

## Squirrels at Ivy Creek

*Created for use by the Ivy Creek Foundation*

When you explore Ivy Creek Natural Area, you often see squirrels running on the ground or climbing up a tree. Gray squirrels are fascinating to watch. They are great little acrobats who can balance on the smallest of limbs and jump from tree to tree. Gray squirrels live in a nest made of leaves and twigs called a drey. You can find the nests high up in the fork of a tall tree. Sometimes squirrels make their nest in the hole of a hollow tree. To find the nests, look for large groups of brown leaves.



Gray squirrels have bushy tails that they use to help them balance on branches. They also use their tails as a blanket when they sleep and as an umbrella when it rains. Gray squirrels eat acorns and other nuts, seeds, buds, and sometimes insects. They often bury nuts in the ground to eat later. Sometimes they forget to dig up the nuts and this helps to plant trees in the forest.

Here is a story of a young squirrel who helps his family repair their drey.....

## Little Squirrel Helps

By Carolyn Long with Illustrations by Virginia Masterston

Little Squirrel watches his Dad grab leaves in his mouth to take up the tree to their nest. Last night, a storm blew some of their nest away. His Dad is trying to repair it.

The nest is high up in a fork of a tall oak tree. It shelters the family of squirrels from the rain and heat and cold.



Little Squirrel loves his family. His Mom and Dad are teaching him to balance on the branches of trees. He is learning to hide acorns to eat later and to grab seeds from under the bird feeders.

Little Squirrel wants to help. He asks his Dad if he can.

“Yes, Little Squirrel. Pick up some dry leaves and take them up to the nest.”

Little Squirrel grabs a mouthful of leaves and scampers up the tree. His Dad shows him where to place the leaves where there are holes in the nest.

Little Squirrel and his Dad work together all day. Little Squirrel is able to place leaves in tight corners that his Dad cannot reach.

Finally, the nest is finished. “You did a good job today, Little Squirrel,” his Dad said.



That night, another storm makes the tree sway as rain pours down. Little Squirrel feels safe and cozy and dry in the nest as he munches on some acorns. He curls up in a ball near some of the leaves he had placed and uses his tail as a blanket. Little Squirrel is tired but proud that he was able to help.



## Activities:

### The Squirrel By Anonymous

Whiskey, frisky,  
Hippity hop;  
Up he goes  
To the tree top.

Whirly, twirly  
Round and round,  
Down he scampers  
To the ground.

Furly, curly  
What a tail!  
Tall as a feather  
Broad as a sail!

Where's his supper?  
In the shell,  
Snappity, crackity,  
Out it fell.

Make a squirrel  
using an empty  
toilet paper roll.  
Draw a face and  
ears on one side  
of the roll. Cut  
out a tail and  
glue it to the  
back.



Make a squirrel out of a pine cone. Cut out a head  
shape and glue it to one end of the pine cone. Draw a  
face and ears on it. Cut out a tail and glue it to the  
other end.



Read: *How Do You Know It's Fall* by Allan Fowler

*Never Trust a Squirrel* by Patrick Cooper

These books are available at the local library: [jmrl.org](http://jmrl.org).