A photograph of a succulent plant, likely a Sempervivum, with several upright stems bearing clusters of small, pink, star-shaped flowers. The base of the plant consists of numerous small, green, rosette-shaped leaves. A black identification tag is visible in the background, partially obscured by the plant, with the text "Sempervivum cyathrum" and "Humboldt" visible. The plant is growing in a garden bed with green moss and grey rocks.

Connecting with the Environment through Nature Journaling

Barbra Sobhani

Barbra.Sobhani@colorado.edu

Earth Educator's Rendezvous 23

Program Day 1

- 8:30 Welcome and introductions
- 8:45 Warm Up
- 9:00 Introduction to Nature Journaling and Field sketching as an interdisciplinary reflective tool
- 9:20 Drawing tips and demos
- 9:40 Small-group sketching exercises
- 10:00 Participants work on sample nature journal page
- 11:00 Regroup – discussion & questions
- 11:20 Wrap-up, share-a-thon
- 11:30 Adjourn

Warm Up – Blind Sketch

- Don't look at your paper
- Don't lift up your pen
- Move your eye at the same speed as the pencil

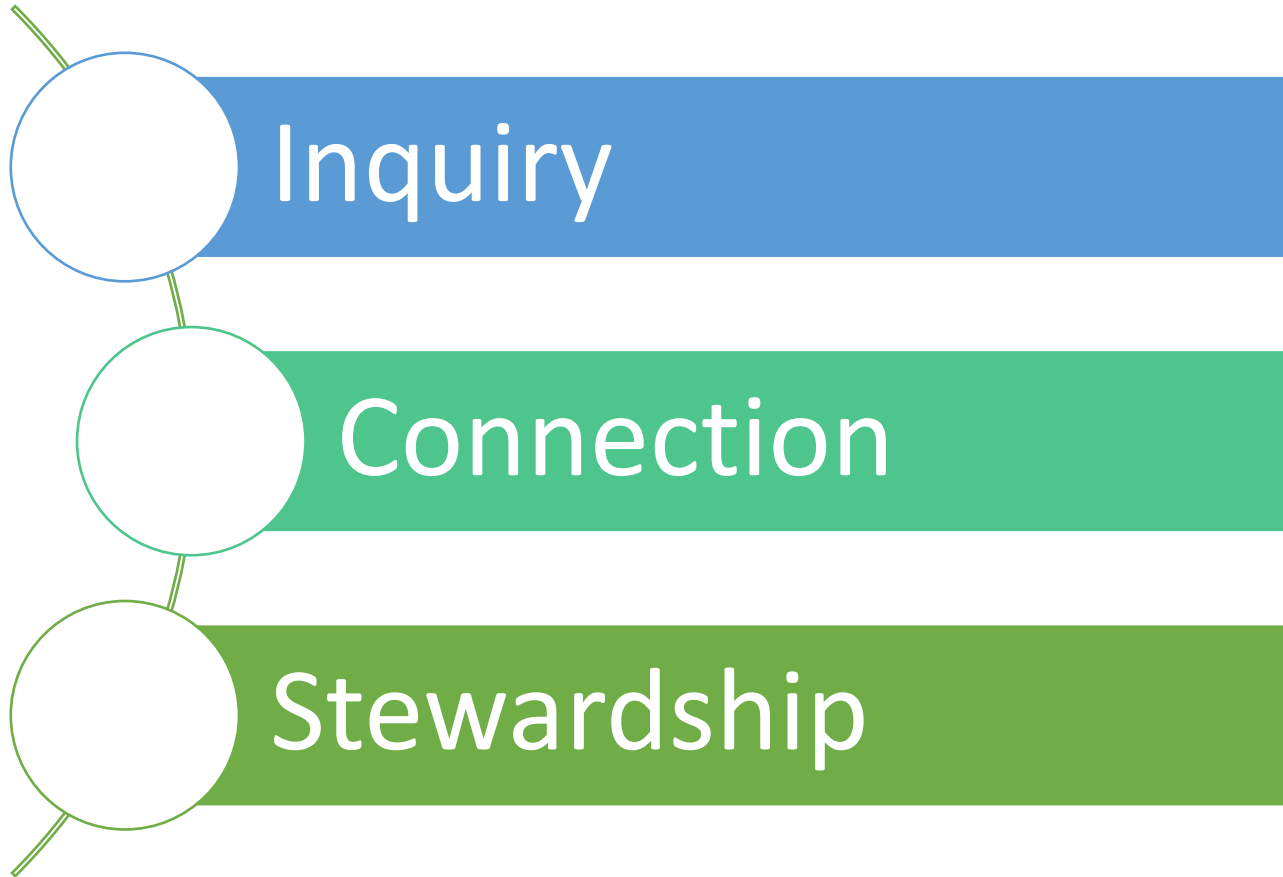


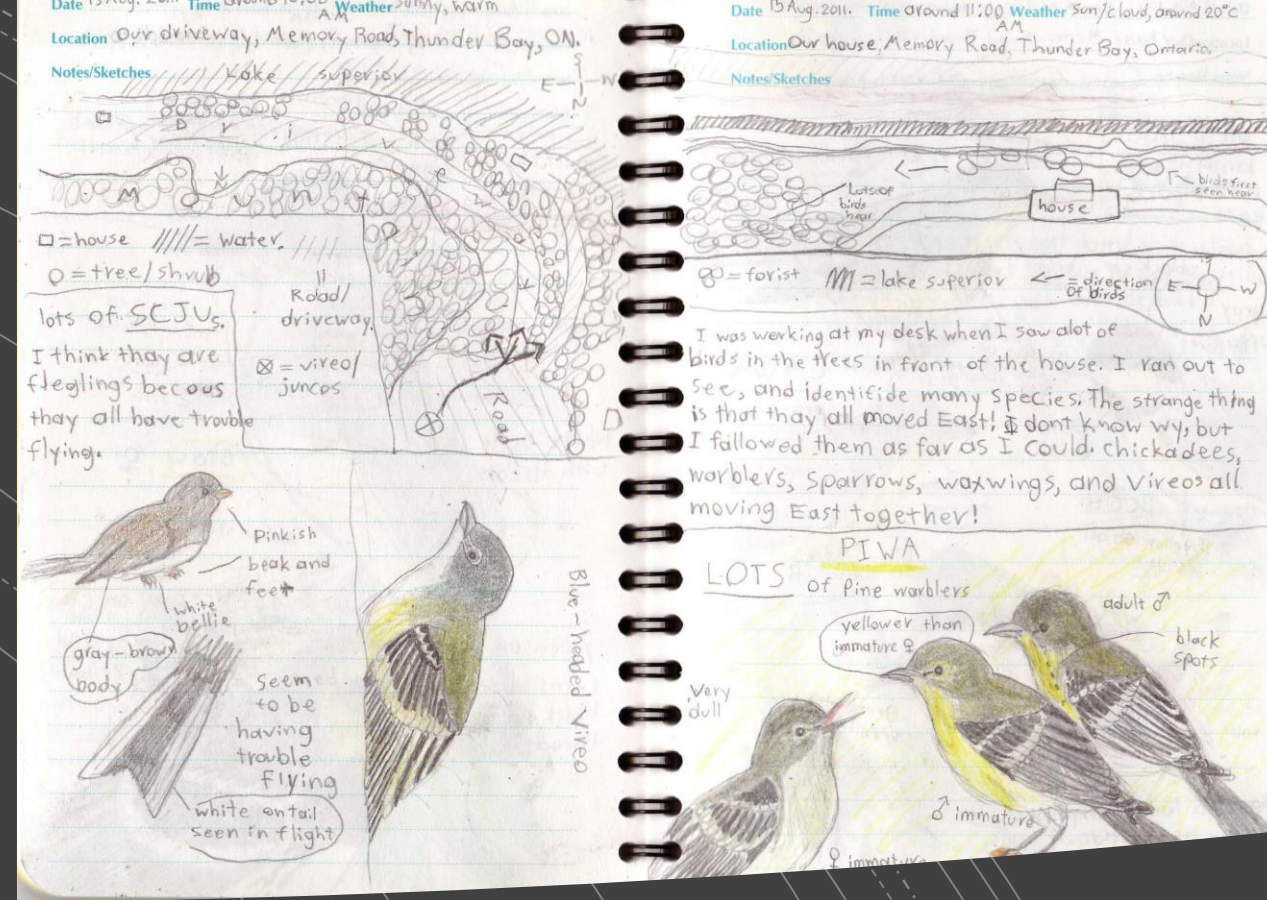




"Nature journaling is an extremely effective and engaging way to teach observation, curiosity, and creative thinking. Journals are the ubiquitous tool of scientists, naturalists, thinkers, poets, writers, and engineers. Using a journal is a skill that can change students' lives forever." - John Muir Laws, Emilie Lygren, [How to Teach Nature Journaling](#)

Why?

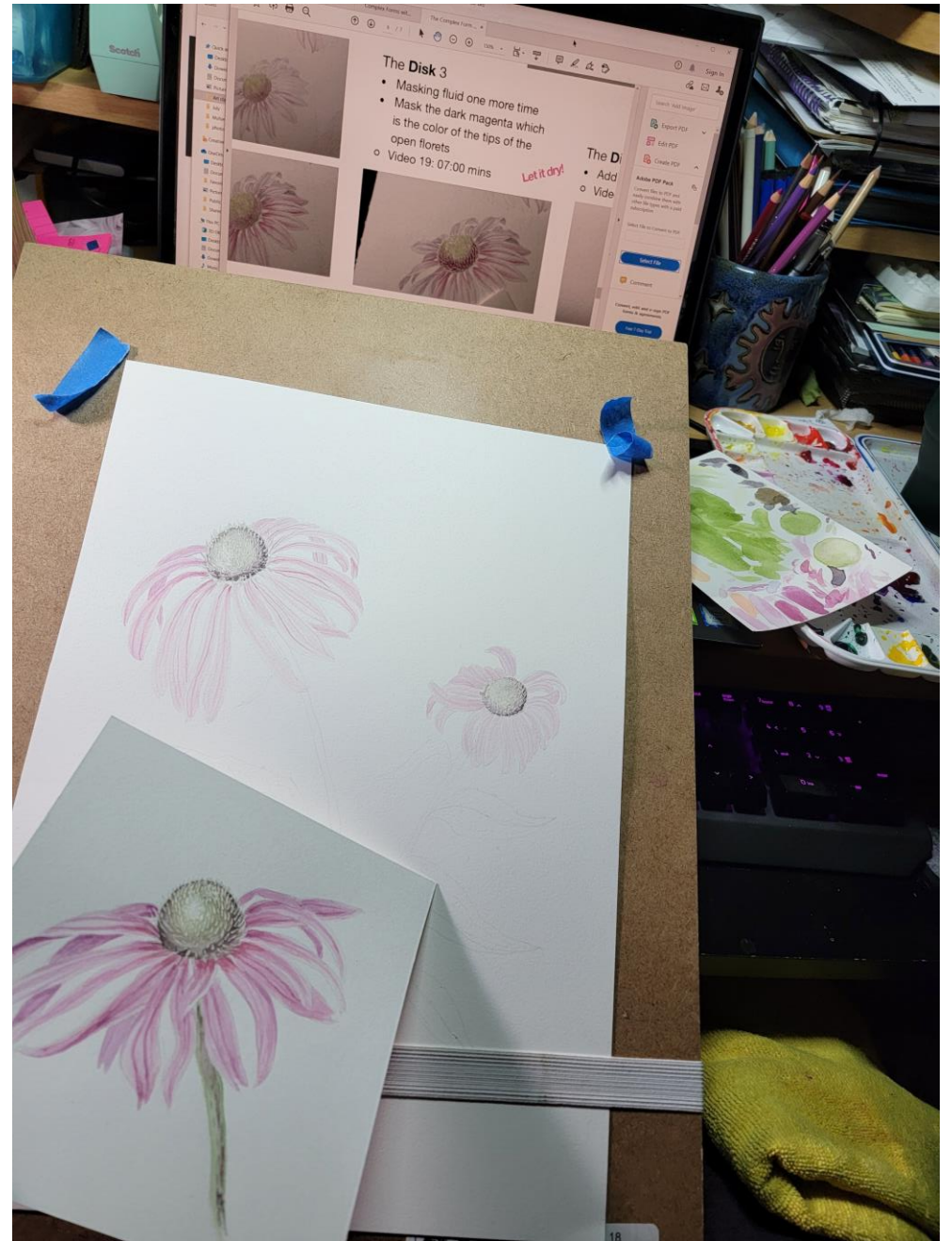




Recording Observations in Nature

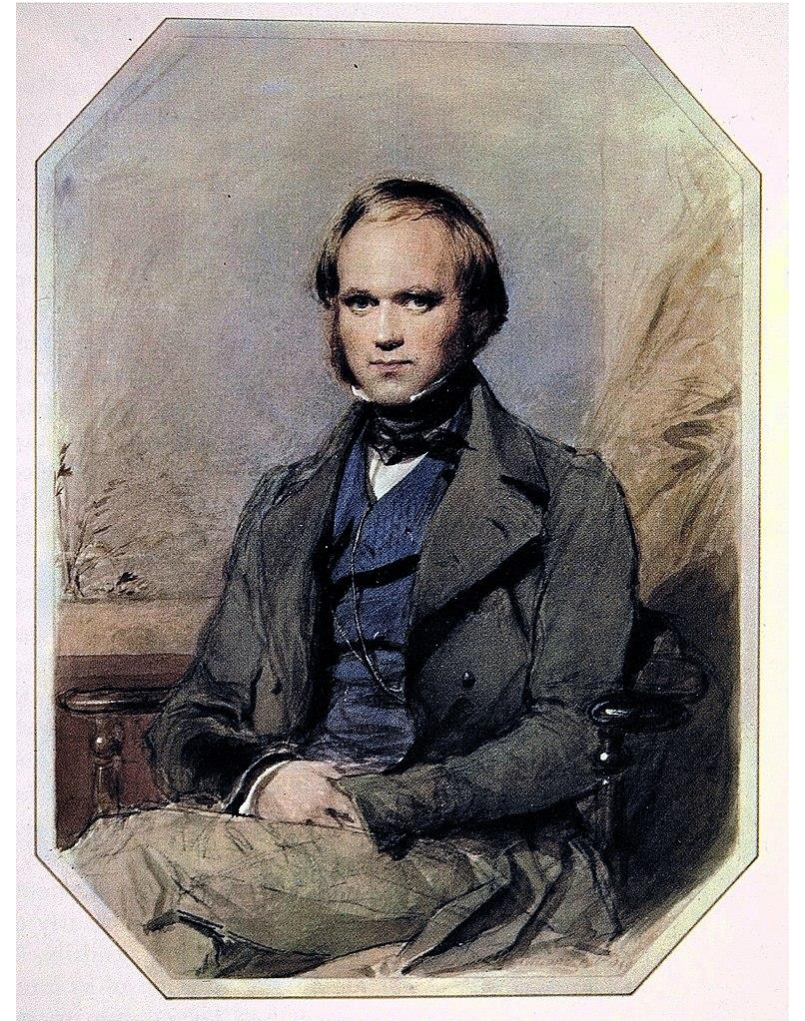
- Nature Journaling
- Field Notes

Naturalist Tradition



Charles Darwin

- (1809-1882)
- Originally training to be a physician, Darwin started as an amateur naturalist
- Signed on to the HMS Beagle and recorded his observations and collected specimens
- Continued his naturalist observations throughout his life



Via Wikimedia commons

John James Audubon

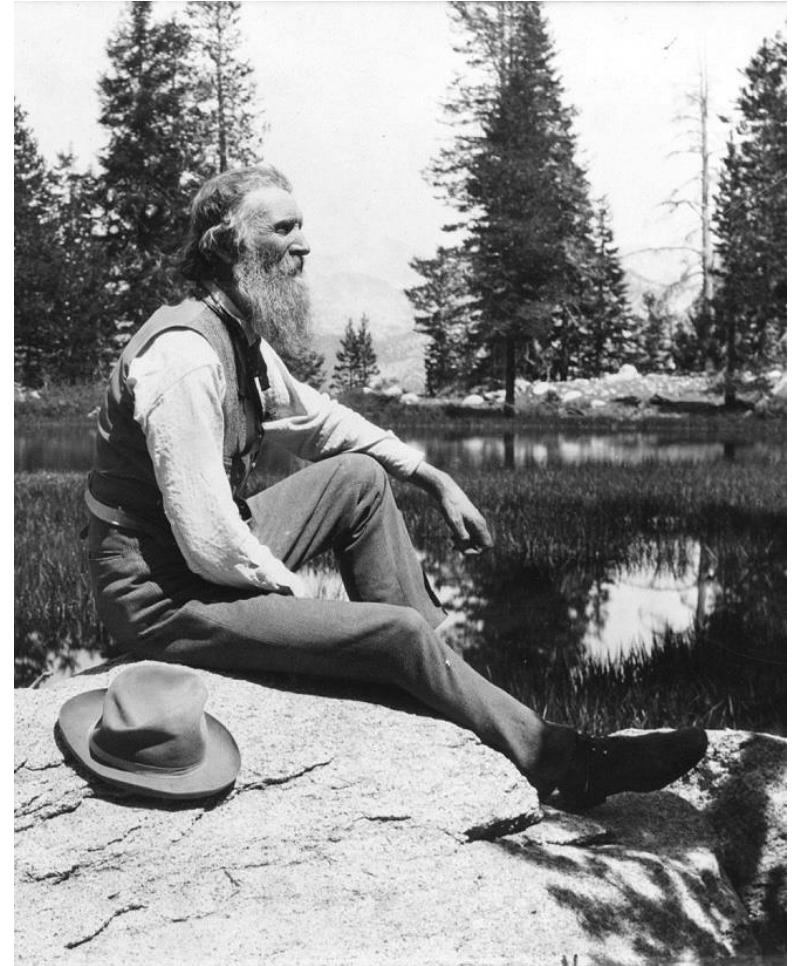
- (1785-1851)
- Audubon was the publisher of one of the most famous ornithological works of all time – “Birds of America.” During his expeditions, he discovered 25 new bird species, and greatly aided in public understanding of bird anatomy and physiology.



Via Wikimedia commons

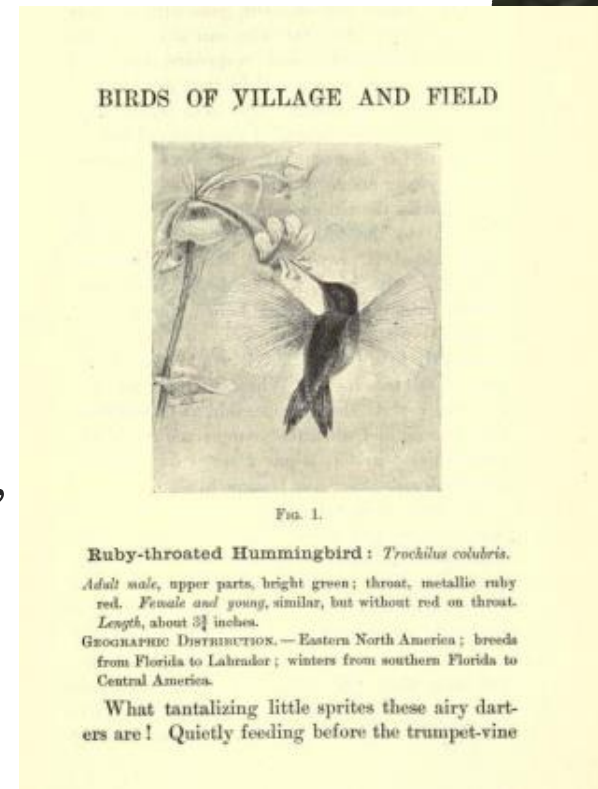
John Muir

- (1838-1914)
- “Father of National Parks”
- Studied botany and geology
- Earliest advocate of the National Park idea
- Muir's three-night camping trip in the Sierra's with President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 could be considered the most significant camping trip in conservation history.
- *“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” – John Muir*



Florence Merriam Bailey

- Merriam was one of the first widely-known female ornithologists in American history.
- She was a pioneer in the field, as she began studying bird behavior as opposed to physical appearance, and railed against the mistreatment, unnecessary killing, and interstate trade of birds.
- She became interested in nature at an early age, as she grew up in a family of amateur and professional naturalists (her father corresponded with John Muir regularly), and studied at Smith College as well as Stanford University.

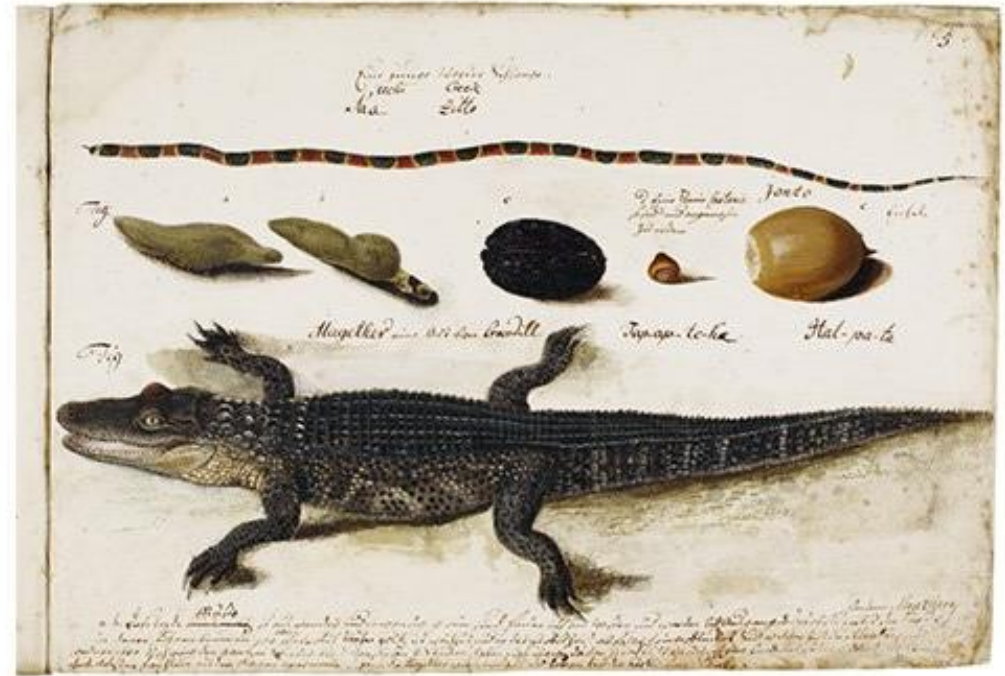


Florence Merriam Bailey and unidentified individuals at Lake Placid, New York, date unknown, #SIA2014-01845 Smithsonian Archives.





PHILIP GEORG VON RECK



As a facilitator for the new colony, von Reck filled his sketchbooks with everything that might be of interest - from fauna and vegetables to scenes of indigenous daily life. Though not trained as a naturalist, he was fascinated by the plants

and wildlife he encountered on his travels, including, as seen here, a water snake, chestnut and an alligator - a "manu" or "spoonbill". Many of his drawings were the first records of new species.

British America

- Philip Georg Von Reck (1711-1798)
- From his notebooks of his time spent in Georgia
- From Explorer's Sketchbooks by Lewis-Jones and Herbert



Amazon exploration

- Henry Walter Bates (1825-1892)
- His observation of Amazonian insects led to his theory of mimicry – named after him “Batesian mimicry”
- From Explorer’s Sketchbooks by Lewis-Jones and Herbert

Modern



The screenshot shows the top portion of the John Muir Laws website. At the top right, there are navigation icons for home, search, and social media. The main header features the text "JOHN MUIR LAWS" in a large, dark blue serif font, followed by "NATURE STEWARDSHIP THROUGH SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ART" in a smaller, dark blue sans-serif font. Below this is a horizontal image of a blue Prismacolor Col-Erase pencil and two birds: a white bird with blue sketch lines and a more detailed brown and yellow bird. Underneath the pencil and birds is the tagline "ATTENTION • CURIOSITY • WONDER". A dark blue navigation bar contains the following links: HOME, BLOG, STORE, EVENTS, NATURE JOURNAL, HOW TO DRAW, 4 TEACHERS, CONTACT, and DONATE. The main content area has a quote: "You have to learn it from the hills and the ants and the weeds and things like that. They do the teaching around here." attributed to —Byrd Baylor. Below the quote is a paragraph of text: "A world of infinite beauty and discovery waits just beyond the point where we usually stop paying attention. Nature offers us peace, a rich and meaningful place to learn. There is no computer program that can replicate the richness of seeing a flower up close, the intrigue of geeking out with bugs, or the calm of laying on your back and watching clouds. The key to developing a closer connection with nature is deliberately enhancing your powers of observation and wonder. Learn how the methods of a field naturalist will help you notice more." To the right of the text is a search bar with the text "SEARCH SITE" above it and "Search..." inside, with a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a promotional banner that says "REGISTER NOW FOR WILD WONDER NATURE JOURNALING CONFERENCE!" and features the "Wild Wonder" logo in a green, cursive font.

JOHN MUIR LAWS
NATURE STEWARDSHIP THROUGH
SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ART

ATTENTION • CURIOSITY • WONDER

HOME BLOG STORE EVENTS NATURE JOURNAL HOW TO DRAW 4 TEACHERS CONTACT DONATE

"You have to learn it from the hills and the ants and the weeds and things like that. They do the teaching around here."
—Byrd Baylor

A world of infinite beauty and discovery waits just beyond the point where we usually stop paying attention. Nature offers us peace, a rich and meaningful place to learn. There is no computer program that can replicate the richness of seeing a flower up close, the intrigue of geeking out with bugs, or the calm of laying on your back and watching clouds. The key to developing a closer connection with nature is deliberately enhancing your powers of observation and wonder. Learn how the methods of a field naturalist will help you notice more.

SEARCH SITE
Search... 

REGISTER NOW FOR WILD WONDER
NATURE JOURNALING CONFERENCE!

Wild Wonder

- <https://johnmuirlaws.com/>



Starting out

- I notice
- I wonder
- It reminds me of

I notice...

- Focus on drawing or writing about what you can observe with your senses.
- What sounds do you hear?
- What colors, shapes, and behaviors can you see?



I wonder....

- As you write or draw, note questions you have about what you are observing.
- Did you observe an interesting pattern or behavior that you wonder about?



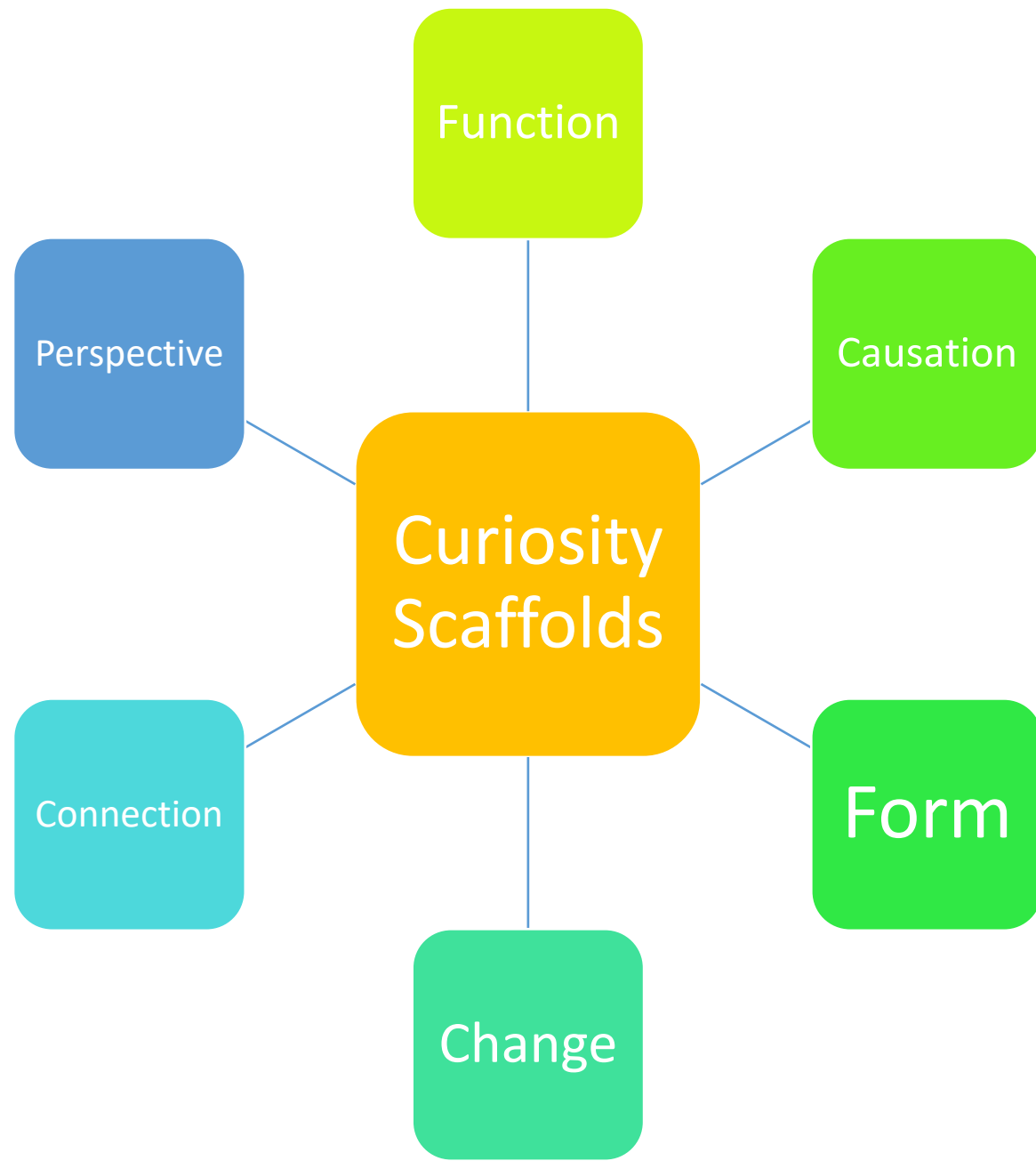
It reminds me of...



Does what you are observing remind you of something else you have observed?

Does it remind you of an event in your life when you observed something similar or felt the same way?

Chaffee County, near Salida



Points of View

Perspective

Function

How does it work?

Causation

Why is it like this?

Curiosity Scaffolds

Connection

What is it like?

Form

What is it like?

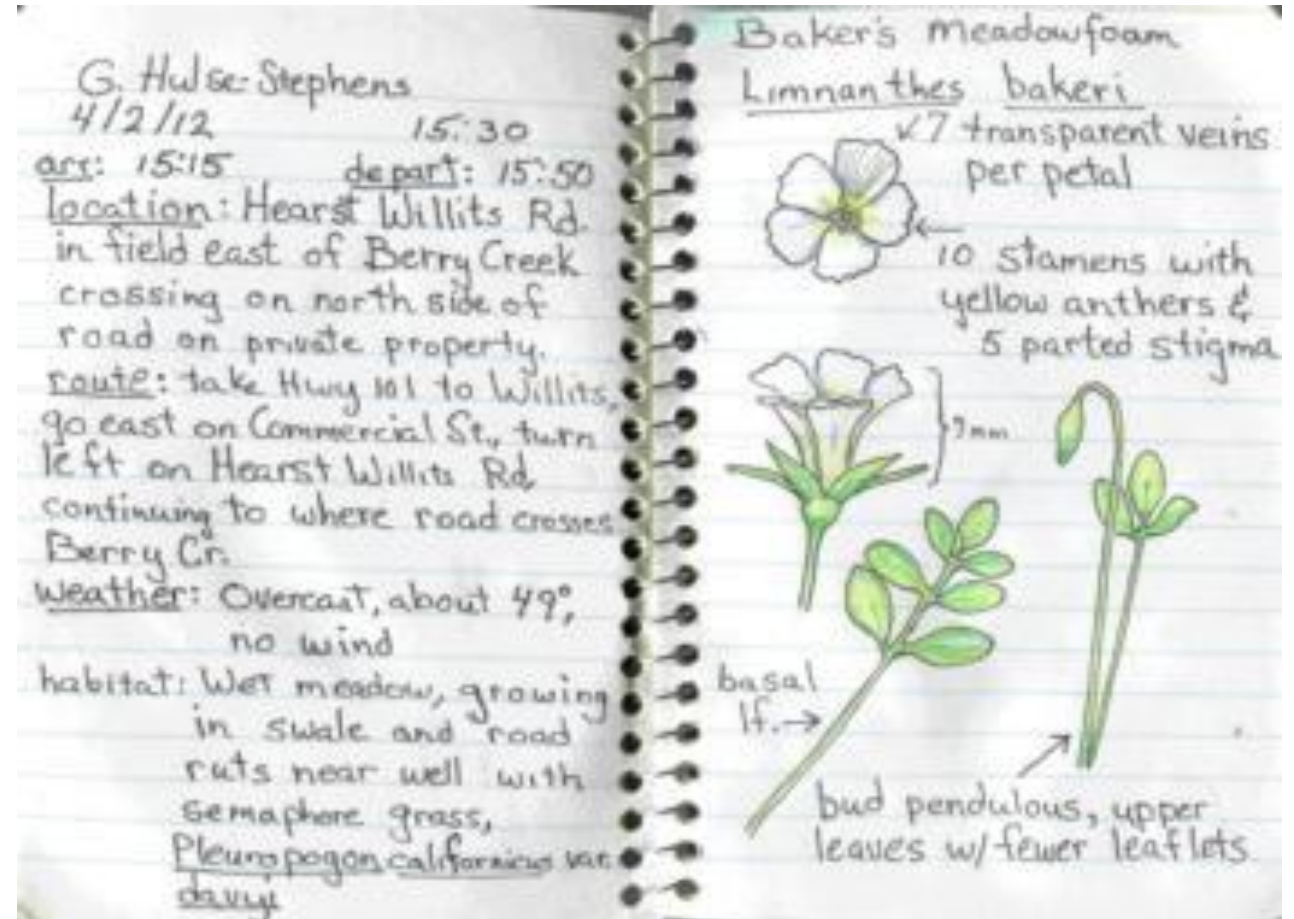
What's next?

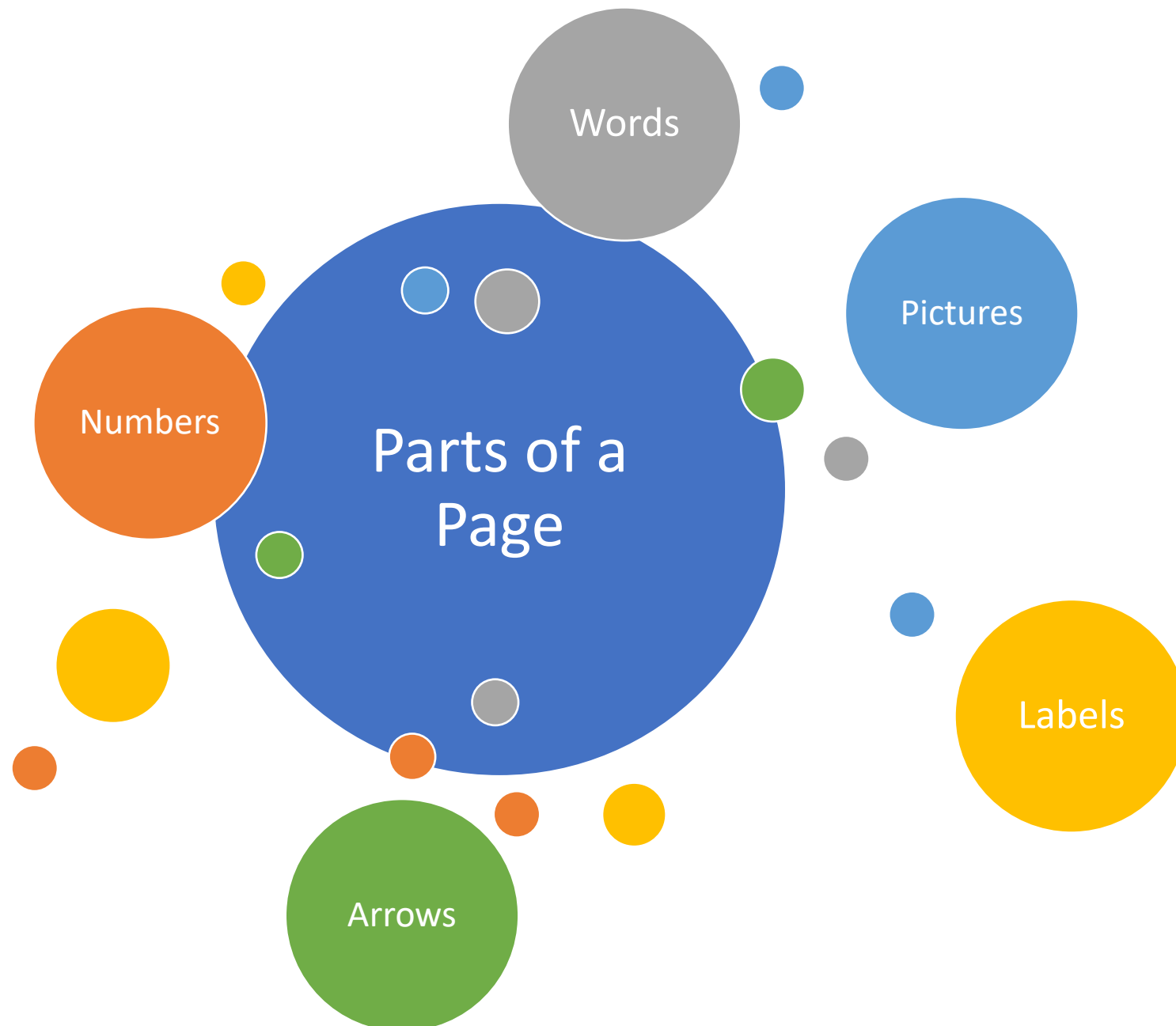
Change

Field Notes

Each entry should include:

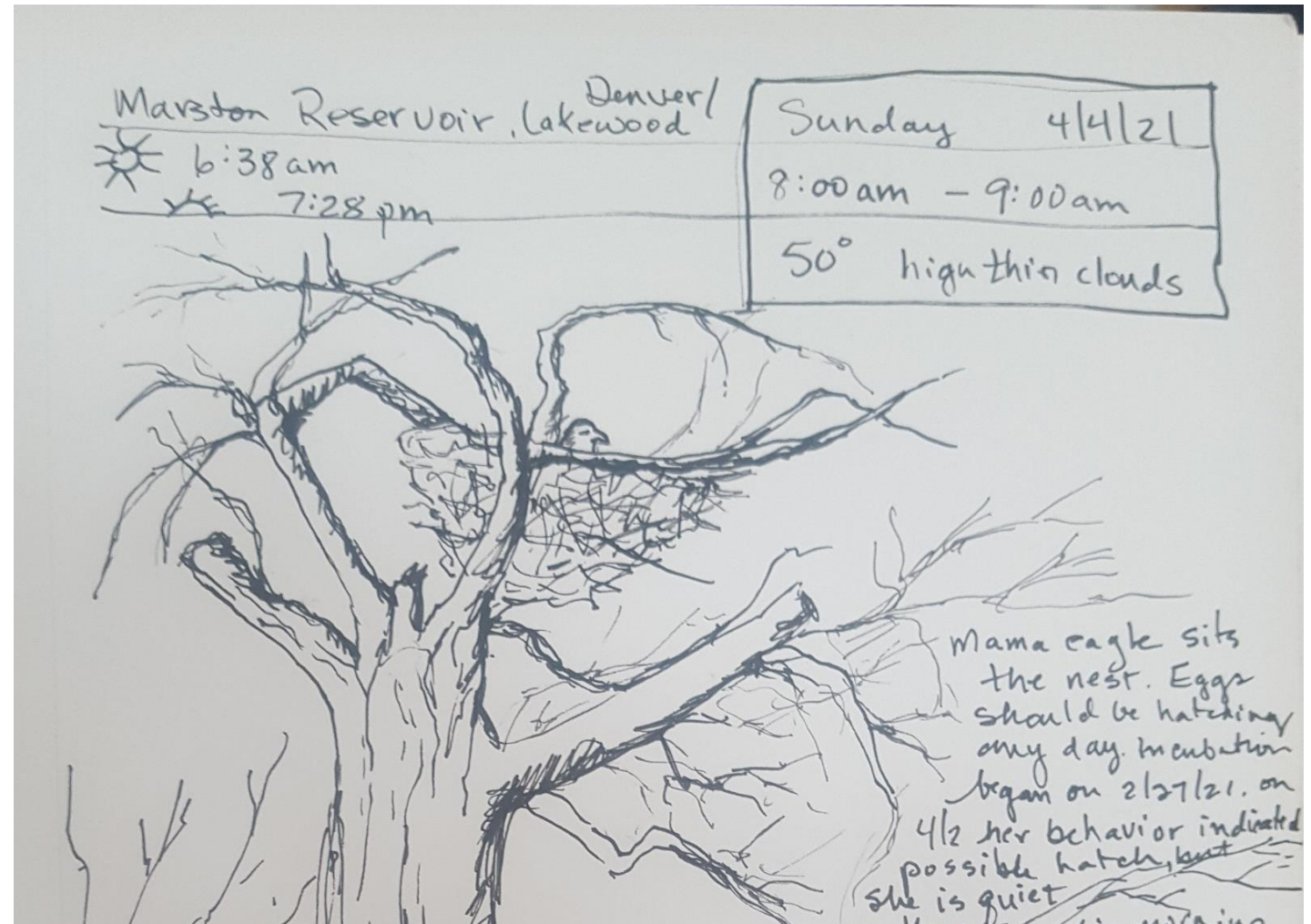
- Name
- Date
- Descriptive title
- Page number
- Location
- Metadata: lat, lon, time, temp, weather conditions





Start with the “meta data”

- Where are you?
- When?
- What is the weather?



Take a few minutes to just observe

I notice

I wonder

It reminds me of



Drawing

- 50% Observation
- Make it a habit
- Look for basic shapes
- Look for the lights and darks
- Find your own style





Sketching tips

- Include a scale
- Annotate
- Show multiple views
- Choose drawing approach that fits the need of the situation
- Use drawing as a tool for making observations
- Put in the “pencil miles”



Steps to start drawing

Observe

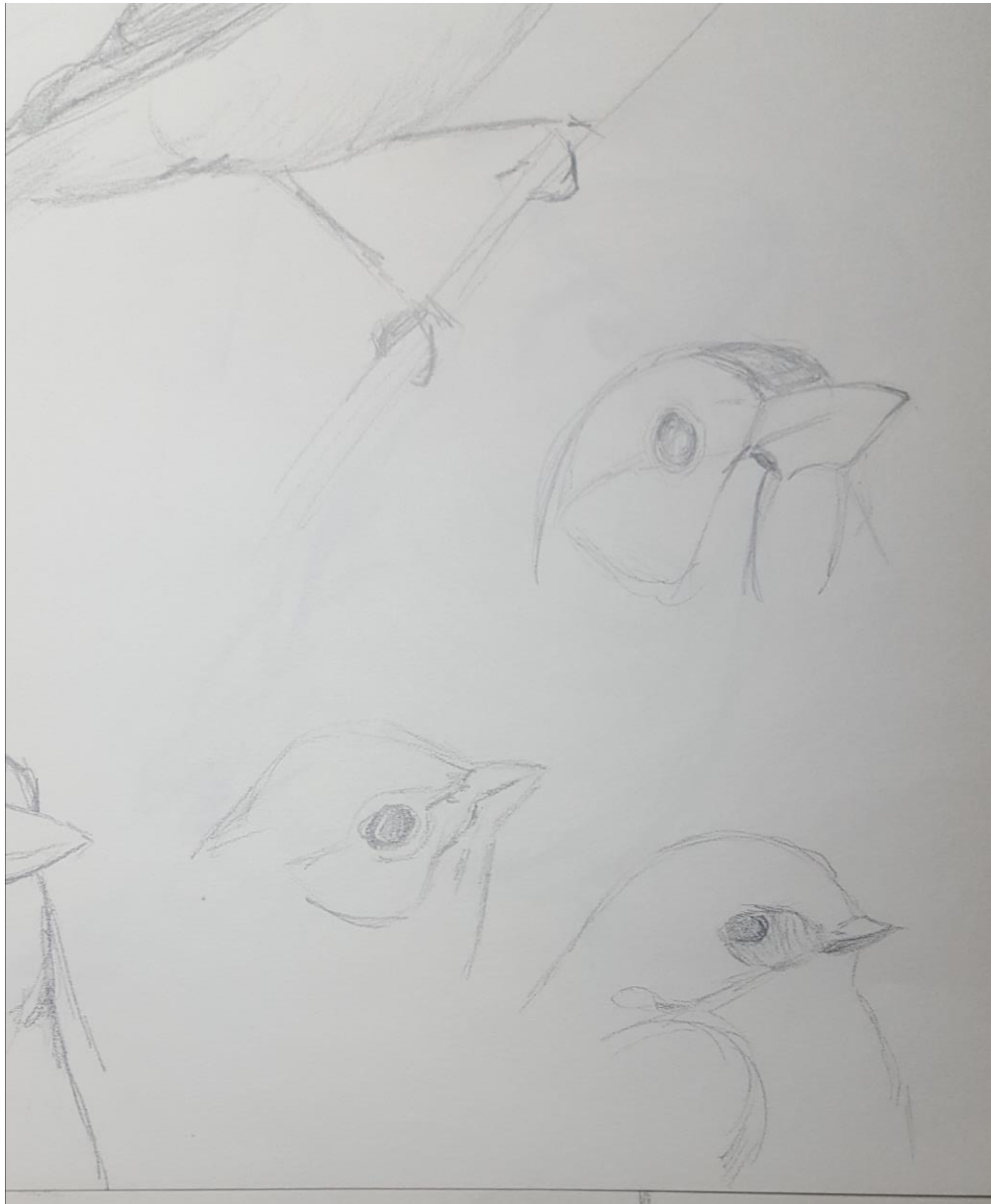
Block in the basic shape

Check and modify the basic shape

Pay attention to the negative shapes

Add details

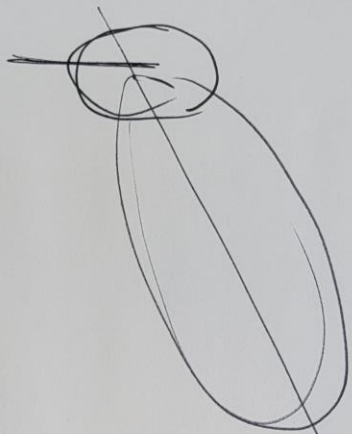
Clean up



Shapes



Posture

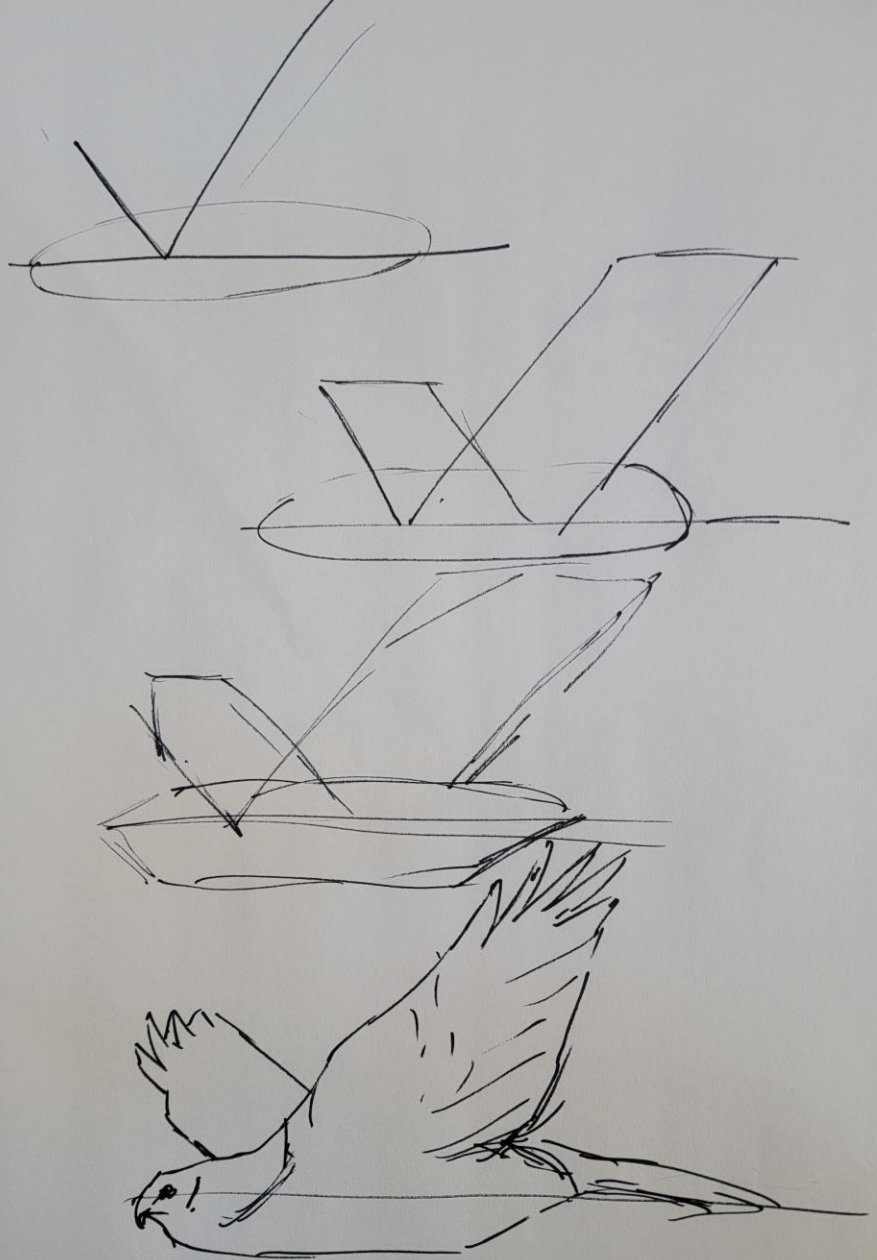


Beak/eye
line



Shape
Neg. Spaces



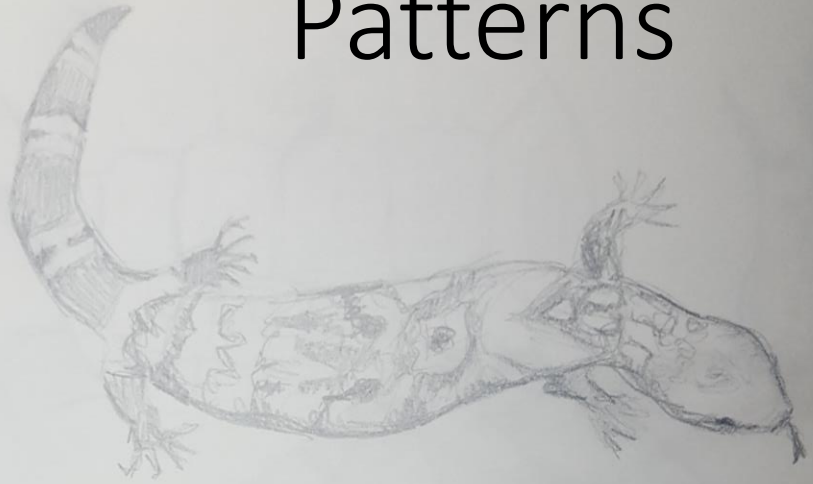




Two minute sketch



Patterns



Saturday, Oct 24, 2020

Home

☀ 7:20am 6:07pm

39.5, -105.1

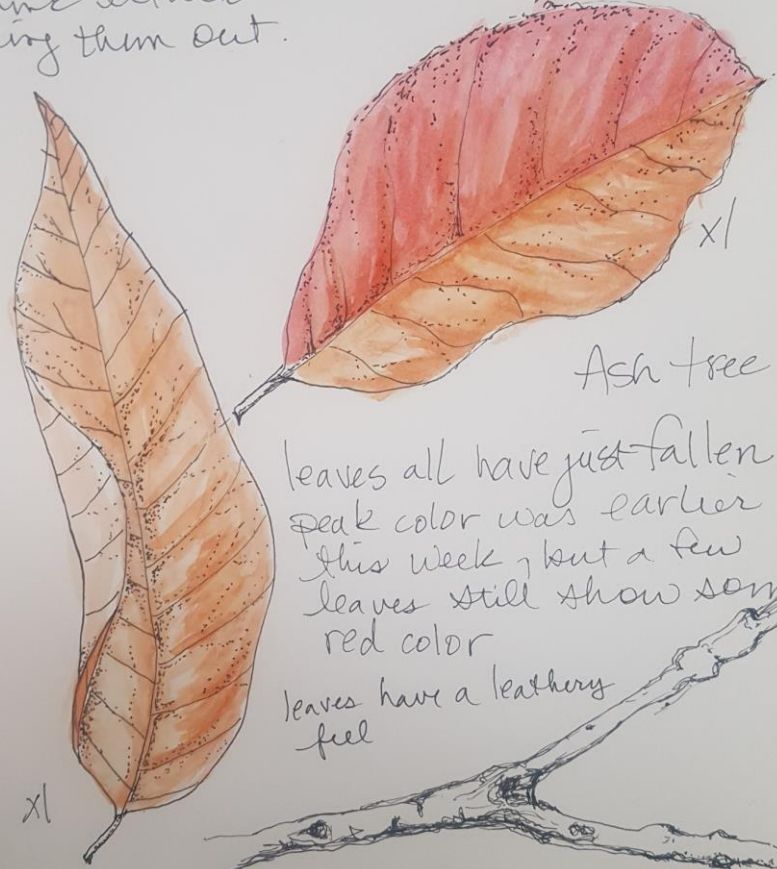
🌙 3:20pm - (12:23am)

1897.9m 5570.8ft

Cold, clear morning

39°

Everything covered with frost this morning. The bird seed cake I had in the feeder was gone this morning. I think either raccoons or squirrels are taking them out.

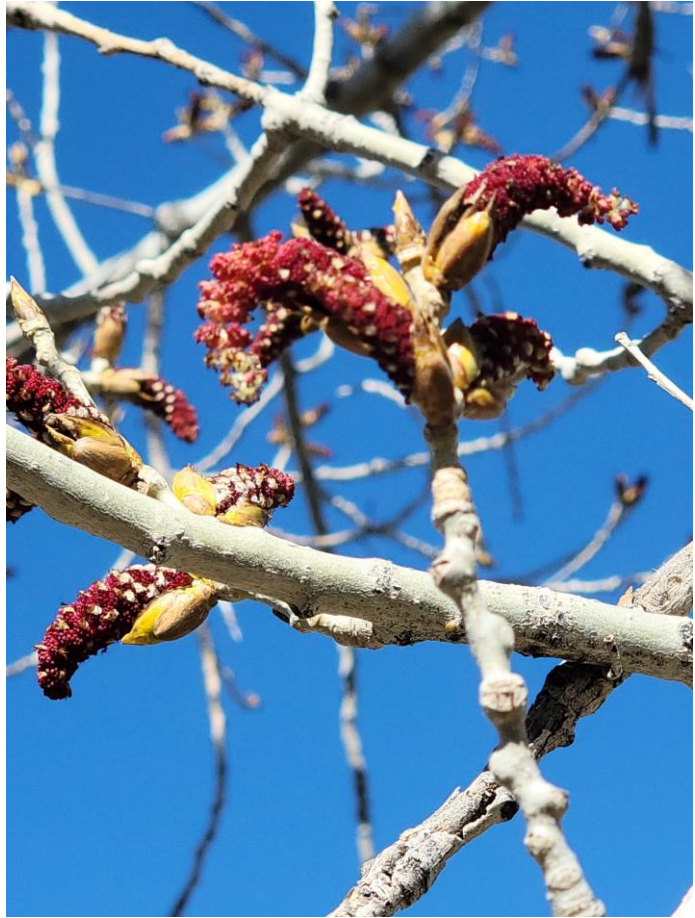


Ash tree

leaves all have just fallen
peak color was earlier
this week, but a few
leaves still show some
red color

leaves have a leathery
feel

Negative Space

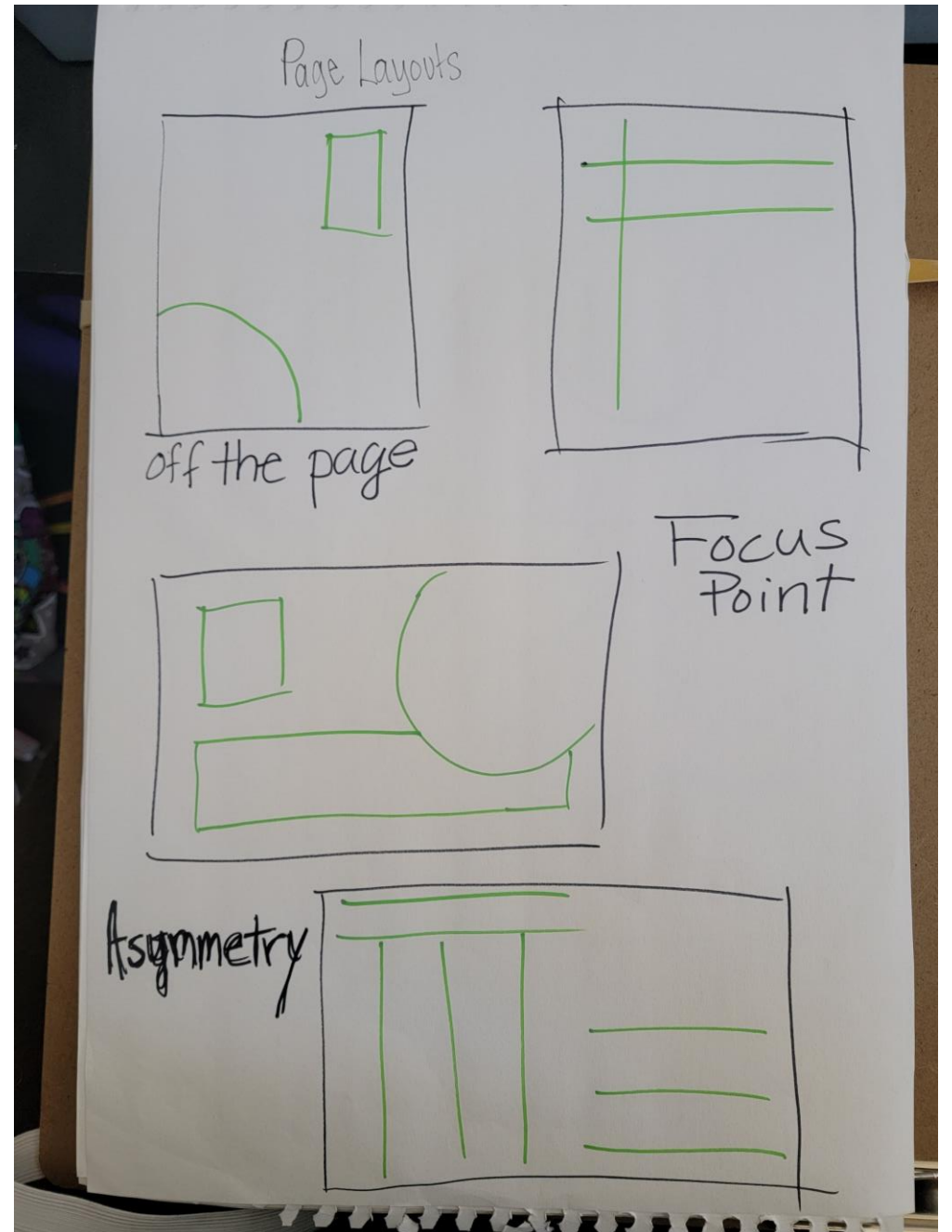
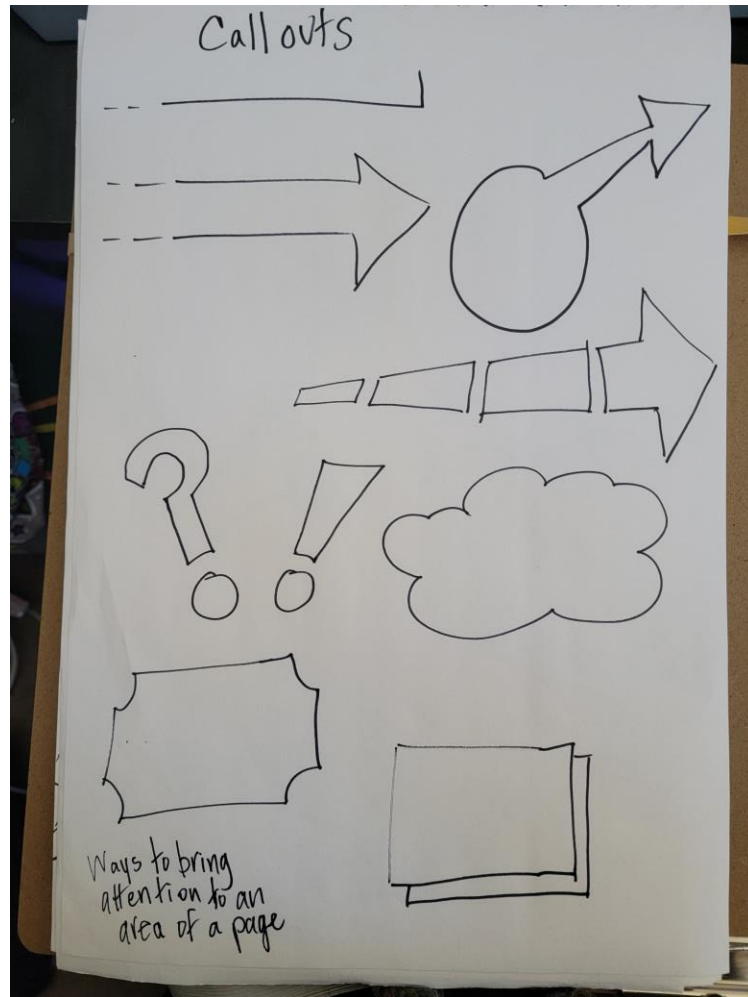


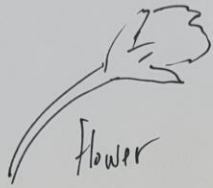
Lights and Darks





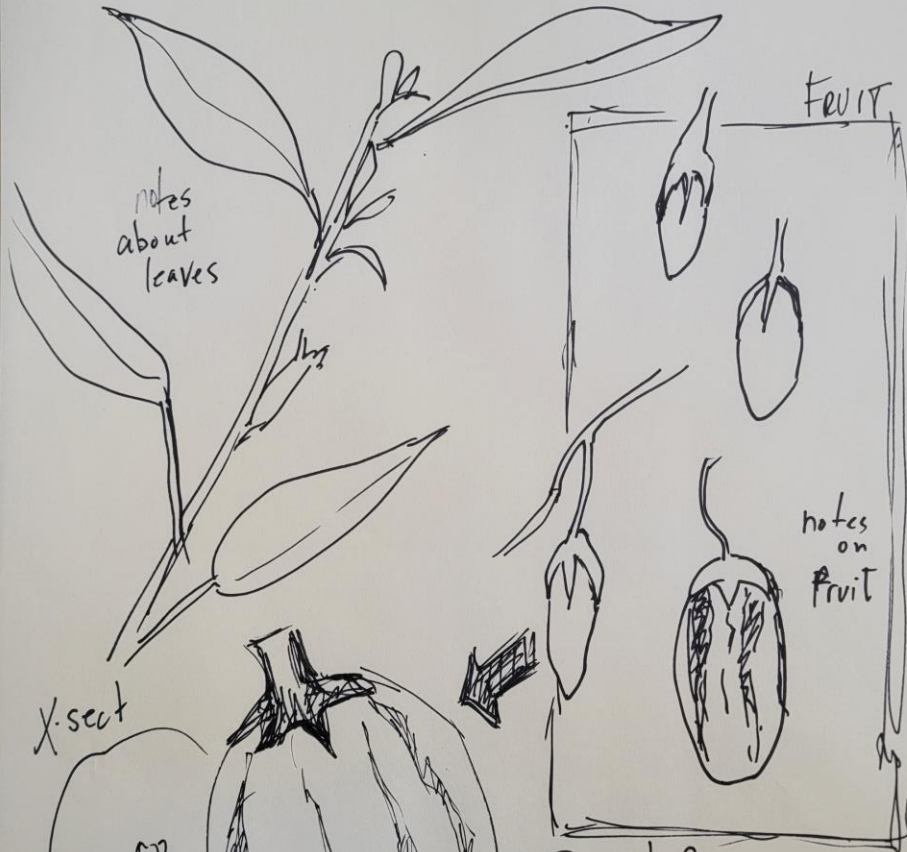
Putting together pages





flower

TITLE



notes about leaves

fruit

notes on fruit

X-sect

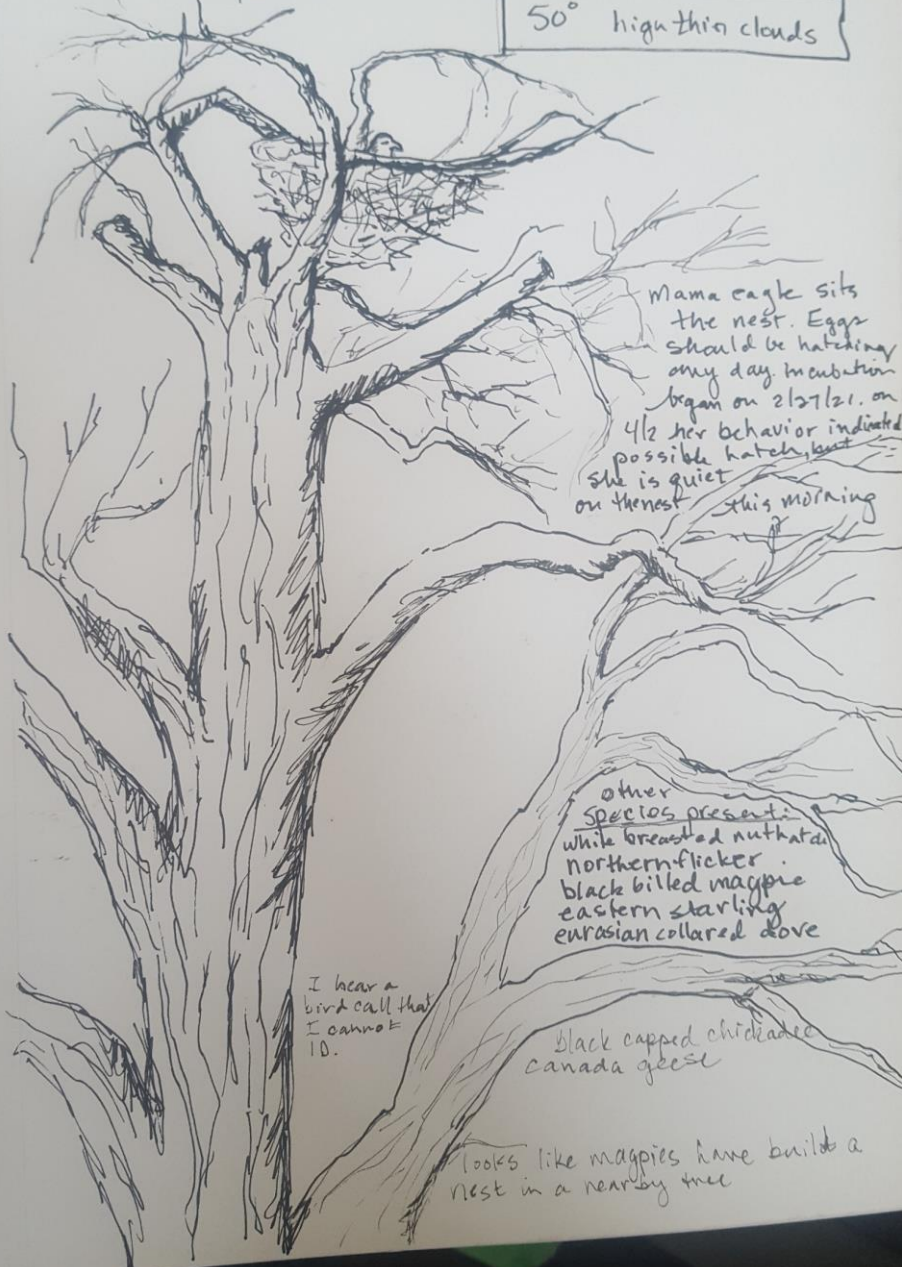


actual size

Scientific name

Marston Reservoir, Denver/Lakewood
 ☀ 6:38 am
 ☀ 7:28 pm

Sunday	4/4/21
8:00 am - 9:00 am	
50° high thin clouds	



Mama eagle sits the nest. Eggs should be hatching any day. Incubation began on 2/27/21. on 4/2 her behavior indicated possible hatch, but she is quiet on the nest this morning

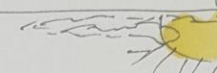
Other species present:
 white breasted nuthatch
 northern flicker
 black billed magpie
 eastern starling
 Eurasian collared dove

I hear a bird call that I cannot ID.

black capped chickadee
 Canada goose

looks like magpies have built a nest in a nearby tree

Chatfield State Park Fox Run area

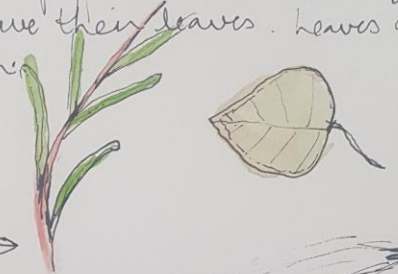
Saturday	10/23/20
39.52 - 105.08	
5456' 1663m	
50° 	

☀ 7:20 am - 6:07 pm
 ○ 3:20 pm - (12:23 am)

01:00 pm
 Light wind, high clouds
 It has warmed up, but a storm is headed our way. The conditions are hazy due to the smoke from the Cameron Peak and Troublesome fires near Estes Park.

Cottonwoods along the bank have lost most of their leaves. The exception is the seedling cottonwoods, they still have their leaves. Leaves on the willows are still greenish.

White Pelican x3
 flying over, landing out by the spit



x3 Ring-billed Gull

4 double breasted cormorants

also saw small gull - different wing flap



white short bill American Coot
 - dipper
 hanging out about 20m from the shore
 ~55 at this spot they are eating plant matter





Along with the rain,
Spring brings the
return of the
Broad-tailed
Hummingbirds.

I heard the
zipping of
the male
as he protects
his perch.

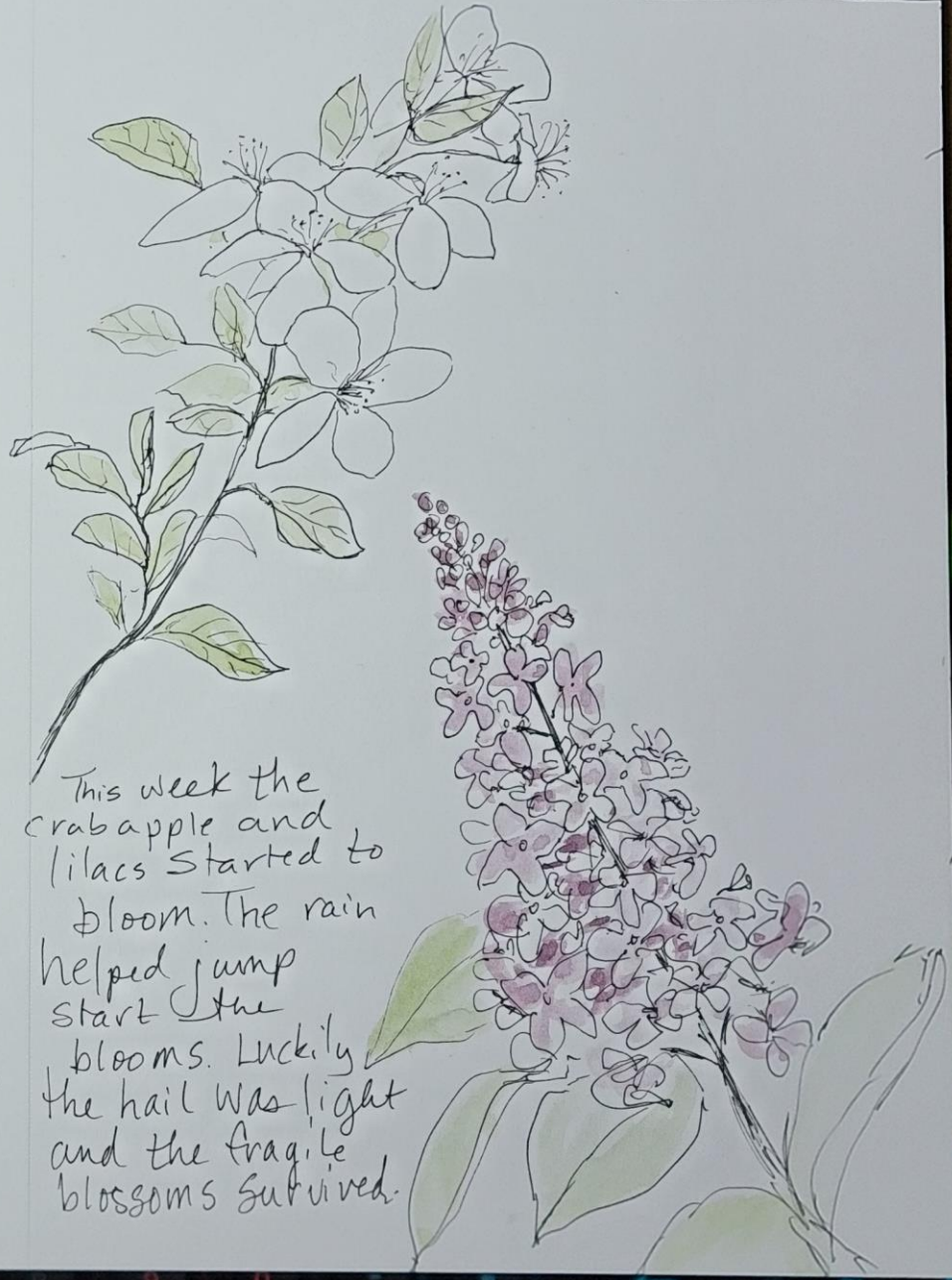
Rain this week -
Waking up to the low
hanging clouds

Trailmark

Wed 5/4/22

...

... rain/hail



This week the
crabapple and
lilacs started to
bloom. The rain
helped jump
start the
blooms. Luckily
the hail was light
and the fragile
blossoms survived.

Practice
time

I notice

I wonder

It reminds

me of

2 minute sketch

Blind Contour

- Move your eye at the same speed as the pencil
- Continuous line, don't pick up pencil
- Don't look at your paper











Questions?

Resources

- John Muir Laws – extensive archive of video lessons
<https://johnmuirlaws.com/blog-archives/>

