



Conservation Works Sit Spot Guide

Overview: Sit spots are places where go to slow down and connect to the natural world around us. They can be anywhere a bit of nature is present: a park bench, rocks along a local creek, the branch of a favorite tree, a balcony, or a backyard.

Find your sit spot: This spot could be anywhere you can be still and quiet on your own, observing what is going on around you with relatively little distraction. We recommend bringing a journal or piece of paper and writing utensil with you in case there is something that catches your attention that you want to record.

Settle into your special spot: Set your watch for 10 minutes. Begin by closing your eyes and taking three, full deep belly breaths to let go of anything that might be presently on your mind. Land fully in the moment and if you can, visit your sit spot once per day, week or month or once during each of the 4 seasons.

Engage your senses: Start to focus on each some of your senses individually - first your sense of vision, then smell, hearing and touching. Use a few of the sensory prompts below to help guide this process and provide a little structure to this full sensory experience of noticing and wondering at what is around you.

Record your observations: If you have journaling materials with you, record all of the “daily happenings” that you notice, paying particular attention to any plants, animals, weather, or activities happening around you. Record any questions that you have.

Share what you noticed and wondered: After 10 minutes are up, return from your sit spot and share what you noticed with someone special. If you asked any questions during your sit spot, take a few minutes to look for answers - perhaps from a knowledgeable friend, family member, mentor, or another resource such as a field guide.

Return to your sit spot again: Don't forget where your sit spot is, because you may want to return there again in the next day or week or month to note what has changed and what has stayed the same!

SENSORY PROMPTS

Sight: Even if your sit spot is a familiar place to you, take a few moments to really look around. What do you see that perhaps you didn't notice before? Are there any details that you can “zoom in on” and look really closely at? Try focusing on a single color around you - how many shades of green or brown or red can you count? Create a list of what you see and what activities are going on - whether you notice wildflowers, bees, trees, birds, leaves, bricks, buildings or pets.

Sound: Listen closely for any sounds - human or natural - make note of these in your journal. Who, or what is making them? Turn your head in the direction of the sounds. Try using deer ears to amplify what you hear, creating a cup shape with your hands and placing one cupped hand around and behind each ear. Do the sounds get louder? Turn your deer ears around so the cup is facing behind you. What happens to the sounds then? Close your eyes and try capturing a handful of sounds, noting with a finger each time you hear a new sound until you have collected 5 sounds in your hand. Create a sound map in your journal. Draw an X in your journal to mark your sit spot. Then listen intently to any noises around you and note these sounds on the page in relation to where you are sitting.

Smell: What do you notice when you inhale and exhale through your nose? What does the air feel like in your nostrils? Put your nose up close to something natural that is near where you are sitting and inhale. What does the smell remind you of? Are there any overwhelming smells that might tell you something of what is going on in your surroundings? Do these smells change over time?

Touch: Place your hands (or perhaps your toes if it's a warm sunny day and you are barefoot) on the surface where you sit - whether tree or bench or soil. What does it feel like? Squishy? Hard? Cool? Hot? What factors might be contributing to that sensation? Perhaps you are sitting on the earth and can pick up a handful of soil and rub it between your fingers. What does it feel like? (When engaging this sense, try not to disturb anything that is alive and living. Sit spots are really about sitting and being without unnecessary disturbance to nature).