Brownie-age girls have enough energy to fuel nearly any outdoor adventure. They’re natural treasure hunters and explorers and more than ready to sing in the rain, marvel at a frozen lake, or gaze at eerie fog rising among the trees. Enjoying the outdoors is the foundation for a lasting love and respect for nature, so consider inviting the Brownies on a range of outdoor excursions:

- **Day trips to local nature areas**, including wetlands (swamps, marshlands, bayous, and bogs all qualify), let girls experience the natural world of their region firsthand.

- **Parks, gardens, natural history museums, and zoos** are among the great urban places for enriching and possibly water-filled adventures. There’s no limit to what the girls can explore in them. They might, for example, check out any water fountains they see. Are they working? Are people using them? If not, why not? How does the water come out? In dribbles or bursts? As a group, they might ask a few questions of other people they see out and about on their own outdoor adventures.

- **Neighborhood walks, including puddle-hopping** in a mild rainstorm, offer opportunities for the girls to explore the watery riches of their streets and sidewalks. Seeing water carry sticks and leaves into storm drains, and rainwater cascade into runoff, are cues to this journey’s opening question, “Where does all the water go?”

**MAKE OUTINGS GIRL LED**

Engage the girls in choosing where to go and what to do. Encourage them to brainstorm who they might be able to meet on their outings. Park rangers? Naturalists? Oceanographers? What questions could they ask these experts that would help them gather ideas about saving and protecting water?

**SPONTANEOUS BOAT-BUILDING**

When visiting ponds or other waterways, the girls might enjoy making simple boats from found materials, such as fallen leaves. Just be sure to drive home the point that live plants should not be disturbed. Invite each girl to:

- Choose two large leaves, one for the boat’s body and one for the sail.
- Find a small stick for the mast.
- Thread the stick through the sail and then stick it into the bottom of the boat.
- Launch the boat and watch it catch the wind, spin on the eddies, or capsize!

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**TAKE TIME TO BE CURIOUS!**

“You do not have to be a ‘nature expert’ to carry on a good nature program. You just need to revive your own childhood curiosity . . . Probably one of the most baffling things in the world to a child is the ‘nature’ of grownups, which seems to them so indifferent to . . . really important things . . . Imagine . . . being too busy to stop and watch the butterfly about to come out of the cocoon, or the cat chase her own tail . . .”

—Leader’s Guide to the Brownie Scout Program, 1950

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From WOW! Wonders of Water (Brownie), page 18
Camping
For some Brownies, overnight camping will be a new experience. A first campout might be in a backyard or a local park in a family camp setting. In some regions, sleepover camp of up to two weeks is also an option for Brownies.

A camp readiness quiz can help girls and their parents determine if the experience is appropriate for them. Check with your council for details.

BEFORE VENTURING OUTDOORS . . .
Follow the Girl Scout motto: Be prepared! Talk to the Brownies about how to treat plants and animals with care:

- **Teach Leave No Trace principles**, which include never taking live vegetation or animals from their habitat.

- **Talk about what “Do Not Disturb” means** with plants and animals: Would it include not flipping over rocks to look underneath? Not pulling up moss? Not pulling leaves from bushes? Not stomping on holes that might house animals or insects?

CAMP MEMORIES: WORKING WAYS OF WEE ANTS

“I spotted some of the girls stomping the ground furiously, and went to investigate. They were stomping a trail of ants! I asked, “Have you discovered where they’re going?” A look of confusion; it hadn’t occurred to the girls that the ants were actually going somewhere. We crouched to watch and the girls became enchanted. Soon they were dropping tiny crumbs for the ants—to watch them drag the crumb back home. We talked about how they worked together on larger crumbs, and how everyone ‘at home’ would get to share.”

—Tia Ramsey, Girl Scouts of Western North Carolina, Pisgah Council, recalling her group of Brownies camping in a national forest

NOT A NATURE LOVER?
Ask your council for training. Or ask to be paired with an experienced volunteer when you venture outdoors with the girls.

ON OUTINGS, SAFETY IN NUMBERS
No matter where you venture, plan on one adult for every six Brownies. Add as much support as you need based on the girls’ readiness for outdoor adventures and your, and your co-volunteers’, level of experience. Adult volunteers are required to take council-approved training before camping with girls. So check your council’s guidelines.

SEIZE EVERY WATERY MOMENT
If girls spot trash floating in waterways, turn it into an opportunity to talk about wise ways to treat water. If your group is preparing a meal outdoors and cleaning up afterward, remind the girls to keep soapy water out of natural water sources, too. Small pebbles and sand can be used to clean dishes.