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Explore the Great Outdoors

While we have enjoyed a mild winter, spring will soon be here. Being active outdoors is always a great spring and summer activity. Simply being outdoors and enjoying your surroundings can be beneficial to your health. Youth of all ages enjoy the endless opportunities for exploration outside, utilizing the outdoors is a great way to create a space for unstructured play time.

One of the activities that my family and I enjoy is going on a nature hike. We choose a nearby trail and walk through seeing what we can find; or even what we can imagine. What kinds of animals might be living nearby, are these marks in the ground tracks, could we build a good fort out of the sticks along the trail? Are there insects on our path? Where are they living, what are they eating, how hard do we have to look to find them?

When a hiking trail is quiet, we spend our time imagining what might have been there last? Or even what was it like right here 100 years ago. There have been many creative stories developed along the trail. In addition, there are numerous treasures that return home after each trip; a small stick with lines where insects have burrowed into the edge, an intriguingly shaped rock, and many feathers.

Nebraska 4-H provides many ways for youth to enjoy the outdoors. Projects like Wildlife Conservation, Outdoor Skills and Shooting Sports, Gardening and Flowers are just a few. There are many others that also provide for additional opportunities to go

outside. However, you like to spend your time outside, I encourage you to take advantage of all the opportunities to enjoy what is naturally there, as well as be creative and become an explorer for an hour and see what you can find.

While you are enjoying your time outside make sure to use sunscreen and bug spray. You might consider carrying a small notebook to record what fascinating things you find. Make sure to take an adult with you on your hike. If you would like more information on Nebraska 4-H and the opportunities to be active outdoors contact the Buffalo County Extension Office, 308-236-1235.