



common objects of the natural community and to point to other things in the natural world.

For example, you might have a marker where deer have grazed, where a beaver has been at work, or where lichens have found a toehold in rock. Another might be a fallen, rotting tree that has become a feeding and nesting ground for insects and reptiles.

After going over your trail, the Scout should have some understanding of the "web of life" as well as a knowledge of common trees and plants. Be sure to remove the trail signs at the end of the activity unless it is to become a permanent nature trail.

### Conservation Project

A conservation Good Turn would, of course, be an excellent highlight for the nature adventure. A few of the possibilities are listed below. Be sure to get permission from the property owner before tackling the job.

For good advice on these and other conservation projects, see the *Fish and Wildlife Management* and *Soil and Water Conservation* merit badge pamphlets.

- Planting food plants for birds and mammals.
- Building a fence or a "living fence" to exclude livestock from a wildlife habitat.
- Building and setting out nesting boxes and brush piles for birds and mammals.
- Planting hedges or windbreaks to create winter cover for wildlife.
- Planting a gully, road cut, fill, or eroding area to provide wildlife shelter and reduce erosion.
- Building, stocking, or fertilizing a farm pond for fish.
- Building check dams, deflectors, or cover devices to provide shelter for fish and reduce erosion.
- Protecting a streambank by plantings or riprapping.
- Building a grass waterway on sloping land.

- Controlling erosion on hiking trails by water bars or spreading a layer of an organic material such as sawdust, wood chips, pine needles, or leaves on the trail surface.
- Planting grasses or other ground cover.

### Troop Nature Museum

The patrol leaders' council might want to have a nature museum to study back home. If so, the nature adventure would be a good starting point.

Keep the museum project simple and have a definite plan for it. Don't collect everything in sight for the sake of collecting. One way to do it would be to assign each patrol to one task, such as:

- Collect the 10 most common insects in your area.
- Make plaster casts of four different animal tracks.
- Make a rearing cage inhabited by six caterpillars.
- Collect 10 kinds of wood and mount for display.
- Collect five kinds of soil.
- Collect and prepare six common rocks for display.
- Plant six different tree seedlings in tin cans.

Before you begin collecting, make sure that you will be permitted to take samples from the site. In some parks, you are not permitted to take anything.

### Nature at Night

Nature never sleeps. Throughout the night the wilderness teems with life. You hear the scurrying of skunks and raccoons seeking a late supper, the howl of a coyote, or the bark of a fox. In the summer, insects hum through the brush, sampling the foliage. In the distance, a night-hunting owl hoots.

Getting close to all this wildlife (except insects!) is a problem. Nocturnal critters are shy and not easily spotted. But it can be done if your Scouts are patient and, above all, quiet.

At night, sit down quietly at least 10 yards from a tracking pit. Remaining absolutely quiet, shine a flashlight on the pit