

Metro nature minute transcripts

Up close

Hi, I'm James, your naturalist with Metro parks. Welcome to another nature minute. As you can see, I've got a magnifying glass and today we're going to look at things up close.

As a naturalist, I always carry a magnifying glass with me. You never know what cool stuff you're going to find to look at. I've got something right over here I want to show you.

This is one of the coolest things we could find...it's an owl pellet. This is where the owls have thrown up the fur and the bones they couldn't digest. It's really cool to look through them because you can find skulls and bones inside. Ooh...here's a little skull. This is the skull from a mouse the owl ate. And here's some other bones.

Boy, weren't those owl pellets neat? Let's see what else we can find right around here.

Wow, isn't it fun looking at all this stuff? You should think about getting a magnifying glass. They're not expensive and you can take them anywhere. Here's an important tip – make sure it has a glass lens, not plastic, which scratches.

This is James with another Metro nature minute. Get outside yourself and explore.

Mushrooms

Hi, I'm James, your Metro naturalist with another nature minute. You can tell when summer's over when the rains come and up come the mushrooms. We're at Oxbow Park today to look for mushrooms.

Did you know that mushrooms are a kind of a fungus? But what we usually call a mushroom is just the small part of the fungus organism that we can see. The rest of it is growing all over the place down in the ground.

But what is fungus? It's not a plant. It's not an animal. It's its own unique life form. One thing that makes fungus unique is the way it eats. If I was one of these mushrooms and I was gonna to eat my burrito, my fibers would grow all around it in the soil and then ooze out digestive enzymes until I dissolved it, and then I'd just [slurp] absorb all the nutrients.

Wow! Look at the color on these lobster mushrooms. Let's take a look at some of the other amazing mushrooms we found today. There's an unbelievable variety of mushrooms out here. Look at all these different colors and shapes and sizes. And we found all of these within 50 yards of the parking lot at Oxbow Park. Here's a tip – you'll find the most mushrooms right after a heavy rain.

You can find out a lot more about fungus with all of the cool mushroom books at your library. This has been James with another Metro nature minute. Get outside yourself and look for cool fungus.

Animal tracks

Hi, I'm James, your Metro naturalist, with another nature minute. We all love to see wildlife, but let's face it, it's hard to see an animal in the wild. We're not going to look for animals today; we're going to look for animal tracks. We're in Oxbow Park and there's some great sandy areas down by the river where animal footprints show up really well.

Here's one you've probably seen before – two toes; sharp hooves on each toe. These are deer tracks and they're all over the place out here.

Wow! Here's a good print. This animal had four toes and a heel pad. It's from a red fox. Red foxes are common at Oxbow Park, but people rarely see them and don't think they're around. But we know they're here because we see their tracks.

It's really fun to follow a trail of tracks and see where the animal went. Big animals aren't the only ones who leave tracks. Any animal with feet – even insects – is gonna leave footprints sometimes. Look at these! These are the tracks of a small bird, probably a sandpiper looking for food around these rocks.

Looking for animal tracks can be as much fun as looking for the animals themselves. You'll discover what wildlife is living around you.

This has been another Metro nature minute. Get outside yourself and explore the world of animal tracks.

Beavers

Hi, this is James, your naturalist with Metro parks, here for another nature minute. We're back at Smith and Bybee Lakes to look for the Oregon state animal. I'll give you a hint – the animal we're looking for is on the Oregon state flag. You're right – it's the beaver!

Wow! Look at these. These are classic beaver chew marks on these sticks. Here's a real fresh one right here. You know beaver are around when you see this. The beaver themselves are really hard to see because they're nocturnal and secretive, but they leave lots of evidence where they're working.

Whoa, here's some really good evidence that beaver are around. This is their food. I found these sticks by the water. Here's a fresh cut one and here's sticks where they've eaten off all the leaves and the bark. Now they might use these sticks to build their lodge or work on their dam.

OK, now there's no question what's going on. Look at this big cottonwood tree and look what the beavers have done to it. You can clearly see the marks where the teeth of the

beaver cut through the wood to take down this big cottonwood. How can they do that? Well take a look at the teeth on this sucker. This is an actual beaver skull. Their teeth are like big chisels that can cut into the wood. They just gouge in and they can cut out some pretty big chips of wood to take down these big trees.

A lot of people don't think beaver live around here because they never see them. But now you know how to look for evidence. Look for beaver sign anywhere in the metro area along streams and rivers.

This is James with another Metro nature minute. Get outside yourself and explore.

Dragonflies

Hi there, welcome to Metro's nature minute. I'm James, your naturalist, and today we're going to talk about dragonflies!

We're here at Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area and there are dragonflies all over the place. Notice how they just sorta show up one day? Where have they been all winter? Where did they come from?

Before they were out flying around, they were living in the water. Here are a couple of dragonfly nymphs, and they might live in the water for four years before they turn into adults and you see them out flying around.

So how do you think they got from swimming in the water to flying in the air? You may have seen something like this on a plant by the water. This is where the dragonfly nymph crawled out and then its back split open and an adult dragonfly came out and flew away.

Let's go catch one! Ha ha! Oh there's one. I almost got it. Come here, you sucker! Dude, these things are a lot faster than I thought. Ugh.

Well, we didn't get one. Boy are they fast. Not only are dragonflies beautiful and fast, but they also eat a lot of mosquitoes, so they're our friends.

This has been another Metro nature minute. Get outside yourself and explore.