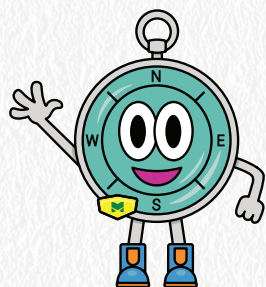


THIS ACTIVITY BOOK BELONGS TO:



HELLO,  
*Explorer!*

Are you ready for some awesome adventures?  
This guide is packed with fun games and  
activities to help you learn, explore, and create  
in our County parks.

Before you start, raise your right hand and say  
the Junior Ranger pledge:

“As a Middlesex County Junior Ranger, I promise  
to protect the parks by picking up after myself,  
being kind to the plants and animals, and helping  
others have fun.”

For a full list of guidelines, visit:  
[DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers](https://DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers)



## HOW TO BECOME A

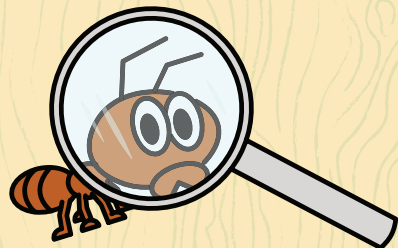
# *Junior Ranger*

- 1 Choose an adventure! Use your senses to observe, discover natural wonders, or get creative.
- 2 Fill this book with notes, drawings, and memories as you complete each activity.
- 3 Complete five or more activities. (Each can only be counted once.)
- 4 Submit proof of completion at [DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers](https://DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers) to win your prize.
- 5 Have your grown-up join our Facebook group, [@MiddlesexCountyJuniorRangers](https://www.facebook.com/MiddlesexCountyJuniorRangers), to connect with others and share stories.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED

Before you head off on your adventure, here's a list of items you'll need to complete the activities in your book.

- \* Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils
- \* Pen or Pencil
- \* Tape Measure or String
- \* Paper



# Observe

Open your eyes, ears, and heart  
to the wonders of the park!



## 1 NATURE SOUNDS

Find a quiet spot, close your eyes, and listen.  
How many different nature sounds do you  
hear? Hold up your fingers to count them.

**Draw or describe what you heard!**

### fun fact

Animals communicate  
through sounds. Birds sing  
to mark their territory,  
and frogs croak to  
attract mates!












**Johnson Park** is a great place to hear  
nature. There are big trees, open fields,  
and even a river.



## 2 BIRDWATCHING BINGO

Can you spot these birds? **Mark them off as you go!**

		
Great Blue Heron	Carolina Chickadee	American Robin
		
Wood Duck	Red-tailed Hawk	Ring-billed Gull
		
Mourning Dove	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Barn Swallow

### fun fact

Robins eat worms in the morning and fruits in the afternoon, and Red-tailed Hawks can spot a mouse from 100 feet away.



### fun fact

Burrows and nests keep animals protected from weather and predators.



## 3 WHO LIVES HERE?

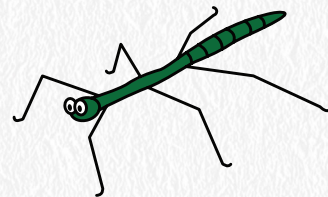
Guess which animals live in these homes.



## 4 BUG INVESTIGATOR

Did you know bugs hide under leaves, on trees, or in the grass? Some bugs even use camouflage to blend in, like Phasmids (stick bugs)!

Visit **Roosevelt Park** and **record how many you can find.**





## 5 ACORN HUNT

How many acorns can you spot on the ground? **Count them up and write the number here:**



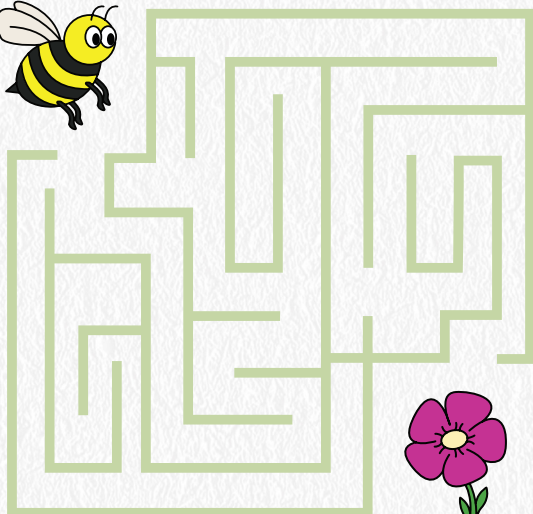
### fun fact

Sometimes squirrels hide acorns and forget about them, which helps new trees grow.



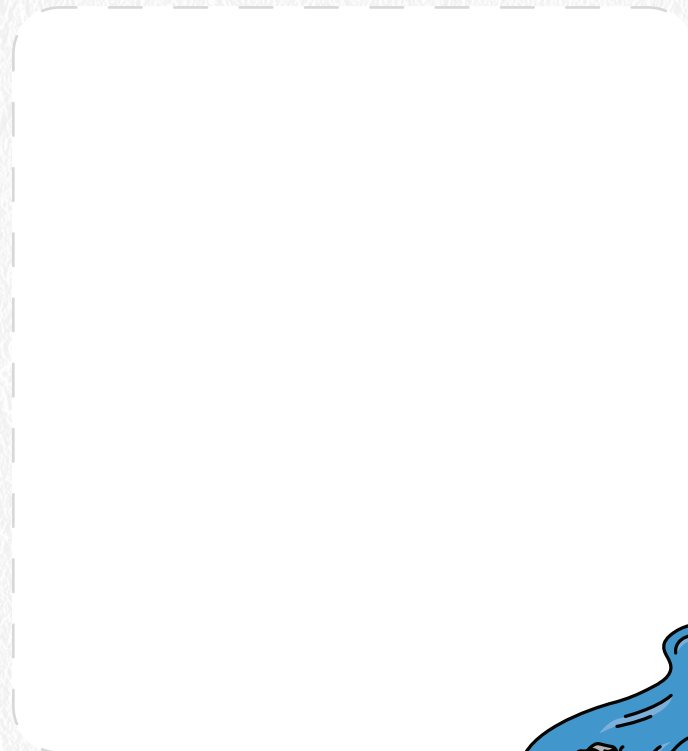
## 6 POLLINATOR PATROL

Help a busy bee find their flower in the maze below!

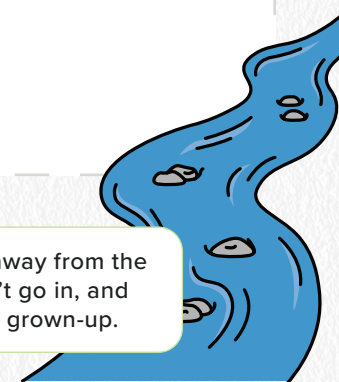


## 7 RIVER WATCH

Visit a spot near a river, like the Raritan River at **Donaldson Park**. **Can you find and draw three wildlife creatures?** Look for fish, bugs, or ducks!



**Remember:** Stay away from the water's edge, don't go in, and always stay with a grown-up.



## Activity Log

Great job using your senses! Write down what you saw, heard, and found, and add your **OBSERVE** merit badge stickers.

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Place:

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Date:

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Date:

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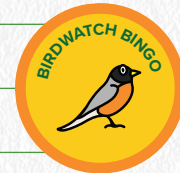
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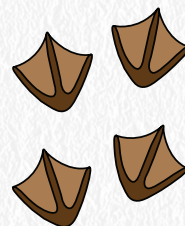
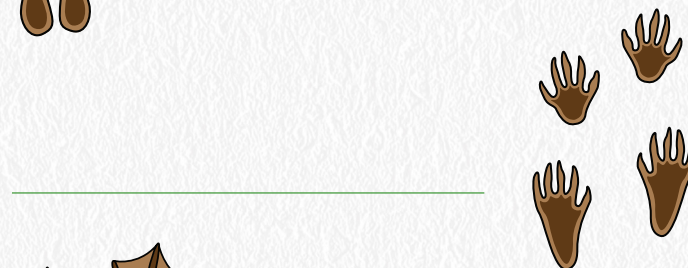


## 1 ANIMAL TRACKS DETECTIVE

Investigate the sketches below — do you know which animals left these prints behind? Head to **Thompson Park** and see if you can spot these tracks in the wild!




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### fun fact

Tracks are animal "footprints" that tell us who was there, what they were doing, and how fast they were moving!





## 2 SCAVENGER HUNT

Let's find some treasures! **Check off each item you find:**

☐

### Bird Feather

Birds grow new feathers every year to stay warm and fly fast.

☐

### Smooth Stone

Stones get smooth from being tumbled and shaped by water over many years.

☐

### Squirrel

Squirrels' front teeth are always growing, so they chew on hard things to keep them short.

☐

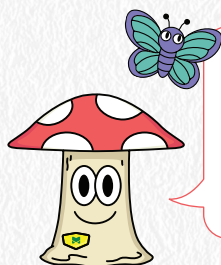
### Mushroom

Mushrooms are like nature's recyclers, breaking down old plants.

☐

### Butterfly

Butterflies taste with their feet.



Visit the Butterfly House at the EARTH Center in **Davidson's Mill Pond Park** to see butterflies up close and learn how they grow! →



## 3 PINECONE COUNTER

Pinecones come in all shapes and sizes. **Count how many you can find** at John A. Phillips Park!

### fun fact

Pinecones have scales that protect their seeds. When it's warm and dry, they open and release them.



## 4 NATURE'S PATTERNS

Look around, Junior Ranger! Nature is full of patterns — on leaves, in the clouds, even in animal tracks. **How many can you spot on your adventure?**

## 5 CHAMPION TREE CHALLENGE

Can you find the largest tree in the park?

It's likely been growing for many years!

**Ask your grown-up to help you find its height and circumference and write them down below.**

### Measure its circumference.

Wrap a string or tape measure around the tree trunk at chest height. Mark or measure where your string or tape measure meets the starting point and write down the number!

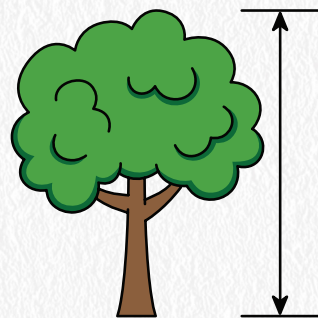
### Find its height.

Find a stick as long as your forearm. Hold the stick upright while your arm is fully straightened in front of you and back away from the tree until the stick and tree are the same height. Then, measure the distance from the spot where you're standing to the base of the tree.



Circumference:

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Height:

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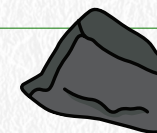


## 6 STONE EXPLORER

Stones tell stories! **Find a stone or rock.** Is it round or flat? Rough or smooth? Warm from the sun or cool from the shade?

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## 7 TREE BARK DETECTIVE

Find a tree with bumpy bark at **Spring Lake Park**. **Place a blank piece of paper against the tree and rub a crayon over the paper to make a bark rubbing!**



### fun fact

Beech trees have smooth, grey bark. Shagbark Hickory trees have shaggy bark that peels off the tree.



## Activity Log

Record your findings and add your *DISCOVER* merit badge stickers — then keep going for more fun!

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Date:

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Date:

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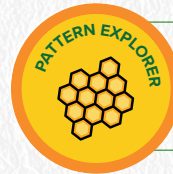
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Date:

Place:

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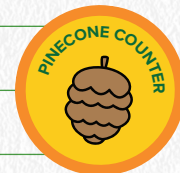
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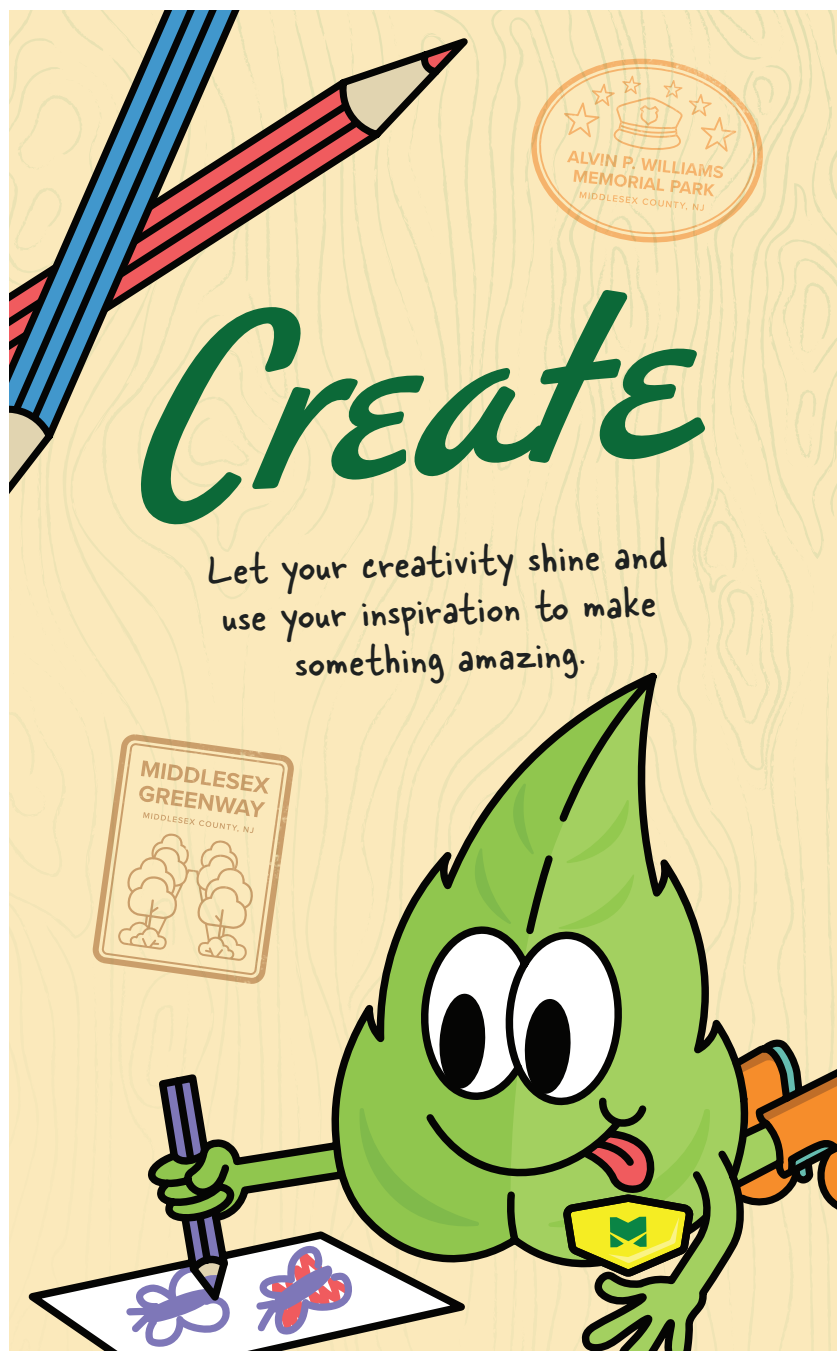
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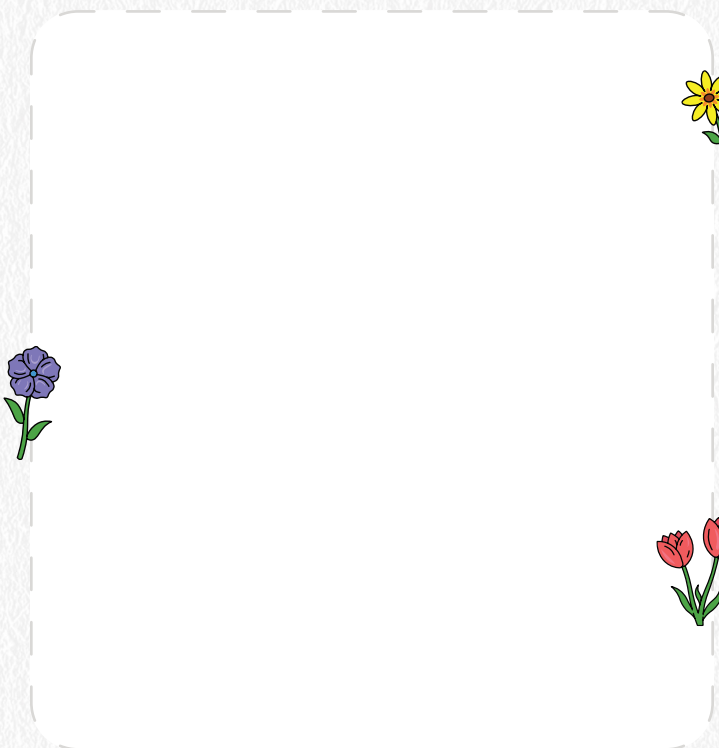
# Create

Let your creativity shine and use your inspiration to make something amazing.

## 1 WILDFLOWER BOUQUET

Look at the wildflowers around you. What colors do you see?

Use crayons, markers, or colored pencils to sketch the flowers you spotted!



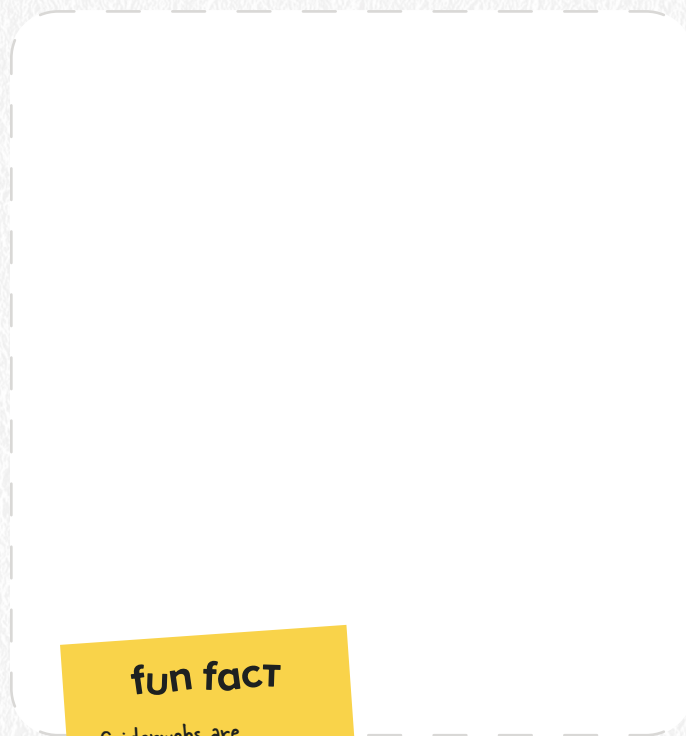
Wildflowers love sunny spots. Find them near open meadows or trails at Davidson's Mill Pond Park.



## 2 SPIDERWEB WATCH

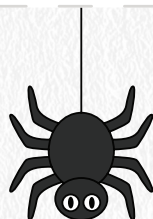
Found a spiderweb? Is it shaped like a circle or zig-zagged? Look closely (but don't touch!) and see how the spider weaves their web.

Draw the web you found below.



### fun fact

Spiderwebs are stronger than steel of the same thickness.



## 3 WORD SEARCH

Can you **find all the nature words** in the word search below?



T	A	W	Y	F	Q	E	M	A	I	P	L	N	S	C
R	B	N	W	A	T	E	R	C	J	L	S	C	W	I
E	K	J	I	B	A	Q	N	L	G	E	T	Y	X	U
E	F	N	P	M	I	W	B	O	C	K	O	H	Y	F
D	W	V	Y	T	A	G	W	U	Z	L	R	I	S	H
Z	S	U	N	K	G	L	W	D	T	Y	M	L	T	M
N	J	U	D	O	P	B	I	R	D	C	X	Z	S	G
P	R	E	R	G	V	F	L	O	W	E	R	Y	B	R
E	F	F	B	L	P	H	X	N	F	J	C	O	F	X
A	R	N	D	G	A	R	D	E	N	O	B	U	A	H
C	A	J	V	V	X	X	R	I	V	E	R	Y	W	P
E	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	G	B	G	E	B	P
V	Q	T	R	N	T	D	D	Y	R	D	N	M	S	K
I	Q	M	L	O	R	V	Y	F	J	Q	S	R	Z	T
U	L	C	T	B	W	R	U	E	A	R	T	H	Z	L

### Words

TREE  
SUN  
BIRD  
FLOWER  
RIVER

STORM  
PEACE  
GARDEN  
CLOUD  
FOREST

WATER  
ANIMAL  
EARTH  
MOUNTAIN

#### 4 SKETCH THE SCENE

Draw a picture of the park you're exploring, then add all the things you've seen! Did you see a bird, a butterfly, or a funny-shaped tree? **Include them all in your masterpiece!**



#### 5 LEAF DETECTIVE

Find leaves of different shapes and sizes on the ground. **Merrill Park** is a great place to find a variety of leaves from trees like oaks, maples, and birches. **Use a blank piece of paper to make leaf rubbings.**

**Remember:** Look for leaves that have already fallen. Some leaves on trees or plants may be poisonous!



#### 6 NATURE SCULPTURES

Collect sticks, stones, and other items around you to **make a nature sculpture known as a cairn!** Some ideas are a tiny fort, a friendly animal, or a cool pattern. When you're done, take a photo and put all items back where you found them.



#### fun fact

People have been stacking rocks for centuries to mark trails.





## Activity Log

Fantastic work, explorer! Write about the amazing things you created, and collect your **CREATE** merit badge stickers.

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# Bonus Activities

You're almost ready to earn your badge!  
Here are some extra activities to enjoy as you  
wrap up your adventure.

## 7 PARK CLEANUP CHALLENGE

Become a Park Cleanup Hero by picking up  
litter! **Write down what you find** and earn a  
special cleanup sticker!

### How to Participate

- Bring a trash bag and gloves.
- Explore the park and pick up litter.
- Write down the type of litter you find  
(like plastic or paper items).
- Submit a photo of your findings when you  
finish this book, and be sure to tie your trash  
bag and place it in an appropriate trash can.



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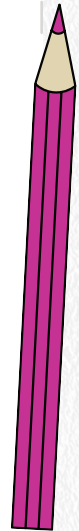
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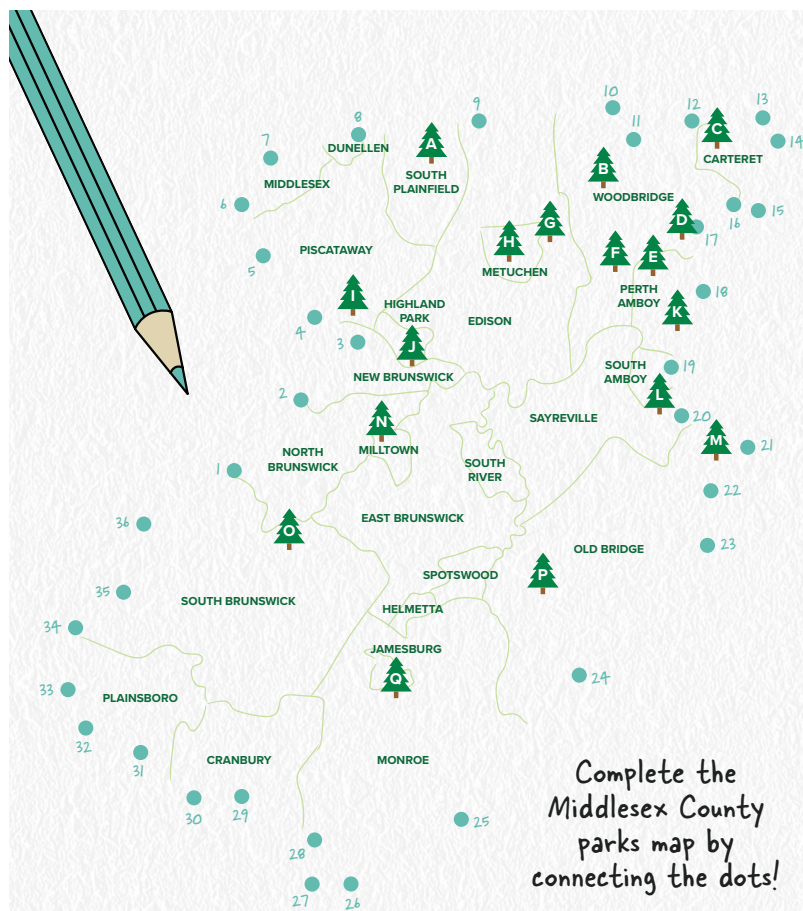
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## 2 DRAW YOURSELF AS A JUNIOR RANGER

What would you look like as a Junior Ranger?  
**Draw yourself** in an explorer hat and backpack.  
What tools would you bring? A magnifying  
glass, a camera, or a notebook?

A large, empty rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for a drawing.



- A. SPRING LAKE PARK  
South Plainfield
- B. MERRILL PARK  
Woodbridge
- C. JOSEPH MEDWICK PARK  
Carteret
- D. ALVIN P. WILLIAMS  
MEMORIAL PARK  
Woodbridge
- E. WILLIAM WARREN PARK  
Woodbridge
- F. FORDS PARK  
Woodbridge

- G. ROOSEVELT PARK  
Edison
- H. MIDDLESEX GREENWAY  
Metuchen
- I. JOHNSON PARK  
Piscataway
- J. DONALDSON PARK  
Highland Park
- K. THOMAS MUNDY  
PETERSON PARK  
Perth Amboy
- L. RARITAN BAY  
WATERFRONT PARK  
South Amboy

- M. OLD BRIDGE  
WATERFRONT PARK  
Old Bridge
- N. DAVID B.  
CRABIEL PARK  
Milltown and North  
Brunswick
- O. DAVIDSON'S MILL  
POND PARK  
South Brunswick
- P. JOHN A.  
PHILLIPS PARK  
Old Bridge
- Q. THOMPSON PARK  
Monroe and Jamesburg

# Park Rules

## 1 STAY ON TRAILS

Help protect plants and animals by staying on marked paths with a grown-up.

## 2 WATER SAFETY

Stay out of rivers, ponds, and other waterways. If you're fishing, remember it's catch-and-release only.

## 3 LEAVE NO TRACE

Always clean up after yourself.

## 4 TAKE ONLY MEMORIES

Don't take anything from the parks like flowers, mushrooms, rocks, or pinecones.

## 5 RESPECT THE ANIMALS

Watch animals from a distance. Don't feed or disturb them.

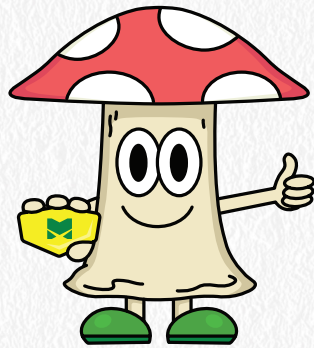
For activities offered at each park, scan here!





# Congratulations!

YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR  
JUNIOR RANGER TRAINING.



Ask your grown-up to submit proof of participation  
at [DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers](https://DiscoverMiddlesex.com/JuniorRangers)  
to win your prize.

Find out how you can get involved in protecting  
our natural spaces with the Middlesex County  
Conservation Corps and volunteer events.



OFFICIAL JUNIOR RANGERS

## Certificate of Completion

"I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
promise to be a great Junior Ranger. I will keep the County parks clean,  
be kind to plants and animals, and follow all park rules. I will take care of  
nature and help others enjoy the parks, too, by being a good example.  
I will always explore, learn, and have fun while protecting our parks."



\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

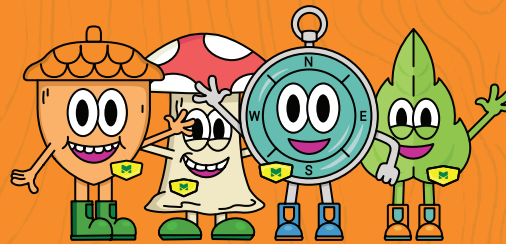
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



**We hope this activity book  
sparks your curiosity and  
encourages you to explore  
and take care of our  
beautiful County parks.**

#MCJuniorRangers

Share your  
adventures with us!



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