

THE NIGHTTIME SKY

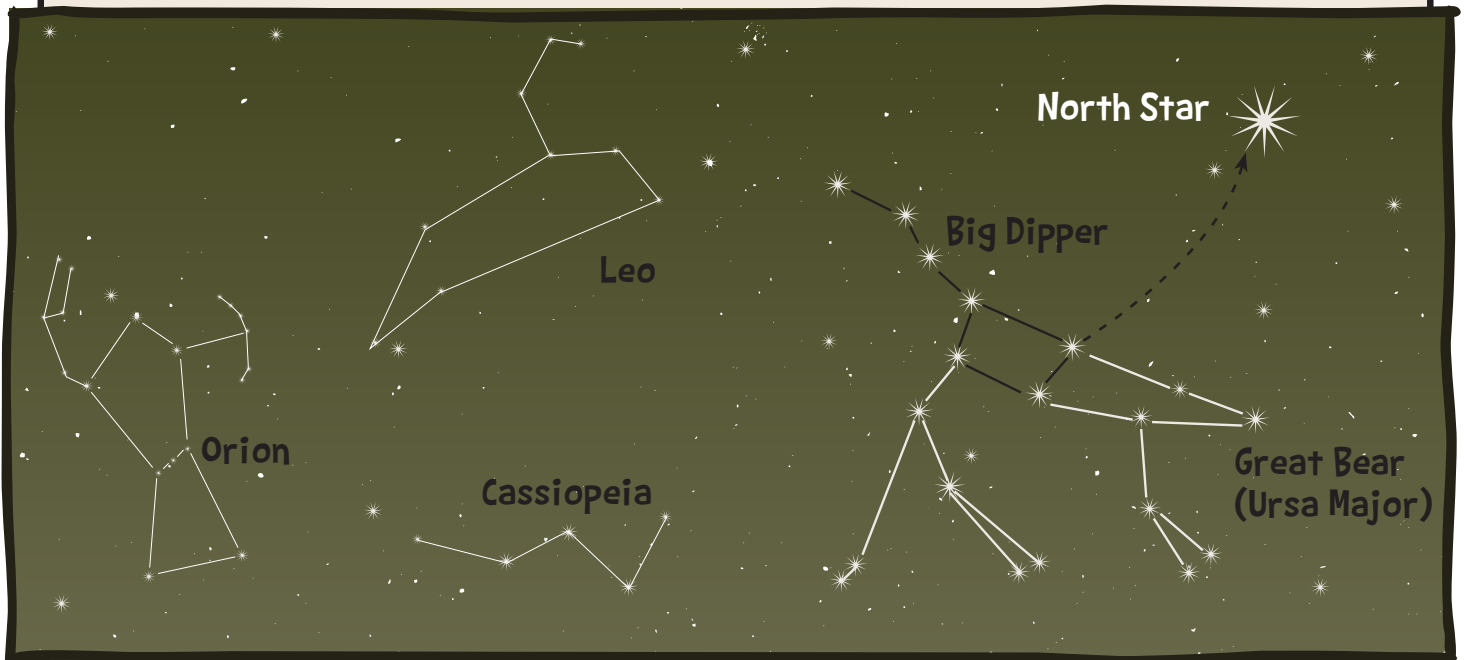
Name _____

Date _____ Park _____

From the beginning of time people have looked up at the night sky in wonder. Some thought the night sky was the home of the gods. Others saw constellations, which are patterns of stars. The Ancient Greeks and the Native Americans saw one of these constellations as a bear, known as the Great Bear (Ursa Major). Even though different cultures were gazing at the same sky, they have different tales about the constellations.

Once upon a time, three hunters started to chase a bear. The first hunter was carrying a bow to shoot the bear, the second hunter was carrying a pot to cook the bear and the third hunter was carrying wood to light a fire. The three hunters were never able to catch the bear and continue to chase it through the sky.

- Adapted from Iroquois Legend



Before compasses and GPS units were invented, travelers used two of the stars found in the Great Bear which point to the North Star as a way to navigate through the wilderness or on the sea.

Today, parks are great places to look for star patterns because they have few lights and plenty of open space. Ask a parent or adult to stargaze with you on your next overnight camping trip!





CULTURAL RESOURCES ACTIVITY

NIGHTTIME SKY

What kinds of constellations do you see in the night sky?
Draw a constellation you can make up
from the night sky and write a story
about it.



1. What is the pattern of your constellation – a shape? an animal? a person?

2. What does this pattern represent to you?

3. How did your visit to the park help you create your constellation?
