

FIELD JOURNAL ACTIVITY

During the Wenatchee Naturalist 12-week course, we suggest that you build your observation skills by weekly practice in the field, writing in your journal. Try to visit once/week for 30+ minutes. It will be more interesting to do a walking route, as compared to a stationary viewing spot.

GUIDELINES:

- ✓ Select a field site that is conveniently located, interesting to you, accessible during the class, and preferably a place where native plants grow.
- ✓ Pick your site, based on your personal interests – decide what you most want to learn about and seek a location that matches.
- ✓ Learn who owns the land. If it is private, seek permission from the landowner before visiting. On public land, obey posted closure dates and rules.
- ✓ Mark your calendar so it is in your weekly schedule as an appointment to keep.
- ✓ Plan to visit, rain or shine. Take an umbrella so you can write-in-the-rain.
- ✓ Select a coat that has adequate pockets and a bag to carry your equipment: journal, pen/pencils, ruler, binoculars, camera, & field guides.
- ✓ Try to keep your hands free, both for safety and so you don't lose an item.

Good places to visit in the Wenatchee Valley include:

- Douglas County sections of the Apple Capital loop trail. Try the Potter's Pond area near 19th Street trailhead or the Coyote Dunes Natural Area sand dunes just south of the Odabashian Bridge south to the 27th NW. trailhead.
- The Chelan County section of the Apple Capital loop trail has excellent waterfowl habitat at the Walla Walla Park swimming lagoon. Walk north along the river into the cottonwood-lined dirt path of the Horan Nature Area. Note- one loop of the Horan Nature Area is under winter season closure, but one loop walking path is open year-round.
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust Jacobson Preserve on Skyline Drive. CDLT asks users to not walk the trail in muddy conditions. Trail open year-round.
- City of Wenatchee Saddle Rock Park. This south-facing slope is typically accessible year-round without mud issues. A nice Douglas-fir and Ponderosa pine forest can be reached within a 10-minute walk of the trailhead. Trails open year-round.
- Dry Gulch Preserve. Users are asked to stay on existing trails (open year-round). Much of this area is restored after mining, but the hillsides have intact shrub-steppe habitat.

Good places to visit in the Leavenworth area include:

- The cross-country ski trails at Ski Hill on Titus Road.
- City of Leavenworth Enchantment Park, Blackbird Island & the grounds of the Wenatchee River Institute, all along the Wenatchee River. Open year-round.
- Leavenworth Fish Hatchery walking trails along Icicle Creek (snowshoe & ski trails during winter). Parking is free at the fish hatchery headquarters.
- A section of the Icicle Ridge Trail from Icicle Road. USFS trailhead parking pass required

Good places to visit in the Cashmere area include:

- Consider walking sections of public roads up Yaksum or Hay Canyon and observe adjoining hillsides that support native vegetation. Consider Tower Road off of Nahaham Canyon
- The Juvenile Pond (Between Hwy 2 & the Wenatchee River, along NW side of Aplets Bridge or the Mill Pond, on Mill Road off Sunset Highway, or the former Cashmere Sewage treatment ponds on Riverfront Drive (inquire with the city about access).

Wenatchee Naturalist

- USFS trails up Mission Creek, included Devil's Gulch and Sand Creek trailheads. USFS trailhead parking pass required.
- Wenatchee River waterfront at "Rodeo Hole." Take the dirt road adjacent to 7444 Stine Hill mailboxes, leading down to Riemann River Ranch. Turn left before the posts to the public parking lot. There is a trail that leads to the river. Be careful, poison ivy present.
- Peshastin Pinnacles State Park (Discovery Pass required). During winter seasonal closure, you can park along the county road and walk into the park. Be careful- poison ivy present.

Quick reference tools to cut out & tape into your field journal

Begin each field observation by recording site data:

Date: include year
Time: start & end times, include AM/PM
Name: observer and names of others in party
Location: goal is to describe the site so that another reader could find your location without talking to you. Consider including a map with driving directions.
Type: stationary or traveling - include distance covered by foot, boat, etc.
Weather: temperature, wind speed, any precipitation, % cloud cover, & cloud type. For land, note % of snow, ice, or water coverage. For river/lakes, note ice/snow amount and coverage as % open water.
Soil: type, moisture content, snow/ice coverage amount & depth
Plants: for 2-4 dominant plants (trees, shrubs, forbs, & grasses), list species name and observed phenology phase (i.e. winter dormancy, leaf buds, leaf stage, flowers, fruit, colored leaves)
Observed species: list by name, or as "unknown #1- i.e. bird, mammal, wildflower, shrub, etc. For unknowns, draw and take notes about defining features of the organism to use later as an identification aid.
Species of special interest: give as much information as you can- name, sex, age class, behavior, and specific habitat use.

For Wind Conditions, use this Beaufort Scale

(source: <http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units/scales/beaufort.html>)

Beaufort Scale

FORCE	NAME	Miles/hr	WIND CONDITIONS
0	Calm	< 1	Smoke rises vertically.
1	Light Air	1-4	Smoke drifts and leaves rustle.
2	Light Breeze	5-7	Wind felt on face.
3	Gentle Breeze	8-11	Flags extended, leaves move.
4	Moderate Breeze	12-18	Dust and small branches move.
5	Fresh Breeze	19-24	Small trees begin to sway.
6	Strong Breeze	25-31	Large branches move, wires whistle.
7	Near gale	32-38	Whole trees in motion, inconvenience in walking.
8	Gale	39-46	Difficult to walk against wind. Twigs blown off trees.
9	Strong Gale	47-54	Minor structural damage occurs (shingles blown off)
10	Storm	55-63	Trees uprooted, structural damage likely.

Updated Sept. 2026