

EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH

# Our Great Big BACKYARD

AN  
ACTIVITY AND  
ADVENTURE  
GUIDE

**FACT: AUGUST 25, 2016 MARKS 100 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE!  
PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON SIGNED A BILL THAT REQUIRED THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO  
“CONSERVE SCENERY AND THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC OBJECTS AND WILDLIFE THEREIN” ON AUGUST 25, 1916.**

Author photograph by Joe Pugliese



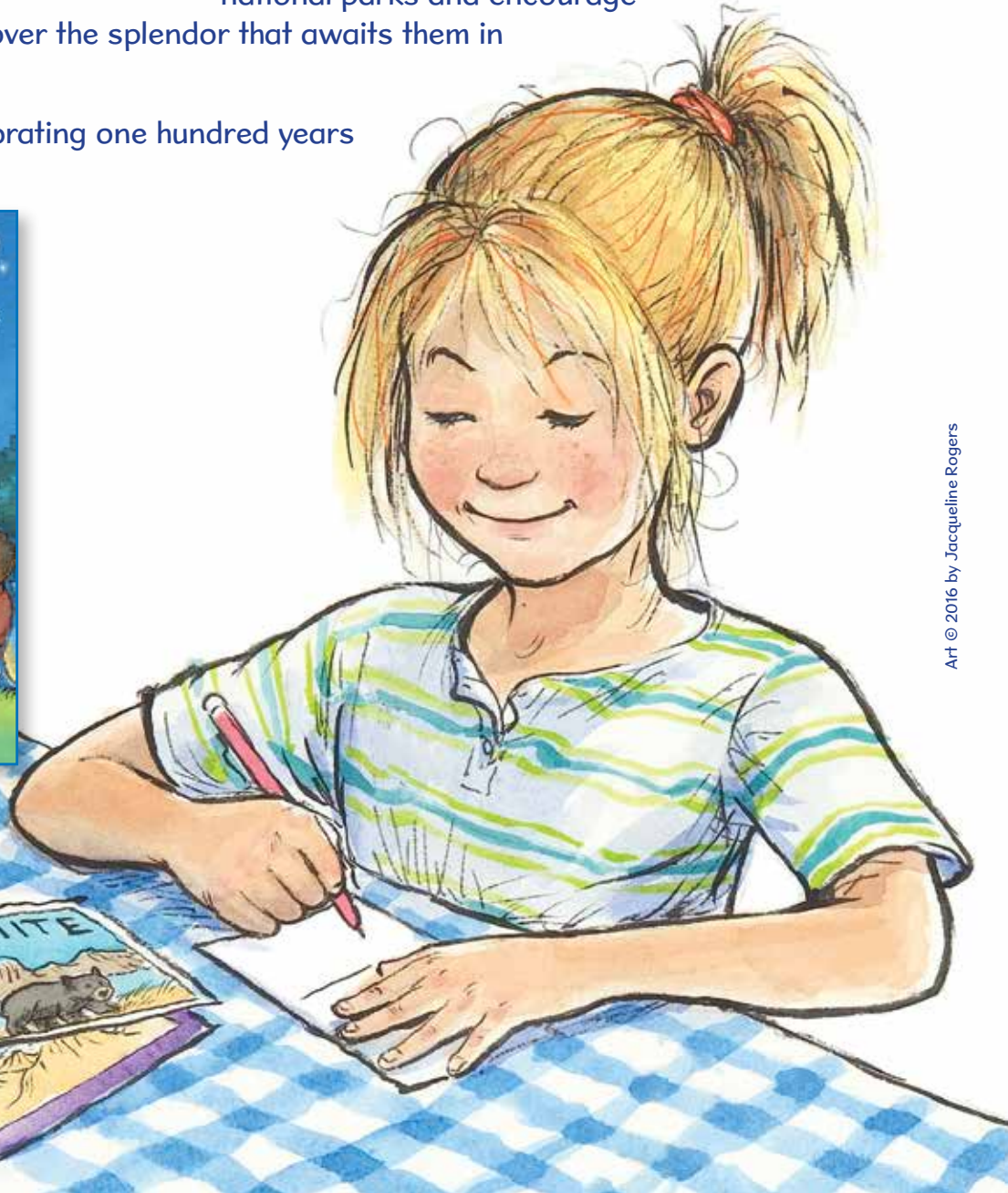
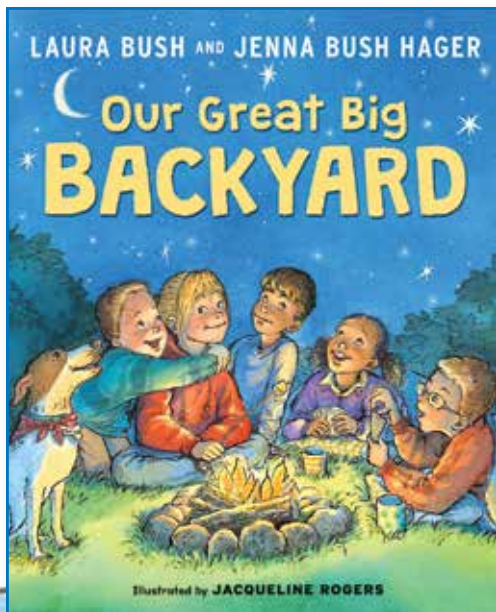
**DEAR READERS,**

When was the last time you experienced the world outside your door? *Our Great Big Backyard*, by Laura Bush and Jenna Bush Hager, is the story of a young girl who leaves her friends—and her screens—for a summer road trip with her family to visit U.S. national parks. Jane soon discovers that the wonder of the outdoors is more exciting than any electronic world.

Inside this booklet you'll find activities and resources for your store, home, school, or library. These pages will help your young readers learn more about our national parks and encourage

them to explore, play, and discover the splendor that awaits them in their own backyards.

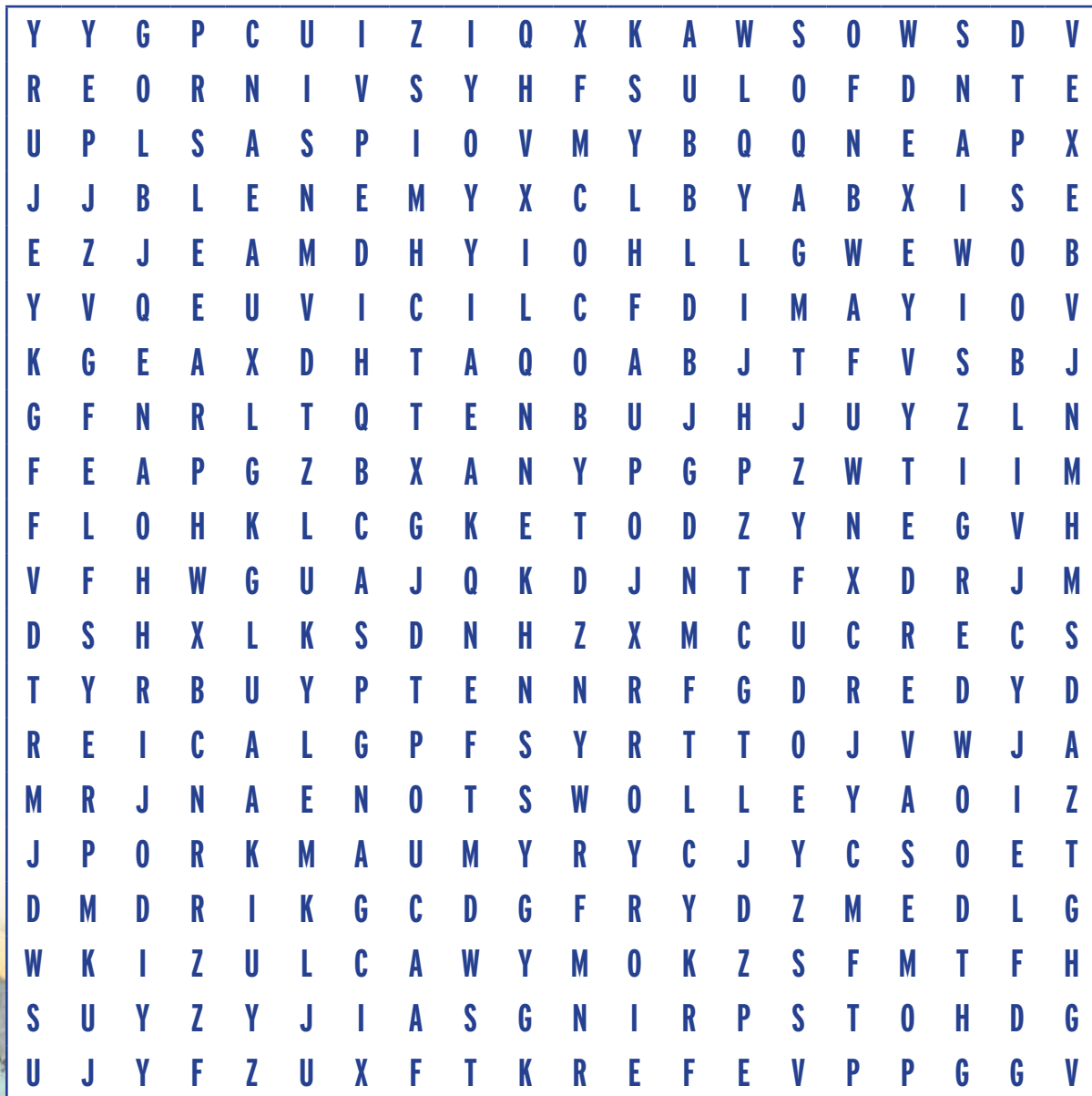
Get outside and join us in celebrating one hundred years of the National Park Service!



Art © 2016 by Jacqueline Rogers

# WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE . . . OUR NATIONAL PARKS?

Jane and her family visit several famous national parks on their road trip, including Big Bend, the Everglades, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite, but there are many more across the country. See how many parks from the list you can find in the puzzle below! Which ones have you visited?



Badlands

Big Bend

Death Valley

Everglades

Glacier

Grand Canyon

Hot Springs

Mesa Verde

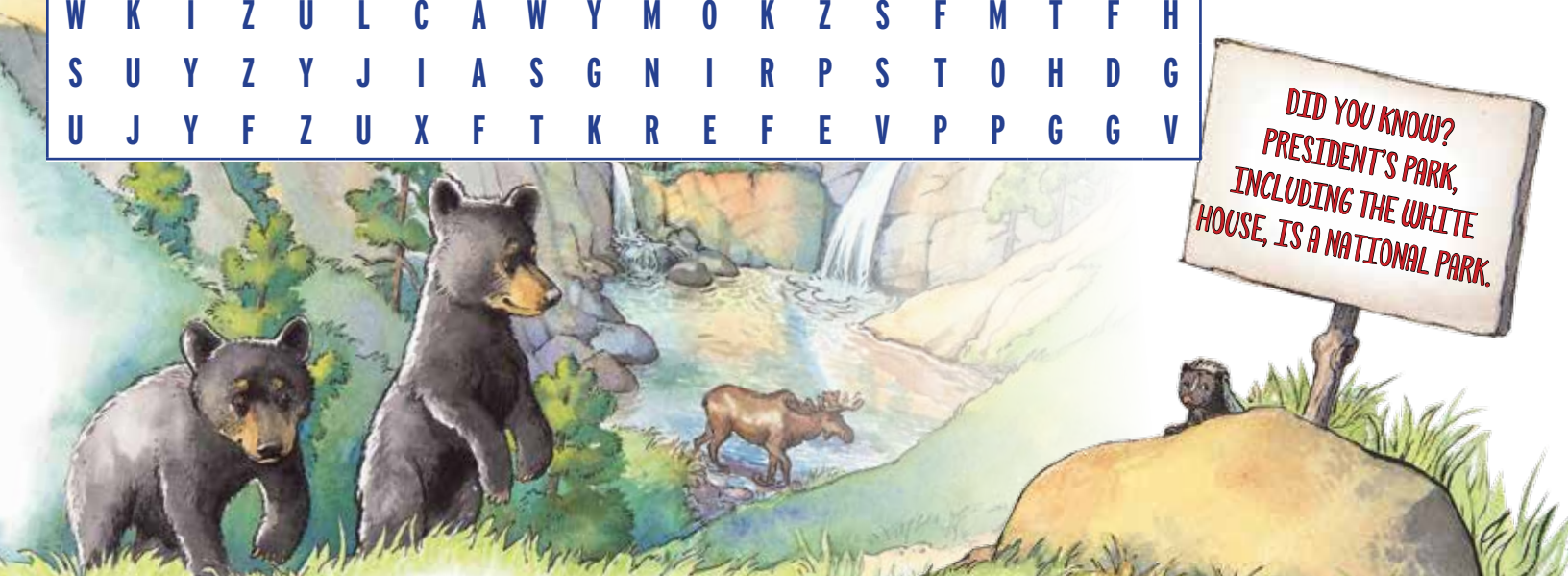
Olympic

Redwood

Yellowstone

Yosemite

**DID YOU KNOW?  
PRESIDENT'S PARK,  
INCLUDING THE WHITE  
HOUSE, IS A NATIONAL PARK.**



# WHAT'S IN *YOUR* GREAT BIG BACKYARD?

You don't have to travel across the country like Jane and her family to appreciate the beauty of the great outdoors—you can find it in your own backyard! Draw a picture in the space below of a place in your neighborhood where you enjoy spending time outside.



# JANE'S LICENSE PLATE CHALLENGE

How many U.S. state license plates do you think Jane and her family see on their Great American Road Trip? Next time you're on a long car ride, see how many you can spot!

<input type="checkbox"/> ALABAMA	<input type="checkbox"/> ILLINOIS	<input type="checkbox"/> MISSOURI	<input type="checkbox"/> OREGON	<input type="checkbox"/> VERMONT
<input type="checkbox"/> ALASKA	<input type="checkbox"/> INDIANA	<input type="checkbox"/> MONTANA	<input type="checkbox"/> PENNSYLVANIA	<input type="checkbox"/> VIRGINIA
<input type="checkbox"/> ARIZONA	<input type="checkbox"/> IOWA	<input type="checkbox"/> NEBRASKA	<input type="checkbox"/> RHODE ISLAND	<input type="checkbox"/> WASHINGTON
<input type="checkbox"/> ARKANSAS	<input type="checkbox"/> KANSAS	<input type="checkbox"/> NEVADA	<input type="checkbox"/> SOUTH CAROLINA	<input type="checkbox"/> WASHINGTON, DC
<input type="checkbox"/> CALIFORNIA	<input type="checkbox"/> KENTUCKY	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW HAMPSHIRE	<input type="checkbox"/> SOUTH DAKOTA	<input type="checkbox"/> WEST VIRGINIA
<input type="checkbox"/> COLORADO	<input type="checkbox"/> LOUISIANA	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW JERSEY	<input type="checkbox"/> TENNESSEE	<input type="checkbox"/> WISCONSIN
<input type="checkbox"/> CONNECTICUT	<input type="checkbox"/> MAINE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEXICO	<input type="checkbox"/> TEXAS	<input type="checkbox"/> WYOMING
<input type="checkbox"/> DELAWARE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARYLAND	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW YORK	<input type="checkbox"/> UTAH	
<input type="checkbox"/> FLORIDA	<input type="checkbox"/> MASSACHUSETTS	<input type="checkbox"/> NORTH CAROLINA		
<input type="checkbox"/> GEORGIA	<input type="checkbox"/> MICHIGAN	<input type="checkbox"/> NORTH DAKOTA		
<input type="checkbox"/> HAWAII	<input type="checkbox"/> MINNESOTA	<input type="checkbox"/> OHIO		
<input type="checkbox"/> IDAHO	<input type="checkbox"/> MISSISSIPPI	<input type="checkbox"/> OKLAHOMA		

DID YOU KNOW?  
THERE IS A  
NATIONAL PARK  
SITE IN EVERY STATE.



# FOR TEACHERS: BEYOND THE BACKYARD

## Writing and Discussion Questions

- How was Jane planning to spend her summer? What plans did her parents have for her instead? How did she feel about this?
- To where did Jane's family travel? What did Jane and her family do together? Would you have enjoyed these activities?
- Jane loves using technology to stay connected to her friends. How do her feelings about technology change as the summer progresses?
- In what ways does Jane use her imagination to add fun and adventure to her trip?
- How did Jane decide to share her summer experience with her friends?



## Extension Activities

- Have students explore the list of national parks and national historic parks at the end of the book and choose one of the parks to research. Ask students to create a drawing, an informational report, a poster, or a presentation slide (e.g. using Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides) to share their findings with the class.
- Use Google Earth to locate national parks across the United States. Then give students two index cards. On one card they should write the name of the national park, and on the other card, the state in which it is located. Collect the cards and shuffle them. Have students use the Google Earth link and work cooperatively to sort the cards into pairs. When the students are familiar with the parks and their locations, shuffle the cards again, place them facedown in rows, and then have students play Memory by turning over two cards at a time to find matches.
- Jane's dad uses a map to plan their road trip. Discuss the purpose and features of a map. Show examples of different kinds of maps. Then have students make a map of their own. They can draw a map of their town or street, school or home, bedroom or classroom. Older students can include a map key. Display the completed maps in the classroom.



- Ask students, "If you were going on 'The Great American Road Trip,' where would you choose to go? Why? What would you do there?" Have students design a travel brochure. They can use a template or design their own. They should include their destination and location, provide drawings or photos, and add a description of activities.
- Discuss: Why are national parks important? What must visitors do to protect these parks? What can we do to protect our planet and natural resources? Can one person make a difference? How? List suggestions on a chart. Then have students design a poster conveying one of these ideas. Hang the posters around the school to raise awareness of the environment.

# FOR TEACHERS: BEYOND THE BACKYARD

## Extension Activities (continued)

- Jane's family encounters many animals on their road trip, including alligators in the Everglades and black bears in Yellowstone. Have students choose an animal found in our country's national parks and research this animal using books and online resources. Have students share their information by writing an informational report. It should include an opening sentence, several facts, and a closing sentence. Younger students can do shared research as a class with the teacher and include drawings of their animal.
- Jane is fascinated by the stars. Have students learn about the constellations and create a sky chart. You can use books and other resources such as the NASA website (<http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/starfinder/en/>) to help you.
- Jane and her family visit the Mississippi River and the Colorado River. Research rivers in the United States and around the world. Which is the longest river in the United States? In the world?
- Jane sends a postcard to her friends. Have students design a postcard depicting one of their favorite destinations. On the other side, they should write to a friend or family member. If possible, have students mail their postcards!
- As students read this book, have them list unfamiliar words that they come across, define them, and create a dictionary. Students might include words such as "humiliating," "treacherous," "fluttering," "possession," "brilliant," or "spectacular."
- Ask students to pretend they are preparing for a camping trip. What supplies would they need? Have them list what they would need and how they plan to transport these supplies. If possible, plan an actual outing for stargazing and nature-watching!
- Encourage students to take a walk in their own backyard. Ask them to observe, take photographs or make drawings, and write about their observations. Ask students if they are surprised by what they can find right in their own backyard!
- Take students on a virtual field trip to the national parks that Jane and her family visited using the links below:

### Everglades National Park

[www.discovery.com/tv-shows/discovery-presents/videos/everglades-national-park/](http://www.discovery.com/tv-shows/discovery-presents/videos/everglades-national-park/)

### Big Bend National Park

[abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/weekend-window-big-bend-national-park-10963308](http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/weekend-window-big-bend-national-park-10963308)

### Grand Canyon National Park

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2X4U1mQzoE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2X4U1mQzoE)

### Yellowstone National Park

[video.nationalgeographic.com/video/travel-source/yellowstone-overview](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/travel-source/yellowstone-overview)

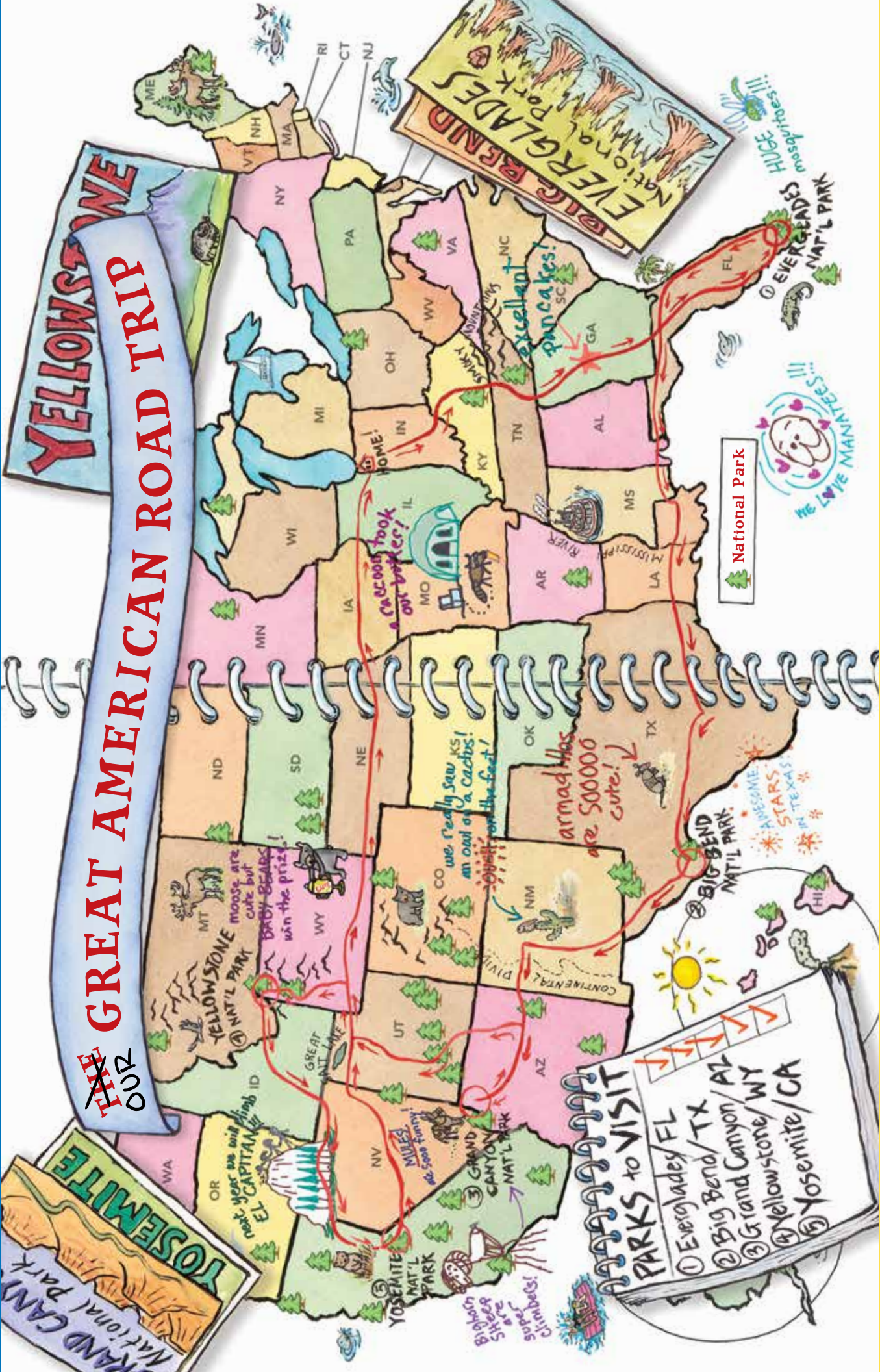
### Yosemite National Park

[video.nationalgeographic.com/video/yosemite-overview](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/yosemite-overview)



Teaching guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, a first grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

SHOW US HOW YOU PLAY IN YOUR GREAT BIG BACKYARD . . . #FindYourPark



**THE GREAT AMERICAN ROAD TRIP**  
OUR

- PARKS TO VISIT**
- ① Everglades/FL
  - ② Big Bend/TX
  - ③ Grand Canyon/AZ
  - ④ Yellowstone/WY
  - ⑤ Yosemite/CA

National Park

**HARPER**

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