










## Take a Hike by the Water

*Plan a walk with your class at the beach or along a river, lake or pond to collect litter after your BC Hydro AquaVan Program.*

**S**TUDENTS will learn basic observation skills through the exploration of a natural habitat. This activity will reinforce basic aquatic conservation concepts and introduce stewardship practices.

### MATERIALS

-  First –aid kit
-  Rubber Boots
-  Waterproof clothing
-  Clipboards & paper
-  Pencils
-  Magnifying glasses
-  Buckets
-  Bag to collect trash
-  Extra dry clothing
-  Sunscreen
-  Flags or pylons to mark boundaries

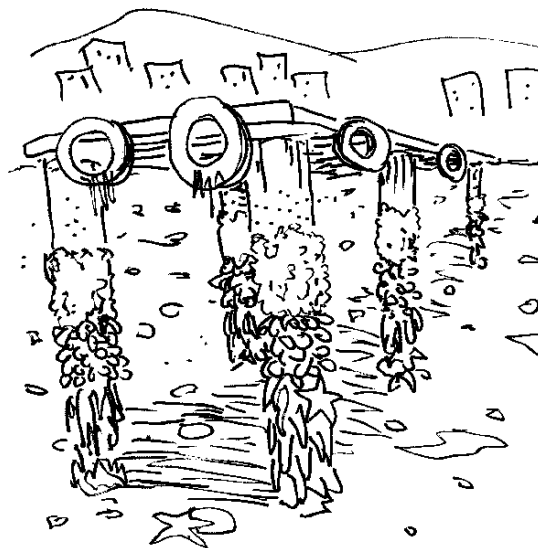
### Steps

**Before taking your walk outdoors,** have your students explain how they care for pets at home and what type of care aquatic plants and animals might require. This discussion will create an awareness of the need to respect all living creatures, including unfamiliar aquatic plants and animals.

- 1)** If you are visiting a beach, the best time to begin your visit is a couple of hours before low tide. You can purchase tidetables at your local bookstore or find them in public libraries and newspapers.
- 2)** Have your class discuss where the animals live and how the wind and water affect these habitats.
- 3)** Discuss how people should behave when they visit natural habitats to promote the conservation of these areas. Remember to inform parents and students about your excursion using a permission form which includes specifics about appropriate dress for the outdoors. Ask for parent volunteers to help out.
- 4)** Take a hike! Try organizing your class into groups with parent leaders and specific equipment. Plan your route and explain appropriate boundaries to keep students safe, use pylons or flagging tape if necessary. Ask students to draw a picture of an animal or plant they observed during their visit. You may want to students to label the different parts of animals or plants. For some key guidelines, see “Be an Aquatic Friend” below.

## Be an Aquatic Friend

**D**OCKS, wharf pilings and other human-made areas are good places to visit. They are readily accessible, often inhabited by a wide variety of organisms, and are often more tolerant of human disturbances.



**Bring a few buckets.** Many soft, slimy invertebrates collapse into a motionless state in air, but are quite active when kept in water. One animal or plant of each species is all your group needs for study.

**Be careful where you walk.** The nearshore habitat can be covered by live animals—all shores can be very slippery, especially when wet. If you dig in the sand at the beach, refill the holes when you are finished. The returning tide may shift your small mountains of sand making it impossible for clams to reach the surface to breathe.

### Take Only Your Pictures, Leave Only Your Footprints

Return plants, animals and rocks to the exact places you find them. Animals and plants are adapted to live in specific habitats—a move of even a few metres may be fatal. At the beach, sea stars or sea urchins placed above the high tide mark will not survive. Crabs and other creatures live under rocks and need their shelters. Even empty shells may become future homes for hermit crabs.

**Don't litter! Trash Bash!** Soft drink six-pack rings can become entangled around the necks of small animals. Cut them up and put them in the garbage. Use a plastic bag to collect trash and litter, try to leave a habitat better than when you found it.

