



Track Detectives

Prep

Explain to students that biologists often have to use clues such as tracks or scat to study populations of wild animals. They even use trail cameras to capture photos of shy, secretive animals to document their presence or abundance in an area. Explain that today, the class will be pretending to be biologists as they examine a scene of tracks in the “snow.”

Materials

- Track scene cloth
- Track field guides

How to

- Lay the track scene cloth on the ground and ask student to gather around. Explain to them that they are biologists hoping to detect bobcats in the area, and are using track evidence to document the presence or absence of bobcats.
- Allow students to explore the scene and come up with some conclusions based on their observation of the clues left behind. Allow students to work together to flip through the track field guides and identify the tracks.
- At the end of the observation period, ask students what they think happened in the snowy scene. Are there any bobcats present in this area? What signs of other animals did they also observe?

Extension

Use the track stencils included in the Keeping the Balance kit to create your own mystery track scene on a large piece of paper, a whiteboard, cloth, or even outside with sidewalk chalk!

