



**Objective:** Winter is the perfect time to see what critters are out and about near where you live and go to school! By looking at the tracks animals leave behind, we can tell the story of what happened in outside, even if we never saw the animals! Students will learn some common animal tracks in Minnesota and practice telling the stories of those animal tracks.

**Outdoor U Video** – watch some of our Student Naturalists explore outside where they live and go to school for animal tracks.

[Outdoor U Animal Track Video](#)

**Outdoor U Activities** – short and quick lessons from us that are designed to help students get to know the tracks around your school.

[CSI Backyard](#) - Students will use their detective skills to observe and record animal tracks outside.

[Hop To It](#) - Students will move their bodies to learn about the different ways animals move based on their tracks.

[Where Did They Go?](#) - Students will create a story based on a drawings of animal tracks.

Incredible [6 minute video](#) from Voyageurs Wolf Project – a compilation of animals that crossed a beaver dam in northern MN and a great follow up to this activity

**Outdoor U Art Connections** – activities from us that serve to strengthen the connection between art and science.

[Smart! \(Snow Art\)](#) - Students will use natural materials to make unique tracks and create a piece of 'smart' (snow art).

[Imaginary Track Stories](#) - Students will create a story about an imaginary animal and their tracks.

**Other Suggested Activities** – additional ideas for activities from other organizations to further your student's learning about animal tracks.

**Animal Tracks Matching Game** from [PBS Kids](#)

*A printable matching game.*

**Track Mysteries** from [Ecologists Educators and Schools \(ECOS\)](#)

*A brief outdoor activity in which students create their own track patterns and create stories based on those tracks.*

**Tracking: Student Activity Guide** from [Beetles](#)

*A very detailed lesson plan that gives a complete overview and explanation on how to take a classroom out for animal tracking sessions.*

**Whose Track is That?** From [the Jeffers Foundation](#)

*A five-minute track matching game that gets students moving around the classroom.*

**Websites** – background information for teachers and fun activities for students to extend everyone’s learning.

#### Teachers

[Teach Outdoors MN – Winter Resources](#)

A comprehensive webpage put together by MN Environmental Educators – has a section with additional animal tracking resources.

[The Old Farmer’s Almanac](#)

Provides useful tips and tricks to help students better find, see, and identify animal tracks. Also included are pictures of a wide variety of tracks and the animals that made them.

[The Old Naturalist](#)

Demonstrates how to identify basic groups of track patterns; Complete with pictures and descriptions, this great resource will help you feel confident when you take your class exploring.

#### Students

**Animal Track Detective video** from [Science for Kids](#)

This engaging and upbeat 5 minute video will get kids excited to be detectives and to find tracks, observe clues, and identify which animal left them behind! Recommended for beginners.

**Track Matching game** from [CSERC](#)

This matching game has three levels for kids to play and learn about animal tracks. Each level builds upon the previous one as students are challenged to identify a higher number of tracks.

**Animal Track quiz** from [Scouts Life](#)

This ten multiple-choice question quiz could be offered to students as an extra challenge at the end of the unit. Includes descriptions to explain why their answer is correct or incorrect.

**Suggested Reading** – a curated list of books we recommend reading with your students about animal tracks.

#### Fiction

[The Snowy Day](#) by Ezra Jack Keats [Animated and Narrated Video](#) also available

A young boy goes out on a snowy day and makes tracks of his own.

[Tracks in the Snow](#) by Wong Herbert Yee

Natural exploration and inquiry leads to a search for who left tracks in the snow.

[Once Upon a Winter Day](#) by Liza Woodruff

A tale about a boy who found the story he wanted by looking outside in the snow.

#### Picture Books

[wild tracks! A Guide to Nature’s Footprints](#) by Jim Arnosky

With beautiful full-page and fold-out, life-sized drawings of animal tracks, this picture book tells the stories of animals and presents field-guide level information in an accessible and fun manner.

[Big Tracks Little Tracks](#) by Millicent Selsam and Marlene Hill Donnelly

All children can be nature detectives, using the clues left by animals to tell a story of their behaviors.

[Whose Tracks are These?](#) By Jim Nail and Hyla M. Skudder

Beautiful pictures and clues lead readers to follow the story to the animal that matches the descriptions, all of which are animals present in Minnesota.

[Who Was Here?](#) by Mia Posada

Beautiful and fun pictures of tracks and animals, clues detailing animal behaviors, and descriptions with all kinds of fun facts about animals all make this book a fun read.

[Tracks in the Wild](#) by Betsy Bowen

Written by a Minnesota author, each page beautifully details the life, behaviors, and shows the tracks of different northern US animals.

Guides—Ideal for teacher reference or to page through and investigate during free time!

[Animal Tracks and Signs](#) by Jinny Johnson, National Geographic

A complete guide detailing characteristics of animals all over the world.

[Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks](#) by Olaus J. Murie and Marck Elbroch

A detailed guide to North American animals, their tracks, and their scat.

[Animal Tracks of Minnesota and Wisconsin](#) by Ian Sheldon and Tamara Eder

Simple yet detailed, this field guide is specific to the area and includes useful charts and resources in the end that are great references for outdoor exploration and classroom activities.

[Animal Tracks of the Great Lakes](#) by Ian Sheldon

This pocket guide is ideal as reference or to take outside and ID animal tracks in the area.

[Field Guide to Tracking Animals in Snow](#) by Louise R. Forrest

This guide uniquely provides details for winter identification in the snow and tips for following an animal's winter behavior in the snow.