6. Wildlife Detectives

Description: Students look for signs of wildlife living in the area.

Objectives: Students will:

- find out what wildlife is living in the bosque;
- examine habitat needs of different wildlife species; and
- use observation skills.

Materials: paper/journals

pencils

natural history guides (tracks, scat); see Appendix B: Annotated References

Procedure: Set clear boundaries for the activity. Define the area for the activity. It can be "stay between this path and the river" or "within ten paces of this path" or whatever is appropriate. Many areas in the bosque look alike and if separated from the group, students can get disoriented and feel lost. Clearly mark a dividing line so that the area is divided into two equal halves.

Divide class into six groups. Assign each group one of the following categories.

Tracks I	Tracks II
Scat & Bones I	Scat & Bones II
Homes I	Homes II

Assign Groups I to one-half of the area and Groups II to the other half of the area.

Students should look carefully throughout the area for their assigned objects. Stay within marked boundaries. Record observations only; do not collect evidence. Look first; never put your hands, feet, or face where you have not looked. Have students use natural history guides to identify their finds, if possible. Encourage

6. *Wildlife Detectives*

Grades: 3–8

Time: 30 to 60 minutes, depending on student interest levels

Subject: science

Terms: *tracks, scat*

students to draw pictures of their finds and keep a tally (i.e., number of small bird tracks, coyote tracks, etc.). If time permits, allow students to switch categories and look for something new.

At the end of the allotted time, bring students together and compile findings. Use the following questions to lead a discussion of their findings.

How many different types of animals live here?

How many of each animal might live here? How do we know?

How many of these animals live underground? In the trees? On the ground?

Where do each of these animals find water?

How do each of these animals find food?

What types of homes do each of these animals need?

Assessment: Have students write about their findings, either in a field journal or as an assignment. Answer appropriate discussion questions as well.

Extension: On paper construct a food web using the animals listed.