

Field Journaling with Students

How can field journaling be used to support student-centered learning in nature?



“Journaling is the single most powerful tool to supercharge your observation, memory, and connection with nature. It is the critical foundational habit of being a naturalist and scientist.”

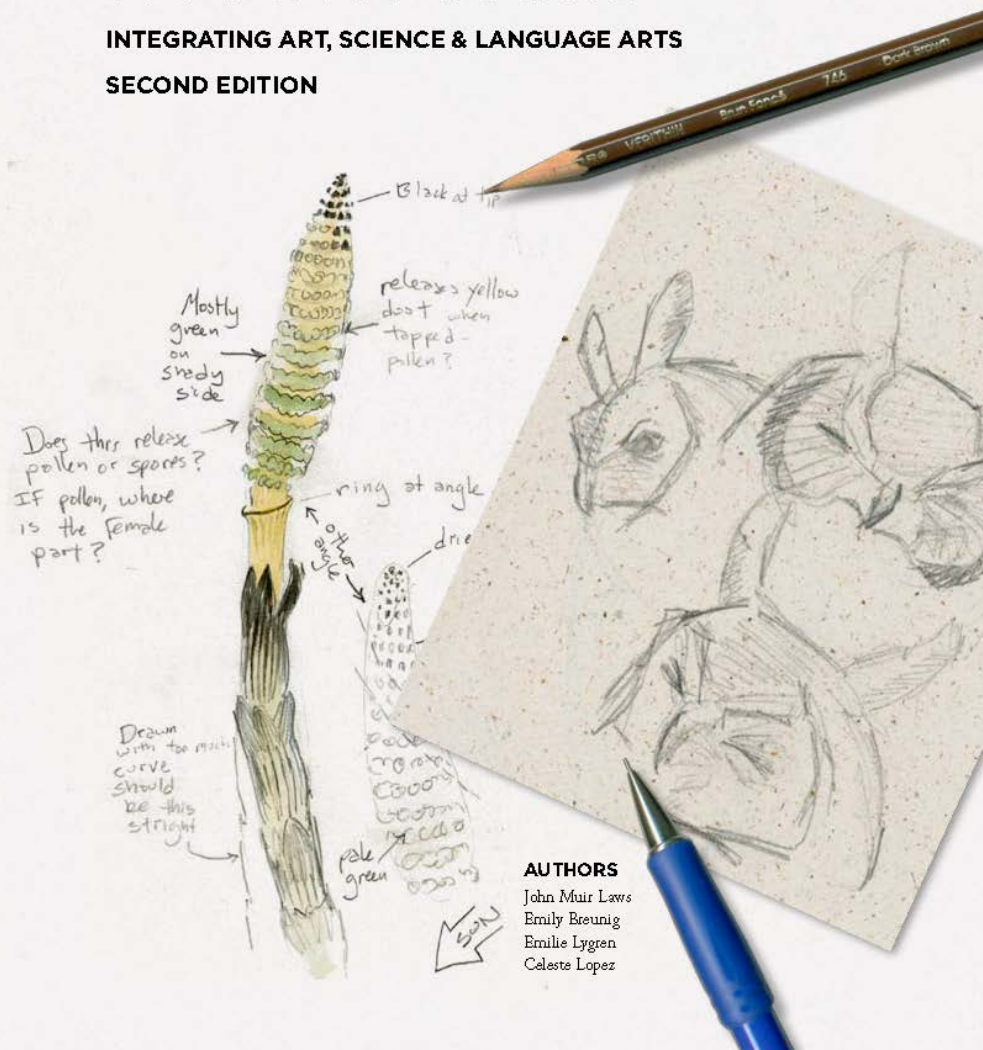
- John Muir Laws

Field guide author, naturalist,
artist, educator, great guy



OPENING THE WORLD THROUGH NATURE JOURNALING

INTEGRATING ART, SCIENCE & LANGUAGE ARTS
SECOND EDITION



AUTHORS

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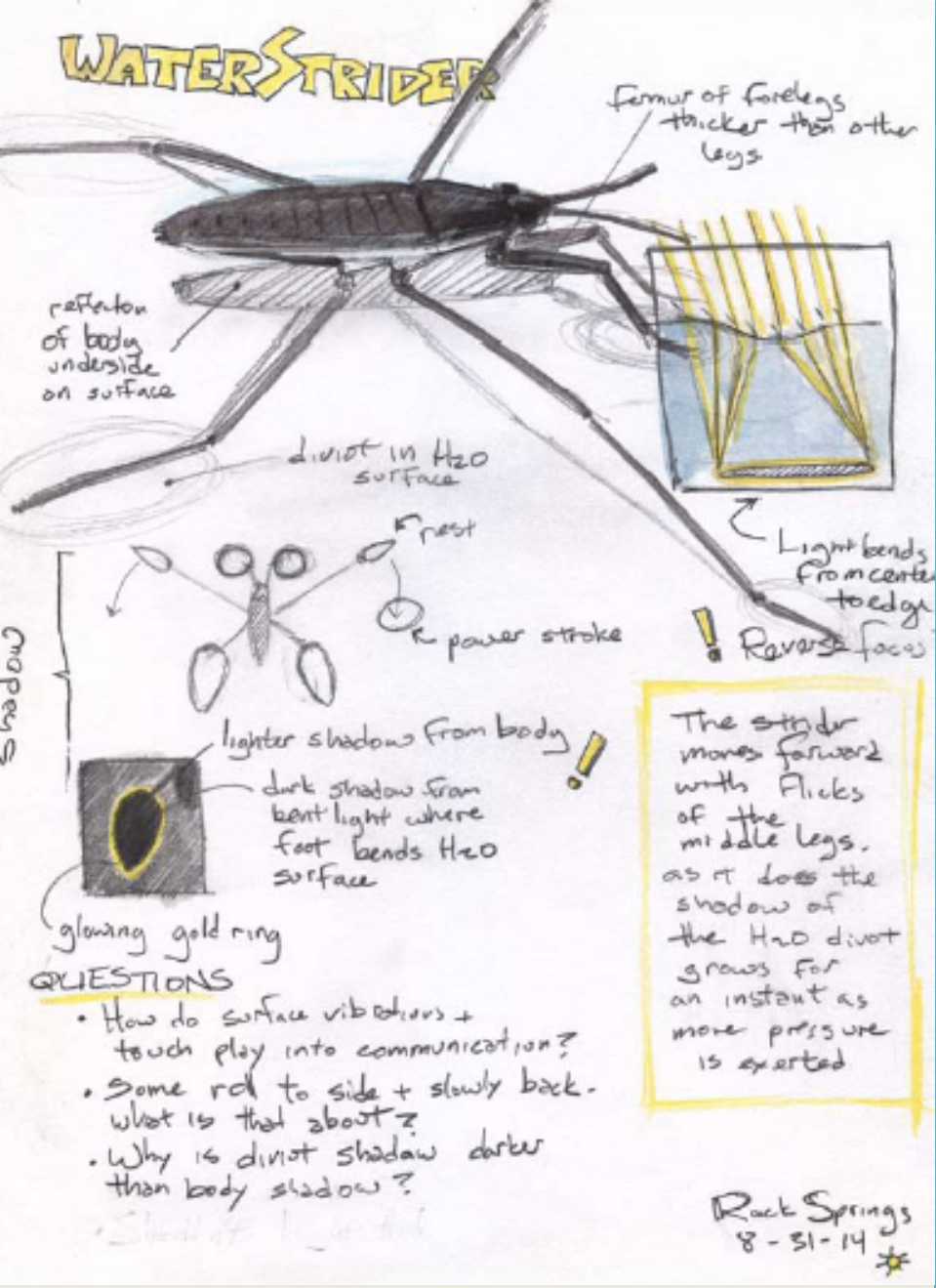
Model Student Activity: To Each Its Own

**From: *Opening The World Through
Nature Journaling***
By John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren
Free Download at:
Johnmuirlaws.com

Examples from Naturalists' Journals

- What do you think the goal was for this journal entry?
- What information is the naturalist/scientist trying to capture?
- What strategies did the author use to record this information?



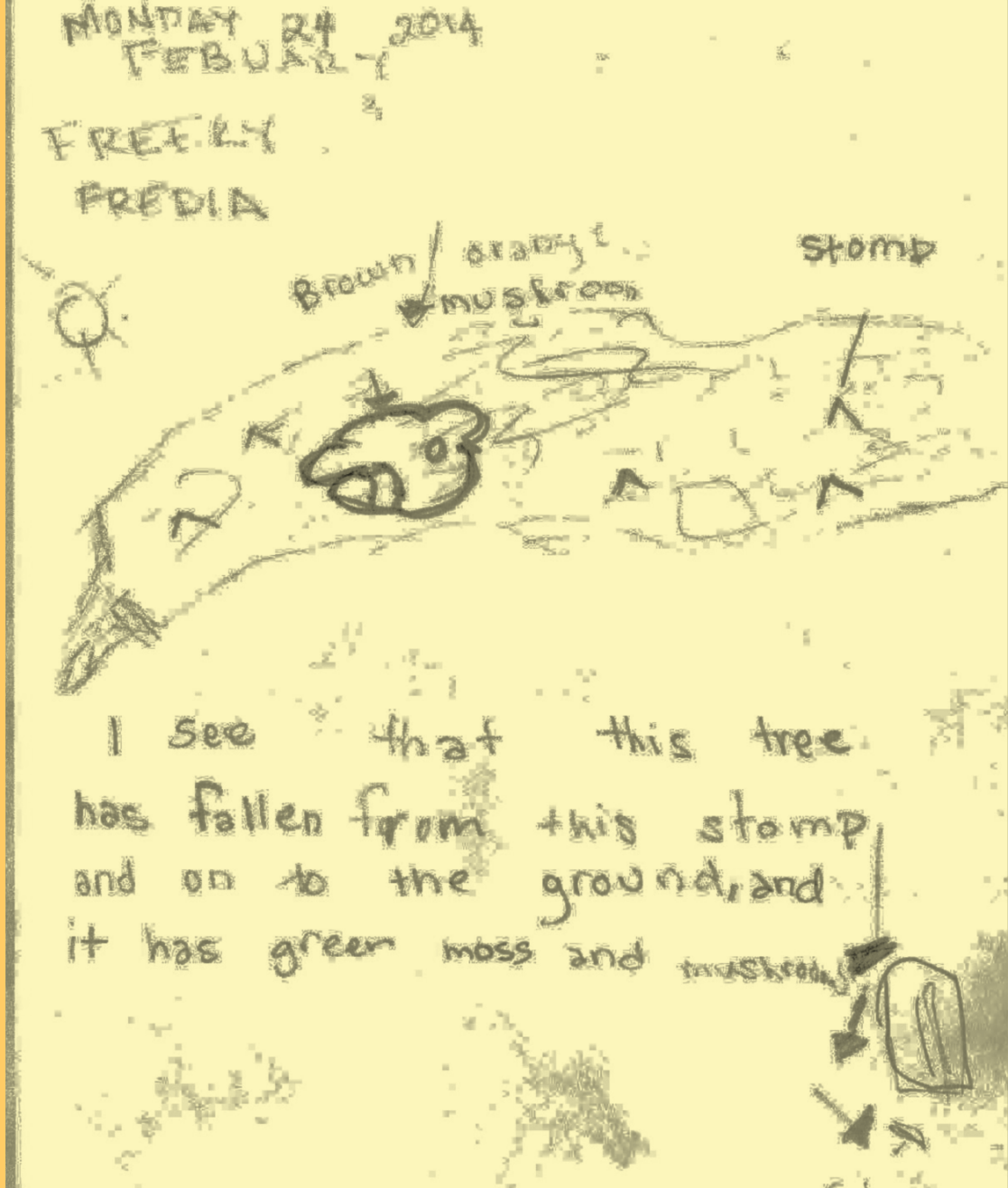


“The foundation of natural history is careful and specific observation with rigorous and exacting note taking.”

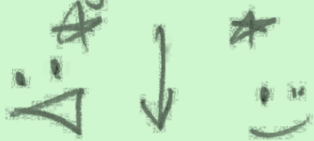
-John Muir Laws



Focus on Observation



Things I found



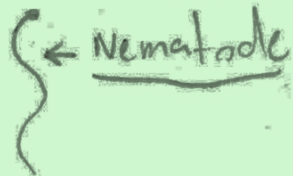
Illustrations



water skimmer

Observations

size: Okay?
color: black
does: lurches across water



Nematode

size: very small
color: brownish??
does: wiggles in the water like a nematode

water mite



size: **VERY** small!!
color: yellow



Fairy shrimp??

size: small
color: yellow-brown

Use drawing,
writing and other
strategies to
record
information



Field Journaling & Science

Note-taking helped transform me from a boy who passively observed the Maine woods into a naturalist-scientist who is an active participant in unraveling the mysteries of the natural world.

- Bernd Heinrich, author of *Mind of the Raven*



Model Student Activity: Plant Timeline

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Common concerns instructors have about journaling with students:

- Journaling won't work for high-energy groups
- Students who don't like drawing or writing will “shut down.”
- Journaling won't fit into my lesson or field experience.





Considerations for Successful Journaling

- Be attentive and responsive to group and individual needs.





Considerations for Successful Journaling:

- Be attentive and responsive to group and individual needs.
- Provide structure and scaffolding that guides and supports student learning.





Modeling different journaling prompts:

- ***Comparisons***
- ***Make a Field Guide***
- ***“Observation Olympics”***
- ***Zoom in, Zoom Out***

From: *Opening The World Through Nature Journaling*,
3rd edition (available in 2016)

By John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren

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Debriefing the Prompts

In your groups, briefly summarize the prompt you did and some interesting things you learned as a result of answering it. Then, discuss one or more of the questions below:

- When and why might an instructor choose to use this prompt with students?
- When might it be useful for students to build this type of understanding during a field experience?
- Are there any lessons you already teach that could be supported by one or more of these prompts?





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- Match scaffolding with learning goals.





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- Provide structure and scaffolding that guides and supports student learning.
- Match scaffolding with learning goals.
- Give appropriate, supportive feedback.





Giving feedback on student journals

- Avoid the tendency to comment on how pretty the drawings are.
- Comment on observations and the strategies used to record them.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Circulate and support students who are struggling.





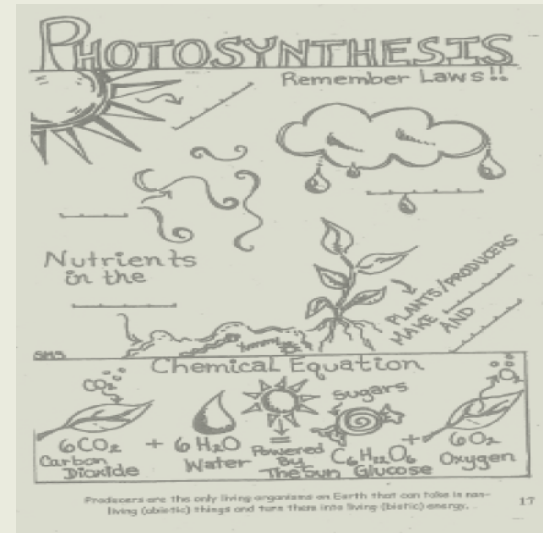
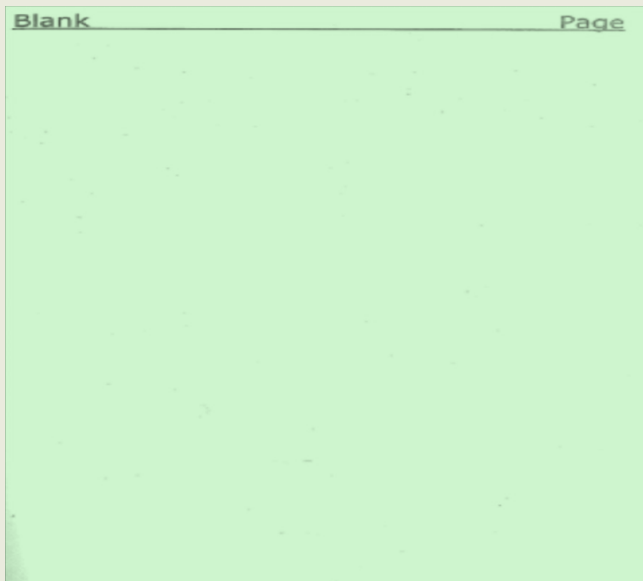
Considerations for Successful Journaling:

- Be attentive and responsive to group and individual needs.
- Provide structure and scaffolding that guides and supports student learning.
- Match scaffolding with learning goals.
- Give appropriate, supportive feedback.
- Make sure students have the right materials for journaling.



Field instructors who use journals frequently with students recommend:

- More blank space to write and draw like an authentic field journal.
- More pages that can be used for multiple activities.
- Fewer pages that remain unused or don't require engaging with nature, such as word searches and fill-in-the-blank diagrams.





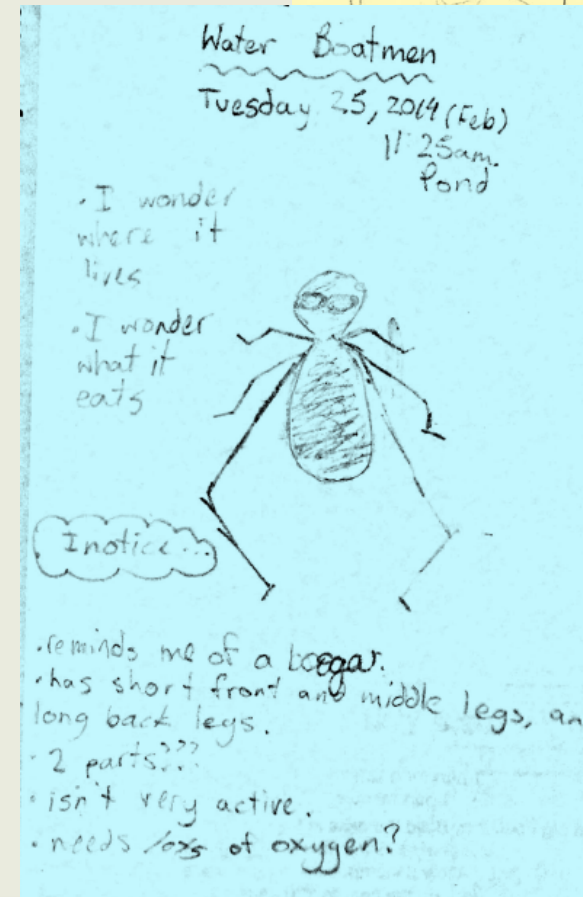
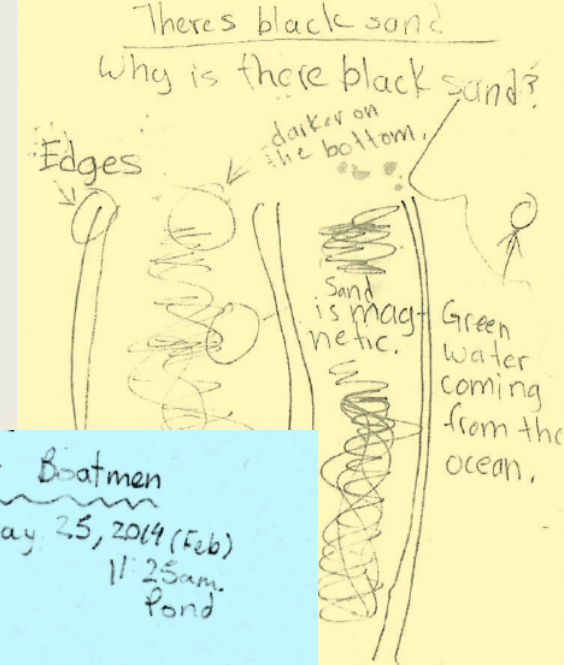
Considerations for Successful Journaling:

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The benefits of field journaling

- Engaging in science practices
- Deepening observation & connecting with natural world
- Creating science text
- Practicing authentic naturalist skills
- Meeting English Language Arts standards
- Building meaning, understanding, connections
- Recording memories



Reflection

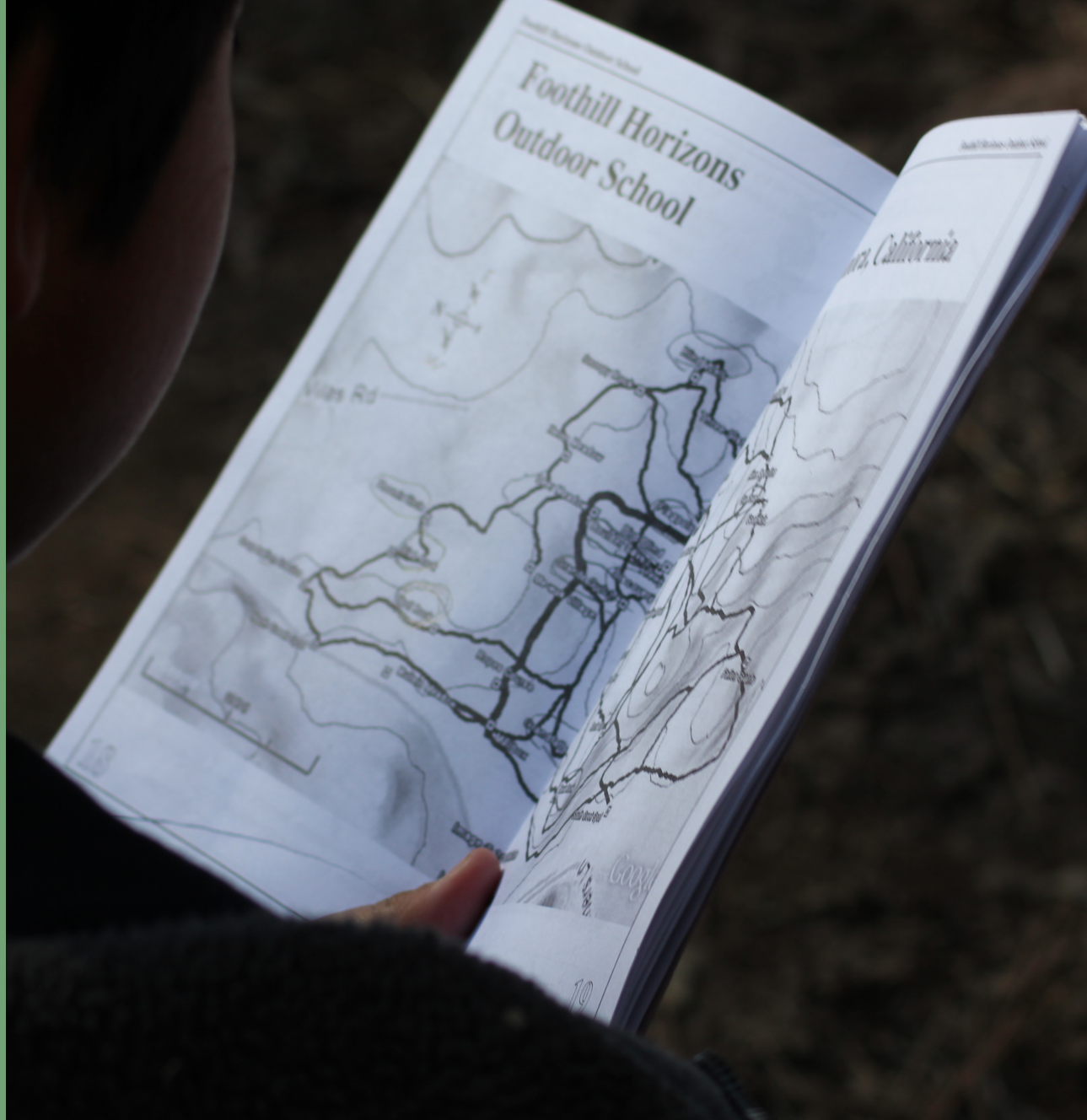
- When and for what purpose might you choose to use journaling with students?
- How might you integrate journaling into activities you are already doing?



The following slides are for the optional “Looking at printed student journal pages” activity.



What are
some
benefits of
printed
student
journals ?



What are some issues or challenges with student journals and how they are used in outdoor science schools?



Examine several journal pages and discuss:

- What do you think is the intent of the page? Is it useful?
- Does it encourage authentic use of field journaling as naturalists?
- Do you think it would be successful with most students?
- Can it be used for multiple activities, or can it only be used with one particular activity?

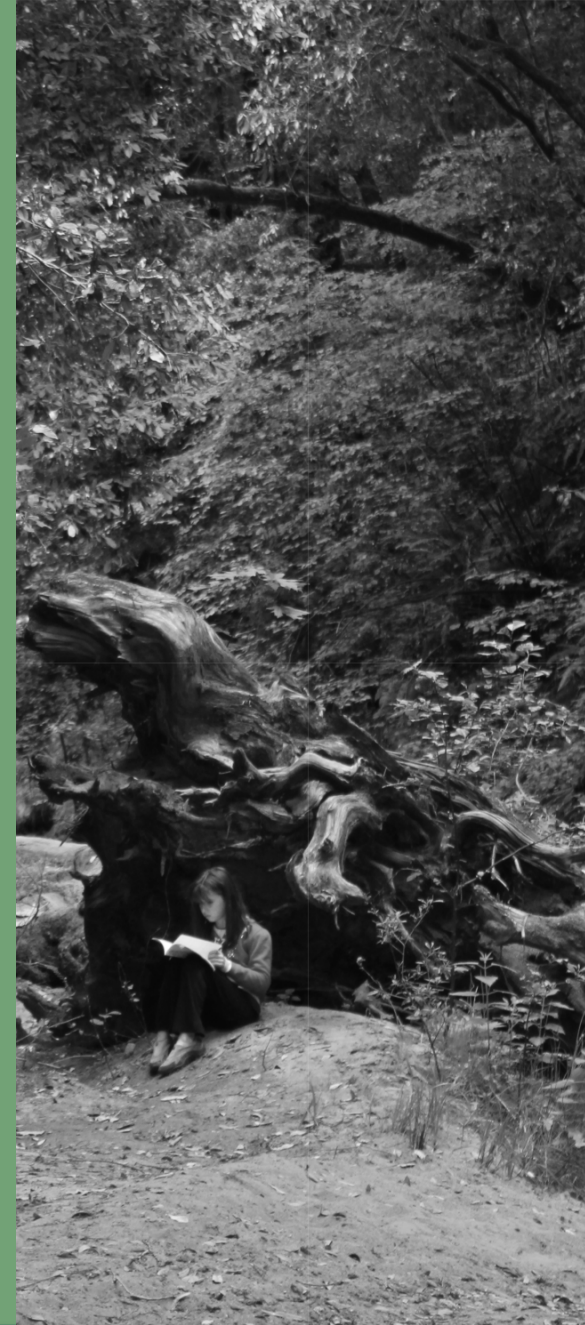


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