

WATER QUALITY

Creeks are affected by human activity. From pollution to habitat destruction, we change the quality of water in a stream.

INDICATOR SPECIES

Some species only thrive in very clean water. By paying attention to the presence or absence of these indicator species, we can make some assumptions about the quality of the water. *Can you find these indicator species?*

CRAYFISH



MAYFLY NYMPH



FROG



RIFFLE BEETLE



WATERSHED

A watershed is a large area that drains rain into a single water source. Pollution from miles away can get into a stream through the watershed. Everyone lives in a watershed. When you get home, research where water from your house drains.

What water source does your water drain into?

What will you do to help keep your watershed clean?

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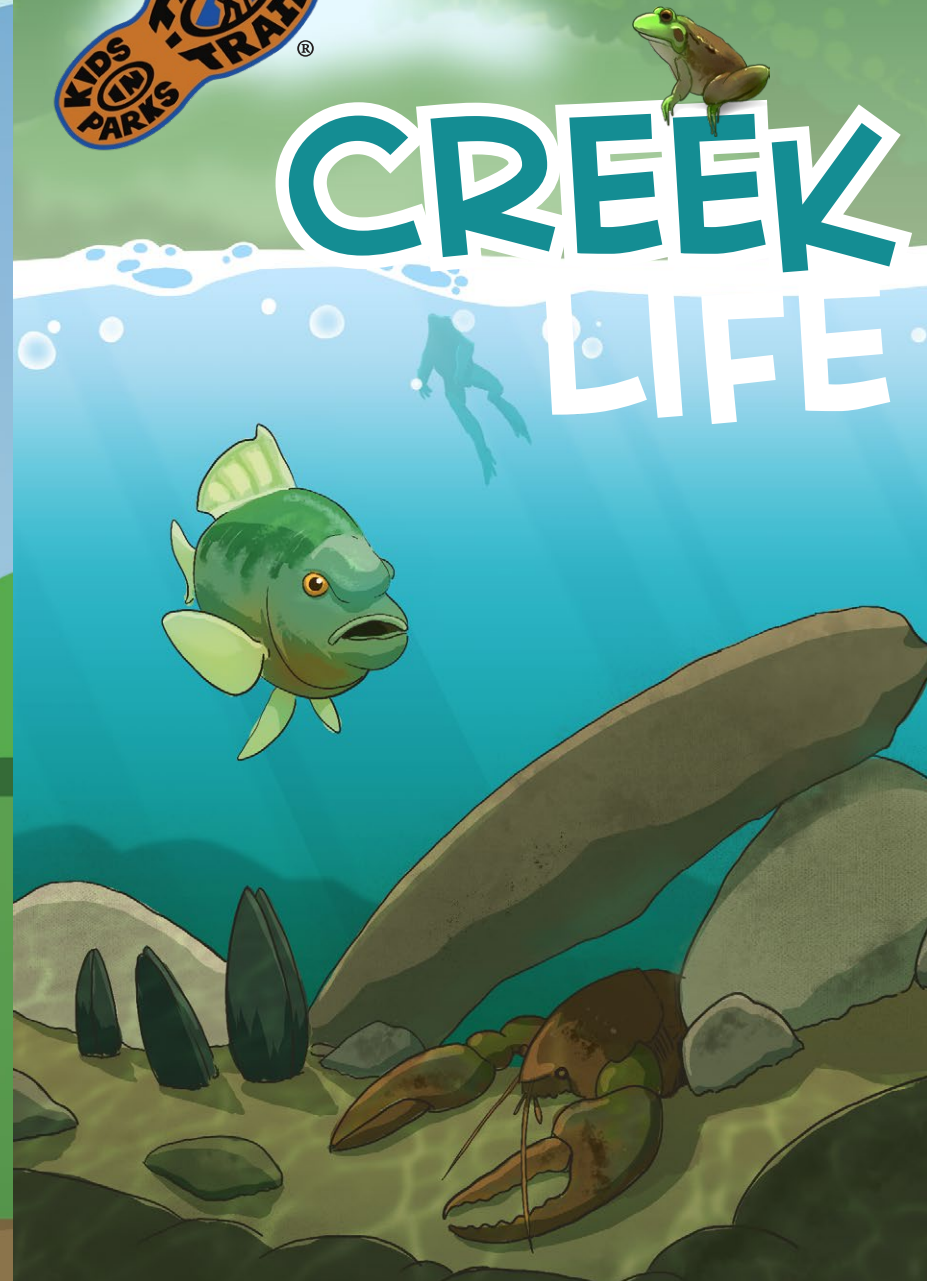
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CREEK LIFE



Creeks and streams are some of the most dynamic environments on earth. Let's explore the ways streams support life and transform the planet.

A WORLD OF WATER

Creeks shape the world and create habitats as they move across the land. A healthy stream supports organisms that live in and around the water.

AQUATIC

The aquatic zone is the area of the creek that is on, in, or under water. Plants and animals that live in the aquatic zone may prefer some parts of the stream to others. The speed, depth, and temperature of the water can all attract different organisms.



FISH are animals like bass, sunfish, minnows, and trout. They swim with fins and extract oxygen from the water with gills.



MOLLUSKS are animals like mussels, clams, and snails. They often attach themselves to rocks. A hard shell protects their soft body.



CRUSTACEANS are animals like crayfish and shrimps. As invertebrates, they have a hard exoskeleton that protects them.

RIPARIAN

The riparian zone is the area that surrounds the creek. It can include the banks as well as areas that occasionally flood. With its constantly changing moisture levels, sediment deposits, and abundant food sources, the riparian zone attracts a great diversity of life.



REPTILES are animals like turtles, snakes, and lizards. They are cold-blooded so you can often see them warming up in a sunny spot.



AMPHIBIANS are animals like frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts. They absorb oxygen through their skin and must stay moist to breathe.



INSECTS are 6-legged arthropods and can be found on the surface or banks of the stream or flying through the air above the water.



MAMMALS are animals like raccoons, deer, beavers, and bears. Look for their tracks in the wet banks of the stream.



BIRDS can be found perched in trees, swooping after insects, or wading in the stream. Listen for their calls and try to spot them.

EARTH MOVERS

Creeks might seem gentle, but they are actually powerful forces that shape the landscape. With the force of rushing water, they carve into the earth and move tons of sediment miles away.

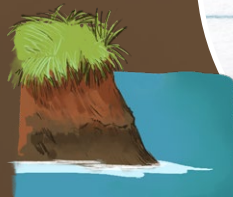
Look for clues that water is shaping the landscape. Write down any evidence you find.



SMOOTH ROCKS



SANDY BEACH



STEEP BANKS



FALLEN TREE

