3. Field Explorations Booklet

**Description:** Students take a creative journal to the field. It has ideas and questions about things found in the bosque, and lots of space for the students’ own ideas, questions, and drawings.

**Objective:** Enhance the students’ observations, feelings, and connections with the bosque through writing, drawing, and thinking about the bosque.

**Materials:**
1. a booklet for each student (masters included in this activity; copies consist of two double-sided pages for each student)
2. stapler for stitching booklet together
3. scissors or paper cutter
4. construction paper for cover (optional)
5. journal tools such as colored pencils, charcoal or crayons for bark rubbings, glue sticks, tape, pens, etc.

**Procedure:**
1. Prepare booklets ahead of time or as an in-class project.
   a. Copy the master sheets as two-sided copies making sure to keep the pages and orientations as they are in this guide.
   b. Fold the two pages in half and in half again as in the diagram below. (Optional: add a 5.75” by 8.75” piece of construction paper to the outside of the booklet as a cover.)
   c. Staple the center of the book along the fold.
   d. With scissors, cut the tops of the pages to create a 16-page booklet.

**Grades:** 3–8

**Time:** Material preparation: about one hour to make 20 journals

Class activity: flexible. This is a field activity. As a break between other activities, the journaling time could be allocated in 10-minute blocks, or the journal can be the focus of a several-hour hike or exploration.

**Subjects:** science, English, art

**Terms:** journal, tamarisk, pillbugs, jetty jacks, soil stabilization, mosquito fish
2. On your trip to the bosque, give students the journals and materials to write, draw, or tape things in their booklet. Start the activity with:

This booklet is a special journal. See if you can find everything mentioned in this booklet.

Each page of this journal has a theme. Figure out the theme on each page, and decide if that thing found in the bosque is here naturally (native) or because of human influences (exotic).

Here are some ideas for using the booklet page by page. Don’t let these ideas stifle your own or your students’ imaginations! Because of copying complexities, page numbers may not match, but it doesn’t really matter as long as the cover page is first!

Page 2: Theme: wildflowers. Find an insect on a flower, and write a short tale about what that bug is doing there.

Page 3: Theme: large cottonwood tree (native). With a light-colored chalk or crayon, make a bark rubbing of a cottonwood tree.

Page 4: Theme: songbirds (native). Sit quietly in the forest with your eyes closed. Can you hear some birds? What sounds are they making? Try to write down the sounds that you hear.

Page 5: Theme: lizards (native). Be a lizard detective. How many lizards can you find? Are lizards easy to see? Why or why not?

Page 6: Theme: mosquito fish (exotic and native). When looking at water, look for small fish swimming around. Ask students to construct a food web, linking mosquito fish to the sun and to large animals like eagles, bears or us!

Page 7: Theme: mosquito (native). Think about making peace with the mosquitoes. Mosquitoes pollinate the flowers.

Page 8: Theme: saltcedar or tamarisk (exotic). Tape a saltcedar leaf on this page, write about a saltcedar or write down how many colors of saltcedar leaves you can find.
Field Activities


Page 10: Theme: decaying cottonwood leaves. Use your nose. What do you think of when you smell old leaves? Tape old leaves in your book. Do they still smell the same?

Page 11: Theme: fire. Think about fires in the bosque. Can you find any signs (like charred wood, dead, blackened trees, etc.) of recent fires? Are fires good or bad for the bosque? Can fires be prevented? How?

Page 12: Theme: cottonwood seedlings (native, but lack of them reflects altered conditions). Hint: look near wet spots, like along ditches, drains, banks and sand bars on the river. Also look for young sprouts from dead and dying trunks and stumps. If you find a few cottonwood seedlings, does that mean that there will be as many cottonwood trees in the future as there are now?


Page 14: Theme: aquatic insect exploration (native). Bring pans or plates for this activity. Nets and waders are also fun. Hand lenses and microscopes really make this activity more exciting. Have students try to see how many different critters they can identify. Explain that generally more kinds of aquatic insects indicate healthier water environments.

Page 15: Theme: jetty jacks. Carefully explore around a jetty jack. What can you find? Write about or draw what you see.

**Related Activities:** Although this activity is similar to the “Bosque Discovery Booklet,” this activity’s focus is on helping the student think about the bosque, while the Discovery Booklet focuses on observation skills.

**Assessment:** Have students share a part of their journal with the class. Have students hand in booklets and review them. Send booklets home with the students to show their parents.

**Extensions:** Add a blank sheet of paper between the two master sheets to provide a 24-page booklet with eight blank pages.

For younger students, use only one or two pages, enlarged on the copier, as the focus for a trip.
How many pillbugs can crawl on my arm at the same time?

There are so many of you protected in a ball of armor. Tiny intruders, eater of leaves.

There are so many of you protected in a ball of armor.

tiny intruder, eater of leaves.

Kevin Bulfin

This field booklet belongs to:

_______________________________________

My Bosque Field Booklet
Wildflower

Thing of beauty

who depends on you

for your sweet nectar

for your plump pollen

for your succulent tissues

for your energy-packed seeds

You are so much more than

a thing of beauty

Wildflower

Jetty jack. Soil stabilization.

I found a wasp’s nest in one of these one time.

What can you find?

I love the smell of decaying cottonwood leaves on the forest floor.

What can you find?

rich

earthy

friendly

Ouch! Who keeps biting me . . .

Would I rather you weren’t around?

Then who would pollinate the flowers?

Then who would feed the bats and fish?

Oh bother, next time I’ll wear more clothes.

Most fires in the bosque are started by people. What do you think about that?

Every time I see some water, be it a ditch or drain, river or marsh, pond or puddle, I like to stop and look for mosquito fish. Tiny swimmers chomping up mosquito larvae. Go get 'em, guys, I urge them, but they don’t even seem to know that I am there.

Pssst! Don’t tell anyone, but there are really nifty bugs that live in the water. Get a white shallow plate, and put some river (ditch, marsh, pond) water and rocks and old leaves that live in the water. Get a white shallow plate, and put that live in the water. Can you believe the way some of those critters can move? Don’t forget to put them home when you are done.

Can you find any sign of fire in these woods?
How many lizards live in the bosque?

I saw something special. I've put a clue right here on this page. Maybe you can guess what I saw.

Someone told me there would be no more cottonwoods for my grandchildren to see. Hmm, I thought, can that be true? And so I went to the bosque to see if I could find the baby cottonwood trees that could someday shade my children's children's children. And this is what I saw:

Teach me your song, I asked the bird, and the song went like this . . .