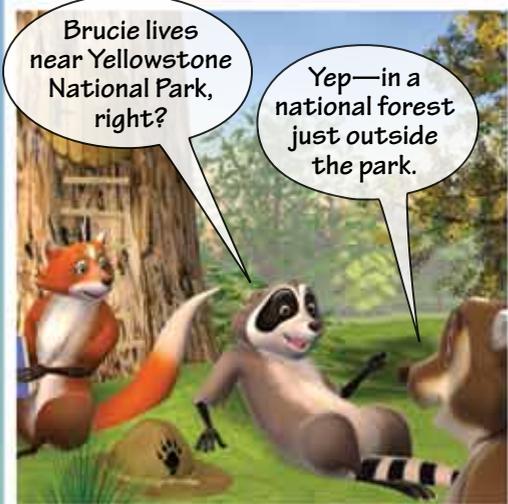




Hey, I just got this text from my cousin Bruce in Montana. It says, "The Wild West is getting a lot wilder these days. Come check it out!"



Brucie lives near Yellowstone National Park, right?

Yep—in a national forest just outside the park.



I wonder what he means by "getting wilder." You can't get much wilder than Yellowstone country.

Maybe he's talking about outlaws and cattle rustlers!



Yeah, right. Maybe you'd better take your marshal's badge with you!

I don't know what's going on, but we're going to find out!



A FEW DAYS LATER . . .

Come on, Rick, quit hogging the binoculars.

I'm just amazed at all the wildlife here.

And we're not even inside the park!



I think I see a pack of coyotes.

I doubt it, Boom. Coyotes don't hang out in packs.

Let me take a look.



Fantastic! It's a pack of WOLVES!

And they're headed toward those elk. This could be interesting!



YELP!!!



The elk have seen the wolves and are running away!

My turn, Scarlett!



Uh-oh, one of those elk is having trouble keeping up!

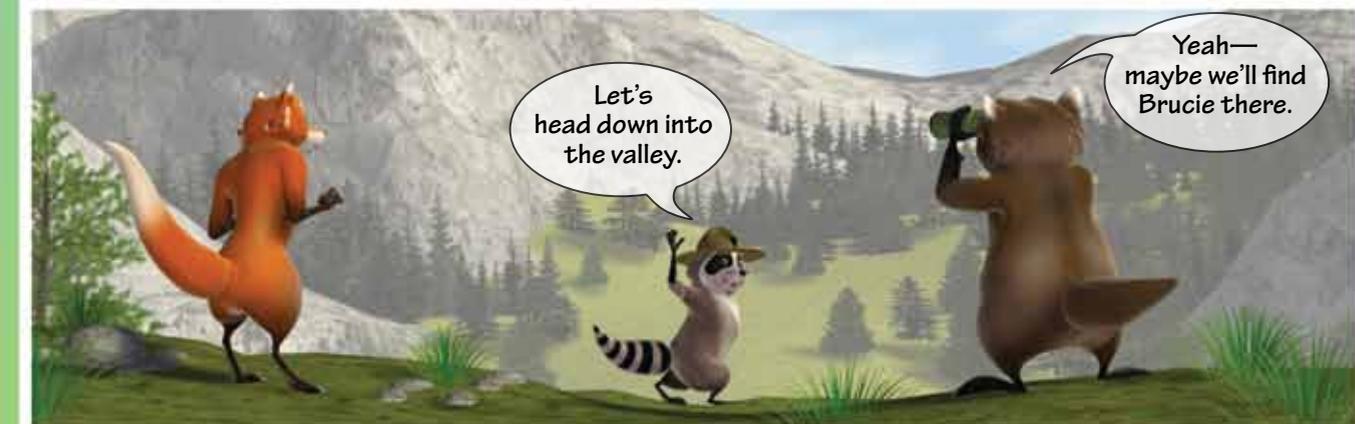


Do you think it's a goner?



Could be. But that wouldn't be such a bad thing.

RICK EXPLAINS THAT, FOR MANY YEARS, NO WOLVES LIVED HERE BECAUSE PEOPLE HAD KILLED THEM ALL. SO, IN SOME PLACES, THE ELK BECAME TOO PLENTIFUL AND ATE TOO MANY OF THE PLANTS THAT OTHER ANIMALS NEEDED. BUT PEOPLE BROUGHT WOLVES BACK TO THE YELLOWSTONE AREA, AND NOW THE WOLVES ARE HELPING KEEP "THE BALANCE OF NATURE."



Let's head down into the valley.

Yeah—maybe we'll find Bruce there.



Look—sheep!

Are they Rocky Mountain bighorns?

Nope—these are a rancher's tame sheep.

Tame sheep in a national forest?

That's right, Scarlett.

RICK EXPLAINS THAT NATIONAL FORESTS ARE OWNED BY ALL THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES. MANY RANCHERS PAY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR PERMISSION TO GRAZE SHEEP AND CATTLE ON THIS "PUBLIC LAND." AND IT'S BEEN THAT WAY FOR YEARS.

Sure are a lot of 'em!

Oh, WOW!

What is it, Rick?

Grizzlies! A huge mom with two cubs!

Uh-oh! I think they've spotted us.

Run!

No way we could outrun a grizzly. Let's hide!

Now let's hope they don't smell us!

But they're coming closer!

Phew! They're not after us—they're after the sheep!

Oh, no—those sheep don't have a chance!

WILL THE BEARS SNATCH THE SHEEP? FIND OUT NEXT MONTH!

# BEAVER TAIL-SLAPPERS



What kind of snack food do beavers like?

Wood chips.

How do beavers check their e-mail messages?

They log on.

What is a beaver's favorite month to cut down trees?

Sep-timber.

Which rodent is a famous pop star?

Justin Beaver.

What do beavers eat for lunch?

Grilled trees sandwiches.

Why was the beaver sent to the principal's office?

It was being gnaw-ty.

What did the beaver say to the tree?

"It's been nice gnawing you."

What did the beaver say when it heard a chain saw?

"They're playing my song."