



Exploring 4-H at Home

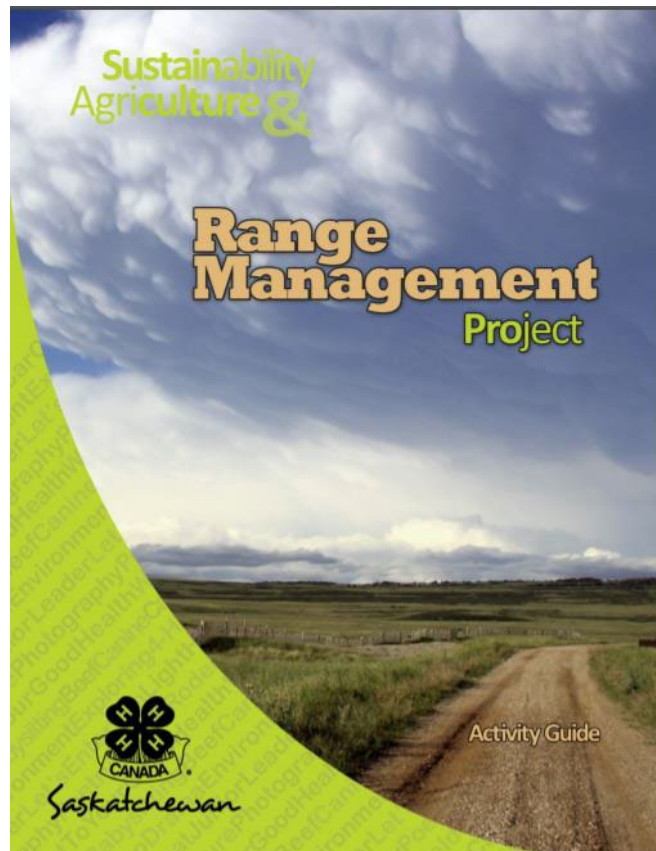


Sustainable Agriculture
and Food Security

Pillar: Sustainable Agriculture and
Food Security

Project: Range Management

Activity: Tuning Into Your Senses



Using Your Senses In The Field

Safety Out On The Range

Staying safe out on the range keeps the project fun! Review these safety points every time before you head out:

1. Pack for the trip. Are you headed out just for the hour or the whole day? Is it +30°C or - 30°C? There are a number of basic things you should pack for a trek plus additional supplies based on the time of year and expected duration of your trek.
 - Water at all times of the year
 - Plant identification books
 - Light snack high in protein
 - Sunscreen and mosquito spray
 - Appropriate clothing. In the winter layers of warm clothes, warm boots, toques, face covers and extra mittens. In the summer layers of cool light clothing, durable footwear and a hat.
 - Notebook
 - Plastic bags to collect plants
 - Hand trowel for digging plants for pressing (optional)
 - Map of the area
 - Camera (optional)
 - Cell phone (optional)
2. Ask permission before you enter anyone's land. It is respectful and they can let you know of any dangers such as unstable soil or aggressive livestock. Leave no trace except your footprints.
3. Always tell an adult where you are going, what direction you are headed and when you will be back. Stick to your plan!
4. Be conscious of the 'season'. Wear bright colours and stay in visible locations in the fall hunting season. Stay clear of cows during calving time. If you come across wildlife or livestock in their mating season avoid confrontations.
5. Be safe around wildlife and livestock. Mothers with young will be protective. Do not approach wildlife. Badgers, raccoons, skunks, foxes and coyotes can all carry diseases. A porcupine can swing its quill covered tail quickly at you. A skunk may turn and spray you if frightened.
6. Watch where you sit. Low growing cactuses can be found on many rangelands. Cactus spines hurt!
7. Look down when you are walking. Holes from wildlife burrows and dens are everywhere in grasslands. Wear sturdy footwear with closed toes. Watch where you walk. 6 Range Management Reference Guide
8. Realize that the distance you walk out onto the prairie is the distance you also have to walk back!

9. Cell phones may not work in rural locations.
10. Prairie weather is UNPREDICATABLE. In particular, thunderstorms with dangerous lightning can appear very quickly. Lightning strikes do occur with and WITHOUT rain.
 - Stay away from tall trees, fences, pipe, and water.
 - A low area on the prairie or an area with thick shorter trees in a treed rangeland is the safest places to be if stranded in a lightning storm.
 - If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, a lightning strike may be about to happen. Crouch down on the balls of your feet with your feet close together. Lower your head covering your ears. You can put your elbows on your knees. Get as low as possible staying only on your feet.

Tuning in your Senses

Time: 10 minutes for each of the 4 mini activities

About

You will work on tuning in your other senses besides sight to help you become a better observer. You will learn how to apply your senses of touch, smell and hearing to appreciating the prairie.

Materials

- Outside location (does not have to be wild land – could be a park, backyard or school ground).
- Appropriate clothing (summer or winter).
- Cell phone or other device to play a sound repeatedly and on-going.

Instructions

Sound

1. Try cupping your ear to see how directing the sound into your ear helps. Close your eyes – does it help you focus more on the sounds around you?
2. In this activity you will practice the art of tuning into what you are hearing. The leader will show the members the playing field. A park with some tree bluffs or landscaping, a mixed grassland area or a forest setting will all work.
3. Your goal is to seek out the sound making device (your Leader will play the sound for you first before they hide the device)
4. Your Leader (or parent helper) will then place the sound making device on the playing field while you and the other members turn your backs, close your eyes and cover your ears.
5. When your Leader says, open your eyes and uncover your ears as you turn around.
6. You and the other members then set out to find where the sound is coming from. Walk quietly, stop often, and tune out your other senses.
7. You can play as many rounds as you like.



Option: Search for a bird or cricket that is making sounds announcing you are in its habitat.

Touch

1. Go out and use your sense of touch on the playing field.
2. Narrow in on some selected elements in your surroundings. Touch objects that go from smooth to rough and from flat to raised within the same object. (e.g. a leaf is flat and then has a raised vein and then goes flat again).
3. Remember that tuning out your other senses (such as by closing your eyes) can heighten the sense you are focusing on.



Smell

1. To tune into your sense of smell form a circle with your other club members and close your eyes.
2. Your Leader will be walking on the inside of the circle doing the 'Leader' part of the activity.
3. After the activity set out to 'smell' your surroundings. A helpful hint is to spritz or dab some water under your nose to heighten your sense of smell.



Sight

1. Likely using sight when observing comes naturally to you, but the goal of this activity is for you to start using your peripheral vision and to reference ahead.
2. Line up shoulder to shoulder with the other members about two-arms lengths apart.
3. What do you see a head of yourself? Likely you won't be using peripheral vision. There are lots of things happening to the sides of you and to the edge of where you usually look (including farther ahead of you). Practice looking 'farther'.



All senses – bring it together

1. Lay on your back on the playing field area where ever you are comfortable at least four arms-lengths away from another member.
2. Use all of your senses to observe what is around you from the big picture stuff to the small stuff happening at the millimetre level.
3. You should be fully absorbed in your surroundings for 3-5 minutes.
4. Once you are done the experience highlight how you can improve your senses in your notebook or 4-H record book.

Option: Next time you visit a native grassland start out by doing this short activity.

Discussion/Questions

- How do you feel when using your senses this way? How could using these senses help when you are appreciating native prairie or working on a range management project?
- Whenever you, a couple members, or the whole club is out on a trek remember to tune in your senses.