“Journey of a Seed” lesson plan

Adapted from Project WILD

Duration: 30-60 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will explain how seeds are carried by wildlife and people
- Students will understand and illustrate the importance of wildlife and people in seed dispersal of native plant species

Background:
Wildlife and people help native plant growth in local natural areas. Seed dispersal is a good example of the relationship plants, people, and wildlife all have to ensure ongoing healthy ecosystems and future plant growth. Many seeds of native plants are carried by animals (fur, eating and dropping seeds, etc.) and people (on clothing and personal items). This activity will help students see the ways wildlife and people help native plants grow in their neighbourhood.

Materials:

- One large sock per student
- Double-sided tape
- One writing utensil per student (pencil recommended)
- One “Field Observations Chart” printed handout per student (**Table One** below)

Procedure:

1. Have students put a sock over their shoe and walk through a grassy area or field in the springtime. It is best to find an area that is wet (morning dew) or one that has many seed-bearing plants present. You can also wrap double-sided tape around the student’s foot or leg to help attract more items as they walk through the field or grassy area.
2. After walking through the area for a few minutes, have students look at their sock. What has happened and can they see anything on their sock? Encourage them not to pull anything off the sock just yet. Talk with the students about the items found attached to their socks, including seeds, grass, twigs, rocks, and other items.
3. Now have the students carefully remove the items from their sock, tallying and drawing what they find in **Table One** (see below). Each student should have their own handout.
4. Ask the students how different an animal’s fur or person’s clothing might act like their sock in this activity? For example, have we ever seen thistles or seeds stuck to our clothing, or a pet’s fur? This happens all the time in nature and animals and people help native plants spread and grow in new areas. Why is this process important? How would plants spread if animals and people were not around to help?
5. Have students remove all items from the sock and return it to nature.

Extension:
Tally all results from students and make a bar or scatterplot graph.