

# A SEARCH FOR SAFE PASSAGE

## Discussion Questions

### CHAPTER 1

#### Danger on the Human Highway



1. What is Bear's favorite food?
2. What terrifies Bear more than anything else in his life?
3. Describe the gorge. What was it like back in the time of Bear's grandparents, and how is it different now?
4. Why do you think Bear is afraid to cross from the North to the South side? Why is it also a strong urge for him to find a way to travel to the South?
5. What effect does hearing and smelling the Human Highway have on Bear? Why?
6. What is the difference between the animals on the North and those on the South side?
7. What are Hawk's main responsibilities?
8. Describe Woodchuck's personality. Why is he called "a ham"?
9. What are the "huge metal boxes with wheels"?
10. What happens on the Human Highway at the end of this chapter and why? Could it have been prevented?

### CHAPTER 2

#### Discovering the Black Hole

11. What are Coyote and Bobcat looking for?
12. How are their personalities different and how are they alike?
13. Do you think animals travel and hunt together in real life? Have you heard of examples of this?
14. What do Coyote and Bobcat mean when they talk about a "black hole"?
15. Who taught them about crossing the Human Highway, what was that character like, and what happened to him?
16. Do you think animals are sad when they lose a loved one? Have you seen any evidence of this?
17. Why is Bobcat nervous about trying to get into the black hole?
18. Describe a time when you have helped a friend do something hard physically. How did that make you feel?
19. Describe a time when a friend helped you do something hard. How did that feel?
20. What does Coyote call Bobcat?
21. What inspires her to make it into the black hole?



### CHAPTER 3

#### Meeting of the Forest Council

22. Why is Bear late to the meeting?
23. Why did the animals form the Forest Council?
24. Who is in charge of organizing it?
25. In what order is the roll called?
26. Describe the character of Salamander. What is her other name?
27. Why is Woodchuck upset at the meeting?
28. Have you ever done something you were told not to and then something bad happened? How did this make you feel and why?
29. Describe Turtle's Law.
30. Name something positive and something negative that results from the law.
31. Who are the strangers and why did they look scary to the other animals?

## CHAPTER 4

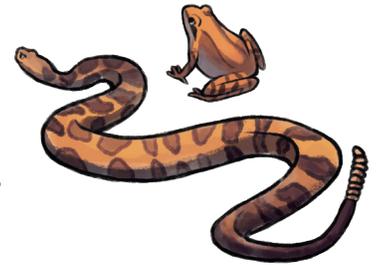
### Strangers Extend an Invitation

32. Why did Owl get onto Deer's back and Hawk get onto Bear's back?
33. Why does Deer say to Bobcat, "I can see by your coat, my friend, you're from the other side"?
34. Why do the animals form a bigger circle with "physical distance" between one another?
35. Which four animals sit on either side of the newcomers and why?
36. Describe a time you were in a group and someone new came into it. How did you help them feel more comfortable?
37. Have you ever been the new person in a larger group who already were friends? How did that feel? How did they welcome you?
38. Who are the two oldest members of the council and what are their special roles?
39. Which character speaks in rhyme and why?
40. Which character brings and shares food with everyone?
41. Would you like to be a member of a group like the Forest Council? What would your role be?

## CHAPTER 5

### Journey to a Secret Passage

42. Why do the animals want to travel to see the Secret Passage?
43. Who is happier about the trip in the middle of the night, Hawk or Owl, and why?
44. Who carries Turtle when she is tired and how?
45. Who carries Snake and Salamander and how?
46. Why does Bear feel disoriented when he reaches the black hole?
47. Describe what happened to Bear's mother.
48. Who helps Bear to feel less afraid and how does this character help him?
49. Name two animals who decide not to go through the black hole and why.
50. What decision does Salamander make about how to cross and why?
51. Why is Bear surprised by Deer's decision?



## CHAPTER 6

### A Traveler Tells of a Landbridge

52. Where does Firefly ride during the crossing?
53. Who gets lost during the crossing and how?
54. Why are the animals afraid of Elk when they first see him?
55. For what types of occasions does Snake reserve his rattle?
56. Describe the legend that Snake remembers.
57. Which direction did Elk come from long ago, which direction has he just arrived from, and how long has he been living in the gorge?
58. Who corrects Coyote's use of "culver" to "culvert"?
59. What part of Salamander is missing and why is she not very concerned?
60. Why do you think Elk calls the other animals Brothers and Sisters? What effect does this have?
61. Describe how Snake and Elk relate to one another. Why do you think this happens?

## CHAPTER 7

### New Friends Along the Way



62. Who are the new friends the travelers meet and why do they need Snake's help?
63. What kinds of herbs do Snake and his friends look for?
64. Who lights their way?
65. Describe the scene when Hawk returns to the Piney Knob on the North side.
66. Who knows the ancient legend that Snake also knows?
67. How is Weasel feeling the next day after the treatment of his tail?
68. What does Bear actually do when he tells the group he is going to look for ants?
69. How does SheBear look different from Bear?
70. Why does Bear tell her he hasn't been sleeping or eating for several days?
71. What does SheBear make Bear promise if she goes with him to the landbridge?

## CHAPTER 8

### Reunion on the Landbridge

72. Who do the animals meet when getting a drink at the river?
73. What does Bobcat start doing after meeting the new character and why?
74. What is the most surprising part of this chapter for you?
75. Describe a time when you have been reunited with a friend or family member after being apart. What did that feel like?
76. What are some of the things that Elk has seen when he used to live in the West?
77. What is Elk's response when Woodchuck asks why there are so many roads?
78. Describe the landbridge and how it was formed. Why is it a safe passage?
79. How are some Human Beings trying to help animals find safer crossings?
80. What is on Elk's neck and how can it help him and other animals?
81. What does Elk tell the animals they need to do now?



### REFLECTING ON THE STORY

82. Who was your favorite character in the book and why?
83. What character did you sympathize with the most and why?
84. Can you identify the footprints at the end of each chapter?

### MEET THE REAL ANIMALS

85. If you could not identify the footprints at the end of each chapter, try matching them up to the animals on each page of this section.
86. Pick one of the animals in the book to study and present to your class. Describe two ways it is different in real life from the character in the story.
87. Explain the concept of "anthropomorphism." How can it be useful and when should it not be used?

### HOW TO HELP THEM CROSS

88. What is road ecology?
89. What does it mean to "thrive"?
90. What kinds of animals have you seen dead on roads near where you live?
91. What are some of the reasons why animals cross—or try to cross—highways and other roads?
92. Why is it hard to know exactly how many animals die on roads?
93. How can animals crossing roads be dangerous for humans?
94. What are some of the ways that humans can help wildlife cross our roads?
95. Give an example of how different species of animals have different requirements for safe road crossings.
96. What is the barrier effect and which animal in the story is most closely associated with it?
97. Explain the concept of species diversity and why it is important.
98. How is fencing used in road ecology?
99. What are some of the reasons why wildlife might shy away from crossing structures?
100. Where do old-fashioned road signs work best?
101. What are the limitations of electric interactive signs?
102. How do round and box culverts differ?
103. What is the main advantage of the multi-plate arch?
104. Open-span bridges are the best solution in what types of situations?
105. When might be a good time to put in an extensive bridge extension?
106. What are the advantages and disadvantages of wildlife overpasses?
107. How might researchers use cameras to learn about road ecology?



Create definitions for these words based on what you have learned.

1. Anthropomorphism
2. Approach
3. Barrier effect
4. Box culvert
5. Bridge extension
6. Collision
7. Collision data
8. Escape ramp
9. Extinction
10. Fencing
11. Fragmentation
12. Geographical terrain
13. Habitat
14. Interactive sign
15. Megafauna
16. Migration route
17. Multi-plate arch
18. Open-span bridge
19. Road ecology
20. Round culvert
21. Species diversity
22. Thrive
23. Vegetation
24. Wildlife crossing structure
25. Wildlife mortality
26. Wildlife overpass

