

Curricular Connections

Wilhelmina the Worm Can't Sleep on the Night of the Full Moon

Place-based Ecology and Natural History:

Spring in Maine is heralded by a chorus of sounds from the spring peepers, wood frogs, and in vernal pools to the classic call of the woodcock in the fields. After a quiet snowy winter, these sounds remind us that life is waking up again. Skunk cabbages are also a sign of spring and are among the most fascinating plants with their ability to melt ice and snow and generate temperatures of up to 70 degrees. This story, though fanciful in its Mother Moon character, informs listeners that amphibians do not reproduce in the same way that mammals do. This is one of the huge distinctions between amphibians and mammals and a good point of science to understand.

Explore:

- Find a vernal pool near you and go out at night to explore it with a flashlight. Wear rain boots. If you find frogs and want to hold them make sure your hands are clean and that you put them right back into the water. They breathe through their skin.
- Start a compost pile to invite worms like Wilhemina to live there.
- Go out on the night of the full moon and experience what life is like in your backyard after dark. And listen for the woodcock!
- Find a skunk cabbage and put your hand inside its flower to feel the warmth.

Reflect and Share:

- Does the full moon ever keep you awake? What do you do?
- Why is it important to have clean hands when holding amphibians? How can we interact with frogs to make the experience safe for them?
- What else lives in a vernal pool during the springtime?

Photos:



Skunk Cabbage



Wood Frog