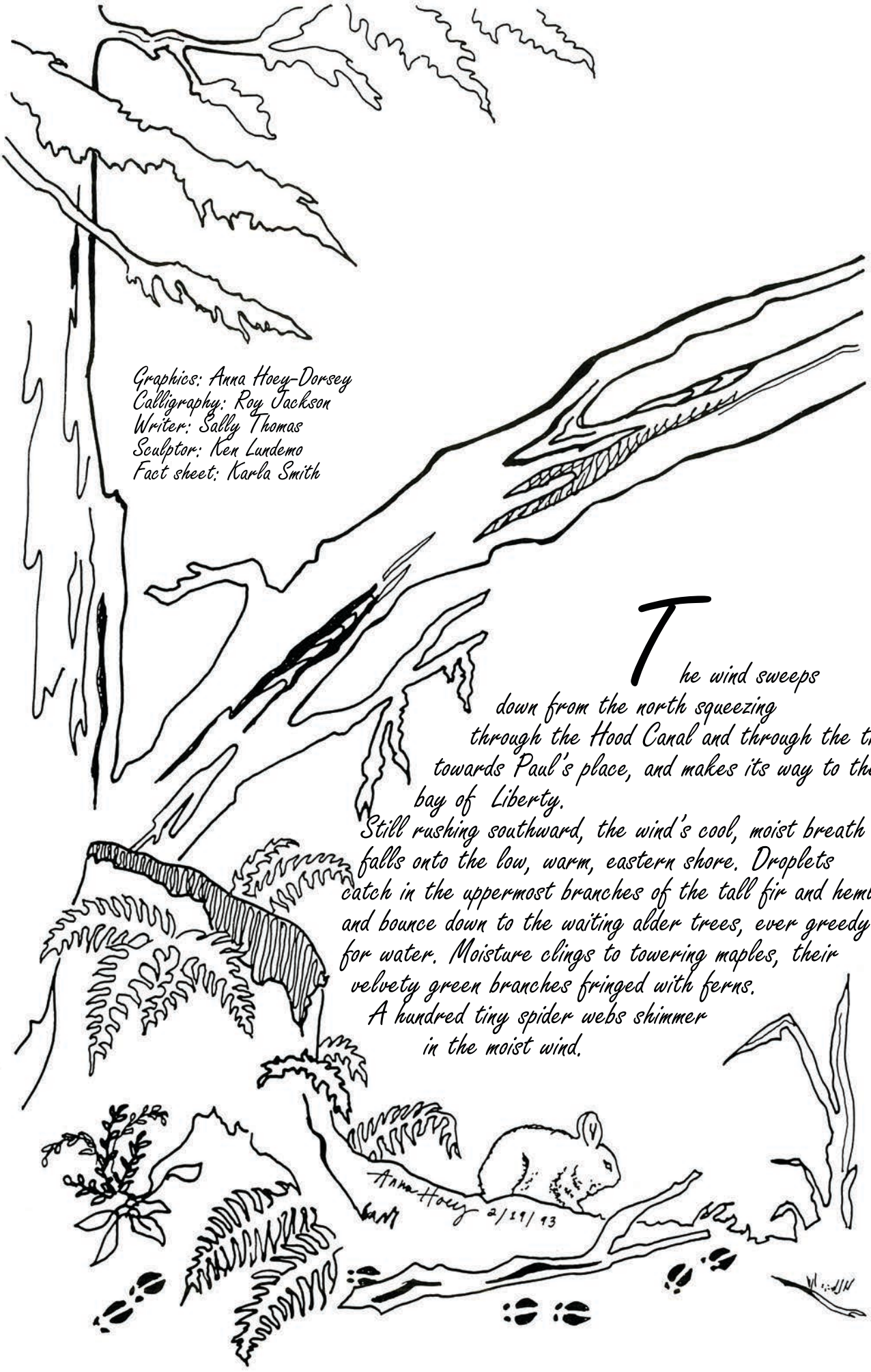
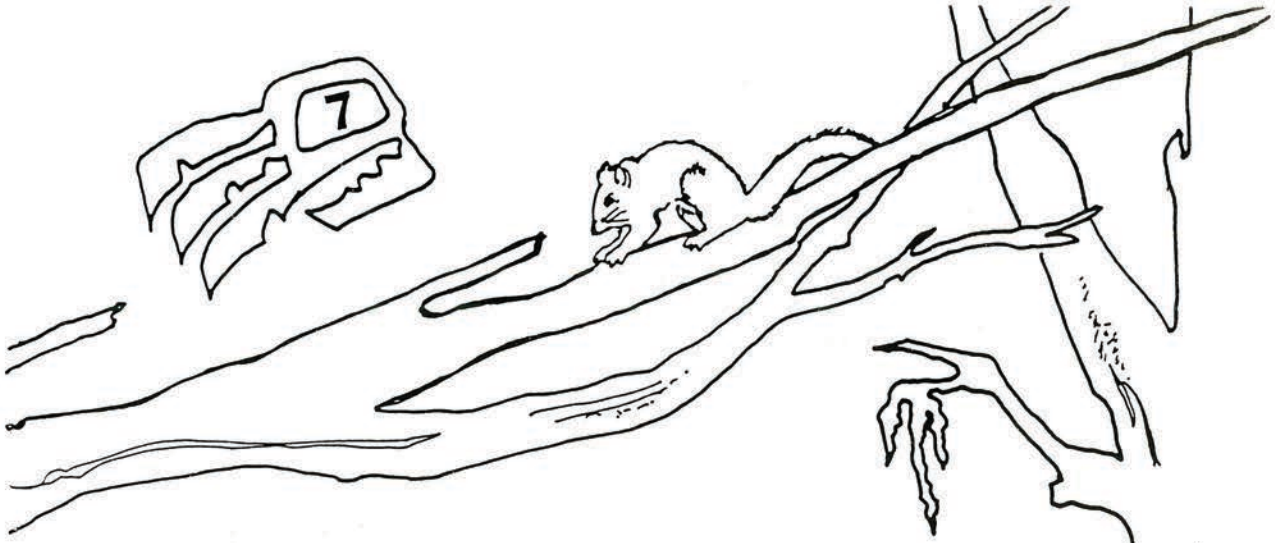


Graphics: Anna Hoey-Dorsey
Calligraphy: Roy Jackson
Writer: Sally Thomas
Sculptor: Ken Lundemo
Fact sheet: Karla Smith

The wind sweeps down from the north squeezing through the Hood Canal and through the trees towards Paul's place, and makes its way to the bay of Liberty.

Still rushing southward, the wind's cool, moist breath falls onto the low, warm, eastern shore. Droplets catch in the uppermost branches of the tall fir and hemlock, and bounce down to the waiting alder trees, ever greedy for water. Moisture clings to towering maples, their velvety green branches fringed with ferns.

A hundred tiny spider webs shimmer in the moist wind.

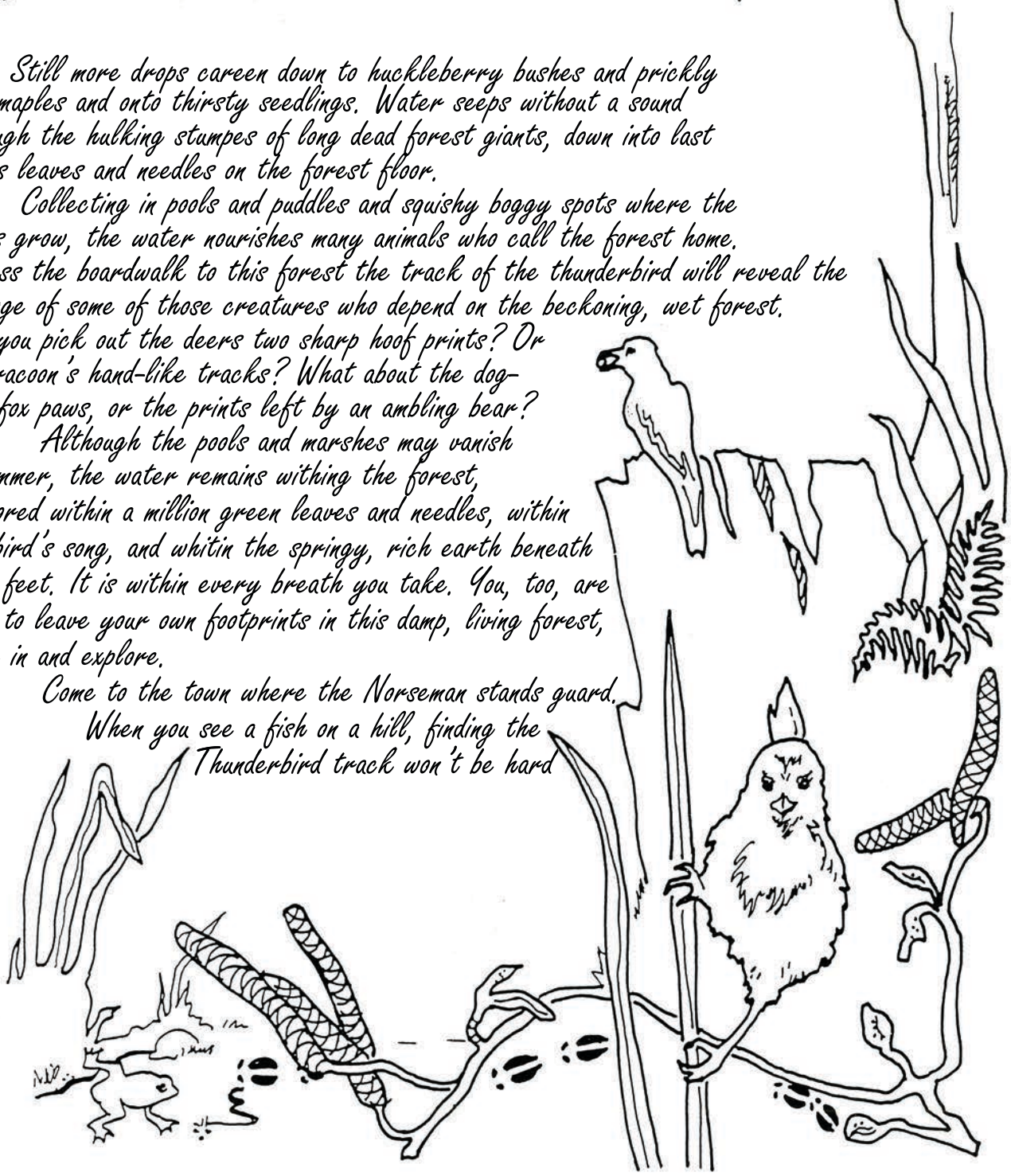


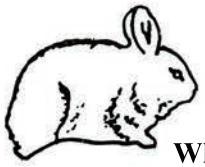
Still more drops careen down to huckleberry bushes and prickly vine maples and onto thirsty seedlings. Water seeps without a sound through the hulking stumpes of long dead forest giants, down into last years leaves and needles on the forest floor.

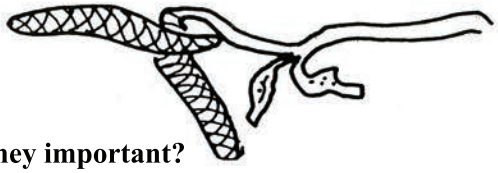
Collecting in pools and puddles and squishy boggy spots where the reeds grow, the water nourishes many animals who call the forest home. Across the boardwalk to this forest the track of the thunderbird will reveal the passage of some of those creatures who depend on the beckoning, wet forest. Can you pick out the deers two sharp hoof prints? Or the racoon's hand-like tracks? What about the dog-like fox paws, or the prints left by an ambling bear?

Although the pools and marshes may vanish in summer, the water remains withing the forest, is stored within a million green leaves and needles, within the bird's song, and whitin the springy, rich earth beneath your feet. It is within every breath you take. You, too, are free to leave your own footprints in this damp, living forest, Come in and explore.

Come to the town where the Norseman stands guard.
When you see a fish on a hill, finding the
Thunderbird track won't be hard



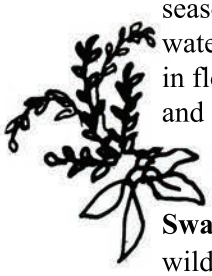




WETLANDS FACTS

What are wetlands, how do they work and why are they important?

Wetlands are marshes, swamps or bogs that are saturated with water at least some part of the growing season. Wetlands work like giant sponges that collect, hold, and release water. Wetlands help maintain water quality by removing sediments from the water that passes through them, as well as acting as buffers in flood zones, thereby helping prevent flood damage. Wetlands are homes to many types of wildlife, and once the wetlands are destroyed, many species of fish, birdlife and shellfish have lost their habitat.



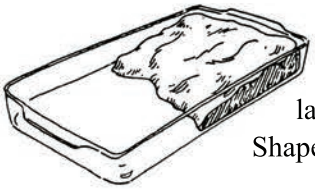
What are the three common types of wetlands?

Swamps are dominated by trees and shrubs. They are typically found along streams and are home to wildlife because of abundant food and cover. **Marshes** are dominated by grasses and herbaceous plants. They are an important breeding area for several species of birds and a rest stop for migratory birds. **Bogs** are in cool wet areas where drainage is poor. They are host to a wide variety of plants and animals, and are generally over 10,000 years old in Washington.

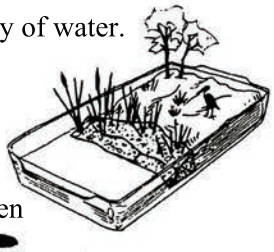
What makes the wetlands Thunderbird Track special?

This wetland site is special because it is a forested wetland. These wetlands can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions ranging from dry to continuous saturation which often leads people to think that these areas are not wetlands. Forested wetlands are usually found in valley bottoms or along streams. Plants common in forested wetlands are red alder trees, Western red cedar, salmonberry, skunk cabbage, lady fern and blackberry. Snags (dead trees) are also common to forested wetlands because their saturated soil conditions can drown tree roots. Forested wetlands, especially those near a stream are highly valued natural systems because they provide a natural source of clean water for streams and are heavily utilized by wildlife.

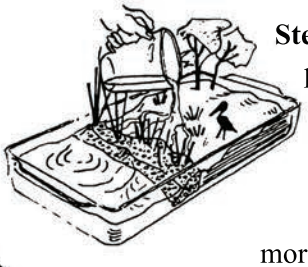
Make Your Own Wetland! Here's how:



Step 1: Spread a layer of modeling clay in half of a roasting pan to represent land. Leave the other half of the pan empty to represent a lake. Shape the clay so that it gradually slopes down to the body of water.



Step 2: Cut a sponge to completely fill the space across the edge of the clay. The sponge represents the wetland buffer between dry land and open water. Attach plants and animals (molded in clay) with toothpicks. You can use painted cotton swabs for cattails, pine needles for reeds and glue pieces of green sponge onto twigs for trees.



Step 3: Simulate a rain storm. Pour clean water into your water body area. Next pour muddy water on the land. The water should soak into the "wetland" and slowly drain out into the body of water. Is the lake water dirty or clear?

Step 4: Now remove the wetland and pour the same amount of muddy water on it. Notice any differences? (The water should fill the body of water much more quickly and it should be dirtier. That's because it's no longer buffered by the wetland). Most wetlands are shallow basins that collect water and slow its rate of flow. This slowing process helps reduce flooding and allow sediments to settle.