



Prairie Mountain Challenge Options:

ART. Ask students to paint or draw a picture of the Manitoba Escarpment exposing its ecosystems' distinct features, and the relative progression from one ecosystem to another. For general information on the ecosystems, see the "Flora and Fauna of the Manitoba Escarpment and Riding Mountain National Park".

ECOSYSTEM ID. Break students up into small groups and ask them to research ecosystems in their area. They should clearly isolate what ecosystems exist there and come up with a checklist of features for each ecosystem. Once each group's list is complete, pool them all into a master checklist for each ecosystem. Pooling each group's ideas will make for a more complete product.

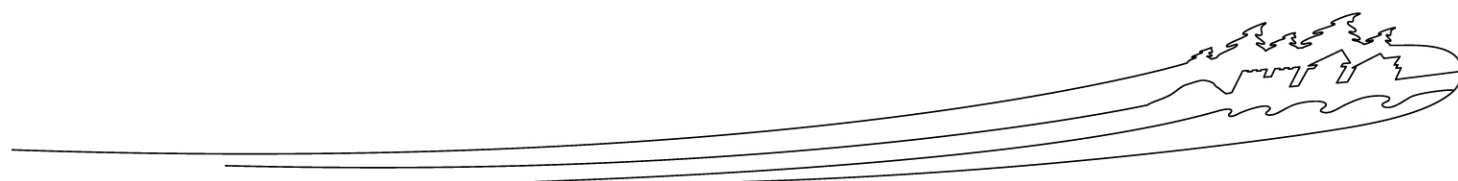
Once the Ecosystem ID Checklist has been established, take your students out for a hike near your school. They can put their ID skills to the test and, using their checklists as a guide, identify the ecosystem(s) around them. Keep in mind that, given the fact that much of southern Manitoba consists of vegetative transition zones, multiple ecosystems often intermingle in the same area.

PHOTOGRAPHY. Take pictures of the different ecosystems in your area over the course of the seasons. Assemble these into a photo collage highlighting your local ecosystem's most interesting elements.

RESEARCH. Have you heard of the amazing fossil discoveries done right in our own backyard? In Morden, Manitoba researchers have uncovered an amazing array of fossils, including that of "Bruce" the Mosasaur. This Cretaceous marine reptile species is renowned as one of the fiercest underwater predators ever and, measuring in at 13 m in length, "Bruce" is the largest discovered in Canada to date.

Visit the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre's website at www.discoverfossils.com for more information on Bruce and other fossils found in the Morden portion of the Manitoba Escarpment. Species just like it lived in the RMNP area and across most of the prairies millions of years ago.

3-D MODELLING. Take a step back in time to the age of hand-made paper mache models. Not long ago, hand-made models were widely used in all sorts of sectors, including city planning, wildlife conservation, geology, architecture, etc. To show students just how much technology has changed in the last decades, break your class up into small groups and ask them to make a paper mache model of the Riding Mountain portion of the Manitoba Escarpment. If you wish, your class could also make a model of the entire escarpment, which runs all the way from eastern Saskatchewan to northern Minnesota.



COMIC STRIP. Break students up into small groups and ask them to pool their talents to create a comic strip describing the formation of the Manitoba Escarpment. This won't be easy as the process that formed the escarpment stretches over hundreds of millions of years. Students will have to isolate the most important moments in its formation and then think about how best to represent those moments in a limited number of tiles. The final product will undoubtedly be fascinating, as it will describe the escarpment area's evolution through innumerable phenomenon; from sub-tropical oceans, to ice fields, to the prairie landscape of today. For a general overview of how the escarpment came to be, see the "Geological History of the Manitoba Escarpment" fact sheet.

FIELD TRIP. Get out of the classroom and come see the Manitoba Escarpment with your own eyes! Parks Canada interpreters take groups out to the escarpment on a regular basis and would be happy to take your class out on a guided tour. Call (204) 848-7226 and book your reservation today.