



Eco Friend

Whenever you spend time outdoors, you can take care of the environment. As a Girl Scout, you probably do this already! In this badge, you'll learn more about how to treat outdoor spaces with kindness and teach others how they can, too.

Steps

1. Think of ways to help the outdoors
2. Observe outdoor spaces
3. Build a safe campfire
4. Take care of wildlife
5. Practice being kind

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll have found new ways to protect our natural world and the living things in it.



Leave No Trace



A Girl Scout always leaves an area better than she found it! Here are the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace that help you to reduce your impacts when you're outdoors. Once you've learned them, keep them in mind whenever you go outside.

- 1 Know before you go
- 2 Choose the right path
- 3 Trash your trash
- 4 Leave what you find
- 5 Be careful with fire
- 6 Respect wildlife
- 7 Be kind to other visitors

Talk about the list with an adult. What do you think each one means?



STEP

1 Think of ways to help the outdoors

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

As a Girl Scout, you know it's important to protect nature when you're outdoors. If you remember to be respectful of the environment whenever you're outside, you'll be a friend to nature forever!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Take a hike.** You've probably taken a hike before, but now get ready to take an eco hike! Buddy up with some friends and an adult to visit a place where you can hike. Before you go, make a plan and learn about the place where you'll be going. Are there water fountains? Trash cans? What does the weather forecast say? Then, when you're on your hike, practice different ways of caring for the environment: stay on walking paths or hiking trails, and leave no trash behind. Can you think of more?

OR

- ☐ **Play a game or sing a song.** When you teach something to others, it helps you remember it, too. And it's fun! Make up a game or a song about different ways to take care of the environment when you're outdoors, and teach it to younger girls—maybe a group of Girl Scout Daisies or your family members. If you need some ideas about what to teach them, check out the box on this page.

OR

- ☐ **Design a poster.** Make a poster showing all the ways you can care for the environment. Think about the different things you do outdoors and the places where you go—maybe you look at but don't touch living things when you go to the beach, or make sure your soccer team leaves no trash behind after your games. Be as creative as you'd like! Share your poster with friends or family and talk to them about it. Is there a place where you can hang it up and see it every day?



STEP 2 Observe outdoor spaces

If you think of yourself as a guest in nature's home, it's easy to remember that objects in nature should stay where they are. When you visit a friend's house, you wouldn't pick up something you liked and take it home without permission. And everything in nature is there for a reason, too. In this step, you'll buddy up with some friends and an adult, and go outside to a place where you can see things in nature like rocks, leaves, shells, and fallen branches.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Find houses in nature.** If you look closely at objects in nature, you can see how different living things create homes for one another. Find some outdoor objects (like rocks and branches) and gently turn them over. Then use a magnifying glass to see if anything lives underneath. Remember that plants are living things, too! When you've finished looking, carefully turn the objects back over. Talk about what you saw with your friends or family. Did anything surprise you?

OR

- ☐ **Tell a nature story.** Buddy up with some friends and an adult, and go outside to look at different objects in nature. Find something you like—maybe a flower or a pinecone—and instead of disturbing nature by taking it home, tell a story about it. Be creative! How did it get there? Does it have a name? A family?

OR

- ☐ **Take a closer look.** Look closely at a flower, plant, rock, pinecone, or other natural object and see if anything lives on it or in it. Instead of picking it up and taking it with you, make an art project about it. You might draw or paint a picture, take photos, or sculpt it out of clay. Why do you think you should leave the object in nature?





STEP 3 Build a safe campfire

Campfires are a lot of fun—and they’re *great* for marshmallow toasting—but they can be dangerous, too. That’s why you want to learn how to build them safely.

Because campfire safety is so important, you’ll do things a little differently in this step. Rather than choose between three activities, you’ll do both of these to complete the step.

ACTIVITIES—DO BOTH:

- ☐ **Learn how to build a fire.** If you’d like to use a campfire on your next camping trip, you’ll want to learn how to build one that is safe and leaves nothing behind. Find two ways to build your fire in the box on the next page. With help from an adult, follow the instructions and build a fire in one of these ways.

AND

- ☐ **Learn how to safely put out a fire.** It’s important to stay safe when building a campfire, but you need to be safe when putting it out, too. Have an adult help you build and light a fire, then work with them to put it out safely. Burn the wood all the way through until it becomes ashes that are cool enough to touch with your hands. (Make sure an adult is with you when you do this.) If anything is still warm or glowing, use your hands to sprinkle water on it until it is cool. Never pour water on a fire—this can create steam and cause burns. Once the ashes are cool, buddy up with an adult to carry them at least 200 feet from trails, campsites, and water sources and spread them out into the woods.

For more FUN: Find out how fire affects the air and land and what happens to wildlife in a forest or prairie fire.



Talk to a Fire Expert

If you want to learn more about fire safety, talk to an expert! Have an adult help you arrange a trip to visit a park ranger or firefighter, and ask questions about staying safe when using a campfire. Do they have any suggestions for safely building campfires and putting them out? Does the weather make a difference? Are there times when you should never build a fire? Be sure to ask any other questions you may have.



Build a Fire

Before you build a campfire (with help from an adult, of course!), make sure fires are allowed where you are. There are different rules for fire building, depending on your campsite, how dry the environment is, or where you are in the country. Once you're sure it's ok, you'll want to gather wood for your fire.

Make sure the wood is:

- ▶ **Dead:** Wood that has dried out.
- ▶ **Down:** Wood that has fallen from living trees.
- ▶ **Dinky:** Wood that is smaller around than your wrist or forearm. It should be easy to break.
- ▶ **Distant:** Wood that is collected at least 200 feet from your campsite.

When you have enough wood for a fire, practice building a fire in one of these places.



Fire Ring

The best place to build a fire is where others have made them before you—in an already-made fire ring at a campsite. Have an adult help you find a fire ring and build a fire in one.

Fire Pan

If you do not have a fire pit available, you can also build a fire in something called a fire pan. Fire pans are made of metal and can be found at camping goods stores. If you don't have a fire pan, you can use a metal trash can lid. The pan should be raised up on rocks to keep the fire from damaging the ground.





Campfire Safety

- ▶ Whenever you build a fire, make sure the area is clear of overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotted stumps or logs, dry grass and leaves, and cleared of anything that could burn, like litter or pine needles.
- ▶ Watch for flying sparks! Tell an adult if you see any, and have them help you put them out right away.
- ▶ Make sure you have a bucket of water or sand nearby before you light your fire.
- ▶ Don't wear anything nylon or plastic, like a poncho, near an open flame.
- ▶ Remove any scarves or loose clothing.
- ▶ Tie back long hair before starting a fire.

Bowerbird Builders

Lots of living creatures, from humans to termites, build homes. One of these builders is the bowerbird, a type of bird that lives in New Guinea and Australia. Female bowerbirds build nests out of sticks, then line the nests with soft leaves. The male bowerbird is also a builder. When it's time to find a mate, he'll try to attract attention by using twigs to make a structure called a bower. Then he'll carefully decorate the bower and the area around it with things like colorful shells, stones, or flowers.



STEP 4 Take care of wildlife

If you're an animal lover, this will be fun for you! Caring for wildlife is very different from caring for pets, but they can still use your help. Find out how you can help wild animals in this step.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Be the best guest.** Can you imagine what it would feel like to have a guest in your home who ate all your food, broke all your toys, and left trash all over the living room? Now imagine your favorite wild animal, and think of ways that humans can be disrespectful of its living space. (Maybe there are no flowers left for a rabbit to eat because people picked them all, or a deer is afraid to come to its favorite place in the woods because it hears loud music playing.) Draw or paint a picture of your animal and talk to your friends or family about how humans can treat its living space kindly when they are outside.

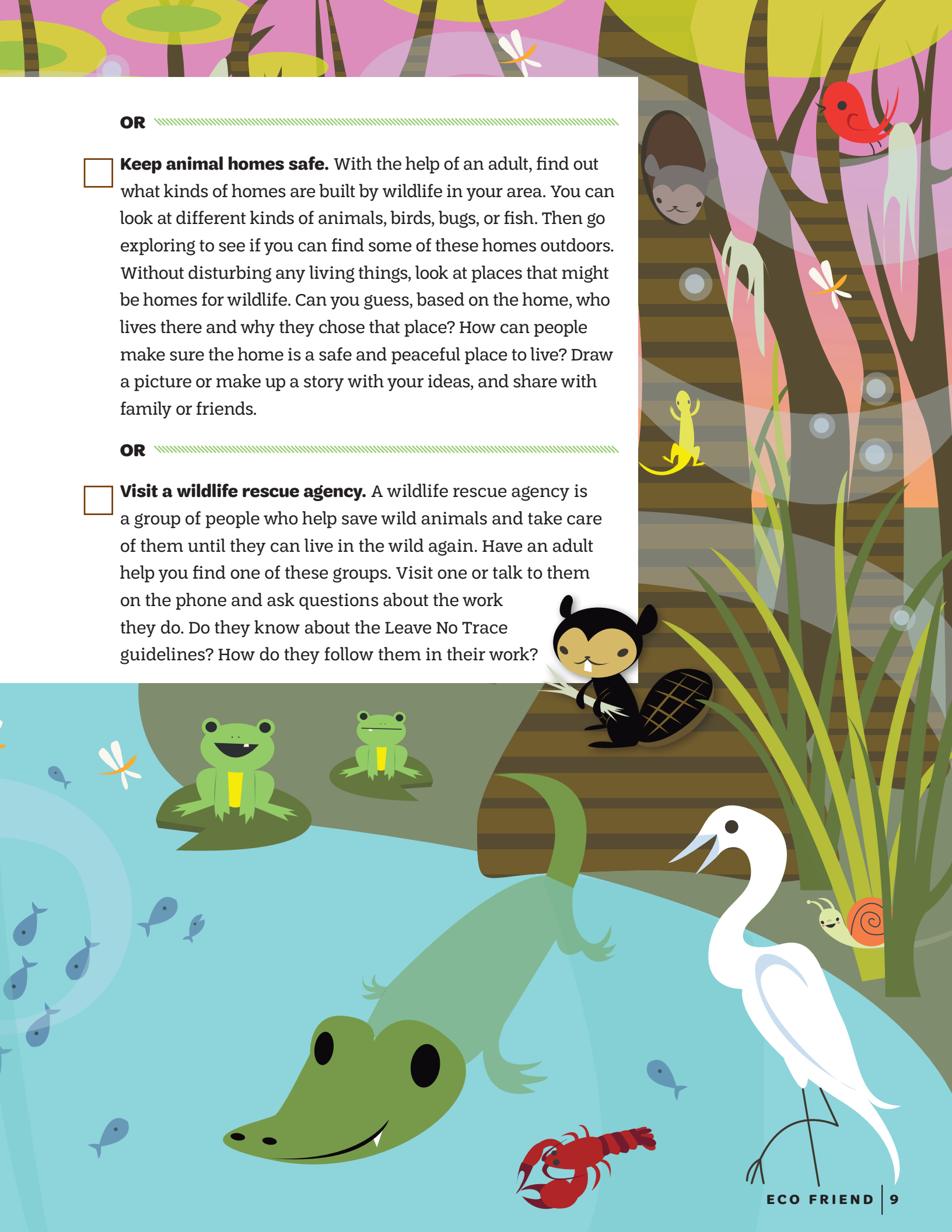


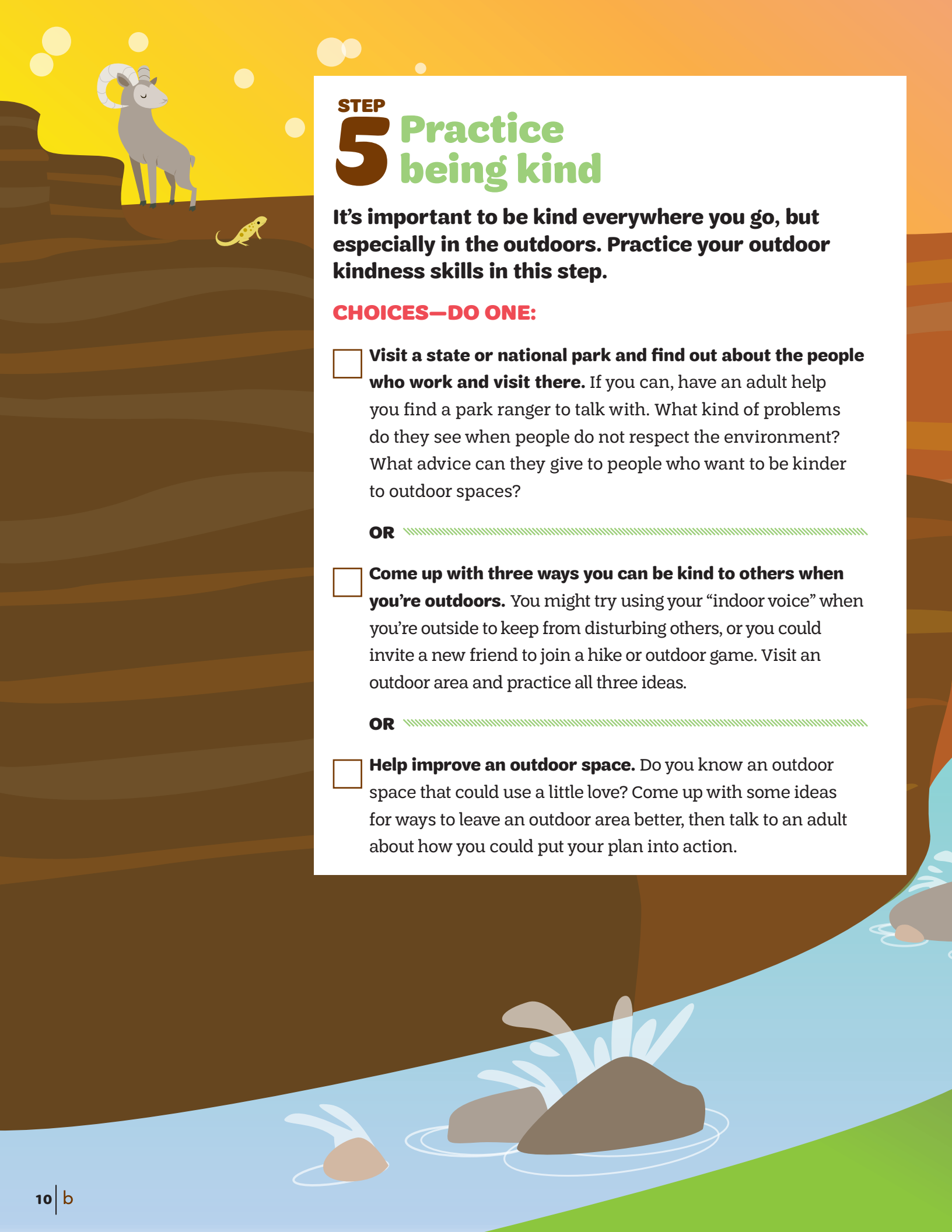
OR

- ☐ **Keep animal homes safe.** With the help of an adult, find out what kinds of homes are built by wildlife in your area. You can look at different kinds of animals, birds, bugs, or fish. Then go exploring to see if you can find some of these homes outdoors. Without disturbing any living things, look at places that might be homes for wildlife. Can you guess, based on the home, who lives there and why they chose that place? How can people make sure the home is a safe and peaceful place to live? Draw a picture or make up a story with your ideas, and share with family or friends.

OR

- ☐ **Visit a wildlife rescue agency.** A wildlife rescue agency is a group of people who help save wild animals and take care of them until they can live in the wild again. Have an adult help you find one of these groups. Visit one or talk to them on the phone and ask questions about the work they do. Do they know about the Leave No Trace guidelines? How do they follow them in their work?





STEP 5 Practice being kind

It's important to be kind everywhere you go, but especially in the outdoors. Practice your outdoor kindness skills in this step.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Visit a state or national park and find out about the people who work and visit there.** If you can, have an adult help you find a park ranger to talk with. What kind of problems do they see when people do not respect the environment? What advice can they give to people who want to be kinder to outdoor spaces?

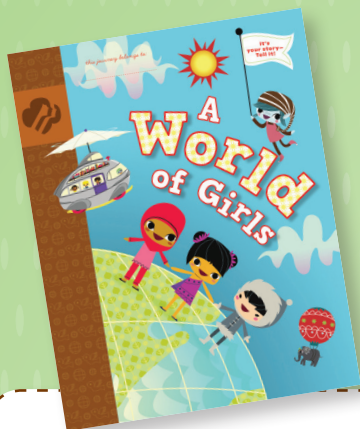
OR

- ☐ **Come up with three ways you can be kind to others when you're outdoors.** You might try using your "indoor voice" when you're outside to keep from disturbing others, or you could invite a new friend to join a hike or outdoor game. Visit an outdoor area and practice all three ideas.

OR

- ☐ **Help improve an outdoor space.** Do you know an outdoor space that could use a little love? Come up with some ideas for ways to leave an outdoor area better, then talk to an adult about how you could put your plan into action.





Going on a Journey? Do some badge work along the way.

In *A World of Girls*, Brownies learn about the power of storytelling. If you choose to tell a nature story in Step 2 of this badge, share it with others to inspire them to make change!

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Teaching campfire safety to Girl Scout Daisies
- Teaching the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace to my brothers and sisters
- Taking a hike with my family, and showing them how to care for the environment along the way



I'm inspired to:

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