Discovery Hike
Activities for Explorers

Presented by the YMCA of the Rockies

Name: ___________________________________________
Andrea was very excited. She was going on her first hike at the YMCA of the Rockies! Just ahead of Andrea was their hiking guide, Tom.

“What kind of animals will we see today?” Andrea asked.

He smiled at her. “What would you like to see?”

“I’ve never seen an elk before! Do you think we might see one of those?” Andrea said.

“Maybe! They walk through this area very often. Can you hear any animals now?” asked Tom.

“Try this. Cup your hands over your ears and listen carefully.”

“Who-Who-Who-Who!” came the sound from above her.

“Oh! I hear something!” said Andrea.
Can you color the animal Andrea heard?
“That was a barred owl,” said Tom. “They are common and they eat lots of rodents and other pests.”

“That’s wonderful!” exclaimed Andrea. “What else lives in Rocky Mountain National Park?”

Can you find these plants and animals?

Ponderosa Pine  Red-Tailed Hawk  Bighorn Sheep
Rainbow Trout  Blue Spruce  Columbine
Ptarmigan  Pine Marten  Mule Deer
Wild Iris  Beaver  Marmot
Moose  Aspen  Elk
Pika
“Tom,” said Andrea, “Is there something in the water?”

“Good eye! I wasn’t sure you would see them!” said Tom. “Those are trout. There are seven native and four exotic species of fish in the park. One native fish, the greenback cutthroat trout is endangered and is protected. Do you see the fishermen down the river? They are catching fish and releasing any that are endangered.”

Can you unscramble the letters to find seven other types of fish found near the YMCA?

Hutarortc ttruot  ____________________________
Wornb urtot  ___________  ___________
Binraow rotut  ___________  ___________
Korob ortut  ___________  ___________
Detldot pulsinc  ___________  ___________
Noglosen ruscke  ___________  ___________
Thiew kescur  ___________  ___________
Can you find five differences between these photos?

“Wow! This is beautiful!” said Andrea, as they emerged into Moraine Park. “Has it always looked like this?”

“Oh no,” said Tom. “Once this valley was filled with ice and glaciers. Even now, this valley is constantly changing. Let’s compare with this photo I took last year.”
“Tom,” said Andrea, “Why is this valley so flat when the rest of the mountains are sharp and steep?”

“That’s because of the glaciers,” replied Tom. “Imagine this entire valley filled to a depth of several thousand feet with moving ice. Once the ice melted, it left behind this valley and a lot of other features in the mountains. I have a list of some of the landmarks left by the glaciers. Do you think you can find them in the landscape?”

“I think so!” said Andrea.

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**Match the definition to the landform.**

A. Arete — A sharp mountain ridge, carved on both sides by glaciers.
B. Cirque — A half-open, steep-sided hollow at the head of a valley, formed by glacial erosion.
C. Glacial Trough — A U-shaped valley that once held the main body of a glacier.
D. Hanging Valley — A side valley that enters a main valley at an elevation high above the main valley floor.
E. Horn — A pyramidal peak, eroded on three or more sides by a glacier.
F. Tarn — A lake created by glacial erosion, often occupying the bottom of a cirque.
G. Paternoster Lakes — A series of lakes created by glacial erosion and connected by a stream.
“Andrea, have you ever seen a black bear?” asked Tom.

“No! I don’t think I want to see one of those,” said Andrea. “Aren’t they scary and dangerous?”

“They can be when they are scared or hungry,” said Tom. “But if they are left alone and watched from a safe distance, they are fun to see and helpful to the environment.

Which of these is true about black bears?

1. Black bears are the only kind of bear found in Rocky Mountain National Park and at the YMCA.
2. Black bears cannot be any color other than black.
3. Black bears eat more animals than plants.
4. Vision is the black bear’s weakest sense.
5. Black bears are the most common type of bear in North America.

“Andrea, did you notice all of the special trash cans around the YMCA?” asked Tom.

“Yes! I could barely get them open!” said Andrea.

“Those are bear-proof trash cans. They help keep the bears wild and safe by discouraging them from eating our trash,” said Tom. “Do you know any other ways we can help keep bears safe?”

“What about staying away from them, especially when they have cubs, and closing and locking all of our doors and windows at night?” said Andrea.

“Those are excellent ways to keep them away!” exclaimed Tom. “If bears cannot see or smell your food, they are much less likely to bother you.”

“Oh! What kind of animal is that?” said Andrea excitedly.
Can you color the animal Andrea saw?
“That was a bighorn sheep,” said Tom. “They live in the mountains on very steep slopes and come down to eat. All bighorn sheep have horns, but it takes most of their lives for the males to develop the full curl. Can you find any more of these things?”

Andrea looked at the list that Tom handed him.

“I think so!” she said.

Can you check off any of the items from Andrea’s list in your yard or local park?

__ Something prickly
__ Something that smells good
__ A woodpecker
__ Something purple
__ A stream
__ Something smooth
__ A nest
__ Something blue
__ Something that makes you happy

__ Three kinds of leaves
__ A flower
__ A song bird
__ Grass
__ A flat rock
__ Moss
__ A spider
__ A pet

__ Something yellow
__ A rodent
__ An insect
__ A pine tree
__ An acorn
__ A tree stump
__ A cloud
__ Something small
“Wait, was that an otter that just ran up that tree?” Andrea asked.

“No, but you’re close!” said Tom. “That was a pine marten. They are in the weasel family. Why do you think it climbed that pine?”

“Was it hunting?” asked Andrea.

“Yes!” said Tom. “They hunt squirrels. You don’t see them very often because they are secretive.”

Can you color the animal that Andrea saw?
“Are we done already?” asked Andrea as they hiked back the YMCA statue.

“Unfortunately, yes,” said Tom. “Would you like to come back and hike with me again?”

“Of course!” exclaimed Andrea.