

Lori Taylor

*Artist and Children's Book
Author and Illustrator*



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EXPERIENCE

- **MEDIA CENTER PARAPROFESSIONAL**

2025-2026 Central Elementary School, Davison, MI. Promoted literacy through creative writing, drawing, and engaging bookmaking projects for students first to fourth grade.

- **AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR/ARTIST**

Owner **Pine Owl Press**, write and illustrate children's educational mid-grade fiction and picture books. Over 20 years experience designing/producing freelance educational environmental signs, interactive murals and exhibits at Michigan nature centers.

- **GRAPHIC ARTIST**

2008-2013 Oakland County Parks & Recreation, Clarkston, MI

Research, design and produced educational materials and portable exhibits for the OCPR Natural Resources; produce wayside exhibits for the OCPR Lewis Wint Nature Center.

- **SEASONAL PROGRAM SPECIALIST II**

2006-2008 Lewis Wint Nature Center, Oakland County Parks & Recreation, Clarkston, MI. Seasonal naturalist/program facilitator, animal care provider, trail guide, exhibit preparator, muralist, public interpretive and educational materials illustrator.

- **OUTDOOR EDUCATOR**

2006 Camp Tamarack, Ortonville, MI. Non-formal educator: Native American Arts, Craft, & Lore, Michigan Wildlife, Animal Tracking, and Michigan Bats. Trained in survival, camping and environmental education, taught outdoor education programs.

- **ILLUSTRATOR**

Michigan History for Kids Magazine, Chronicles, Michigan History Magazine, Historical Society of Michigan 2016
Michigan Author Illustrations:

Kathleen Jae, *Elanora and the Salt Marsh Mystery*, Cover/black & white spot illis.

Kitty Donahue, *Henny & Benny Bunyan*, Cover/color illustrations

Carol Trembath, *Fairies and the Global Tree to the Rescue*, Cover/color illustrations

Mary Grant, *Moving North*, Cover/color illustrations

Doris Holik Kelly, *The Gift of Summer Rain*, Cover/color illustrations, *The Copper Turtle*, cover

WORKSHOPS, CLASSES & PRESENTATIONS

- Michigan Alliance for Environmental Outdoor Educators, Oct, 2026 “*Literacy Meets Environmental Literacy*” program presenter. Oct. 2011 “*Great Lakescapes: Artist-in-residences*”. Workshop for educators at their annual conference.
- The Stewardship Network, Jan. 2011, “*Art and Conservation*”, poster presentation annual conference.
- “*Sense of Place: Artist as Naturalist*”, Huron-Clinton MetroParks, Dec. 2009 “Art in the Parks”, Metro Beach Metro Park, Mt. Clemens, MI.
- Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson MI, June 2009 Mixed Media Collage Art presentation demo
- **2014 Artist-in-residence, Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan**
- **2008 Artist-in-residence, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park**
- **2007 Artist-in-residence, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Lapeer Art Association Gallery 194, Lapeer, MI, *represented, class instructor*
- AuSable Artisan Village, Grayling MI, *represented, instructor*
- For-Mar Nature Center, Genesee County Parks, *volunteer*
- Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) member
- Michigan Alliance for Environmental Outdoor Educators, *member, scholarship recipient*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

- *2024 Project Wild* Traverse City, MI
- *2022 Project Wet* Muskegon, MI
- 2013 Wild,Wild Midwest S.C.B.W.I. Spring Conference
- Matt Faulkner's Illustration Boot Camp, SCBWI Annual Fall Conference, Mackinaw Island, MI, Sept. 2011
- Rapid Field Assessment Training, Huron River Watershed Council, Aug. 2007
- Leopold Project, MAEOE, Ray, MI, May 2007
- Nita Leland Color Workshop - Fenton, MI 2004
- "Writing For Children & Teenagers", Institute of Children's Literature: Completed 2001

SKILLS & INTERESTS

Painting, drawing, writing, Affinity, Adobe Photoshop & InDesign, woodcarving, photography, bird/wildlife watching, tracking, camping, kayaking/canoeing, hunting, fishing.

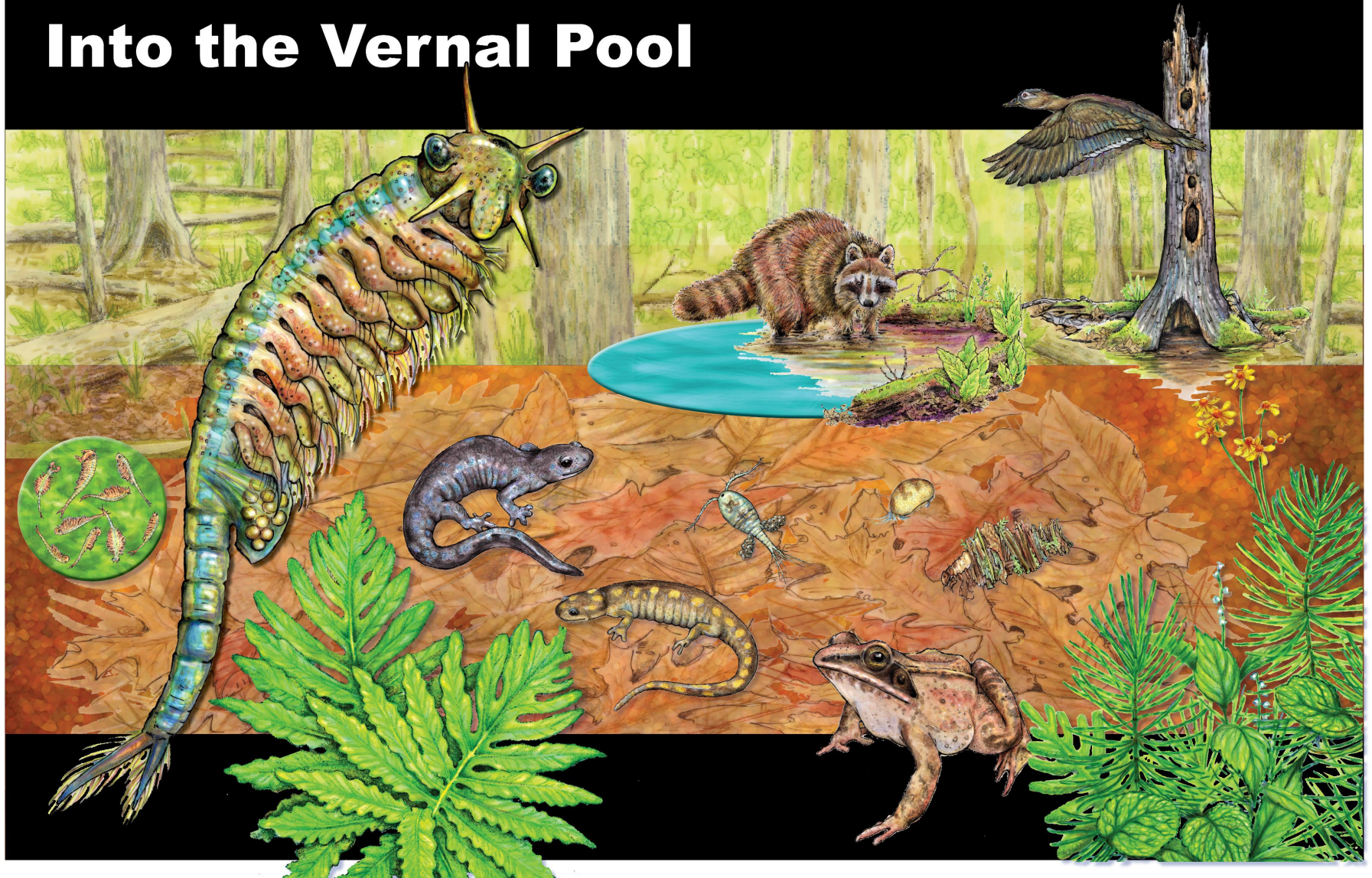


BOOKS ILLUSTRATED & WRITTEN



EDUCATIONAL SIGNS & POSTERS

Into the Vernal Pool



Best Dam Builders



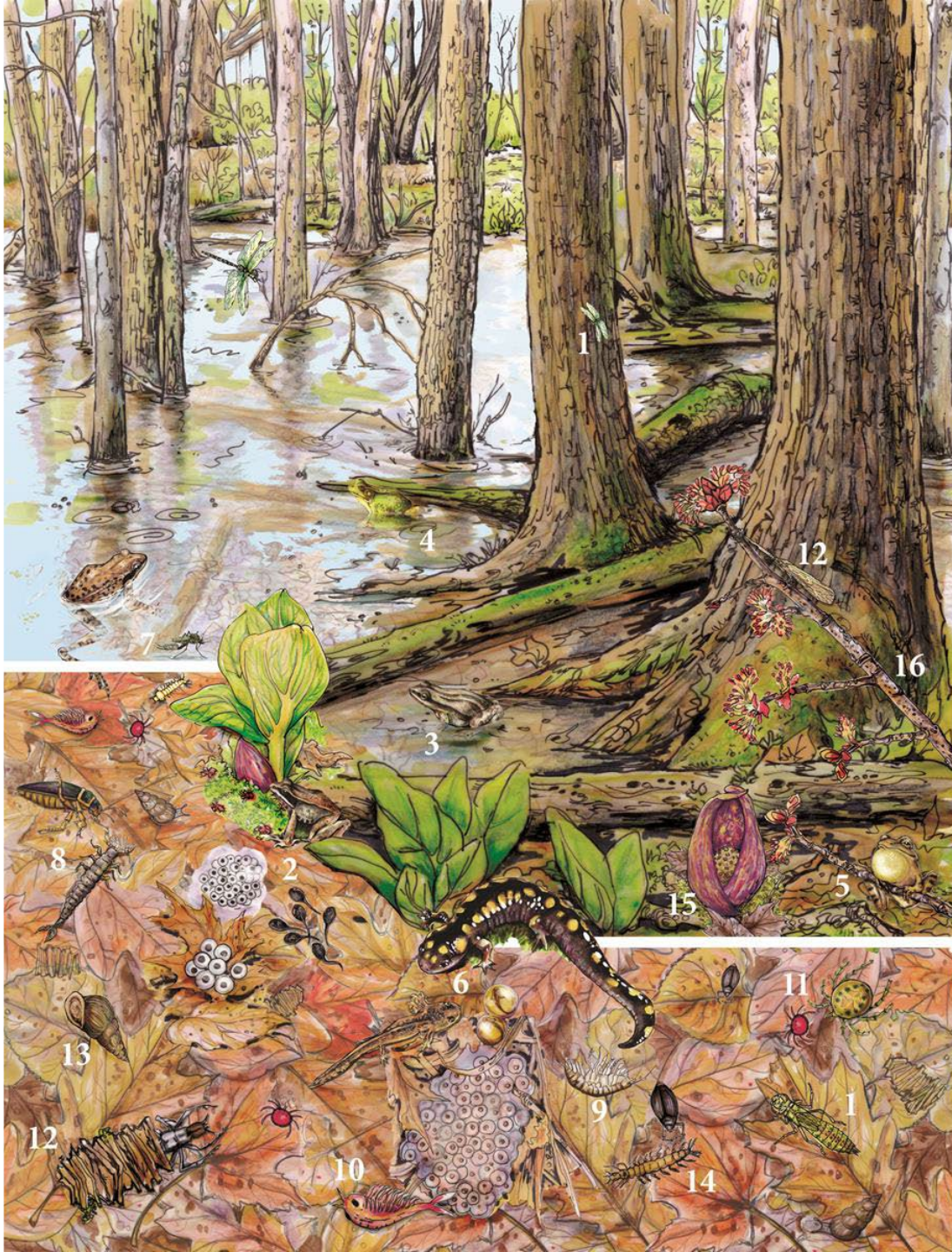
Life After Death



PLANT ILLUSTRATIONS



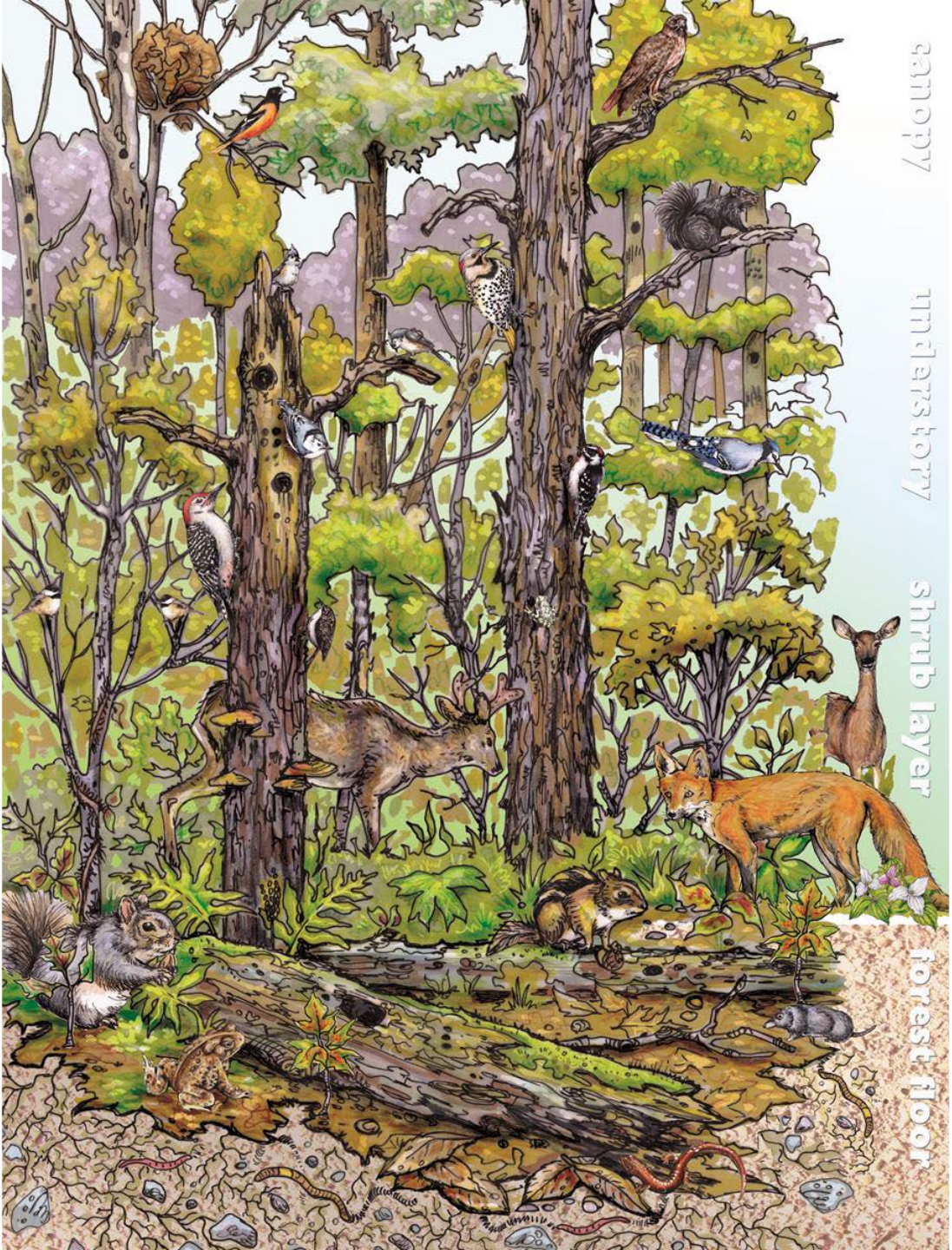
VERNAL POOL



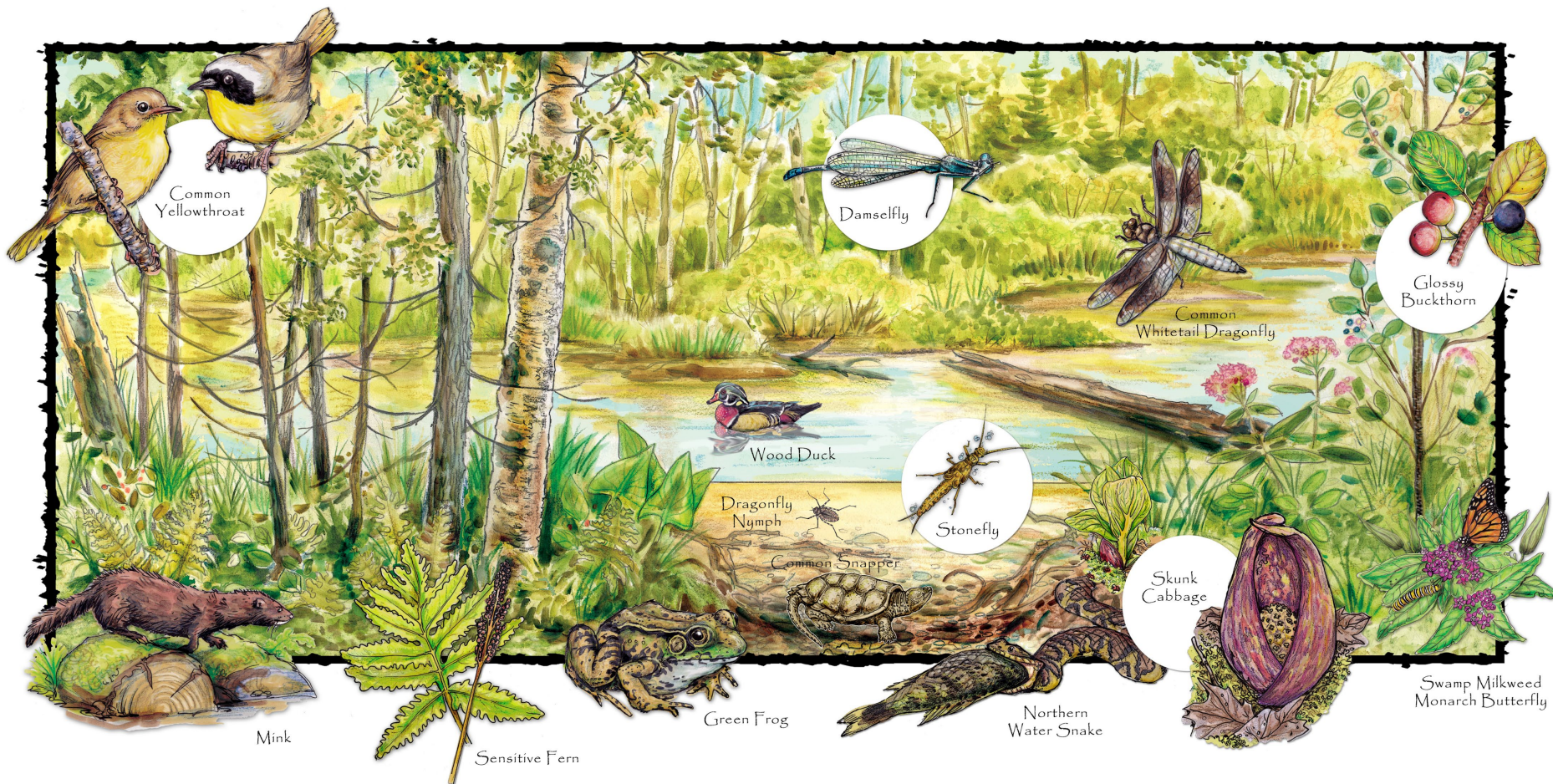
URBAN WILD



FOREST STORIES



CLINTON RIVER LIFE



Decoding Coyotes (*Canis latrans*)



OAKLAND
COUNTY PARKS
DestinationOakland.com



intelligent and social in nature.

Coyotes Are Adaptable:

Coyotes are one of the most adaptable animals in North America. Coyotes have survived despite being hunted and trapped for centuries. Coyotes are primarily active at night and go unnoticed most of the time. Coyotes are wary of people and tend to stay away from humans. One key to the coyote's success is its amazingly diverse diet. Coyotes are really **omnivores** and will eat just about anything.

- Birds
- Snakes
- Frogs
- Garbage
- Livestock
- Grasshoppers/insects
- Rodents
- Carrion/road kill
- Fruits/vegetables
- Rabbits



Coyotes are Dog Relatives:

Coyotes look a lot like dogs and belong to the dog family. In Michigan other members of this family include the Red Fox—*Vulpes vulpes*, the Gray Fox—*Urocyon cinereoagenteus* and the Gray Wolf—*Canis lupus*.

All of these animals share similar characteristics, including a remarkable sense of smell, an elongated muzzle, long canine teeth and powerful jaws. Canines are excellent hunters and efficient predators. Plus, they are

Comparing Coyotes to Dogs

- Coyotes have yellow eyes with large black pupils. Most dogs have brown eyes.
- Coyotes possess thick underfur with bushy tails. Many dogs do not have underfur.
- When running, coyotes hold their black tipped tails level.
- Coyote coats have many colors—buffy-gray to yellowish-gray to reddish brown. Its back from the neck to the tail and along its shoulders has black-tipped guard hairs. Coyotes have cream-colored throats and bellies.
- Coyote ears are held erect and pointed, while most dogs have drooping ears.
- Adult coyotes weigh 25-50 pounds. Males are larger than females.
- Coyotes are 43-53 inches long. The tail makes up about half its length.
- Coyote tracks look different than dog tracks—coyotes walk in a straight line—dogs do not.
- Coyotes walk with purpose. Dogs wander.

Coyote Tracks and Trail



Dog Tracks and Trail



A Year in the Life of Coyote:

- **December:** Courtship begins; females choose a mate. Pairs bond and may remain together for years, but not necessarily for life. Females choose a mate.
- **Late January – February:** Coyotes breed/mate.
- **April:** Young are born in dens with four – seven pups per litter. Gestation takes 60 days. Pups are helpless for the first 35 days and depend on adults to survive.
- **May – June:** Pups venture out of the dens and begin to eat food regurgitated by adults.
- **July – October:** Parents care for young. Demand for food increases coyote activity, and may make them more visible to people.
- **October:** At six months, pups have teeth and are nearly full grown. Coyotes can be seen in family groups as mother coyotes train their young to search for food.
- **November – December:** Most young disperse to find their own territories. One or two pups may stay with parents if food is abundant.



Saving Spaces for Predators:

Predators like coyotes are essential to maintain healthy, balanced ecosystems. Coyotes prey upon deer as well as rodents, rabbits and other small mammals. Living with predators can be difficult for humans to accept, but understanding this important natural balance is one step towards sharing communities with predators like coyotes.



Salamanders

field notes

Salamanders are often mistaken for lizards which they vaguely resemble.



Salamander Facts

Salamanders are amphibians like frogs and toads. Salamanders have moist, smooth (or bumpy) skin. Most lay their eggs in the water. Larvae emerge as gilled fish like creatures. Like all amphibians, salamanders undergo metamorphosis before leaving the water and moving to the land. They develop lungs during this change, but some species retain their gills and live permanently underwater. Terrestrial salamanders breathe by absorbing oxygen and release carbon dioxide through their moist skin.

Herpetology, (from Greek: herpeton = "creeping animal") is the science that studies amphibians and reptiles.



Plight of the Salamander

Predatory feral cats and invasive species can hurt salamander populations.

Logging and any related activities that open the canopy of the forest lower the humidity and hurt salamanders.

Other factors that hurt salamanders include acid rain, the pet trade and the use of salamanders for fish bait.



Salamanders play important roles in nature, especially in woodland and wetland habitats. They are predators and eat smaller creatures, such as insects, slugs, worms and spiders.

How You Can Help Herps

Salamanders are very sensitive to environmental changes.

- Eliminate use of all chemicals, particularly herbicides and pesticides in wetlands.
- Avoid handling these amphibians; their skin is sensitive to many chemicals including cosmetics.
- Preserve local populations of salamanders, avoid using these animals as fish bait.
- Learn about salamanders in your area.

Red-backed Salamander (Plethodon cinereus)

Description: 2.3"-5", small, thin body. Two color phases: "redback" phase features reddish or orange stripe down the back and tail; "leadback" phase lacks stripe and has dark colored back sometimes speckled with light spots. Both have mottled belly with a white and gray "salt and pepper" pattern. **Habitat:** Deciduous woodlands with thick leaf litter, decaying logs or stumps. **Food:** Small insects, invertebrates. **Note:** These salamanders lose portions of their tails during encounters with predators.



Eastern Tiger Salamander (Ambystoma tigrinum tigrinum)

Description: 7"-13", broad, rounded snout and small eyes. Background color is brown, black or olive with scattered yellow or brownish blotches, spots, streaks over head, back and tail. Aquatic larvae usually greenish or grayish, speckled with black, with feathery gills behind the head resembling Mudpuppies, but have five (instead of four) toes on each foot. **Habitat:** Woodland, meadows, marshes, suburban areas in burrows underground. **Food:** Slugs, worms, insects, snails, smaller salamanders. **Note:** Michigan's largest land living salamander.



Eastern Newt (Notophthalmus viridescens)

Description: 2.5"-5.5", small salamander that lives in both aquatic and terrestrial ("eft") form. Adult is olive-green to greenish brown above, with a yellow, black spotted belly, flattened tail. Land-living eft is reddish brown to bright red or orange (a warning to predators of its toxicity). Skin appears rough, but is soft to the touch. **Habitat:** Vernal ponds (temporary), small permanent ponds, marshes, bogs, and swamps. **Food:** Insects, worms, crustaceans, mollusks, tadpoles. **Note:** Toxic skin secretions cause many fish to avoid eating them.



Spotted Salamander (Ambystoma maculatum)

Description: 4.3"-9.8", chunky, black or dark gray bodied with rows of round yellow spots running from head to tail. Rarely, spots are tan or white or absent. Sides unspotted, belly grayish to purplish. **Habitat:** Mature, moist woodlands (with access to vernal ponds for breeding) underground burrow or under rotting logs or leaf litter. **Food:** Worms, insects, spiders, slugs, snails. **Note:** Does NOT tolerate human disturbance and is becoming rare in many parts of Michigan due to logging of its mature woodlands habitat requirement.



Blue-spotted Salamander (Ambystoma laterale)

Description: 3.5 - 5.5", black body with turquoise, pale blue flecks and spots on sides, limbs, belly and tail. Belly may be black to grayish black. **Habitat:** Moist deciduous hardwood areas and swamp woodlands with access to vernal ponds (under rotted wood), woodlots, and urban parks. Best time to view is just after ice melts along forest pond edges. **Food:** Insects, centipedes, spiders, worms, small invertebrates. **Note:** Prefers fishless vernal ponds for breeding. Defense posture of lashing tail back and forth and will detach if grabbed.



Mudpuppy (Necturus maculosus)

Description: 8"-19", large, aquatic salamander with flattened tail, reddish gills behind head. Body is brown or gray brown with darker, scattered blotches. **Habitat:** Inland lakes, marshes, rivers. Prefers shallow water in spring, deeper in winter and summer. **Food:** Crayfish, insect larvae, worms, snails, small fish, small amphibians and their larvae. **Note:** When confronted by predators, a Mudpuppy's skin will secrete a thick, slimy secretion making it difficult to handle.



salamander
track

and tail drag



The majority of salamanders are terrestrial as adults, but lay their eggs in or near the water and have aquatic larvae. The Red-backed Salamander, lives and reproduces entirely on land, while the Mudpuppy a permanently aquatic salamander, lives on the bottom of lakes, ponds and streams.

Every Herp Needs a HABITAT!



Salamanders---
silent and secretive creatures of mystery...

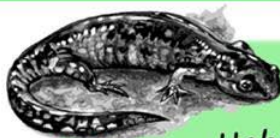
From Uplands...

Most native terrestrial salamanders spend the majority of their lives hidden under the forest soils, fallen logs, and leaf litter...

To Vernal Ponds

Salamanders depend on intact forest communities to complete their life cycle. The vital forest features include temporary or "vernal" ponds which are created by spring rains and snowmelts and will dry up by mid-summer. In connection with uplands for salamander survival, this connection and proximity are important.

Salamander evolution and diversity are associated with cool, moist areas.



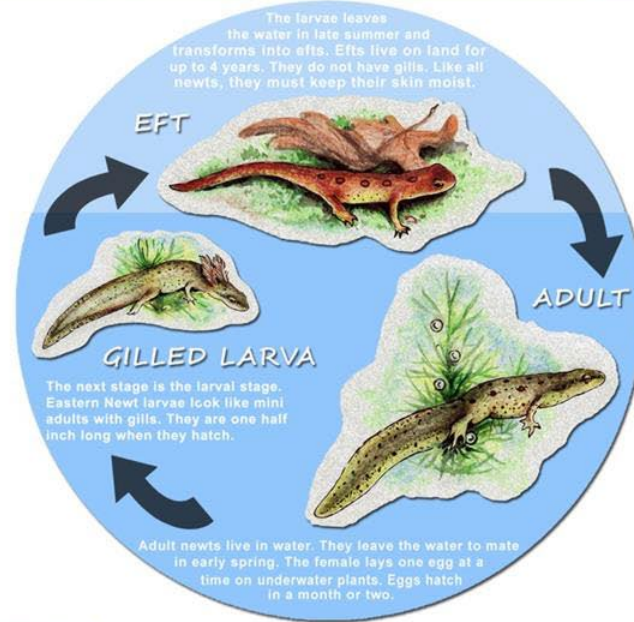
Salamander Reproduction: Habits and Habitat

Salamanders have some very unique breeding habits and habitats. Under certain conditions some species of salamanders, that are normally terrestrial, when sexually mature can remain in the water and reproduce as mature larvae. The Red-backed Salamander does not even lay their eggs in water, rather they deposit them under rotting log or stump cavities. The larval stage is then completed in the egg, so that when they hatch they look like miniature adults.

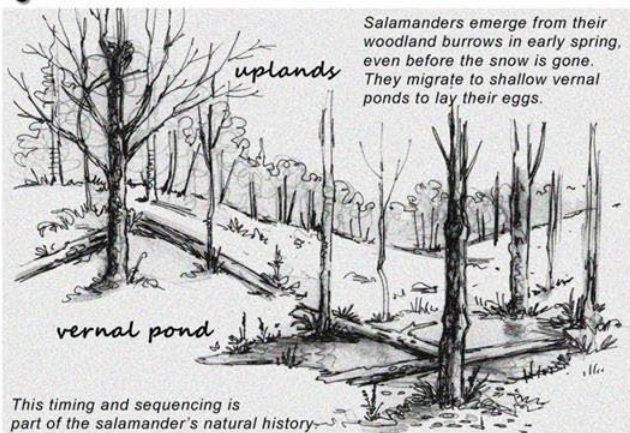
Salamanders like the Blue-spotted Salamander, in very early spring, with the first snow melting rains, leave their burrows in woodland soil where they over-wintered and migrate to shallow, temporary "vernal" ponds. These temporary ponds are free of fish and other aquatic predators and are often still partially covered with ice.

Most salamanders have a unique method of internal egg fertilization. Males produce spermatophores in globs and the females crawl over the spermatophore and takes up the sperm through her vent and stores it. Storage may be from hours to years. Many species of salamanders need temporary or semi-permanent ponds tied to the continued presence of relatively undisturbed woodlands.

Amphibians that can breed while retaining gills and other larval characters are said to be "neotenic" as in the case of the Tiger Salamander of the U.P. and Northern Lower Michigan. This may be due to short summers and cold temperatures.



Migration



Salamanders emerge from their woodland burrows in early spring, even before the snow is gone. They migrate to shallow vernal ponds to lay their eggs.

This timing and sequencing is part of the salamander's natural history.

Movement and emigration distance varies with each salamander species. This factor limits salamander populations as they are tied to a particular area. In the event that they are successful and produce excess numbers they cannot move and populate other areas due to their specific habitat requirements.

Unique, and Unusual Newt

The Eastern Newt, also called the Red-spotted Newt has several different life stages. They live in ponds, marshes, and quiet streams.

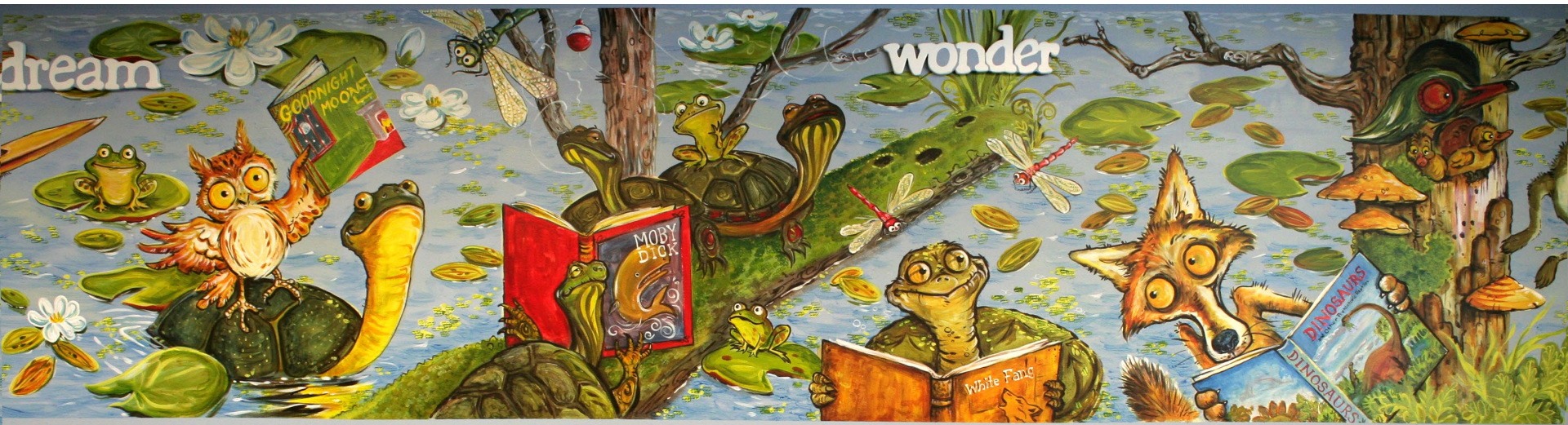
The adults can grow over five inches long and has four toes on their front feet and five toes on their back feet.

The larval stage is similar in color to the adult. It is smaller and has flower-like gills coming from its head. This stage is called the "eft" stage. The eft is found on land and is bright orangish-red or reddish-brown. It grows to over three inches. The eft stage has poisonous chemicals in its skin so predators will not eat them. Efts are seen in moist woodlands.

MURALS



Moose Tree Art Center, Lake Orion, MI (Main Wall)



Pinckney Community Public Library, Pinckney, MI **MURAL**

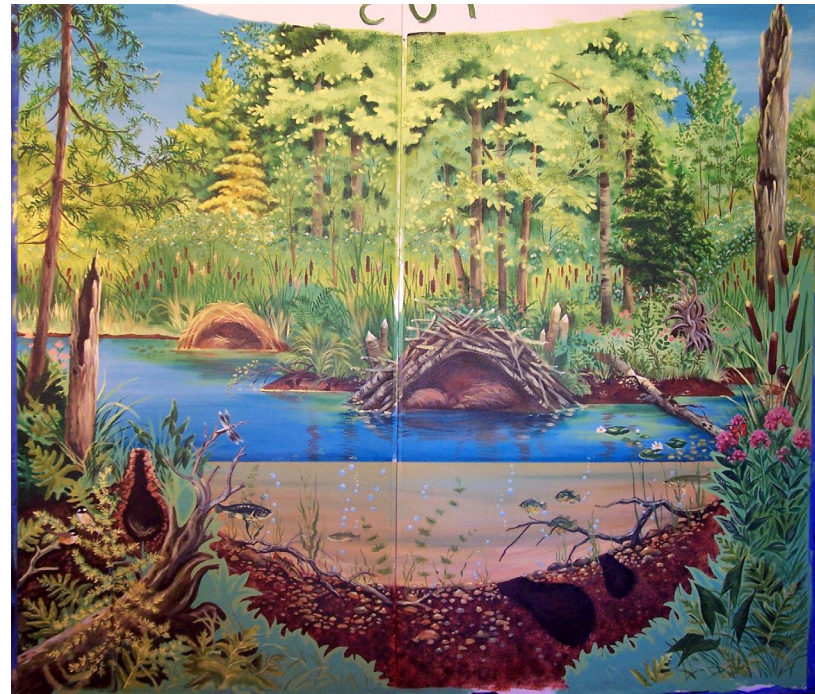
Lewis Wint
Nature Center

Shadow Wall

(detail)

*LEWIS WINT NATURE
CENTER*

MAGNETIC MURAL and SHADOW WALL



MAGNETIC WALL MURAL



19' X 8' BOARDMAN RIVER NATURE CENTER

HISTORICAL MURAL DETAIL



Lake St. Clair MetroParks. "1820 Lewis Cass Expedition"

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS



