

January - Week 4

Stories Written in Snow

As Aldo Leopold wrote, “January observation can be almost as simple and peaceful as snow, and almost as continuous as cold. There is time not only to see who has done what, but to speculate why.”

Venture out on the snow to see what stories have been “written” on the blank white space. Careful examination of tracks may help you identify the “writer.” Does the creature have two or four legs? Does the track show hoofed prints? Are there pad prints with four toes, with or without toenails (canines show toenails, cats retract their claws)? Are they bird feet? Are there wing prints? Has something been left at the scene?

Measure or estimate distances between sets of tracks to determine if the animal was walking or running. You may have a handy measuring device in your pocket, for example a dollar bill is 6 inches long. Did two or more animals interact? What drew them to this spot? Is there evidence of predation?

It is now time to write and illustrate your story. Use evidence to describe who was there and what they did. What questions do you still have? Revisit the snowy landscape in the following days to check for new chapters or entirely new stories that are written in the snow. Your additional observations may help you answer any questions you have from your initial excursion.

Quote from: *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* by Aldo Leopold



A bad day for a mouse... or was it?