Getting Into Your Animal Mind
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• Introduction
• Exercise: Favorite Memory, Animal Mind?
• Why Natural Play? Research, Wild-o-meter
• Structural
• Programming
• Materials to support natural play development

Exercise:
• Small groups work on natural play ideas (15mins)
• Report out and wrap-up (10 mins)
1) In your memory, where were you?
2) What were you doing?
3) What objects/materials were you using?
4) How did you feel?
5) What details of smell, sight, sound and touch do you remember?
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WHAT ARE NATURAL PLAY AREAS?

Natural Play Areas are outdoor spaces designated for play that incorporate natural components such as plants, logs, water, sand, mud, boulders, hills and trees. These components represent the larger wild environment in a way that feels safe and manageable to young visitors while inviting imaginative and explorative play, *from the backyard to backcountry*.

"My best memories of childhood are from walking through the woods with my sister and climbing what we then called 'mountains; exploring creeks for hours and looking up at the sky from grassy fields. I hope my children and grandchildren are able to enjoy those same experiences:' - M. Lowen, an Oregon parent

Natural Play challenges and fascinates children and teaches them about the wonders and intricacies of the natural world while they explore and play within it. It is intuitive and unstructured, constructive, and timeless, encouraging interaction with natural materials, features, indigenous vegetation, and creative landforms.
Unstructured Play is Natural Play

SETTING - Wild-O-Meter

WILD  RURAL  SUBURBAN  URBAN

CONTINUUM - Types of Play

Free Play  Nature Play  Nature Themed  Play Ground
Oneonta Gorge
West Columbia River Gorge, OR

The gorge staircase drops down from the Historic Columbia River Highway.

Oneonta falls is a rewarding destination for all.

Abundant opportunity to build rock carins.

The narrow gorge is dappled with textures.

About 1/2 way up the gorge, this massive log jamb provides a challenging but conquerable climbing and balance puzzle.

Free Play
Nature Play
Nature Themed Play
Play Ground

Age Range: 6-Adult

Description:
Park area is confined within existing trails and marked visibly by interpretive sign posts at the perimeter.

Setting:
Natural, a 2-mile round-trip hike up a creek canyon.

Activities:
Go for a hike, look for insects, make a rock carin, swim, or play hide and seek.

Play Elements
• Trees, shrubs, sticks, branches, pebbles and rocks.
• Climbing, hiding.
• Hands will get dirty.

Play Activity
• Movable Materials
• Natural Vegetation and rocks
• Topography

Component Costs:
• Location sign. $ NA
• Staircase. $ NA

Total: $ NA

Contacts
USFS, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
902 Wasco Street, Suite 200
Hood River, OR 97031
(541) 308-1700
Silver Falls Nature Park
Sublimity, OR

The Bird Play pod hosts different types of alterable nests and movable materials.

Example of an artist built nest, with eggs and straw bedding.

The Bear Play pod emphasizes wood play, climbing, tracks, and a memory game.

Panorama of the Cougar Play pod that hosts a naturalistic rock climbing wall, balance and climbing stumps, and a megaphone for audible expressions.

A gravel looped path connects the different themed nature play pods while creating a buffered natural island for kids to discover and play within. A web of dirt trails was started by Park staff to encourage kids curiosity and encourage exploration.

Description:
Park area consists of play pods and is connected by a 1/4mile loop trail that creates a forested center island.

Setting:
Forested and natural, adjacent park campground facilities.

Activities:
Go for a hike, look for insects, build and construct, or play hide and seek.

Play Elements:
• Accessible loop path.
• Stone climbing wall.
• Wood climbing features.
• Nest building.
• Movable pieces.
• Topography.
• Growing loudspeaker
• Hands will get dirty.

Play Activity:
• Secret Paths, Create Your Own Paths
• Climbing/Balancing.
• Assembly.
• Hiding, Viewing.
• Noise Making.

Component Costs:
• Design Workshops. $9,300.00
• Cougar Pod. $35,000.00
• Bear Pod $28,000.00
• Bird Pod. $15,000.00
• Additional expenses. $12,700.00

Total: $104,000

Contacts
Steve Janizzewski
Oregon Parks and Recreation, State Parks
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 390-0639 ext. 222
Westmoreland Nature Play Area
Portland, OR

The making of the creek and wetland play feature.

Westmoreland Nature Play Area is scheduled to be completed fall 2014.

The making of the creek and wetland play feature.

Description:
Creative nature play area with a quiver of natural play elements, trails, skatepark, and nature play area.

Setting:
Westmoreland park is a linear 43 acre park with a central riparian corridor.

Activities:
Climb, hide & seek, climb on boulders, build and construct in sand, splash in water, crawl through tunnel.

Play Elements
• Creek and wetland.
• Boulders.
• Logs.
• Willow tunnel.
• Sand pit.
• Loose parts.
• Hands will get dirty.

Play Activity
• Splashing, learning.
• Climbing/Balancing.
• Climbing/Balancing.
• Crawling/Exploring.
• Build/Construct.
• Build/Construct.

Component Costs:
• Excavation $ TBA
• Surfacing/Curbing $ TBA
• Creek Area $ TBA
• Log Mound $ TBA
• Mountain Area $ TBA
Total: $800,000.00

Contacts
Sandra Burtzoz
Portland Parks & Recreation
1120 SW Fifth Ave, Suite 1302
Portland, OR 97204
503-823-5594
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Natural Play Areas</th>
<th>The Spectrum of Nature Play</th>
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<td>Private</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised</td>
<td>Unsupervised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawn/ Surfacing</td>
<td>Planting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed</td>
<td>Imaginative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>No Structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**Silver Falls Nature Park**  
Sublimity, OR

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### Activities
- Roaring across the play area
- Climbing trees
- Looking out across play area
- Sitting in the cave / den
- Running and playing in the open area

### Materials, Elements and Spaces
- Boulders marking the main entryway
- Big hills of rocks / boulders to climb
- Single low, fairly flat boulders (easy)
- Piled up groups of boulders (challenging)
- Boulders embedded in hillside (alternatives)
  - A shady parent den / shelter with benches overlooking habitat
  - Real cougar claws and fur to feel
  - Voice funnels to amplify roaring
  - A central grassy field
- Kid-sized dens as destinations among the boulders and for hiding
- Overhanging boulders with climbing holds (some accessible)
- A wide path / loop trail around boulder area with small trails leading off
- Spaces among the boulders for two people to interact
- Spaces among the boulders for five or more people to interact

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**Cougar Habitat**

### Characteristics
- Purring
- Running fast
- Pouncing
- Den living
- Stalking
- Play wrestling
- Large territory
- Curling up
- Roaring
- Hiding / camouflaged
- Napping in trees
- Being very quiet
- Eating rabbits
- Being powerful
- Licking
- Having claws
COUGAR PLAY
Silver Falls Natural Play

- COUGAR DEN
- MULCH PLAY SURFACING
- AMBUSH AREA AND SIGN
- MAIN PATH
- STAIRS TO THE UPPER PLAY AREA
- COUGAR GROWL STATION
- HUNTING OVERLOOK
- ROCK SCRAMBLE
- SAND PIT WITH DEER ‘REMAINS’
- SHRUB PLANTING

UPPER PLAY AREA BOUNDARY FENCE
LOG CLIMBING AREA
PRINTS OF COUGAR CHASING DEER
SEATING AREA
SLEEPING LIMBS
Silver Falls Nature Park
Sublimity, OR
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Natural Play Programming
The Pilot

PROJECT TIMELINE

July 2017: Initial research, site evaluation, program development, and messaging
Aug-Dec 2017: Nature Play Pilot series and evaluation
January 2018: Summarize and analyze Pilot outcomes

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Alternate times for maximum exposure
- Marketing: word of mouth played a major role in success
- Develop Project Management Plan to guide future of program

Age Distribution

Number of Pilot Programs: 25
Number of Participants: 414
Number of Pilot Sites: 6
Average Attendance: 17
Project Management Plan

- Project Overview
- Goals
- Site Inventory
- SWOT Analysis
- Target Audience
- Framework
- Project Timeline
- Budget
- Deliverables
- Communication & Marketing Plan
- Follow-up & Evaluation
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CREATIVE
- "Spontaneous invention and change make for true play and sound child development" (Albinson 20).

INDEPENDENT
- "Play is what children do when their time is not being organized by adults...It is a time when children control and manipulate their world into imagined environments" (Albinson 18).

CONFIDENT
- "Mastering physical challenges at their own pace will help children feel a sense of accomplishment and self-worth that carries over into other aspects of learning" (www.arborday.org)
- "Natural playgrounds made with natural play elements, mirror natural world experiences that help children - and young adults - constantly discover new things about themselves and the world around them through experimentation, observation, problem-solving, and manipulation." (www.naturalplaygrounds.com/resources_article_why-encourage-natural-pla)

Proud
- "attachment to the land is not only good for the child, but good for the land as well." (Louv, 157.)

IN WONDER
- "Children live through their sense. Sensory experiences link the child’s exterior world with their interior, hidden, affective world...freedom to explore the outdoor environment is essential for healthy development." (Louv, 65)

INTELLIGENT
- "The core of the naturalist intellect is the human ability to recognize plants, animals and other parts of the natural environment." (Louv, 71.)
- "Any natural place contains an infinite reservoir of information, and therefore the potential for inexhaustible new discoveries." (Louv, 67.)

JOYFUL
- "entralling pleasures of building wigwams in the woods, gathering hickory nuts and apples, hunting frogs, haying and harvesting, and scampering barefoot down long, leafy lanes..."(Louv, 150.)
### Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do we make Natural Play Areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hiding:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between rocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In shrubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under tall grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swinging:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudly for an audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quietly to oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touching:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuzzy flower buds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough tree bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swimming:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a deep river pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Throwing (and catching):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pushing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATCHING!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARING!</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCOVERING!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**How Do We Make Natural Play Areas:**

### Materials and Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploratory topography:</th>
<th>Variety of spaces:</th>
<th>Small pieces:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mounds</td>
<td>Trellises</td>
<td>Blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curves</td>
<td>Low walls</td>
<td>Wooden boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pits</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>Tree cookies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berms</td>
<td>Willow fencing</td>
<td>Fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone walls</td>
<td>Changes in level</td>
<td>Shovel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sand pits              | Changes in plants | Magnifying gl
| Water courses          | Playgrounds on water | Journals    |
| Mud areas              |                   | Guidebooks  |
| Natural amphitheaters  |                   | Compass     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to show change:</th>
<th>Malleable &amp; loose materials:</th>
<th>Places for first-hand interaction:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rain collection ponds</td>
<td>Sand</td>
<td>Butterfly observation areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain gauges</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Frog ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow-play</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Birdhouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundials</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Nature paths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical challenges:</th>
<th>Resting spots:</th>
<th>Outdoor art:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance beams</td>
<td>Gazebos</td>
<td>Wall murals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logs</td>
<td>Pergolas</td>
<td>Play sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ropes</td>
<td>Arbors</td>
<td>Sound gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climbing areas</td>
<td>Shade tents</td>
<td>Land sculptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>Benches</td>
<td>Vegetation sculptures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digging areas</td>
<td>Grassy areas</td>
<td>Fountains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boulders</td>
<td>Tables</td>
<td>Children’s art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log steps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawl-through log</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plantings:</th>
<th>Opportunities for performance:</th>
<th>Climbing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wild areas</td>
<td>Rain sticks</td>
<td>Up rocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native plants</td>
<td>Marimba</td>
<td>Under logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife attracting plants</td>
<td>Bongo</td>
<td>Up hills and mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design with nature</td>
<td>Akambira</td>
<td>On boulders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shade</td>
<td>Dancing scarves</td>
<td>Up trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal points</td>
<td>Acting stages</td>
<td>On ropes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities to learn / teach:</th>
<th>Other:</th>
<th>Make up your own...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amphitheaters</td>
<td>Unprogrammed spaces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation signs</td>
<td>Live animals</td>
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<td>Experimentation stations</td>
<td>Different abilities</td>
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<td>Educational trails</td>
<td>Places for children to rest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Separate activities for older children and younger children</td>
<td></td>
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