

# RAMSEY READER



## THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES:

Observe pond water

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Drop by the park

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Learn about surface tension

## *Wild About Water*

We are very lucky to be surrounded by a variety of fresh water here in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes." Ramsey County is home to one of the world's longest rivers, as well as beautiful lakes, small streams and diverse wetlands. Protecting these different water sources and keeping them clean and free from trash and pollution must be a priority. This week, we'll get *Wild About Water* and learn about aquatic creatures and surface tension.

# *Pond dipping*

Ramsey County's lakes and ponds are teeming with life. From fish and frogs, to small snails and insects, you can spend a couple of fun hours looking for different types of living creatures and plants that you can find in the water.

For help identifying what you've found, check out this guide from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:

[bit.ly/DNRpondlife](https://bit.ly/DNRpondlife)



## **AQUATIC OBSERVATIONS**

Take a trip to a pond or lake and grab a sample of water. Let's take a moment to see what we can find.

### **Materials**

- A white tray or ice cream bucket, yogurt container, etc. The white background will make it easier to observe what you find.
- Net – a small aquarium net, you can purchase one at a pet store for just a couple bucks.

1. Fill your tray or bucket up about halfway with lake or pond water.
2. Wade into the water and move your net in a figure eight motion, staying just above the mud on the bottom.
3. After a few figure eights, place your net into water in your bucket and gently turn it inside out.
4. Let the everything settle and then closely observe the water. You should see a wide variety of aquatic creatures moving in your bucket.
5. Once you are finished observing, return your water and creatures the lake or pond that they came from and try again. Did you find different things?



# *Drop by the park*



Keller Creek

Many Ramsey County parks have beautiful bodies of water which are great for recreation, exercise, relaxation and they can be a great place to observe animals. Here are some places in our wonderful parks if you'd like to try pond dipping.



## **VISIT THE PARK**

**Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park** Park in the lot located south of County Road F. There are a variety of trails and habitats including walks along Vadnais Lake and a chance to watch aquatic wildlife including birds and crawfish. Note: No boating or swimming is allowed in this particular section of the Saint Paul water system.

**Keller Regional Park** Keller Creek offers easy access to the water's edge for pond dipping. Park at the Golfview parking area, 2098 Maplewood Drive in Maplewood, and walk down the hill past the tuj lub courts. There are stone steps on either side of the pedestrian bridge that spans Keller Creek. The creek is a great location to kayak or canoe.

# Breaking the tension

Some aquatic insects, such as water striders, can stay on top of the water's surface while they swim. Water molecules have a high level of attraction to each other which makes the surface act as though it is covered with a thin membrane. This is called *surface tension*. In water, the surface tension is high enough to allow insects to stay on top of the water's surface and not break through, even though these bugs are denser than water.



## TRY IT OUT

**Materials** - a clear glass cup, towel, water and a paper clip

1. Put down a towel on a flat surface.
2. Carefully fill a glass with water, up to the very top so the surface of the water is level with the edge of the glass.
3. Place the paperclip on the edge of the glass and slowly slide it onto the water.
4. It may take a few tries, but if you do it gently enough, you can get the paperclip to float on the surface tension just like water striders! What other small objects can you get to float on water?



Water strider insect



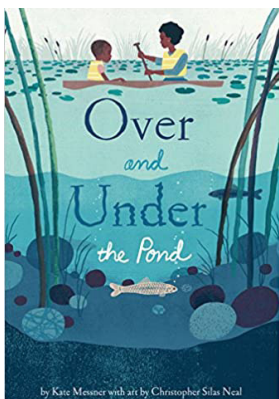


# Ramsey readers

Here are some interesting books to get your little learners interested in water. All of these books are available through Ramsey County Library.



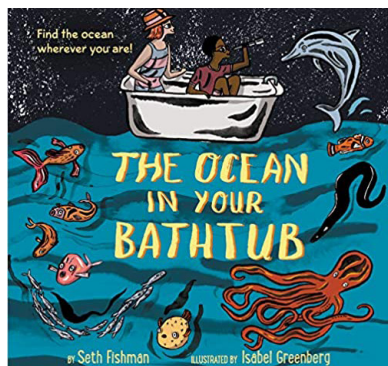
## DIVE INTO A GOOD BOOK



### Over and Under the Pond

by Kate Messner

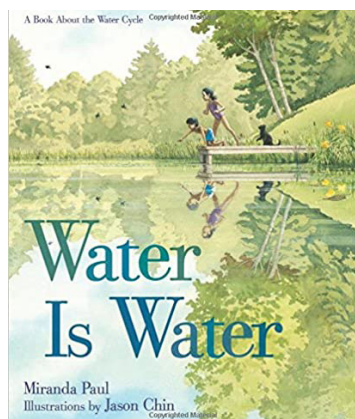
A secret underwater world brought to life: In this book, readers will discover the plants and animals that make up the rich, interconnected ecosystem of a mountain pond. Over the pond, the water is a mirror, reflecting the sky. But under the water is a hidden world of minnows darting, beavers diving, and tadpoles growing. These secrets and many others are waiting to be discovered. over and under the pond.



### The Ocean in Your Bathtub

by Seth Fishman

No matter how far from the ocean you live, it is part of your life, every single day. And you are part of the ocean's life, too. Every time you flush the toilet or throw something away, you might be sending it to the ocean — and every time you do a good deed, such as pick up litter or recycle, you are helping the ocean!



### Water is Water: A Book About the Water Cycle

by Miranda Paul

This spare, poetic picture book follows a group of kids as they move through all the different phases of the water cycle. From rain to fog to snow to mist, talented author Miranda Paul and the always remarkable illustrator Jason Chin combine to create a beautiful and informative journey in this innovative nonfiction picture book that will leave you thirsty for more.



RAMSEY COUNTY  
Parks & Recreation



# Learn more

There's so much more to learn about water. Check out these resources to continue exploring and discovering.

## National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Learn all about water in a variety of ways, including through games and sing along songs.

[bit.ly/NIHwater](https://bit.ly/NIHwater)

## United States Geological Survey

Earth's water is always in movement and is constantly changing states, from liquid to vapor to ice and back again. Learn about the natural water cycle with some interactive diagrams and great resources that you can download for free.

[on.doi.gov/2YG7zRK](https://on.doi.gov/2YG7zRK)

## American Red Cross

Stay on top of water safety and keep your kids safe when swimming or playing near the water. Learn how to be water smart with Longfellow the Whale in an 8-part short video series called *Whale Tales*.

[rdcrss.org/3b5MwwF](https://rdcrss.org/3b5MwwF)



### *Did you know?*

Bluegill fish help keep insect and crustacean populations in control. During a summer, one bluegill can eat up to six times its own weight in food!