

FACILITIES FOR PROGRAM ALONG THE TRAIL

Picnic Ground, Campfire Ring and Inspiration Point

It is generally conceded that the picnic ground should be outside of the trail area. It is rather important that rustic tables, chairs and fire places be provided just off the entrance and in a beautiful spot.

The campfire ring may be on a hill or down by the water. The ring around the site of the campfire may be of logs or rustic seats so that annual treks, Indian trails, Gypsy patter runs or jaunts, and treasure hunts may end here with a song fest, and program of various types.

The inspiration point is generally chosen because it is a wonderful overlook with a clear horizon, and possible open air theatre advantages. It is here that star parties or programs will be held. Appropriate music, poetry, songs, stories and facts are woven into a star program while children with flash lights or candles form the reflection of the constellations of the dome above.

This poem, with speaker pointing out constellations, would introduce a star program.

STARS BY DAY

"All day long the stars go by,
 Marching up and down the sky,
Orion with its jeweled sword,
 Seeks the bull, whose head is lowered,
While Sirius, the mighty one
 Trails the chariot of the sun,
And Procyon, the lesser hound,
 Never stops to look around
But ever at the Huntsman's heel
 Hopes for steak at his next meal
And Pleiades lets down their hair
 And weeps for one who is not there
And fair Capella keeps her light
 Beaming gentle till the night
The Dipper, in the sun's last ray
 Dips a drink from the Milky Way
While Pegasus, the winged horse,
 Munches at the heavenly Goose.
Andromeda, freed from her rock
 Holds Perseus in friendly talk,
And both go swinging down the west
 Upon a never-ending quest.
We can not see them, you and I,
 But all day long the stars go by."

This poem could well be used in a bird program:

THE ORIGIN OF BIRDS

"The Indians of the Shasta mountains tell
A legend strange and beautiful,
How the Great Spirit stepped from cloud to cloud
In the long ago.

And fast upon the dome of Shasta stood,
The spotless face of new-born earth to see,
And everywhere he touched the land, up sprang
A green luxuriant tree.

Pleased with the sight, the splendor of his smile
Melted the snows and made the rivers run.
And soon the branches tossed their leafy plumes
And blossomed in the sun.

Day after day, while the just summer shows,
He watched with fresh delight the growing trees;
But autumn came, and fast the bright leaves fell,
Swept by the keener breeze.

Yet were they radiant now, in every hue,
Of red and gold which could with sunset vie;
Looking on them, He loved them, -
They were still too beautiful to die.

Thrilled by His glorious gaze, each leaf renewed
Its life; and floated buoyantly along;
Its beauty put forth wings; and as it soared
Its gladness grew to song.

Thus from the red stained oak the robin came,
The cardinal bird, the maple's splendor bore,
The yellow bird, the willow's faded gold
In living plumage wore.

Even the pale brown leaves the pageant joined,
Sparrows and larks awakened to rejoice;
And though they were less fair, He gave to them
The more melodious voice.

Since then, the bird's close kinship with the trees
Have ever kept, and built the yearly nest
Beneath the fragrant shelter of the boughs
As on a Mother's breast."

Frances Laughton Mace

A bird masque such as "Sanctuary" by Percy Mackaye, could be given here. Thus the conservation of wild birds will be impressed upon all those attending the pageantry.

Many programs, given for Arbor Day, Bird Day, May Day, the 4th of July, the Harvest Festival, also in connection with an Indian Garden Planting, a Wild Flower Garden Planting, or any festival, could be enjoyed here. The reading and the acting of Hiawatha and The Fairy Ring play, a Gypsy Frolic and many other plays centered around the natural wild life of the trail area would find appropriate setting on this elevated point.

Many quiet games may be played on the trail while those requiring running over this trail, should be played in an adjoining area. If large groups enter into these games, much caution must be given. Nature Observation and Puzzle games, Bulletin 1-44 and Treasure Hunts, M.P. #212, July 1937, price ten cents, N.R.A., Ass., 315 4th Ave., New York City. Also Nature Games for Hikes and Out-of-Doors, M.B. #256 from N.R.A., 315 4th Ave., New York City, will be enjoyable to all.

It has been suggested by a naturalist writing for the Nature Magazine 1937, that every naturalist should wear an insignia and this insignia should be put up on certain areas. He suggested the Egyptian Tau.

Recreation and Preservation as a Common Denominator of Nature Trail

There is a lot of difference between learning and being taught. The Nature Shrine offers chances for learning through observation. If we wish to put to work our leisure time and relearn the long forgotten but eternal values of our nature trails, may we strive to protect, to preserve, and to glory in these paths of the wilderness.

In every phase of this work, may all make the happy observation, the appreciation and the preservation of the wild life, the key note of the Nebraska Nature Trails..

WHAT WE OBSERVE ON NEBRASKA NATURE TRAILS

The frosty ground is thawing and springtime is almost here,
And mother nature's spring display will bring us health and cheer,
The new hatched birds will sing their song, a song they've never heard,
The sweet melodeous chirping, ancestral song of birds.

Our thoughts are lost in wonder as our hearts with music thrills
When through the microscopic lens, we watch the murmuring rills,
And magnifying every drop we find a world of strife,
In the busy actions of the Proto zoa's life.

And then we're warned, by darkened cloud, and rain disturbing rills,
Of thunder loud arousing all but peace of quiet hills
The thunder loud that e'er precedes the freshening April rain
A rain that's sure to bring to us the fragrant flowers again.

The Insects all amuse us as compared with ours, their ways;
The moths resembling drunkards with their flying bright-light craze,
And too, we watch the wasps and find, we copy every day,
A lot of things these insects do in work and in our play.

Displayed in green and free to all, the comfort of the grass,
Together with majestic trees and rolling fields we pass,
Are nature's gifts and countless too, ascending to the skies
A gift for you and you and you, a gift to use and prize.

And as we live with open eyes when traveling nature trails
Tis then we find and love the one who never never fails
Tis then we hear and see and then we learn to know the worth
Of mother nature's gift to us, this good old precious earth.