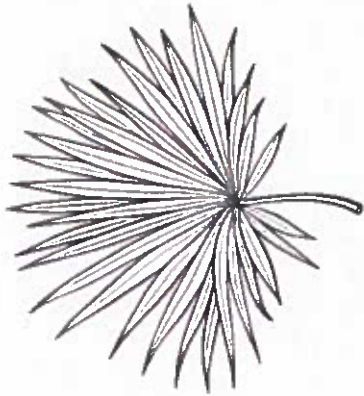
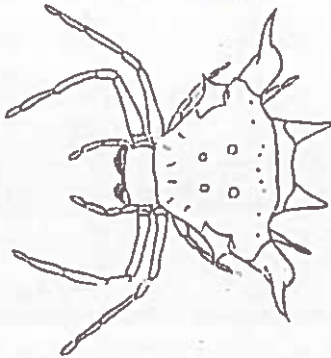


Carolina Wren  
*Thryothorus ludovicianus*



Dwarf Palmetto  
*Sabal minor*



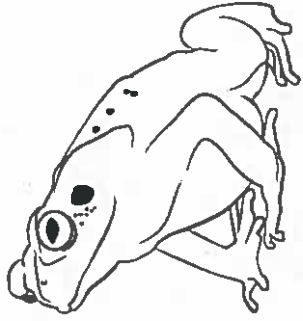
Spinybacked Orbweaver  
*Gasteracantha cancriformis*



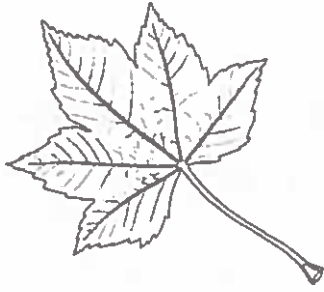
# Couturie Forest Discovery Journal

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

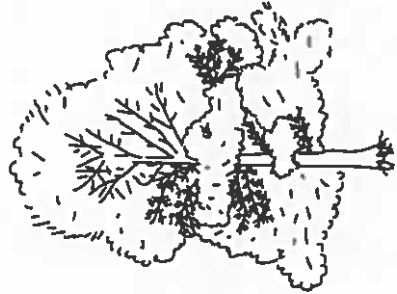
DATE \_\_\_\_\_



Gulf Coast Toad  
*Incilius nebulifer*



American Sycamore  
*Planatus occidentalis*



Bald Cypress  
*Taxodium distichum*



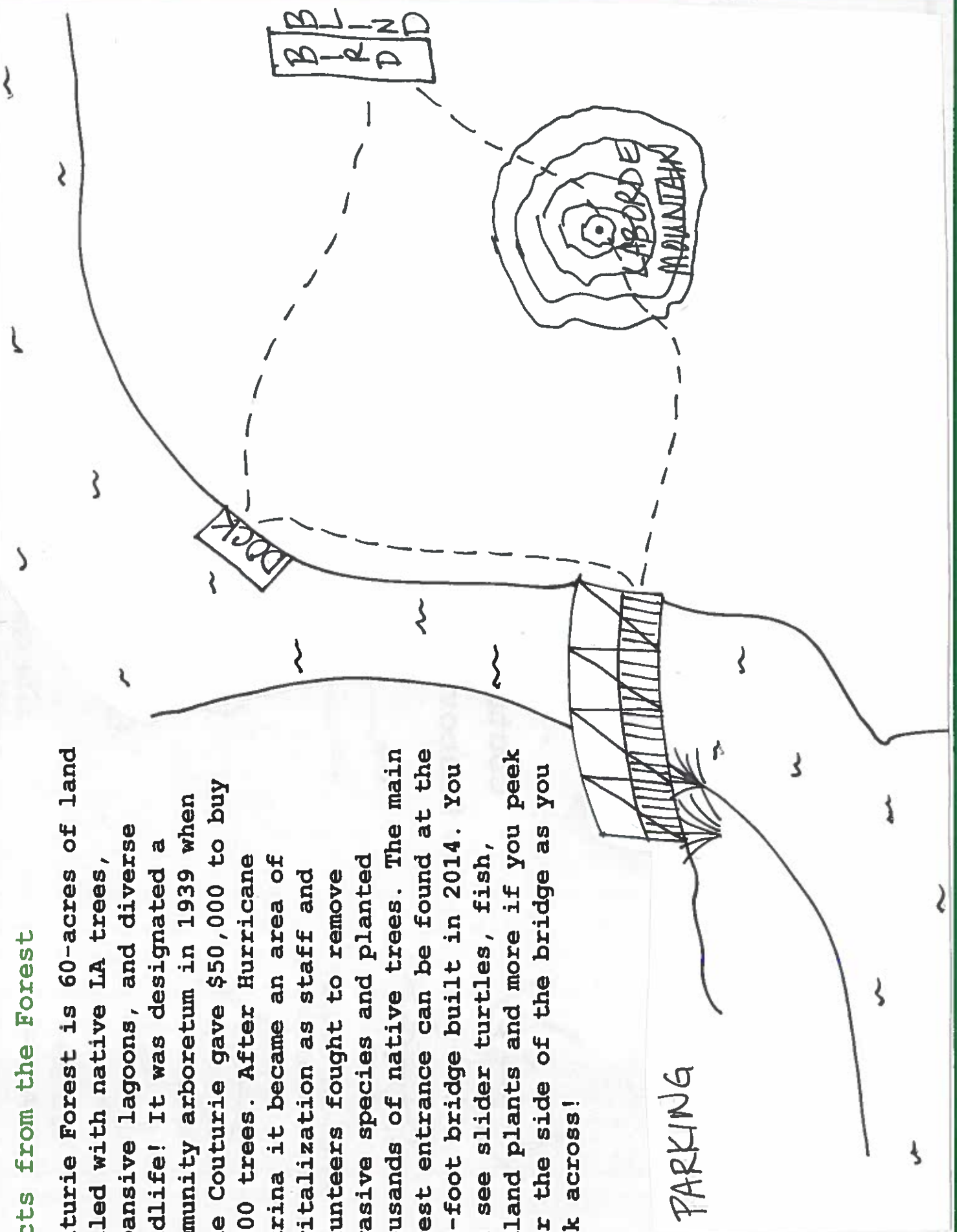
White Ibis  
*Eudocimus albus*



American Alligator  
*Alligator mississippiensis*

## Facts from the Forest

Couturie Forest is 60-acres of land filled with native LA trees, expansive lagoons, and diverse wildlife! It was designated a community arboretum in 1939 when Rene Couturie gave \$50,000 to buy 6,000 trees. After Hurricane Katrina it became an area of revitalization as staff and volunteers fought to remove invasive species and planted thousands of native trees. The main forest entrance can be found at the 100-foot bridge built in 2014. You can see slider turtles, fish, wetland plants and more if you peek over the side of the bridge as you walk across!





## Discover!

Draw one animal or plant  
you see from the dock!

## Adaptations

The special characteristics that enable plants and animals to be successful in a particular environment are called adaptations. Camouflage, as in a toad's ability to blend in with its surroundings, is a common example of an adaptation. Adaptations give the organism a better chance to survive in its surroundings.

## Discover!

Think about the two species you chose to draw.

Why do you think the two species were not found in opposite locations?

What about that area or that species makes that location better suited for them?

Draw one animal or plant  
you see from the bird  
blind!

Take your notes here:

## Identifying Birds

Birds are difficult to identify because usually you can only hear or see them briefly before they fly off. Look for these important characteristics to help you:

- **Size:** size can help you narrow down the possibilities. For example, a Great Blue Heron is going to be much larger than a Warbler.
- **Sound:** Sometimes you can identify a bird just by their call! Listen to bird recordings and you can discover how distinctive their songs can be. The Blue Jay is often easy to identify in the forest-its harsh calls, used to attract other jays, are called 'jeers.'

- **Physical characteristics:** Field guides are very helpful for bird ID. As much as possible, look closely at a bird to note the length of their tail, their coloring/pattern, their leg color, and anything else distinctive.

As an example, one easy way to tell Herons from Egrets is the leg color. Egrets have very black legs while the Herons have much lighter colored legs!



## 'Tails' of Couturie Forest

City park has been named the best birding spot in New Orleans! Take a walk along the trails in Couturie Forest and you can hear and see numerous bird species that live here. Around 280 different birds have been spotted in the Park, most in the forest!

Birds tend to be near the top of their food chain, so they often indicate the health of an environment. It is therefore very important to keep them safe and we can do this by admiring from afar, protecting their environment and planting native plants.

Take notes on the birds you see (or hear) as you walk along the trails. What characteristics about these birds might help you to identify them later?

## Becoming a City Park Naturalist!

A naturalist is someone who observes and studies plants, animals, insects, rocks and fossils.

What can YOU do to become a naturalist?!

- Slow down and try to observe nature as you walk through it!
  - What different plants, animals, and insects do you see?
- Pay close attention to characteristics of these organisms so that you can try to identify them.
  - How does that organism behave? What is its habitat?
- Observe, but do not disturb nature! A true naturalist wants to keep the ecosystems they are observing healthy.
  - Do not touch any animals or bugs. Try to stay on paths so that you do not walk over any plants and disturb them.

Explore the 'floor' and take notes like a naturalist! Find a log on the ground and make some notes...

On the log, I notice...

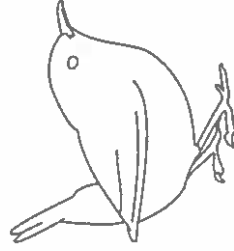
Under the log I notice...

Under the leaf litter, I notice...

## Couturie Forest Animal Survey Table

Track how many animals you see as you walk around Couturie Forest!

	Water	Shoreline	Surrounding Landscape
Birds			
Turtles			
Fish			
Insects			
Other			



## Mountain Musings!

Laborde 'mountain' is New Orleans' highest point of elevation! It was built from materials excavated from Interstate 610, and is 46 feet above its 3-foot-below-sea-level base. Sitting at the top of Laborde Mountain is a great place to take some quiet time to reflect and listen to the calming sounds of the forest.

Naturalists use all of their senses in order to make thorough and accurate observations. Sit on the bench on Laborde Mountain and make some notes about what you see, hear, smell and feel! (Let's not taste anything out here!)

I see...

I hear...

I smell...

I feel...

## Healthy Cities Need Healthy Parks!

Couturie Forest is one of the many unique and special areas of City Park where visitors can enjoy, relax, and explore. Since urban parks provide so many benefits to people, people need to become stewards of urban parks! Talk with the people around you about what you think it means to be a steward of the park.

## Come back to the Forest!

\*Couturie Forest wouldn't be the beautiful space it is without the help of thousands of volunteers who help us each year! If you're interested in volunteering please email [volunteer@nocp.org](mailto:volunteer@nocp.org).

\*Want to be a scientist for City Park? Check out the Nature's Notebook trail which begins right at the bridge. We are always looking for help in making observations about our forest trees!