



Looking to learn about wildlife and the habitats they depend on?

Explore this event guide and consider hosting your own **freshwater reflection and nature journaling activity** to slow down, observe, and build a deeper connection with your local freshwater environment.

- Recommended event duration: 20-60 minutes
- Suitable for: Families, schools, community groups
- Group size: 1-30+ participants
- Main activity: Observing, sketching, photographing, and recording changes at a local freshwater site
- Cost: Free

Freshwater Reflection & Nature Journaling Guide

Freshwater environments are constantly changing with the seasons, weather and wildlife activity. This activity encourages participants to slow down, observe a local creek, river, pond, or wetland, and record what they notice through writing, sketches, or photographs. By returning to the same location over time, participants develop a stronger connection to freshwater ecosystems while recognizing seasonal changes and the importance of long-term environmental stewardship.

1. Select your site

- Choose a publicly accessible freshwater location that can be safely visited multiple times throughout the year. Parks, viewing platforms, boardwalks, and accessible pathways are ideal for repeated observations.

2. Conduct a hazard assessment

- Visit the site beforehand to identify potential hazards such as unstable banks, slippery surfaces, wildlife activity, or restricted access.

○  [Hazard Assessment.pdf](#)

3. Observe and record

- Spend time quietly observing the area. Record what you see, hear, smell, or notice about the water, shoreline, wildlife, plants, weather, and other landscapes through writing, sketches, photographs, or a combination of these methods.

4. Reflect on Changes

- If returning to the same location, compare observations between visits. Consider:

- How has the water level or flow changed?
- What plants or wildlife are new or missing?
- How have the seasons affected the landscape?
- What human activities might be influencing the area?

5. Share your Observations

- Invite participants to share journal entries, drawings, or photographs. Discuss how regular observation can deepen understanding of local freshwater ecosystems and encourage stewardship or local waterways.

Basic Equipment Checklist

- Notebook or journal
- Pencil or pen
- Camera or smartphone (optional)
- Field guide (optional)

Outcomes

Participants will:

- Record observations of a local freshwater ecosystem
- Recognize seasonal or long-term environmental changes
- Develop observational and nature journaling skills
- Build a stronger personal connection to local freshwater environments

If you complete this activity, we'd love to hear from you! Share your experience with Living Lakes Canada at: WaterConnections@LivingLakesCanada.ca

Please include the location, number of participants, results (e.g., observations recorded, any changes in environment) and any photos or feedback. Your submissions help us measure the impact of these activities, strengthen future funding applications, and continue developing free freshwater resources for communities across Canada.

Safety & operations

Before you begin:

- Tailor this template appropriately to facilitate your safety meeting
 -  Tailgate Safety Meeting .pdf
- Assign an event coordinator
- Review site hazards and event boundaries
- Explain observation-only expectations (no collecting or disturbing organisms)

Key safety rules

- Do not enter deep or fast-moving water
- Respect wildlife and sensitive habitats
- Be cautious near steep, slippery, or unstable shoreline areas
- Stay on designated pathways where possible
- Wash or sanitize hands after activity
- Children must be directly supervised at all times

Disclaimer

This guide is intended to support community-led educational and stewardship activities for informational purposes only. Organizers are responsible for assessing the site conditions, participant safety, and any permits or permissions that may be required. Participation is voluntary and at the participant's own risk.

We recommend connecting with Living Lakes Canada or a local stewardship organization for additional guidance and support.