



Museum of Natural History & Science Interpretation Guide for *Nature's Trading Post*

About Trading

Nature's Trading Post is a center for observation and exploration of nature objects. It is also a center for the active trading of natural objects. We act as facilitators. Everyone on both sides of trading is an active learner during the process. The focus of *Nature's Trading Post* is not the points, but the actual trading process. We explore our resources, ask questions, compare objects and make new discoveries about things we thought we knew. Below are guidelines for what objects we will or will not take.

Nature's Trading Post encourages respectful observation and responsible collection of the natural world. We only take what we want or need, but always leave enough for replenishment and the enjoyment of future generations.

Our trading guidelines are set up to address most items we encounter. The trader's experience should always be positive and educational. Even if, for whatever reason, we send an object home with the trader, we still discuss the object, research as needed and give points for sharing. We explain why we won't be keeping the object and focus on what is interesting about what has been shared.

What *Nature's Trading Post* will NOT accept for trade:

1. Any item regulated by U.S. Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Conservation Act, CITES, or other local, state, national or international laws and agreements (ie: no eggs, feathers or bird's nests).
2. Taxidermy or "stuffed" items (ie: no mounted animals or bird specimens, no furs or skins).
3. Living or dead (killed, hunted or found) animals (ie: nothing icky or smelly and no meaty bones).
4. Nothing altered or made by people, including Native American artifacts.
5. Anything which may prove unsafe or unsanitary to people.
6. Any questionable item the staff or volunteer does not feel comfortable accepting for trade. These items will be shared and assigned points, but then should be sent home with the trader.

What *Nature's Trading Post* will accept for trade:

1. Living natural objects from plants (leaves, seeds, pressed plants, wood) and from animals (shells, cocoons, spider webs, vacant wasps nests, teeth, antlers, snake skin, turtle shells, clean bones, exoskeletons of insects).
2. Non-living natural objects such as rocks, fossils, sand, soil.

The trading process can be overwhelming at first. Our staff is happy to assist you on any trade.

What to talk about at *Nature's Trading Post*

Nature's Trading Post is full of local and exotic display items that have been brought in from trades or are part of our museum collections. There are new items appearing all the time. Anything out in the open can be touched. There is a resource library of books on everything from insects, to fossils, to weather, to nature stories. The bulletin board and blue circle table change every few months with new themes. Items for trade have points on them. If an item doesn't have any points on it, it is not for trade.

Most of the **fossils** for display and trade are local fossils from the Ordovician period. Cincinnati is world-famous for its fossils. The Ordovician Period was about 440 million to 500 million years ago. During this time, the Cincinnati area was a shallow sea. Our common fossils, including bryozoa, brachiopod and trilobites were living in that shallow sea. Our bedrock of limestone and shale was layered in that sea floor. In most places in the world, the bedrock of the Ordovician Period is still buried deep in the Earth. The Tri-state area is unique because forces of the Earth have pushed up and erosion has worn away to expose the Ordovician bedrock in our region.

Around *Nature's Trading Post* are displays for visitors to explore. The boxes of **pull-out shelves** in *Nature's Trading Post* are all selections from our natural history collections. They are for display only. The shelves of **blue, yellow and red plastic bins** are all objects available for trade. The point value should be on the object itself or on the bin it is in. The **discovery boxes** are located in the light wooden boxes on the shelves near the door. These discovery boxes are available for visitors to take out while visiting *Nature's Trading Post* and explore the objects and activities inside. The **vivarium** next to the bookshelf holds plants, frogs, a gecko, an anole and African millipedes. There is also an aquarium of fish and an aquarium with a tortoise. Across from the front door is our black bear hamster named Mahkwa. Mahkwa is a Native American name for bear.