

How the Bat Came To Be

The animals challenged the birds to a ball game. The birds accepted. As the birds were preparing for the game, a little animal as small as a mouse climbed the tree and asked to join their team. He said the animals made fun of him because he was so small. The birds pitied him and fashioned wings out of the groundhog skin that they used for their drum.



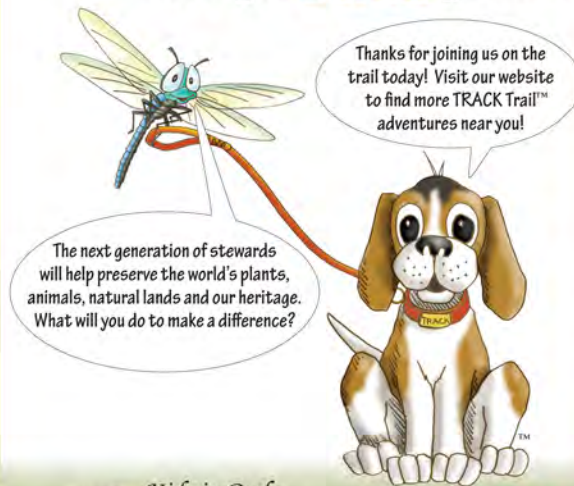
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The animal became the bat, and he could hold the ball and dodge and circle about. During the game, the birds gave the ball to the bat. He dodged and circled, keeping the ball away from the animals, threw it between the posts and won the game for the birds.



- take turns playing tag with a partner, and try to dodge and circle like the bat!

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Animal Athletes



Cherokee legends come to life!

The Cherokee have many stories of how animals helped to create the world and why certain animals look the way they do. Use this brochure to discover some of these legends and find out how you can do exercises to be as strong and fast as the animals here on the Oconaluftee River Trail!

CAUTION: These exercises should only be performed with adult supervision.

Cherokee Legends

Read the following Cherokee tales and try each animal exercise challenge as you hike the trail.

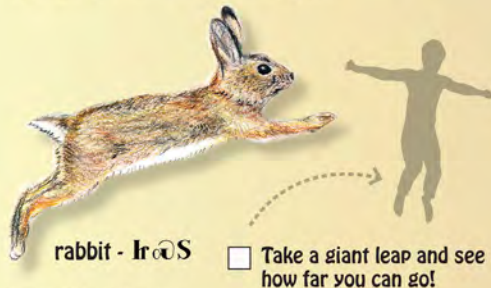
How the Deer Got His Horns

In the beginning, the deer had no horns. The animals held a contest to find out who was faster, the deer at running or the rabbit at jumping. The winner would win the antlers. After the rabbit was found out to be cheating, the animals gave the horns to the deer, who they decided was the better runner. He has worn them ever since.



The Rabbit Escapes from the Wolves

Some wolves caught a rabbit and were going to eat him. The rabbit convinced them to let him show them a new dance he was working on. When the wolves were distracted stomping their feet, the rabbit took a giant jump and was off through the long grass.



Designed and Illustrated by Tony Geiger

Cherokee Creation Stories

The Water Beetle and the Buzzard

When all the world was water, the water beetle offered to go and see what was below the water. The water beetle dove to the bottom, under the water, and came up with soft mud. The mud began to grow and formed what we now call the earth.



The buzzard was sent by the animals to see if the wet land was ready for them. The Great Buzzard, the father of all buzzards, flew all over the earth, low to the ground. When he reached Cherokee country, he was tired and his wings began to strike the ground. Wherever they struck the earth, there was a valley and where they turned up again, there was a mountain. That was how the mountains came to be here.



The Black Racer and the Water Spider

In the beginning the world was cold. A fire was put into the bottom of a hollow sycamore tree that grew on an island. The animals knew it was there but could not get to it. The little black racer snake said he would try. He swam to the island and crawled into a small hole at the base of the tree. The heat proved to much for him and after dodging about blindly over hot ashes, he managed to escape without any fire. His body was scorched black and he has a habit of darting around to this day



After many animals had tried and failed, the little water spider said she would go. She could run on top of the water or dive to the bottom, so she could make it to the island. She spun a thread from her body and wove it into a tusti bowl. She put one small ember of burning coal into her bowl and brought it back to the animals. Ever since, we have had fire.

