



Salamander Rescue

Pamela McDowell

Illustrated by Kasia Charko

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About the book

Cricket McKay has lived in Waterton all her life, so she is surprised to discover an animal she hasn't seen before: the long-toed salamander. She finds a band of them migrating from the pond to their hibernation grounds at Crandell Mountain. Crossing the road that lies between the pond and the mountain is dangerous enough, but now a newly-constructed curb makes their journey even more challenging. Can Cricket and her friends come up with a solution to help the salamanders?

Salamander Rescue is the second book featuring Cricket and friends, following *Ospreys in Danger*.

About the Author

Pamela McDowell was born in Calgary, Alberta, and has lived almost all of her life there. She graduated from the University of Victoria in British Columbia and began her first career in education. Pamela taught junior high and high school in Alberta and British Columbia and she enjoys getting back into the classroom to share her books with students.

Pamela started writing articles for local and national magazines. Eventually she moved to freelance writing for newspapers and has written more than 200 human interest articles for *The Calgary Herald*. Since 2010, she has written more than three dozen nonfiction books for children.

Pamela's fiction focuses on the diverse animals and habitats of Alberta. As a teenager, she chose volunteering at the Calgary Zoo over hanging out at the mall. On weekends at the zoo, she made friends with Peaches the porcupine and spent part of each day cuddling Rosie, the boa constrictor. Her interest in prickly, furry, slimy, slinky animals continues in her stories.

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About the Writing

While visiting Waterton one summer, Pamela noticed odd tunnels under the main road into town. People who live in Waterton told her about the long-toed salamanders that were discovered on the road one night as they migrated to Linnet Lake. Pamela instantly knew this would be a great adventure for Cricket and her friends.

Salamanders are tiny, secretive creatures, and Pamela has never seen one in Waterton. This meant she had to do a lot of research and talk to a lot of experts to get the details needed for her story. A scientist—the real Dr. Kate—and a park warden had many stories to share. After the book was written, Pamela was invited to help clean up and restore some of the tunnels under the roadway. It was hard work and she still hasn't seen a salamander.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections*Prereading Ideas*

- Sometimes wild animals exist near us without our knowing. Have you ever been surprised to find an animal you didn't expect in your neighborhood? What was it? What happened to it?
- Cricket and Shilo have never seen salamanders in Waterton. The salamanders are tiny and there aren't very many of them, so why is it so important that they are protected?
- Roads can become dangerous barriers for wildlife. How have people tried to protect animals from these dangers? Does this create other problems or dangers for the animals?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the dangers the salamanders face as they migrate across the road?
2. Why does Dr. Kate mark the salamanders with blue dye in chapter 4? What are other ways scientists identify animals that may look very similar?
3. Cricket and her friends sell lemonade to raise money for the salamander rescue in chapter 7. How do they work together as a team? Have you ever raised money in a similar way? What did you do? What did you use the money for?
4. What is the difference between an endangered species and one that is threatened? Which is more serious? Why?

Suggested Activities

- Using information from the book, draw a map of Waterton. Be sure to include Cricket's house, Linnet Lake, Crandell Mountain, Mr. Tanaka's house, the stable, the playground and Pat's Garage.
- Cricket's favorite ice cream flavor is chocolate. Find out the most popular flavor in your class by surveying the students and creating a tally chart. This data can be used to draw a bar graph showing your results.
- In the last chapter, Cricket suggests writing a letter to the government. How would you convince the government to build tunnels for the salamanders? Write the letter using correct letter format, including salutations

- Research project: Where else do long-toed salamanders live? Write a short report and be sure to include a map.
- Research project: What are the stages in the salamander's life cycle? Draw and color a picture for each stage. Be sure to label your pictures and connect them with arrows to show the cycle.
- Cricket and her friends made sixteen dollars selling lemonade. They charged twenty-five cents per cup. How many cups of lemonade did they sell? If they sold the same number of cups for ten cents each, how much money would they have collected? Would they have made enough money to purchase the cement?
- Divide a piece of paper in half lengthwise to create two columns. Label one column "reptile" and the other one "amphibian." Research to find information for each about appearance, habitat, food, etc., and create a chart. Find examples of animals for each.

Websites of Interest

True story of Waterton's salamanders

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/waterton/natcul/natcul1/w.aspx

The construction of tunnels in Waterton

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/waterton/natcul/natcul1/w/1.aspx

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Ospreys in Danger

Awards and Reveiws

Ospreys in Danger

2014 CCBC Best Books

2015 Green Earth Book Award nominee

"An exciting tale for young animal lovers." —*School Librarian's Workshop*

"McDowell has done of fine job of telling an interesting and immediate story to children who are becoming interested in environmentalism and who can connect to events in this story...Charko's illustrations add increased meaning to the text as they give readers more access to what an osprey looks like, what the environment looks like, and especially what a power pole looks like to make the problem in this book make sense." —*CM Magazine*