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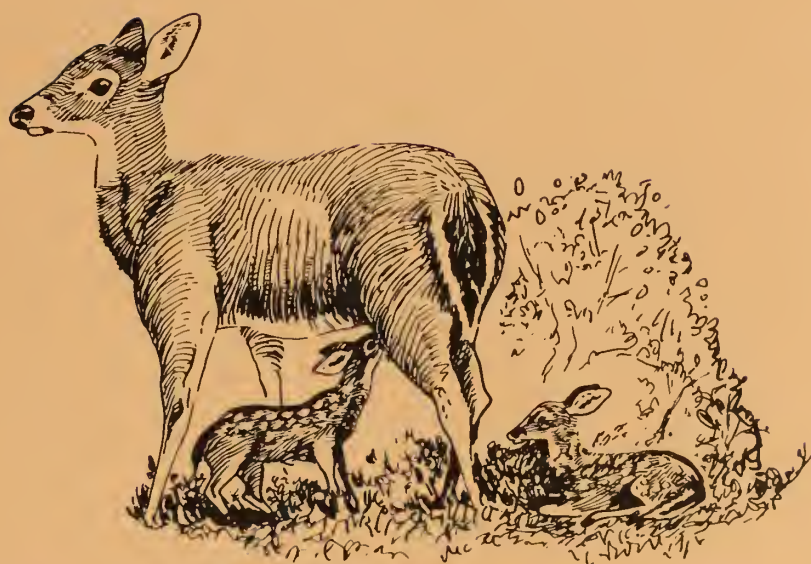


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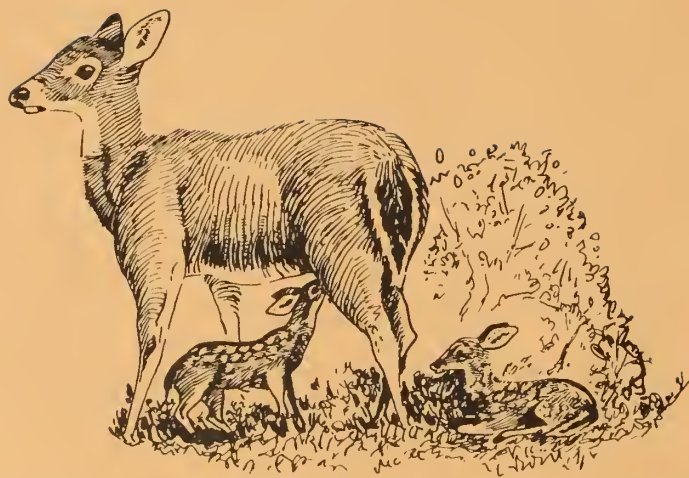
ACTIVITY GUIDE

for

Organized Groups

ROCK CREEK NATURE CENTER





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The Rock Creek Nature Center is located in Rock Creek Park at 5200 Glover Road, N.W. just off Military Road. Built in 1960 to interpret the complexities of the natural environment, the Center has since served as a setting for outdoor educational experiences.

The Nature Center includes an interpretive building with Planetarium and three self-guiding nature trails. The main exhibit room features nature displays, and sensory and live exhibits of snakes, insects, and birds native to the area. These and similar displays illustrate the diversity of natural habitat represented in an urban park. Also housed in the building are an auditorium and reference library.

VISITING HOURS

The Rock Creek Nature Center is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Center is closed on federal holidays and Mondays throughout the year.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Schools and other organizations may utilize the Nature Center during regular visiting hours for observation and independent study. For teachers and group leaders requesting Ranger-conducted programs arrangements must be made in advance. Programs include talks, guided walks, planetarium shows, natural history slide shows, films and live animal demonstrations. Programs are presented weekdays throughout the year. The activities differ both in complexity and content and are therefore appropriate to specific age groups. Please keep this in mind when making requests. The minimum age for all activities is 7 years.

HOW TO SCHEDULE YOUR GROUP

Teachers, and community leaders are required to call or visit the Nature Center in person to arrange for Naturalist-conducted programs.

Rock Creek Nature Center
5200 Glover Road, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20015
202-426-6829

Appointments should be made as far in advance as possible to assure availability of desired activity. Groups expecting to remain in the park through the lunch hour should bring lunches since food service is not available in the park. Restrooms, parking and water fountains are located at the Nature Center and within walking distance of picnic facilities.

GUIDED NATURE WALKS

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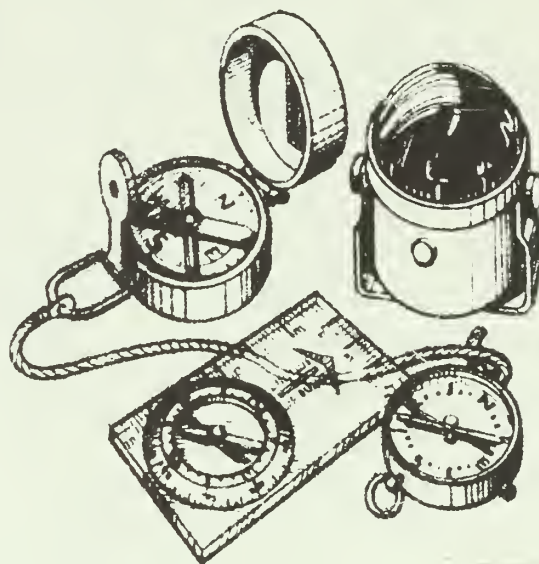
Presented upon request to school, community, scout and conservation groups of ten or more individuals. Walks are led by Ranger-naturalists along park trails. Themes for discussion center

around changes apparent in the forest and are adapted to the interests and age of the audience. 45 minutes. Limited to 35 people.

MAP AND COMPASS

ORIENTEERING

Orienteering is an outdoor activity that requires skillful use of a map and compass to find your way through the woods. A map and compass reading demonstration and film presentation is available to requesting groups of ten and more individuals ages 10 and older. Following the introductory session groups may want to try their newly acquired skill to challenge the Rock Creek Park Orienteering Course.



NATURAL SCIENCE PROGRAMS

BIOGRAPHY OF AN OAK TREE

An exhaustive look at the growth of an oak tree beginning with the germination of an acorn and continuing through to its establishment as a towering forest giant. Participants will be able to follow the sequences of oak tree growth in a forest area and recognize their importance as habitat and food source for a wide variety of wildlife. A 30-minute walk to identify and explore the 16 species of oak trees found in Rock Creek Park will follow this presentation.

POWER OF GREEN

This program examines the workings of a leaf and focuses on the significant contributions of plants to a healthy environment. It also discusses and shows an interesting representation of plants found in Rock Creek Park and the surrounding Metropolitan Area. Participants will be able to understand how environmental conditions influences plant variety in an urban area and will be provided an insight into such processes as chlorophyll manufacture, etc. A 30-minute plant identification and exploration walk will follow this presentation.

NATURAL SCIENCE PROGRAMS

IT'S YOUR PARK

An illustrated program on the natural history of Rock Creek Park including an overview of the park's cultural, historical, and natural resources. This activity will familiarize the visitor with the park and its diversity and will present the park's many interesting aspects. A live animal demonstration will be featured with this program.

WILD EDIBLE PLANTS

This film opens with a brief discussion of the historic value of wild plants as food and shows some common plants which are edible. The program will show that there are many wild plants that are good to eat and cautions people to know what plants should be harvested and eaten. A short edible plant walk will also be included.

UNFRIENDLY FLORA AND FAUNA

Over twelve dangerous plants and animals are examined and identified in this unusual film whose principal theme is that most wild plants and animals are harmless and we need never have a conflict with those that are potentially dangerous. Viewers will learn to recognize many dangerous plants and animals and will also learn how to avoid injury and illness from encounters with them. The presentation will include a short hike in search of a few unfriendly plants and animals found in Rock Creek Park.

AUTUMN COMES TO THE FOREST

The forest comes alive with color and activity in autumn. Leaves on trees turn from green to vivid shades of rust, crimson and gold until they finally fall to the forest floor; birds begin to migrate and mammals are finding places to live during the cold winter months. Viewers will recognize changes that signal the coming of autumn and discover how forest animals prepare for winter. A live animal demonstration will be included with this activity.

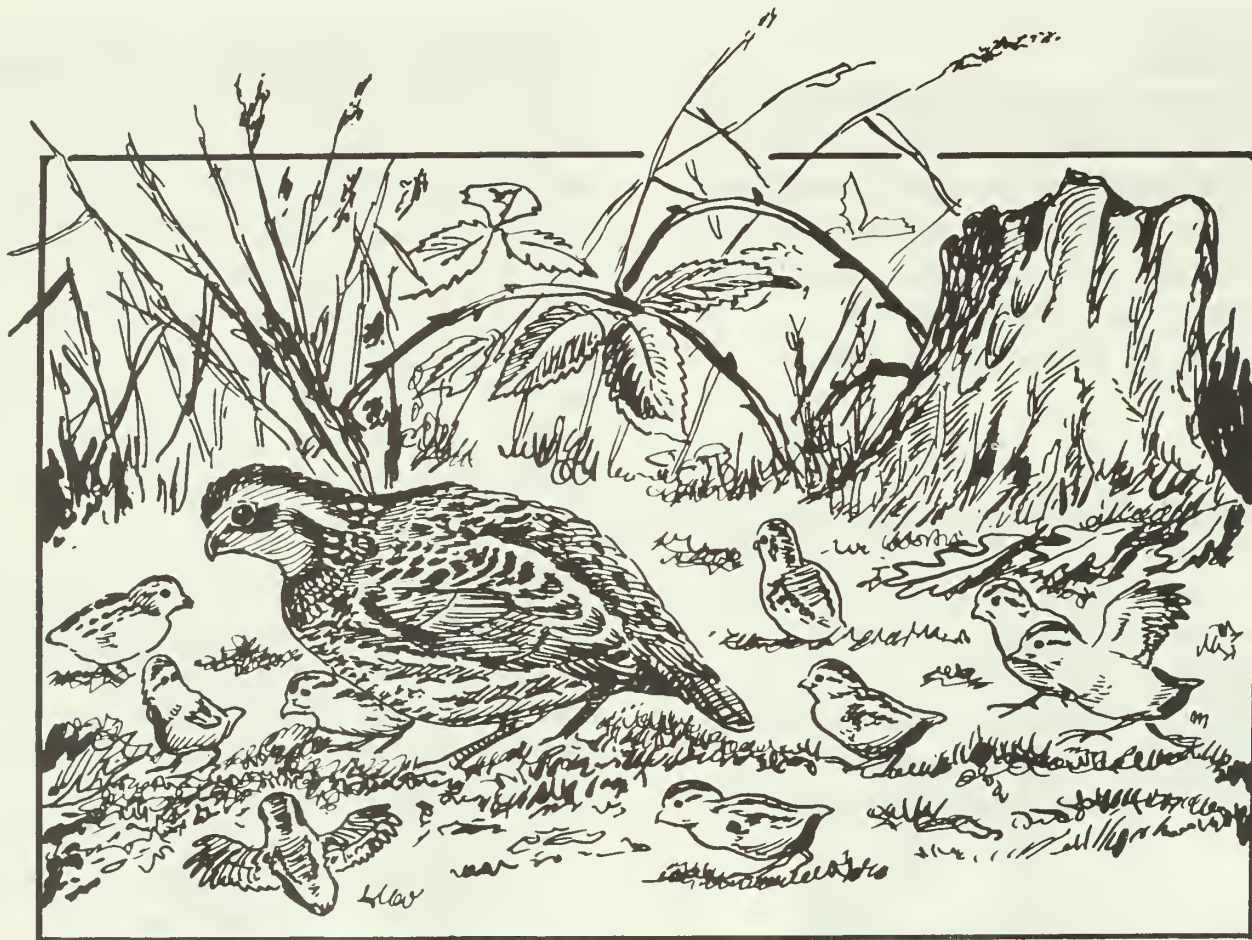
WINTER COMES TO THE FOREST

When winter comes, the forest looks bare and dead. But if we look more closely there are buds containing tiny leaves, the cocoon of a moth, a chickadee looking for insect eggs, rabbit tracks in the snow and seeds which will grow next spring. Our discoveries reveal the many ways that living things are adapted for living through winter. A live animal demonstration will be included in this presentation.

SPRING COMES TO THE FOREST

Life beginning again in the forest is captured in this visually exciting film. By compressing time, it records the growth processes occurring in nature throughout the spring. Animals are once again in sight; birds return from their winter migration. Participants will learn to recognize signs of seasonal changes and also see how animals care for their young. A live animal demonstration will be featured with this presentation.





ANIMALS OF NORTH AMERICA

A program featuring some amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals of North America. Discussion of eating habits, methods of defense and their specific characteristics are presented. The program will highlight the spectacular inventory of the wildlife riches of North America. A broad cross-section is represented throughout the film. Trip planners may request either a live animal or mounted specimen for enhancement of this program.

RESIDENTS OF ROCK CREEK PARK

An illustrated slide program about the surprising variety of wildlife found in Rock Creek Park. The program mentions which animals are frequently seen and which are rare. The area's environmental problems and their impact on resident wildlife is also detailed. Participants will learn the importance of green spaces to animals in an urban area and also the effect of urbanization on wildlife populations and habitat. An animal demonstration will also be presented.

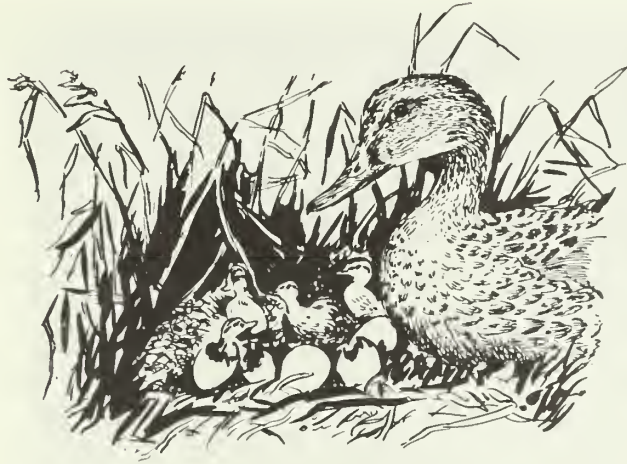
LIFE IN THE WOODLOT

A 16-minute film narrated by a woodsman who understands and respects the delicate, though vigorous balance that must be maintained throughout nature. A very good display of plant and animal life found in eastern hardwood forests is featured. An animal demonstration will be presented with this film.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

The gradual disappearance of many species of wildlife, too often a prelude to extinction, is a problem of large proportions. This slide presentation will help the viewer to understand the more serious threats to endangered wildlife. It offers an overview of the situation and in the process vividly introduces a large number of endangered animals such as the whooping crane, the grey wolf, the grizzly etc.

NATURAL SCIENCE PROGRAMS



WORLD IN A MARSH

A very good survey of the diverse and interesting plant and animal life found in a marsh. Focuses on the struggle for survival, including predator-prey relationships and the reproductive patterns of several species. Viewers will become familiar with this interesting, though often overlooked part of the natural landscape. The program may also include an animal demonstration.

SNAKES

This program will illustrate the interesting life habits and special adaptations of snakes, showing their equipment for locomotion, sensation, nutrition and self-protection. The four poisonous snakes of the United States and Canada are identified in this 45-minute activity that stresses the value of most snakes to mankind. The presentation will also feature discussion, and a demonstration, and will provide a closeup look at some of the park's resident reptiles.

MAMMALS THAT GNAW

Rodents far outnumber all other mammals in kind and number. They may live in trees, burrow under the ground, hide in grass or in rock crevices and they may store food, build nests or lodges in water. Discussion of these distinctive habits and of the area's rodent population will be included. A look at a number of mounted wildlife specimen including the beaver, North America's largest rodent, will also be featured.



OWLS

This program presents through close-up photography a variety of owls nesting, hunting, eating and rearing their young. Ten species of owl are represented feeding on rodents and other small wildlife forms. The activity emphasizes the importance of owls as predators in helping to control populations of rodents and other wildlife. A discussion and appearance by Max, the Center's resident owl, will be the highlight of the program.

THE MORNING SPIDER

Pantomimist Julian Chagrin portrays a hard working but often inept morning spider whose attempt to snare a meal are often frustrated. During one day he encounters a bee, a gang of mosquitos, a centipede and blue fly whom he captures but cannot bring himself to eat. Recommended for hearing impaired as well as other audiences.



THE GYPSY MOTH . . . A DILEMMA

The gypsy moth, imported into Massachusetts in 1869, is today a major environmental problem. Reports of infestation and defoliation throughout northeastern U.S. threatens to cause irreversible damage to forest communities. A discussion of the gypsy moth's occurrence in and effect on Rock Creek Park resources will also be included.

BIOGRAPHY OF A BEE

Using an analogy between a city and a beehive, this film presents an indepth look at honeybees and the instinctive organization of their lives, emphasizing the division of labor between drones, workers and queen bees. The film will be followed by a discussion at the Nature Center's observation beehive.

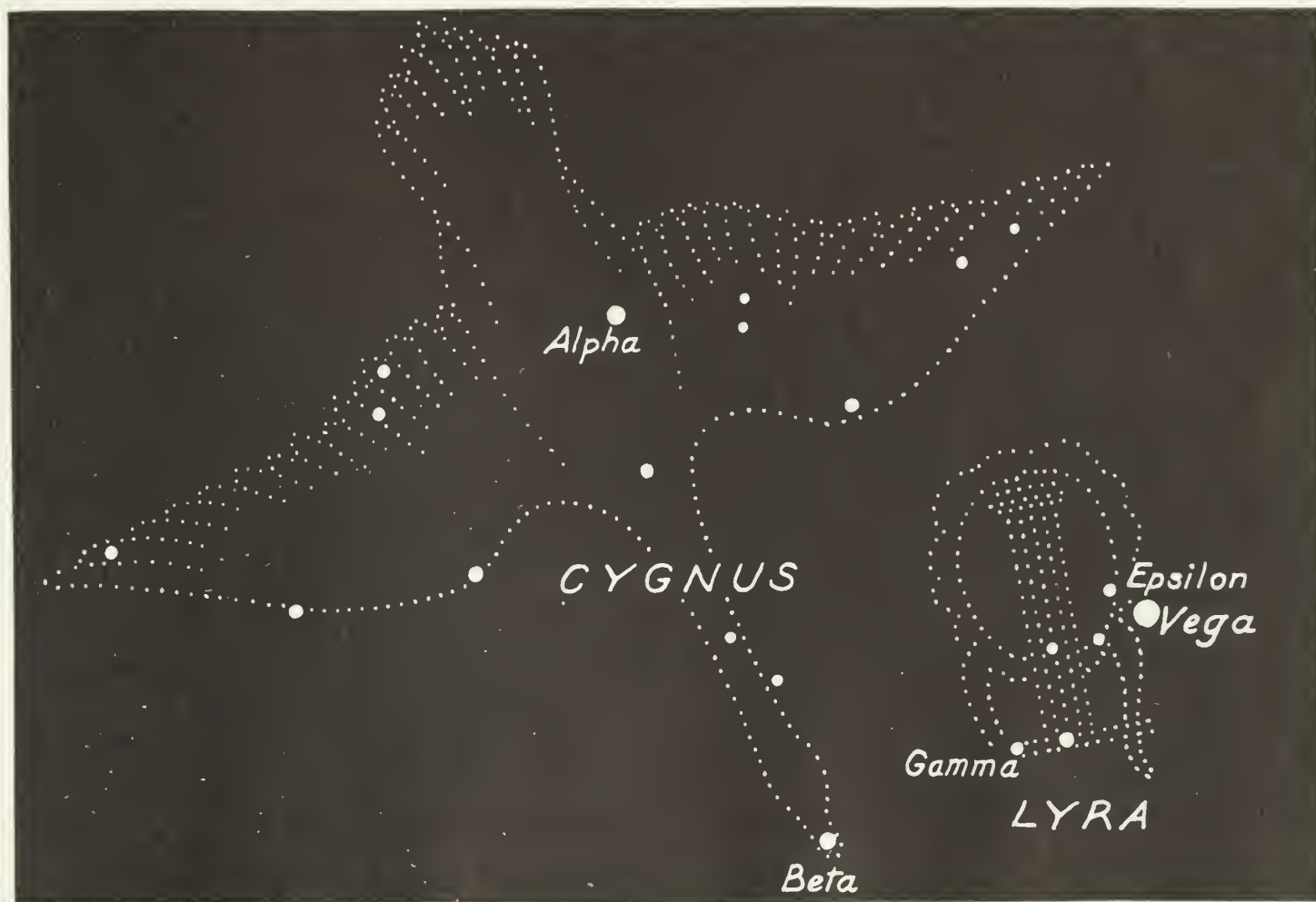
LITTLE GIANTS—INSECTS IN OUR WORLD

A 20-minute slide show about some important members of the animal community—the insects of our yards and gardens. An outdoor insect trek will be included with this activity and will provide the participant with a fascinating and interesting glimpse of the insect world.

ROCK CREEK PARK—"THE POET'S PLAYGROUND"

A new 17-minute film highlighting the natural features and recreational opportunities available in Rock Creek Park. Presented daily upon request to general audience viewers.

PLANETARIUM PROGRAMS



THE PLANETARIUM

The Planetarium is an enclosed chamber that comfortably seats 70 people and provides the setting for presentation of a wide selection of shows about the night sky, planets, stars and the universe. Through the use of a Spitz projector, slides and other aids, Planetarium operators are available to show the night sky as it appears over Washington, D.C. at any time. The following shows may be requested from the Nature Center.

THE NIGHT SKY **Ages 7 and older**

A basic introduction to the night sky. Learn how to identify and locate the moon, planets, bright stars, and constellations for the current date.

STAR FLIGHT **Ages 7 and older**

A fun trip from the Nature Center to outer space. Also includes a basic introduction to the night sky.

FANTASY IN SPACE **Ages 7 and older**

A voyage with music, fantasy, science fiction past, present, and future. Introduction to the night sky also included.

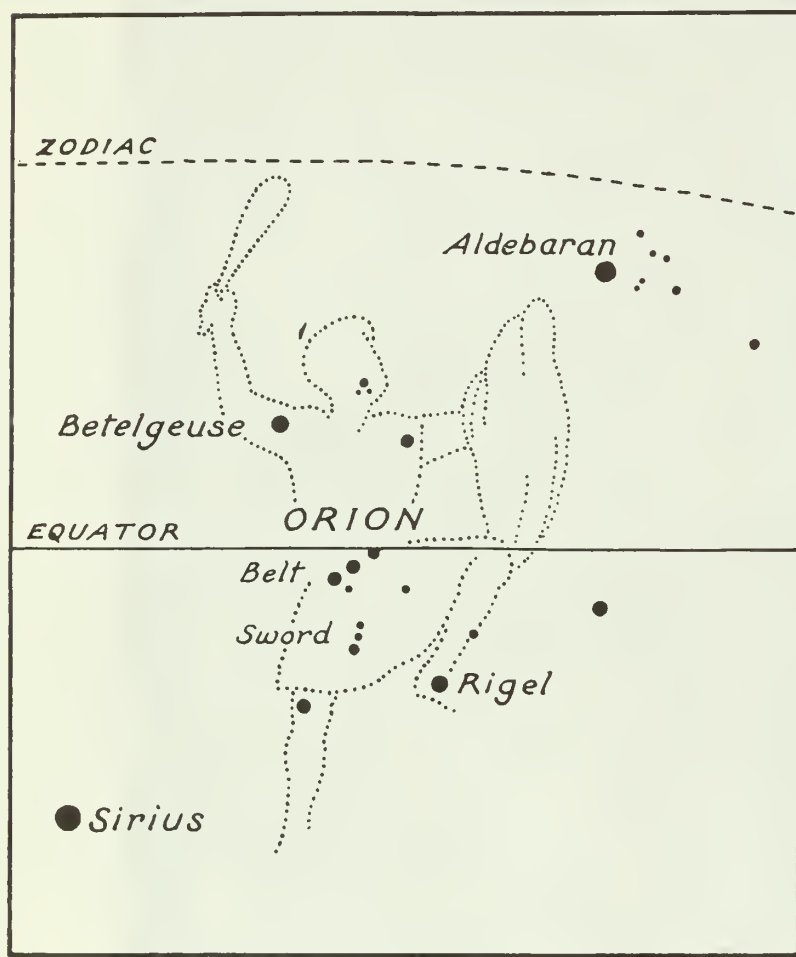
TIME WARP **Ages 7 and older**

Beam aboard for an adventure in time and space through the realm of science fiction. Introduction to the night sky also included.

MARTIAN MYSTERIES **Ages 8 and older**

The red planet Mars abounds in the unexplained. Why are the Martian volcanoes so big? How did the valleys form? What created the strange "fingerprint" features? Introduction to the night sky also included.

PLANETARIUM PROGRAMS



COSMIC GARBAGE **Ages 9 and older**

An introduction to meteors, asteroids, and comets. As the earth moves through space, it encounters dust to mountain sized chunks of rocky and metallic debris. What has this meant to earth in the past? What of the future? Introduction to the night sky also included.

SOUND **Ages 9 and older**

Now you hear it, now you don't. An introduction to the properties of natural and man-made sounds. Introduction to the night sky also included. This show is recommended for the visually handicapped.

LIGHT, IT LIGHTS

UP YOUR LIFE **Ages 9 and older**

A basic introduction to the study of light. What is light, where does it come from, and what are the properties of light? Introduction to the night sky also included.

STAR DUST **Ages 10 and older**

Dense clouds of nebulous gas and dust lie scattered through interstellar space. These incredibly beautiful objects become the birthplace and graveyards of the stars. Introduction to the night sky also included.

THE HIDDEN WORLD OF VENUS **Ages 10 and older**

A close look at our clouded neighbor. Introduction to the night sky also included.

STORIES FROM UNDER THE SKY **Ages 13 and older**

A mythological trip through the zodiac to learn of man's early relationship with the sky. Introduction to the night sky also included.

STARS IN YOUR EYES **Ages 13 and older**

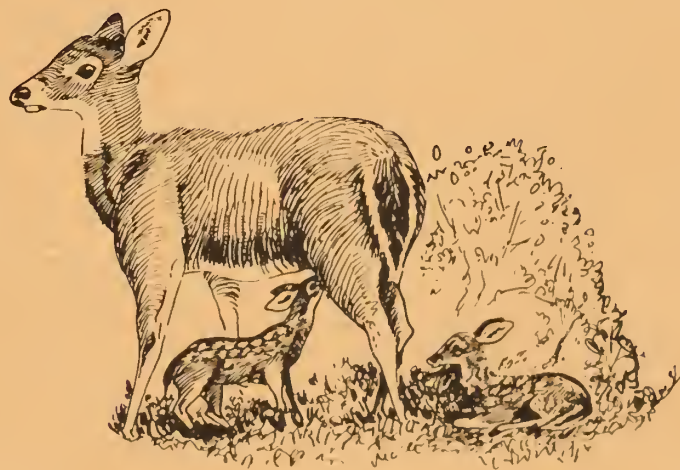
The story of how a star begins, from the simplest and most abundant elements. Introduction to the night sky also included.

FEEL THE EARTH MOVE **Ages 15 and older**

Discover the eight different ways in which the earth moves. Introduction to the night sky also included.

THE UNIVERSE

A 25-minute film that provides a sweeping review of things both known and searched for in our universe: The structure of our solar system; the lives and deaths of different types of stars; pulsars; quasars and galaxies; the search for extraterrestrial life. A good introduction to astronomy. Recommended for ages 13 and older.



" . . . to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects therein and provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
ROCK CREEK NATURE CENTER
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