

## Campfire Creatures Cryptid Quest

*Program:* Campfire Creatures

After discussing the various types of cryptid creatures believed to roam around the peninsula, as well as their real-life counterparts, participants will take their “field notebooks” and attempt to locate clues left by these creatures throughout their home, backyard, or local park. Investigators are encouraged to sketch the clues and to write a short description of the creature they believe these clues relate to.

Potential cryptids: hog kong (giant wild hogs), sea monsters (manta rays, giant catfish), Skunk Ape (monkeys), dragons (alligators, iguanas, Nile monitor lizards), and wampus cat (panthers, bobcats, jaguarondi).

*Objectives:*

- Introduce participants to the concept of legendary creatures and their real-life counterparts.
- Use deductive reasoning to explain “clues” as remnants of actual animals in Florida’s ecosystems.

*Clues:*

Long tusk or horn cut-out (hog tusk)

Alligator scutes (dragon scales)

Six paw prints (wampus cat)

Fur (for swamp ape)

Leather (sea monster)

*Setting up the Quest:*

A parent or guardian will need to help hide the clues around the space, whether that be inside or outside, for the young investigators to search for. Investigators can use their field notebooks to track what they have found. Once all of the clues are found, try to decide if they come from a cryptid creature or a real animal. You can also use these “clues” to glue to the sketches, to make touchable creature portraits.

*Materials needed:*

- Cut out clues; found materials

*Alternative materials:*

Use cardboard pieces to create the hog tusk, alligator scutes, and mermaid scales with paint or crayons to color the materials or use the template in the activity packet. Patches of faux fur can represent the skunk ape and wampus cat. Cotton balls colored with a black or brown permanent marker can also be pretend fur. For leather, take a brown paper bag or butchers paper and wrinkle it continuously until it is supple.





