

# TIES<sup>to</sup>theLAND

## Tips for Involving the Next Generation

It's never too soon or too late to help your family develop ties to the lands.

### Encourage Exploring

Youth are naturally curious. Help them discover the diversity and wonder of being in the woods. Teach them how to find their way using a compass. Spend time turning over rocks or looking for signs of bird and animal presence. The possibilities truly are endless.

### Unsupervised play

The idea of letting kids disappear on their own for hours at a time can raise all kinds of fears for parents. Sure, there are risks. And you certainly want children to be aware of, and prepared for, dangerous situations. But letting kids play and explore in the natural world has proven psychological and cognitive benefits.

### Share your knowledge

The very young are like sponges when it comes to soaking up knowledge. Keep it casual and fun and they will be delighted to learn from you. As we get a bit older, certainly by the time we are teen-agers we have developed interest areas. Respect the uniqueness of older children and heirs by letting them know you'd like to share something with them and asking if they would like to learn about it.

### Collect wild foods together and prepare a dish

While hunting, fishing and gathering food together we create place specific memories that are an important part of ties to the land.

### Treasure hunts

This can be fun for all ages. Set up your own treasure hunt with maps, clues and hidden treasure. Geocaching combines the ancient pastime of treasure hunting with modern technology - GPS devices. For more information go to <http://www.geocaching.com/>

### Share stories

The simple act of sharing stories about our experiences on the land can create a sense of increased connection to our heritage, our families and the land. Tell your stories and ask others to share their experiences.



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### **Share photos**

If your heirs have spent time on the land ask them to take photos of their favorite spots and talk about why that place is important to them.

### **Encourage diverse activities**

Not everyone has the same interests. It is unlikely that all of your heirs will be interested in the activities you engage in on the property. Encourage others to use the land to participate in activities that interest them. For example, you may construct a rustic artist's retreat where people could go to write or draw. It is especially helpful if your heirs participate in creating the areas that they will use.

### **Invite participation in decision making**

Participation in decision making is important. People are more supportive of decisions they have been involved in making. It is also a tremendous opportunity for individuals to learn about what is involved in managing and owning the property.

### **Invite participation in management**

You can help your heirs develop management capabilities by inviting them to make meaningful contributions to the management of the property. Making meaningful contributions also means the risk of making meaningful mistakes. It is hard to stand back and watch others make a mistake. Learning, however, involves making mistakes. Remember, mistakes are usually outweighed by the opportunity to develop the skills and confidence. Hopefully, by the time your heirs assume all of the management responsibilities they will have developed the experience and judgment to avoid catastrophic mistakes.

### **Share ownership**

There is nothing like ownership to really get people invested. Forming a corporation allows for the gradual transfer of ownership through the use of stocks, without giving up control. You can invest young heirs with 'ownership' rights by giving them permission to make decisions about the management of a small plot of land.