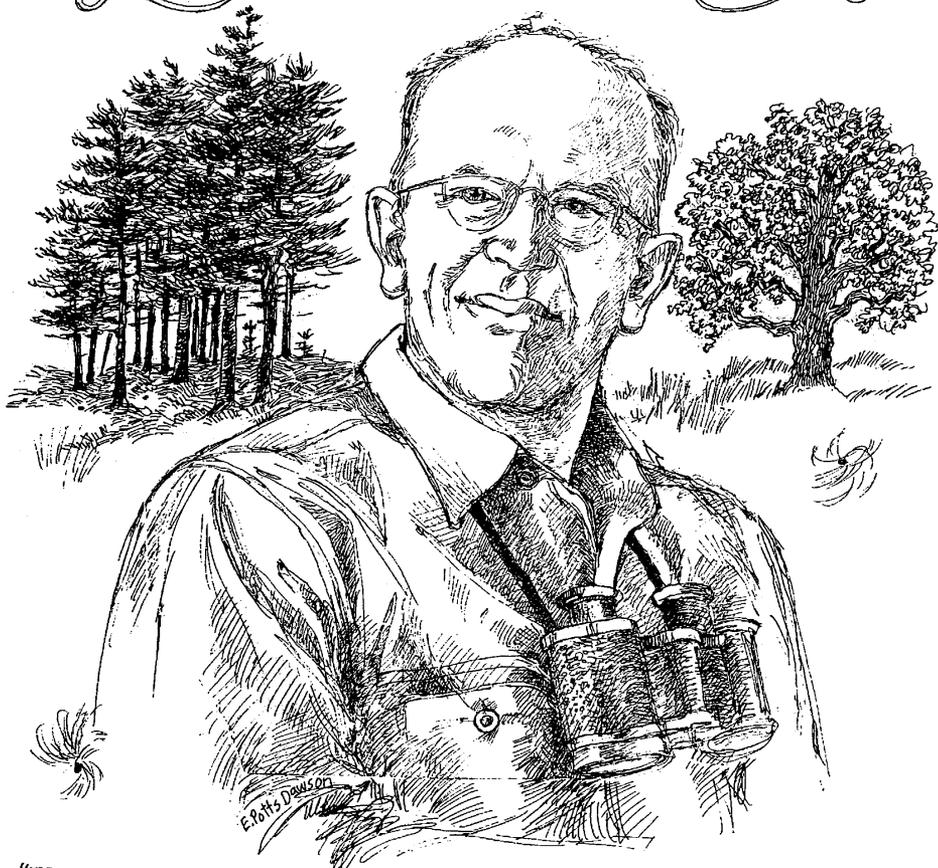


Take a Hike with
Aldo Leopold
A Leopold trail tour for families



"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot." *A.L.*



ALDO
LEOPOLD
Nature Center

Where Learning is Natural!

Specializing in nature education for all ages

330 Femrite Drive ♦ Monona, WI 53716 ♦ (608) 221-0404
naturenet.com/alnc



Welcome! to the Aldo Leopold Nature Center



As you explore our trails, keep your senses alive.

Look up at the highest tree branches, peer down at the tiniest insect crawling across the ground, listen for the wind blowing through the grasses into the trees, smell the soil, taste the air, and stop to feel the warm sun shine on your face.

Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* is a collection of essays written about experiences on his family's land in Baraboo, Wisconsin. In it, Leopold emphasizes the value of "land" - soil, water, air, wildlife, and plants - to our everyday lives.

Take a hike with Aldo Leopold.

The trails connect a patchwork of native Wisconsin habitats. As you follow the trails, look for signs close to the ground in different areas. The signs describe the major habitats and pose questions that Leopold himself might have asked you had he been standing with you on these very spots! Learn more about the special habitats by reading this brochure. For a really wonderful adventure on the land, bring along your copy of *A Sand County Almanac* and read the suggested passages... at home or on the trail.

Enjoy!

The page numbers refer to the 1968 Oxford University Press paperback edition of "A Sand County Almanac". This edition is available for sale during business hours in the Nature Center.



"A wise old owl lived in an oak; the more he saw the less he spoke; the less he spoke the more he heard: Why can't we all be like that bird?"

~Edward Hersey Richards



Let's Play A Game!



Indian Grass

"I am the second most important plant of the prairie (next to Big Bluestem) or so I am told! Look at my nice plumes!"

Look on the map for the puzzle's answer.

PRAIRIE

on prairie plants can go as deep as ten to twenty feet underground.

5

WETLAND AND POND

For most of the year, you can find in a wetland.

1

Aldo Leopold liked to to nature while he was near a wetland.

10

8

OAK SAVANNA

Aldo Leopold called an oak savanna an oak .

7

9

When two different habitats are side-by-side, the area between them is called an .

4

OAK HICKORY WOODLAND

A woodland is to more than just trees!

6

By counting a tree's rings, you can figure out how it is.

3

SOILS

covered this area of Wisconsin 10,000 years ago.

2

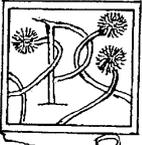
Use the numbered squares from above to find this answer.

"There are some who can live without

— — — — —
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

and some who cannot." - Aldo Leopold





RAIRIE



“During every week from April to September there are, on the average, ten wild plants coming into first bloom. In June as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them. He who steps unseeing on May dandelions may be hauled up short by August ragweed pollen; he who ignores the ruddy haze of April elms may skid his car on the fallen corollas of June catalpas. Tell me of what plant-birthday a man takes notice, and I shall tell you a good deal about his vocation, his hobbies, his hay fever, and the general level of his ecological education....”

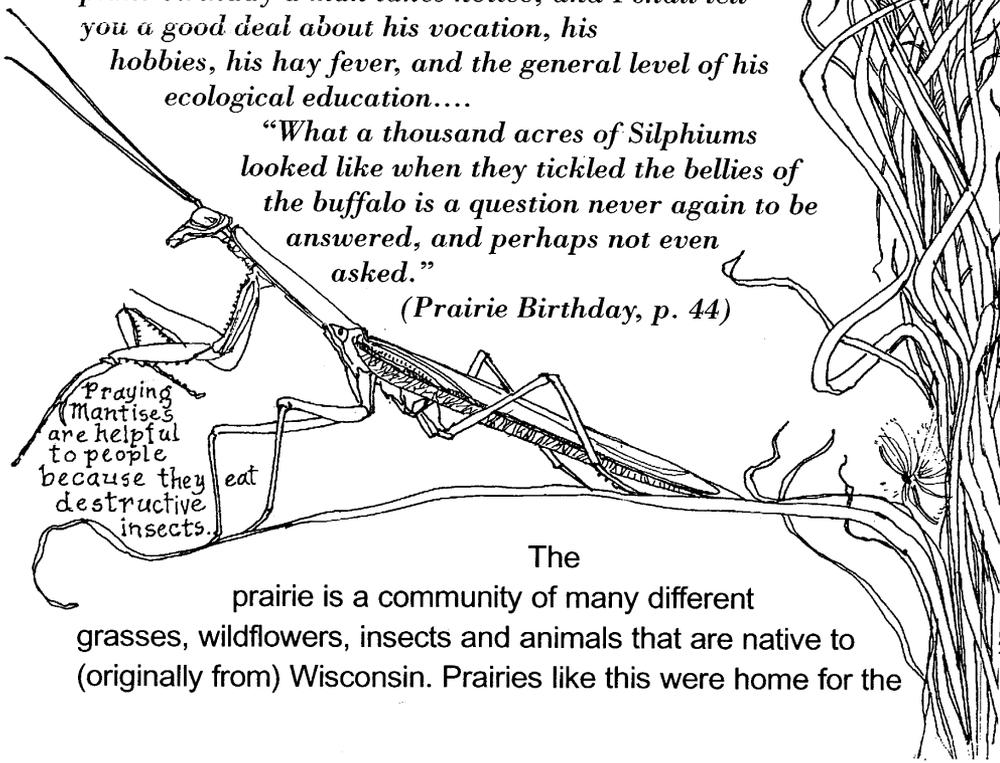
“What a thousand acres of Silphiums looked like when they tickled the bellies of the buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked.”

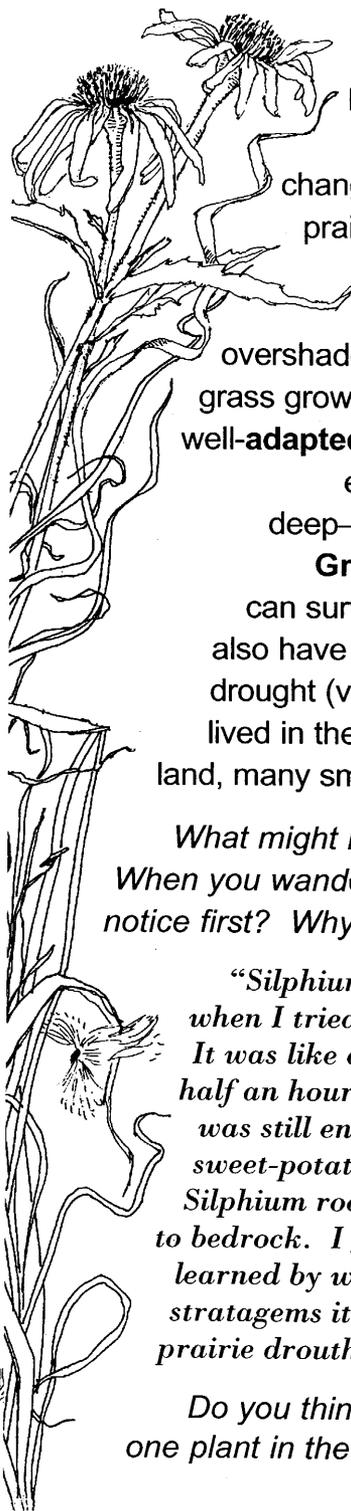
(Prairie Birthday, p. 44)

*Praying
Mantises
are helpful
to people
because they
eat
destructive
insects.*

*Purple Cone Flower
This is the plant
prized by Native
Americans...
and
butterflies!*

The prairie is a community of many different grasses, wildflowers, insects and animals that are native to (originally from) Wisconsin. Prairies like this were home for the





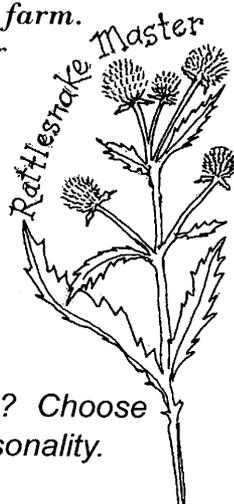
buffalo and used to cover most of this region before we started using it for farming.

The flowering plants (**forbs**) on a prairie change with the seasons. In fact, a different prairie flower blooms practically every week from spring through fall. In the spring, before the grasses have had a chance to overshadow them, the shortest forbs bloom. As the grass grows taller, taller forbs bloom. Prairie plants are **well-adapted** to prairie conditions of wind, drought, and extreme temperatures: their roots go very deep—sometimes ten to twenty feet underground!

Grasses have tough, slender stems, so they can survive even when strong winds blow. They also have very deep roots, which help when there is a drought (very little rain). Before the 1830s, buffalo lived in the prairie. While buffalo no longer roam this land, many smaller animals do.

What might live in the small openings in the ground? When you wander through the prairie, which plants do you notice first? Why? What does that say about you?

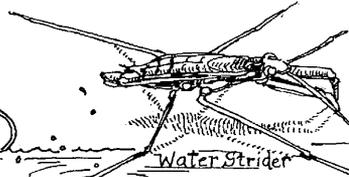
“Silphium first became a personality to me when I tried to dig one up to move to my farm. It was like digging an oak sapling. After half an hour of hot grimy labor the root was still enlarging, like a great vertical sweet-potato. As far as I know, that Silphium root went clear through to bedrock. I got no Silphium, but I learned by what elaborate underground stratagems it contrives to weather the prairie drouths.” (Prairie Birthday, p. 48)



*Do you think plants have **personalities**? Choose one plant in the prairie and describe its personality.*



WETLAND



and

*“To arrive too early in the marsh is an adventure in pure listening... When you hear a mallard being audibly enthusiastic about his soup you are free to picture a score guzzling among the duckweeds.”
(Too Early, p. 61)*

The wetland provides food, water, and shelter for a variety of animals and plants. It also filters rainwater so that the plants and animals have fresh water to drink. A wetland is also a place where many people like to stop and reflect. Why did Leopold like to visit the wetland (or marsh)

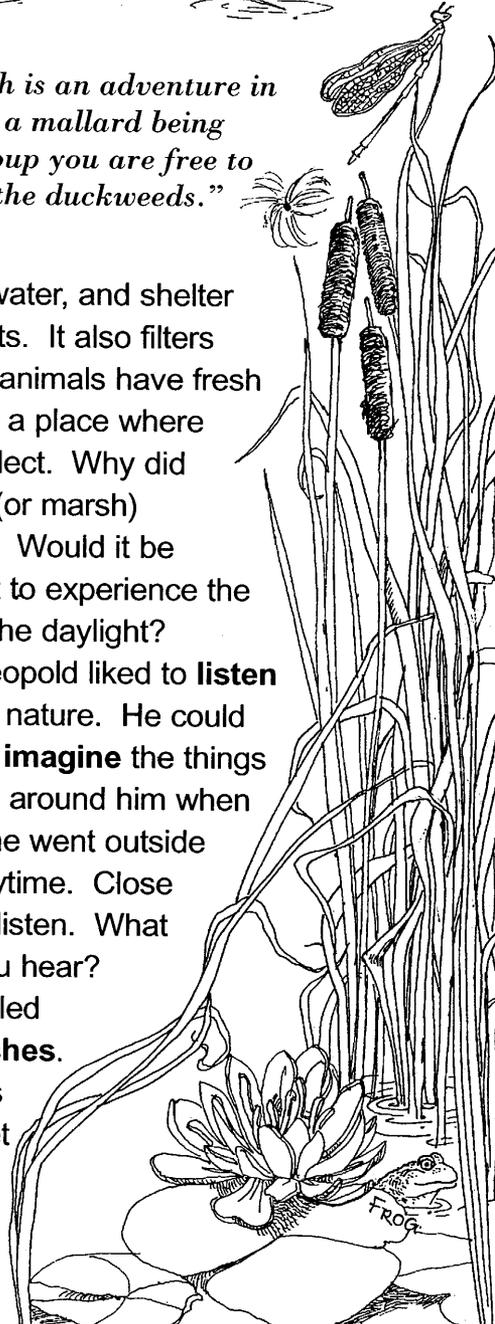
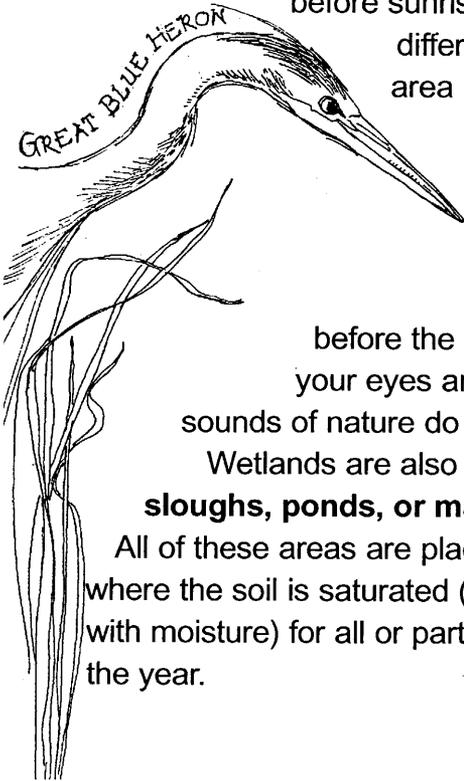
before sunrise? Would it be different to experience the area in the daylight?

Leopold liked to **listen** to nature. He could **imagine** the things around him when he went outside

before the daytime. Close your eyes and listen. What sounds of nature do you hear?

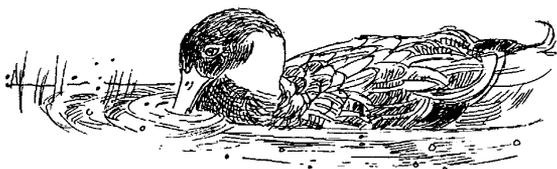
Wetlands are also called **sloughs, ponds, or marshes.**

All of these areas are places where the soil is saturated (wet with moisture) for all or part of the year.





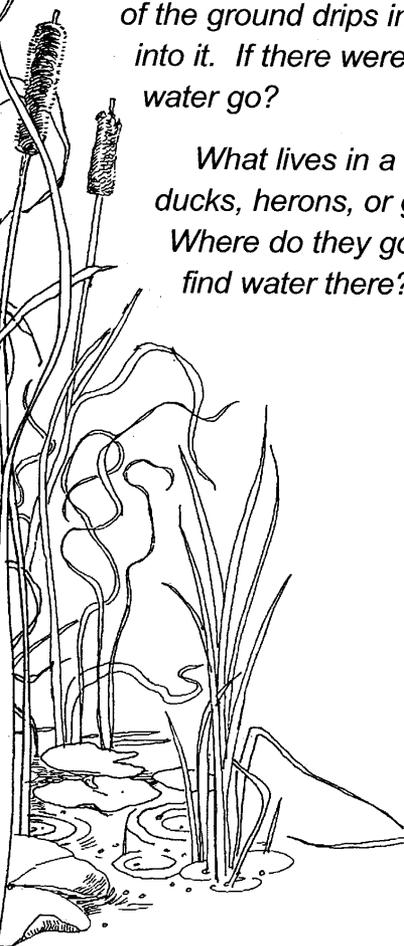
POND



Some wetlands form in shallow basins left by glaciers. Other wetlands form along edges of rivers, lakes, and ponds, and sometimes in highway ditches! Is there a wetland near your home or school?

How do you think this pond stays full? Water deep beneath the ground seeps into it, water running over the top of the ground drips into it, and rain falling from the sky drops into it. If there were no wetland here, where would the water go?

What lives in a wetland? During part of the year, ducks, herons, or geese may hover around this pond. Where do they go when they leave? Do you think they find water there?



Trails are open
from sunrise to sunset
when classes are not in session.
Tours are by appointment.



For the protection of
the land and everyone's
enjoyment, please:

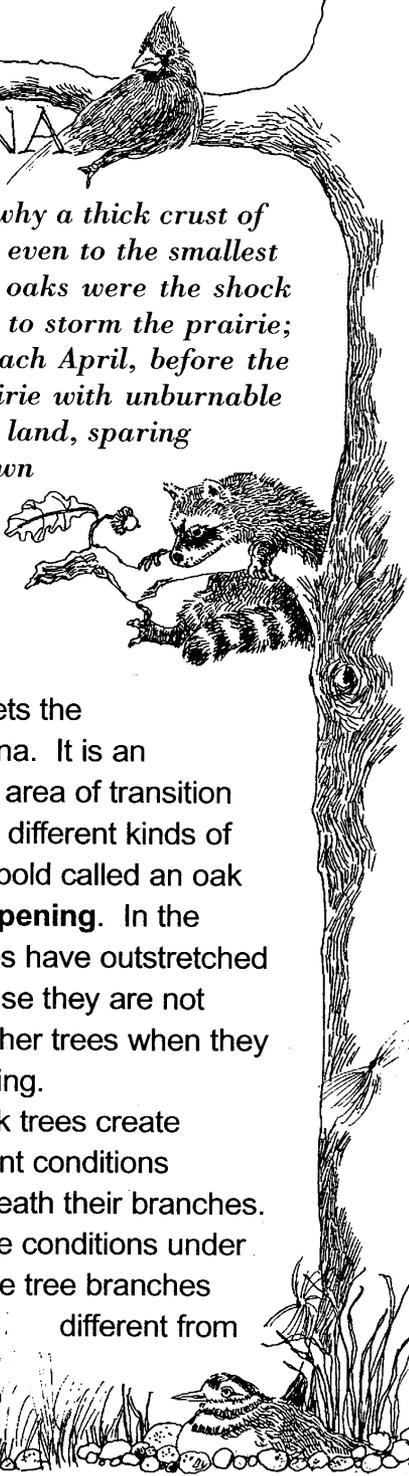
- Stay on the trails
- Do not pick wildflowers or plants
- Remember that wa
- Do not use bicycles or motorized vehicles
- Leave dogs and pets at home



Water is ok, but refrain from picnicking
• Respect all living things



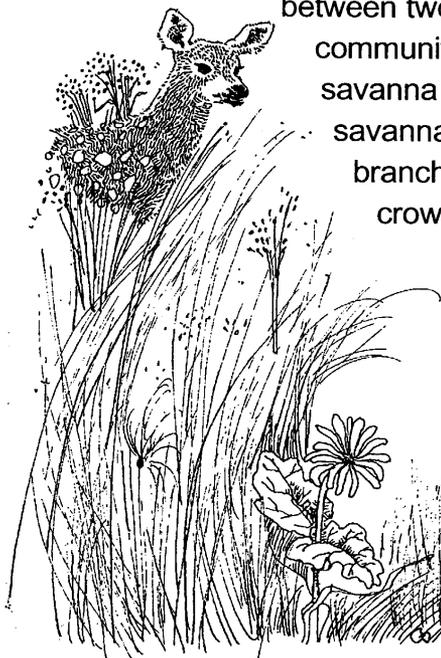
OAK SAVANNA



“Have you ever wondered why a thick crust of corky bark covers the whole tree, even to the smallest twigs? This cork is armor. Bur oaks were the shock troops sent by the invading forest to storm the prairie; fire is what they had to fight. Each April, before the new grasses had covered the prairie with unburnable greenery, fires ran at will over the land, sparing only such old oaks as had grown bark too thick to scorch. Most of these groves of scattered veterans, known to the pioneers as ‘oak openings,’ consisted of bur oaks...” (Bur Oak, p. 26-27)

The area where the prairie meets the forest edge is called an oak savanna. It is an example of an **edge** area—an area of transition between two or more different kinds of communities. Leopold called an oak savanna an oak **opening**. In the savanna, the trees have outstretched branches because they are not crowded by other trees when they are growing.

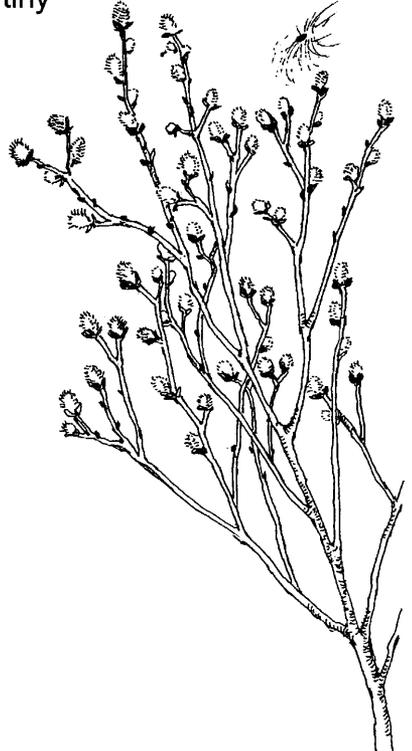
Oak trees create different conditions underneath their branches. How are conditions under the tree branches different from



the conditions in the open prairie? The branches make shade, which makes the area underneath cooler and moister than the open prairie. How are the plants in the oak savanna different from those in the prairie? Are their **leaves** the same **width**? Are the **plants** the same **height**?

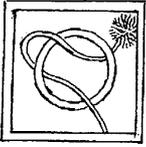


The oak savanna is home to **many different animals** because animals from the prairie *and* from the other areas live here. Animals might use the prairie during the day, but like to be in the forest at night. Deer may browse in the woodland area, nipping off tender young sprigs of trees, and wander into the prairie area to munch on the grasses and other plants. Birds may sing from their perches in the oak trees and forage for tiny seeds from plants in the prairie. A red fox might love to live near this area because he could hunt for small animals in the open prairie and hide among the trees on the other side of the oak savanna.



If you could live in a prairie, in the woods, or in an oak savanna, which would you choose? Would you like to live in different areas for different reasons? Where would you rather be if there were a prairie fire?





AK HICKORY WOODLAND

"We sensed that these two piles of sawdust were something more than wood: that they were the integrated transect of a century; that our saw was biting its way, stroke by stroke, decade by decade, into the chronology of a lifetime, written in concentric annual rings of good oak." (Good Oak, p.6)



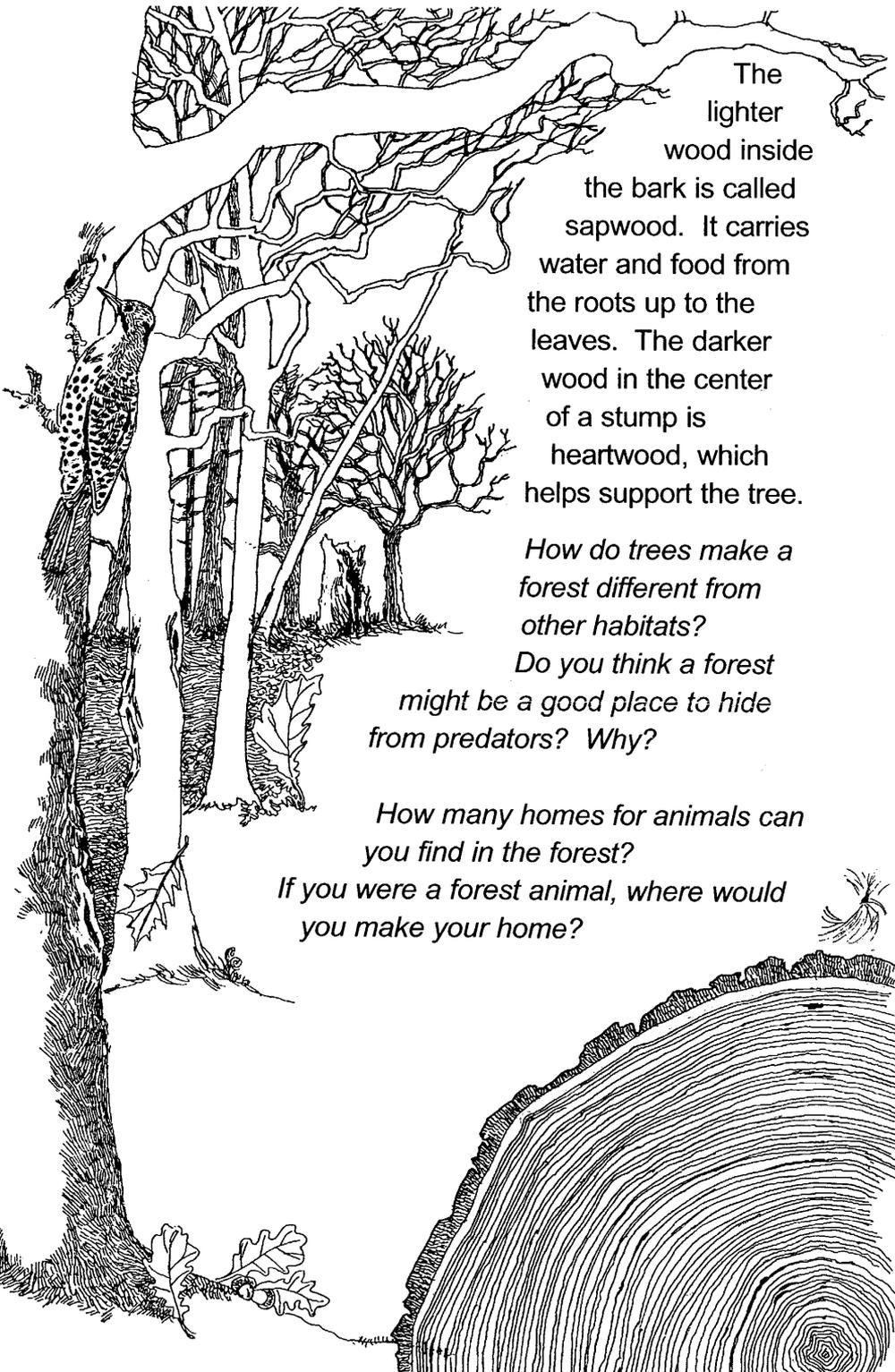
As you can tell, this woodland is home to more than just trees! The forest is home to many animals, plants, and insects who live everywhere from the moist forest floor to the tops of the biggest trees. Together, the trees, flowering plants, ferns, squirrels, birds, ladybugs, and other critters and plants form a **woodland community**.

Even though many, many things live here, forests are most famous for their trees. You can learn much about a tree by measuring its diameter, counting its growth rings, and looking at the way it grows. When a tree is cut down, you can also see its growth rings in the stump.

If you look carefully, you can see all the different parts of the tree trunk. The bark on the outside of a tree is scaly and protects the tree from things like harsh weather.

Just inside the outer bark is the inner bark, which carries food down through the trunk to the roots.





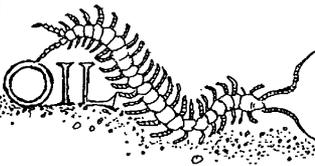
The lighter wood inside the bark is called sapwood. It carries water and food from the roots up to the leaves. The darker wood in the center of a stump is heartwood, which helps support the tree.

How do trees make a forest different from other habitats?

Do you think a forest might be a good place to hide from predators? Why?

How many homes for animals can you find in the forest?

If you were a forest animal, where would you make your home?



“X had marked time in the limestone ledge since the Paleozoic seas covered the land. Time, to an atom locked in a rock, does not pass.

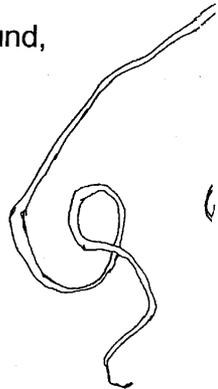
“The break came when a bur-oak root nosed down a crack and began prying and sucking. In the flash of a century the rock decayed, and X was pulled out and up into the world of living things. He helped build a flower, which became an acorn, which fattened a deer, which fed an Indian, all in a single year...” (Odyssey, p.104)

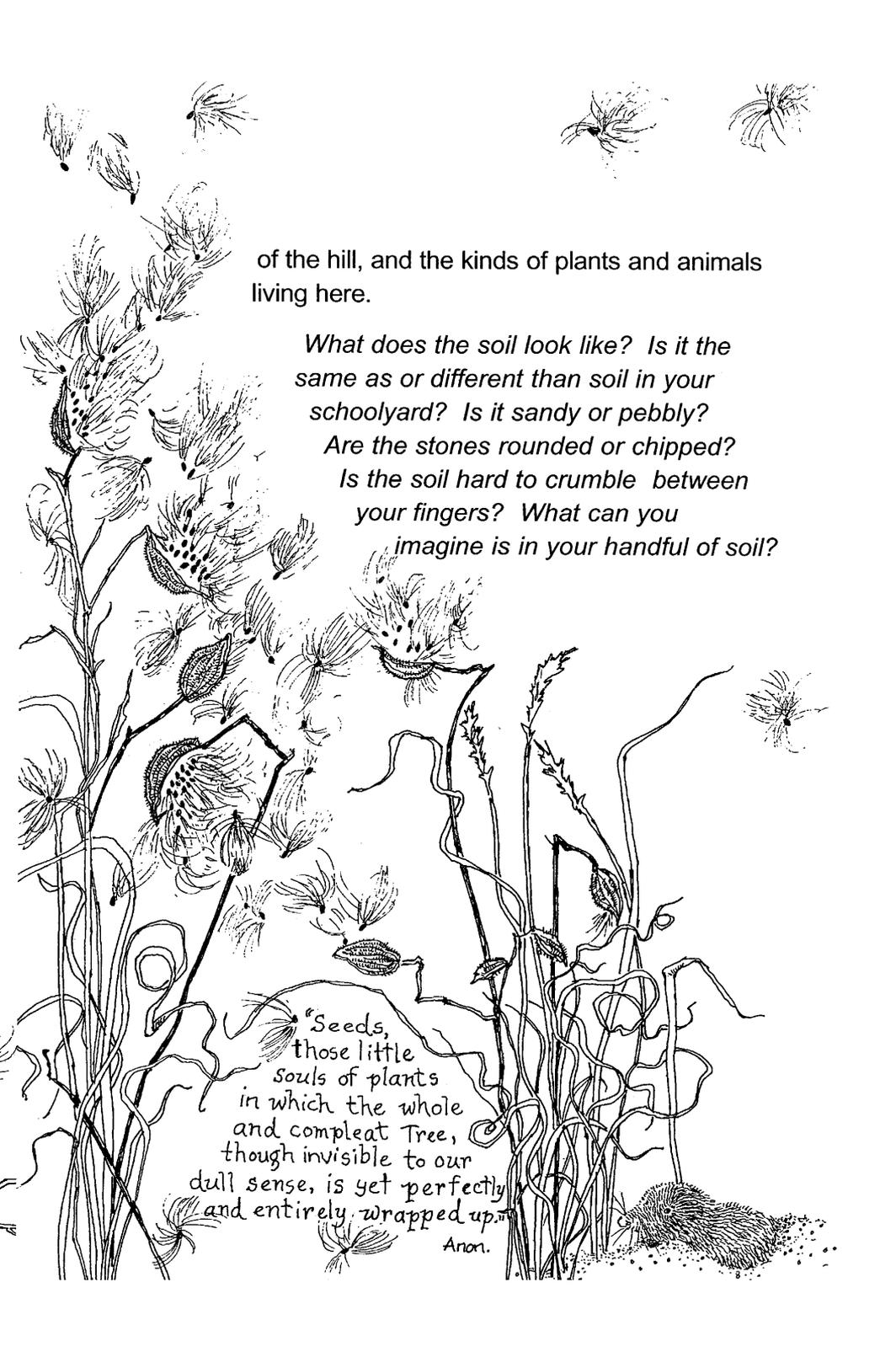
Soil is a mixture of air, water, millions of plants and animals, and rocks worn down by weather. When you hold a handful of soil, it is all those tiny things mixed together. Soil is made in many ways – from the top down and from the bottom up.

A glacier covered this area about 10,000 years ago. When the frozen glacier moved down from Canada, gravel, rocks, and boulders frozen in the ice moved with it. When the glacier melted, it left the rocks behind. Little by little, the weather wore the rocks down, which began to make soil from under the ground.

Nature works to make soil from above the ground, too! As plants drop their leaves and branches on the ground beneath them, the material **decomposes**. This decomposing matter makes a place for worms and other creatures to live: soil. In fact, millions of tiny animals make their home in the soil... it's hard to see most of them!

The soil in this woodland is unique and ever-changing due to factors like time, the type of rock underneath the soil, the weather, the slope





of the hill, and the kinds of plants and animals living here.

What does the soil look like? Is it the same as or different than soil in your schoolyard? Is it sandy or pebbly? Are the stones rounded or chipped? Is the soil hard to crumble between your fingers? What can you imagine is in your handful of soil?

"Seeds, those little souls of plants in which the whole and compleat Tree, though invisible to our dull sense, is yet perfectly and entirely wrapped up."

Anon.

“Teach the student to see the land,
to understand what he sees,
and enjoy what he understands.”

Aldo Leopold

Who was Aldo Leopold?

Aldo Leopold was a world-famous ecologist who made his home right here in Southern Wisconsin. He and his family learned on and from the land at their farm outside Baraboo, Wisconsin. Leopold wrote about how people can live in harmony with the land in his book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Leopold taught us that “when we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

What is the Aldo Leopold Nature Center?

The Aldo Leopold Nature Center is a private, not-for-profit educational organization supported by charitable contributions. Through naturalist-led programs on the land and in the classroom, family programming, neighborhood outreach, and teacher training, it impacts tens of thousands of children each year. The Center also operates the regional consortium *Nature Net: the environmental learning network* to enhance the outdoor education of area children.

Interested in learning more?

Order *Aldo Leopold: Learning from the Land*,

a video which recalls the story of the Leopold family and their Wisconsin “Shack” experience. Available at the Nature Center.

This project was made possible through support from the following:

Dane County Fund for Children, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Madison Community Foundation and Overture Foundation, Kodak American Greenways Foundation, and Foley & Lardner.



This project was awarded the National 1999 Kodak American Greenways Award.

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Design & Illustration:

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