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Animal Trackers

Tallgrass Prairie Center, University of Northern Iowa

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Animal Trackers (K-8)

Curriculum Connection: Science & Life Systems; Language (Oral/Written)

Materials: Pictures of animals and clear track imprints. Access to an outdoors area where imprints can be made (sandy, soil, etc.)

Activity: Divide students into groups of roughly 3. Create animal cards or laminated pages with name of animal and pictures/descriptions of their tracks. Examples could include: deer, raccoon, rabbit, wolf, bear, coyote, bobcat, fox, squirrel, weasel, otter, mink, bison, prairie dog, vole, etc. Teams will separate to different areas where they can create a set of those tracks given (*Optional materials:* plastic cutlery, pencils for forming tracks). Number the locations and teams will then go to each station and record their guesses as to what each set of tracks represents.

Possible Prompts or Leading Questions:

- Work closely with your groupmates to imitate the size and specific shapes of these footprints
- After recording all of their guesses have a discussion about what the most confusing stations were
- Are any of the animals on our list predator and prey of each other?

Extensions & Other Options:

- One person of each group stands by their tracks to make sure they aren't disturbed and/or teams cycle through to guess with that person
- Take class pictures of well-crafted prints and the activity as a whole to hang up in school