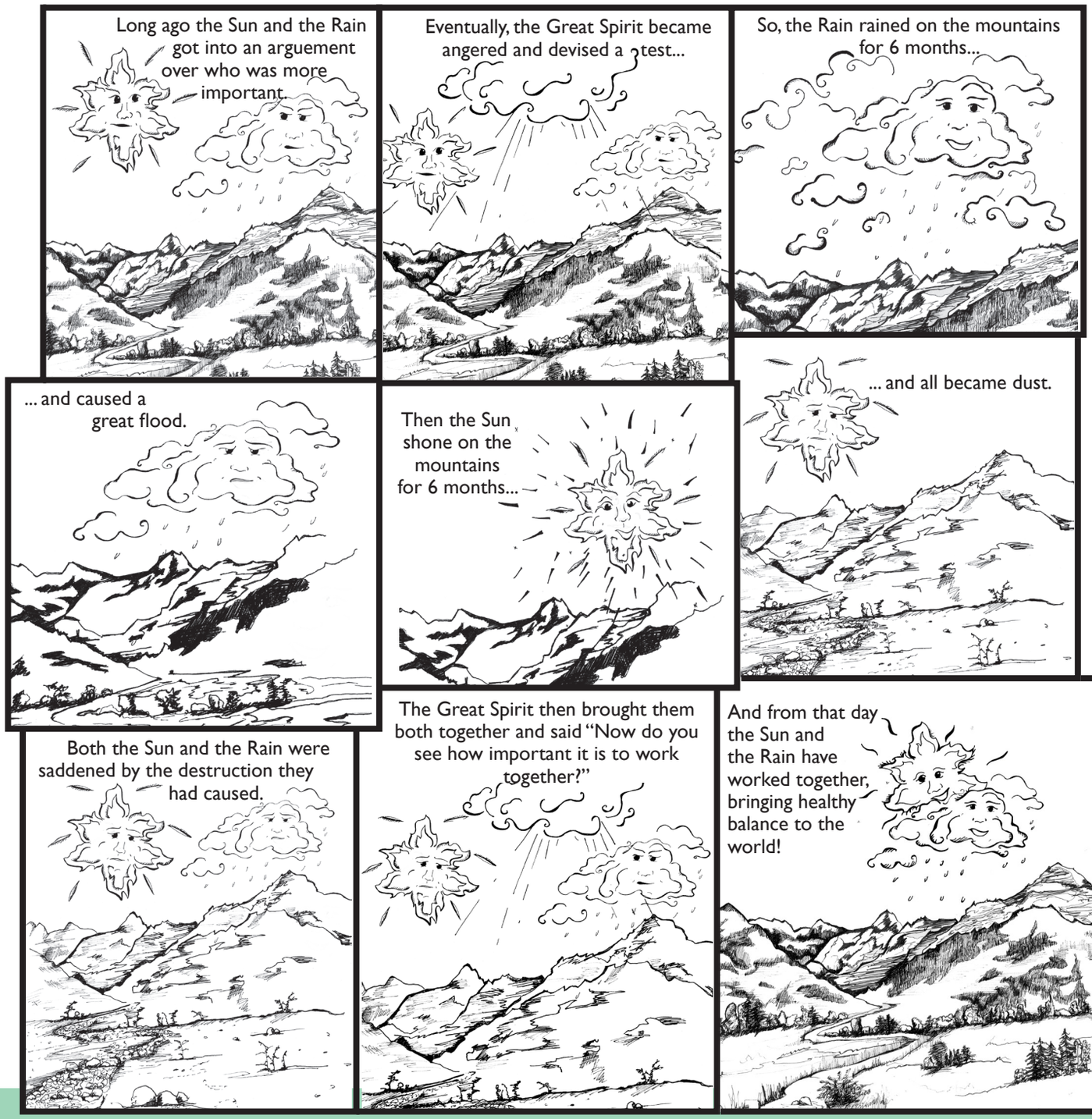
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Use MAPS to know where you'll be going so you won't get lost.
- Be PREPARED! Don't forget clothes to protect you from COLD, HEAT, or RAIN.
- Make sure that you bring plenty of FOOD and WATER.

leave no trace
CENTER FOR OUTDOOR ETHICS

Sun and Rain...

The native people who lived here before the miners came are called the Utes. They called this place the Shining Mountains. The Ute Tribe mainly used this area in the summer and moved on to warmer places before the snows of winter would come. To help their children understand and appreciate the changing summer weather, parents would tell their children this story.



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Leave areas AS YOU FIND THEM so the next person can enjoy them.
- Treat living plants with respect. Never cut into a living tree! Instead of picking flowers, take a picture so that everyone can enjoy them.
- Leave natural objects and historical items. If everyone took one, there would be nothing left! Arrowheads and other historic artifacts are protected by law, and should stay where you find them. Once they are gone, they are gone forever!

BURIED TREASURE!

Circle all of the good places in the river to pan for gold, and draw an 'X' on the spot where you'd stake your claim!

The miners who first came here were looking for gold, silver and other metals. Silver, most common, was found in rock deposits called 'veins.' Gold, less common, was sometimes washed into the streams by rain. Miners used gold pans to see if they could find tiny bits of gold in grains of sand and gravel in a stream. The best places to search are shallow sections and the slower moving parts of the stream, like the inside of bends. When miners found a concentration of gold or a vein of silver, they would stake a 'claim.'

Can you help the miner find places to pan for gold, and then stake his claim?

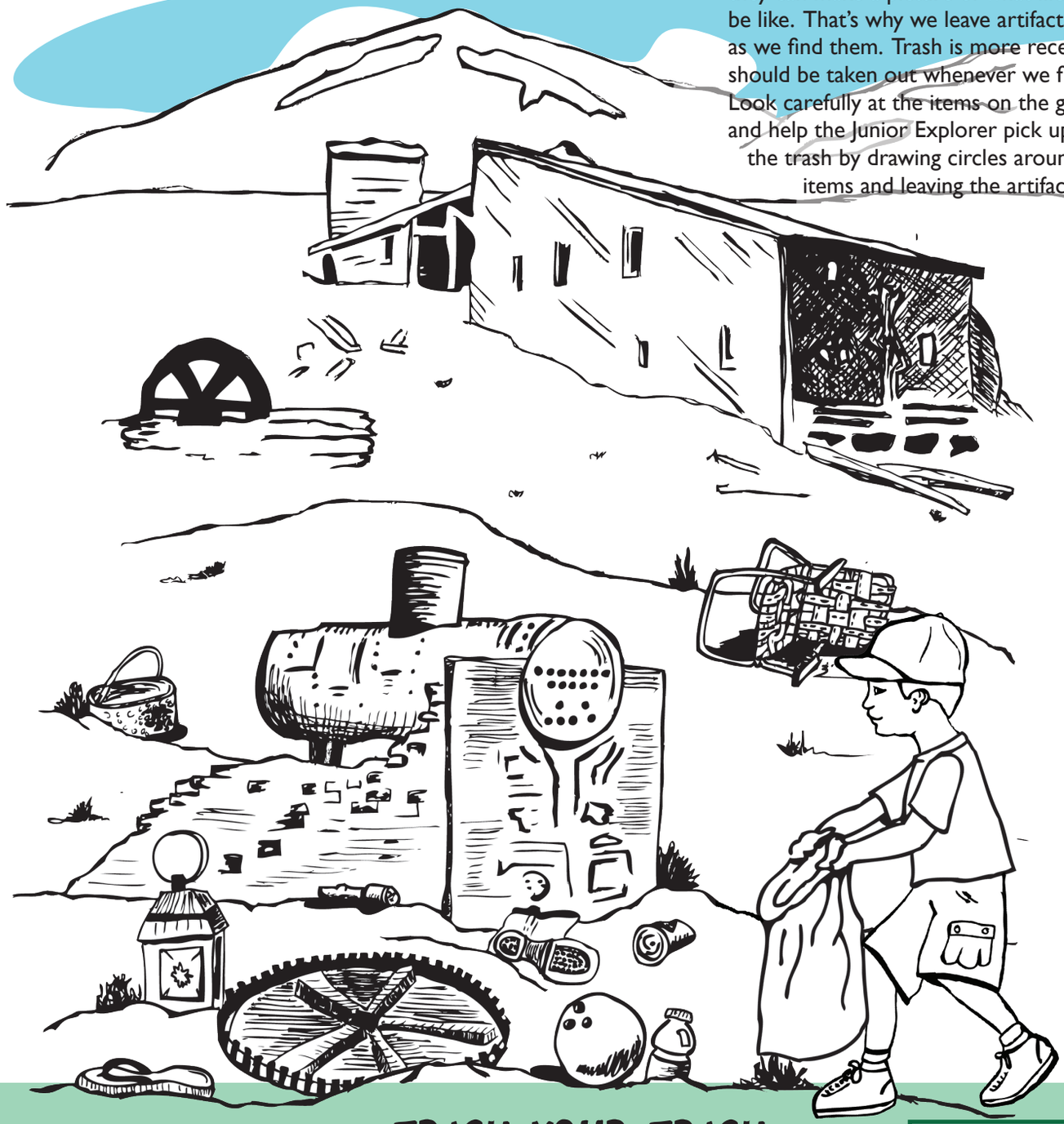
STAY OUT OF MINE SHAFTS!

They are EXTREMELY dangerous,
and are one place that you should NEVER explore!

TRASH OR NOT TRASH?

CIRCLE ALL OF THE ITEMS THAT ARE TRASH, NOT ARTIFACTS.

Archaeologists study the things that people leave behind to help us better understand our past. These things are called "artifacts." For something to be considered an artifact, it must be at least 50 years old. Artifacts are like puzzle pieces; when they are all there, they can make a picture of what life used to be like. That's why we leave artifacts exactly as we find them. Trash is more recent and should be taken out whenever we find it. Look carefully at the items on the ground, and help the Junior Explorer pick up all of the trash by drawing circles around trash items and leaving the artifacts.



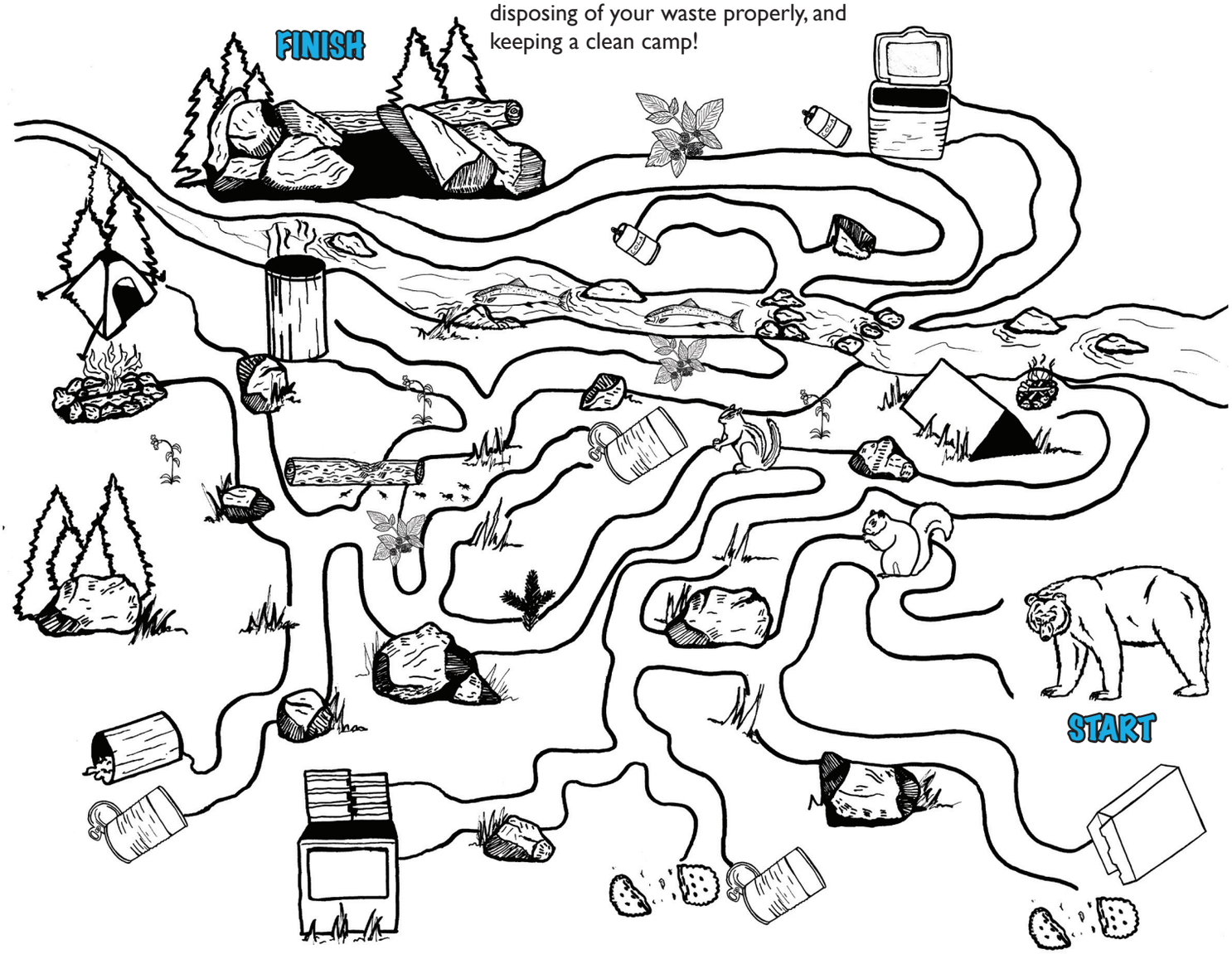
TRASH YOUR TRASH

- Put trash where it belongs, in the trash! Remember: if you can pack it in, you can pack it out! Make sure to fasten the lid on the trashcans so that animals can't get into human garbage.
- For human waste, use bathrooms or outhouses when available. If you have to "go" out in the woods, ACT LIKE A CAT and BURY POOP 100 big steps from water, in a small hole 4-8 inches deep.
- Do not put soap, food, or poop in lakes or streams.

BEAR MAZE

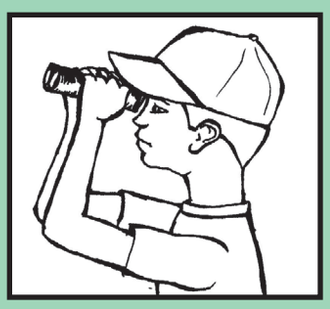
CAN YOU HELP MOTHER BEAR FIND HER WINTER DEN?

Black Bears are always looking for food! In the wild, bears eat twigs, leaves, roots, berries, small mammals, and fish. Black bears will also tear apart logs and turn over rocks looking for insects to eat. Because bears are always searching for food, be extra careful with food scraps and trash that may attract bears. Do your part to protect these animals by disposing of your waste properly, and keeping a clean camp!



RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe animals from a distance, and NEVER APPROACH, FEED, or FOLLOW THEM.
- Human food is UNHEALTHY for all animals and feeding them starts bad habits. Protect wildlife and your food by storing your meals and trash where animals cannot get to it.
- Never touch a wild animal, even if it looks hurt or sick. The best way to help is to tell a park ranger or other responsible adult.
- CONTROL PETS at all times so they don't bother wildlife, or leave them at home.

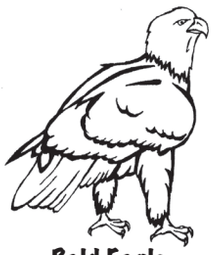


TRACKS

Even if you don't see an animal, you can still see the signs that it leaves behind.

CAN YOU MATCH THE ANIMAL TO ITS TRACKS?

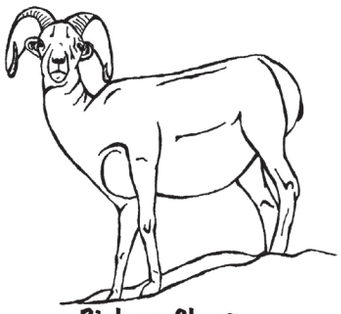
Black Bear



Bald Eagle

Beaver

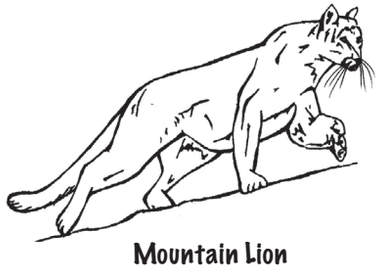
Mule Deer



Bighorn Sheep

Black-billed Magpie

Ground Squirrel



Mountain Lion

FIND AN ANIMAL TRACK AND DRAW IT HERE!

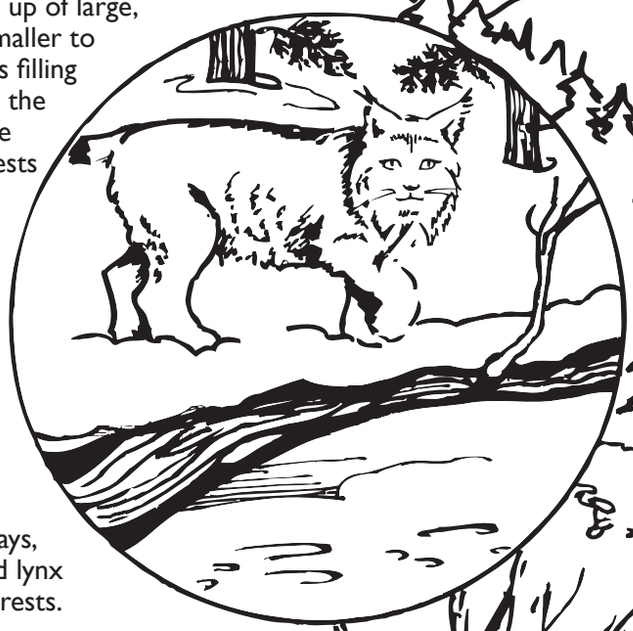
What animal do you think it belongs to?

_____

HABITAT BREAKDOWN

A "habitat" is a place where a plant or animal lives. Habitats are made up of 4 things: food, water, shelter, and space.
Let's explore the main habitats on the Alpine Loop.

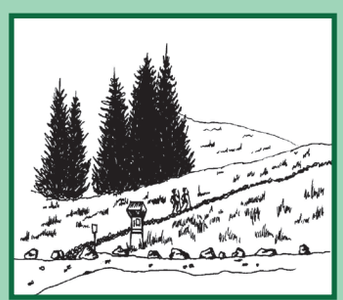
Spruce – Fir forests are found at 9,700 feet to 12,000 feet in elevation. This forest is dense and moist and very shady! Trees found in this habitat include Engelmann spruce, Colorado blue spruce and subalpine fir. The forest is made up of large, older trees with smaller to medium sized trees filling the space between the forest floor and the canopy. Older forests contain a lot of fallen and dead trees.
Because these forests are so shady, winter snows will not melt until late spring. Many animals such as chipmunks, pine squirrels, Steller's jays, snowshoe hare and lynx live in spruce/fir forests.



Riparian Habitat is found close to streams, rivers, lakes, marshes, and other bodies of water. Thick willows and some grasses grow in the moist soils, as well as some evergreen trees such as Engelmann spruce and sometimes subalpine fir. Many different kinds of wildlife live within this habitat: beavers, muskrats, mallards, fish and aquatic insects. Even black bears and eagles can be seen here looking for a meal! Since all animals need water to drink, the riparian zone is a great place for wildlife viewing.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH

- Stay on the MAIN TRAIL!
  Don't take shortcuts to get up or down switchbacks.
- If there is no trail, try to walk on bare patches of soil, or step on rocks. Many plants will not survive if stepped on.
- Try to find campsites that are already used instead of creating new ones. Good campsites are FOUND, NOT MADE.



Alpine Tundra is found from 12,000 feet up; it is the life zone above tree-line. It is known as a beautiful place to look for wildflowers, but the tundra can be a harsh place to live. The average temperature for the year is below freezing, and in some places on the tundra the snow never melts! Most of the vegetation, such as grasses and even the lichens that grow on the rocks, is small and short. Most of the animals of the tundra such as the marmot and pika, burrow into the ground to survive the cold of winter. Be careful where you walk to reduce your impacts on the plants.

The **Aspen Habitat** is found at 6,500 to 11,000 feet in elevation. Aspen trees are Colorado's most common deciduous (leafy) tree. Aspen forests (or "stands") are very sunny places, and much light reaches the forest floor. Many flower species are found here, such as columbine, lupine, and Indian paintbrush. Aspen stands are a favorite place of cavity nesting birds, such as mountain bluebirds and woodpeckers. Aspen stands regenerate through young shoots that sprout up from a common root system; since all of the trees come from the same roots, some large aspen stands are one huge living thing! One of the favorite foods of elk are the young aspen shoots.

FIND AN EVERGREEN AND SHAKE ITS HAND

IF THE NEEDLES ARE SPIKY, IT'S A SPRUCE. IF THE NEEDLES ARE FRIENDLY, IT'S A FIR.

ALPINE LOOP BINGO

LOOK AROUND! TRY TO FIND AS MANY OF THE BINGO ITEMS AS YOU CAN. YOU MAY HAVE TO HIKE TO FIND SOME OF THEM. GOOD LUCK!

cairn	wild flower	gray jay	beaver tree	chipmunk
cottontail rabbit	camp site	pinecone	fisherman	big horn sheep
moose	home state license plate	FREE SPACE	marmot	eagle
mining cabin	snow	leaving sign	mule deer	animal print
mining artifact	friendly fir	ranger	pika	entering sign

FIND AN INSECT

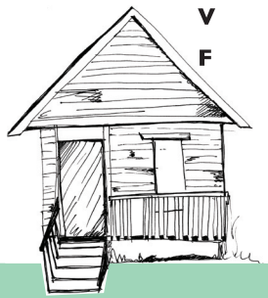
EVERY LIVING THING IN NATURE HAS A JOB TO DO. WHAT IS THE INSECT DOING? WHAT PART DOES IT PLAY IN THE NATURAL WORLD?

MINING CAMP WORD SEARCH

FIND THE MINING CAMP NAMES IN THE PUZZLE BELOW. WORDS CAN GO UP, DOWN, SIDE TO SIDE, DIAGONAL, AND EVEN BACKWARDS! GOOD LUCK!

In the late 1800's, the Alpine Loop was bustling with mining activity. In fact, most of the roads in the area were built during that time! If you look carefully at the surrounding mountainsides, you may see the remains of many abandoned mines with colorful names. Can you find them all in the word search?

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



WORD BANK

Gold Prince
Empire Chief
Hidden Treasure
Pride of the West
Golden Fleece
Iowa Tiger
Tobasco
Mayflower
Ute Ulay
Frank Hough

BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE!

- Use a CAMP STOVE for cooking. It's easier to cook on and clean up than a fire.
- Use an EXISTING FIRE RING to protect the ground from heat. Keep your fire small. Remember, campfires are NOT for trash or food.
- Use dead wood that is no bigger than your arm. Burn all wood to ash and be sure that the fire is OUT & COLD before you leave.

WHAT AM I? CONNECT THE DOTS

FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW, THEN CONNECT THE DOTS TO DISCOVER WHAT THIS ANIMAL IS.

You can find me in this, the highest habitat in the mountains.... ___ ___ ◯ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

I am related to this animal, with long ears and a fluffy tail... ___ ___ ___ ___ ◯ ___

Because I am brownish gray in color, I am hard to spot when I hide in the ___ ___ ___ ◯ ___

I gather ___ ___ ◯ ___ ___ from surrounding meadows, and leave it in "haystacks" to dry on the rocks.

What am I? ◯◯◯◯

Answers: Alpine Tundra, rabbit, rocks, grass, pika

FIND A QUIET PLACE IN NATURE AND BE COMPLETELY STILL FOR ONE MINUTE

WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU HEAR.

_____

_____

INVENT AN ANIMAL

HIGH AND COLD, THE ALPINE TUNDRA CAN BE A DIFFICULT PLACE TO LIVE. USE YOUR IMAGINATION , AND **INVENT AN ANIMAL** THAT CAN LIVE HERE.
DRAW YOUR ANIMAL IN THE SPACE BELOW.
THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

WHAT DOES IT EAT? _____

_____

WHERE DOES IT LIVE? _____

_____

WHAT DOES IT DO IN THE WINTER TIME? _____

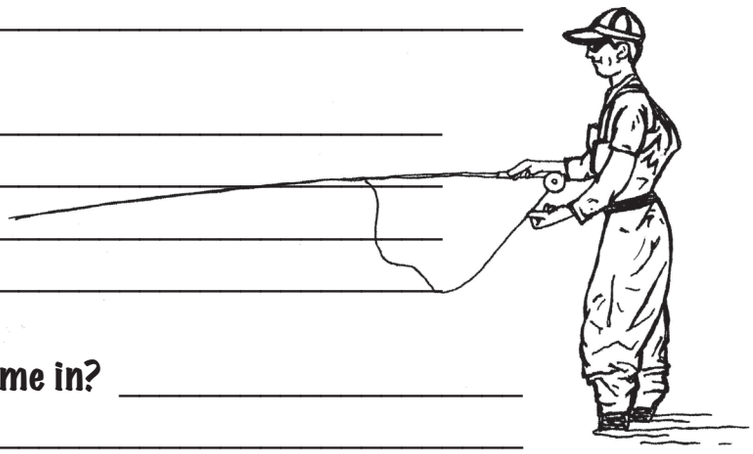
_____

GET OUTSIDE!

It's time to grab your gear and get outside to play!
When you get back, TELL YOUR STORY!

Describe the weather. _____

_____



What did you do today? _____

_____

_____

_____

What habitat did you spend the most time in? _____

_____

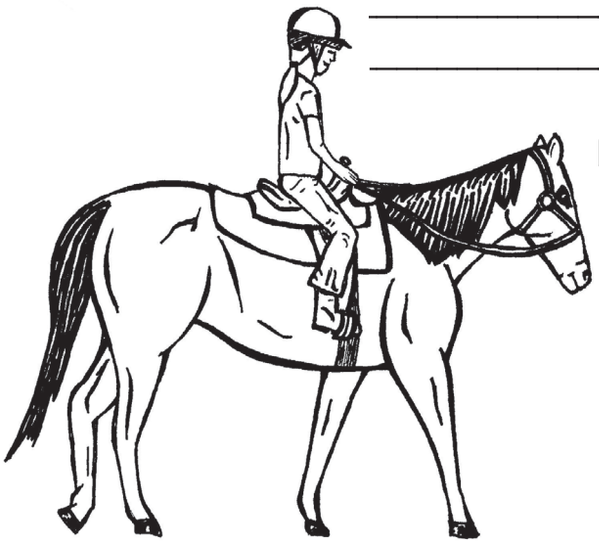
_____

Did you see wildlife or signs of wildlife? Describe what you saw. _____

_____

_____

_____



How did all of today's activity make you feel? _

_____

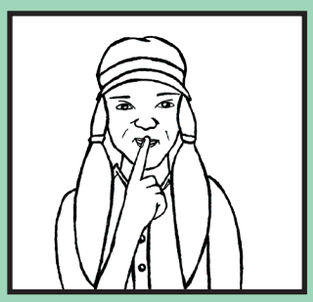
_____

_____

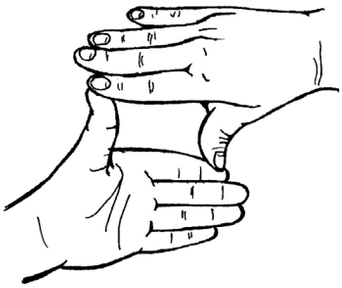
_____

BE KIND TO OTHER VISITORS

- Make sure the FUN you have in the outdoors does not bother anyone else. Remember that other visitors are there to enjoy the outdoors, too.
- LISTEN TO NATURE. Avoid making loud noises or yelling. You will see more animals if you are quiet.



TAKE A MEMORY



Hold your hands up like you see on the left side of the page and look through your 'view finder'.
Draw what you see and take home a memory!

STEWARDSHIP Is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

What are Public Lands? They are a great place to play. But they are also a kind of storybook, telling us about our history on the land. They are also a giant living thing, where every little piece of the natural world has an important part to play. Public lands belong to YOU, but they also belong to ALL OF US. The Alpine Loop is a special place. Like the sun and the rain, we all have to work together to take care of it, so that future Junior Explorers can come and enjoy this place as much as you did!

Bureau of Land Management

JUNIOR EXPLORER
ALPINE LOOP

I pledge to :

- **Continue to learn about the Alpine Loop**
- **Explore and care for my public lands**
- **Teach others what I have learned**

In Recognition of having completed all requirements

_____
Name

Is hereby appointed a Junior Explorer of the Bureau of Land Management on this day

The___ of _____, 20___ _____
(Day) (Month) (Year) BLM Official Signature

For More information on the Junior Explorer Program or the Alpine Loop, please call the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service at(970)-641-0471 or visit us at www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gfo.html

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Project Coordinators: Jim Lovelace & Sally Thode (BLM)
Illustrations, Design, and Production: Chris Mack, Kelly Eisinger, Shayna McDonald, Corbin Webber
(Western State College graphic design students), Terri Lennon Murphy, Faculty Advisor