



## MARVELOUS, MUSHY MUD

It's early spring, and as the ground thaws and the rain falls, there's bound to be LOTS of MUD!

A scientist might describe mud as a mixture of water and any combination of different types of soil. Different types of soil? You bet! Soil can be sandy or more like clay, and depending on your soil, the mud it makes can be gooey, sticky, or smooosh-y.

**Mud is cool and fun, and it's also very useful.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### MUD IS A BUILDING MATERIAL

Beavers move logs and sticks into the mud to form a strong base for their dam. Then, they carry even more mud with their front paws to build up and make the dam even stronger.

American robins build their nest with twigs, dry grass, mud, and more. The mud helps give the nest its round shape, keeping the eggs and hatchlings safe and warm for several weeks.

#### MUD IS A WINTER HOME

Some freshwater turtles burrow into mud at the bottom of the pond each fall and stay mostly inactive until spring.

#### MUD IS A PLACE TO HIDE

Dragonfly nymphs camouflage themselves on or in the mud at the bottom of the pond as they wait for prey to swim or crawl by.

#### MUD IS A PLACE TO EAT

"Mud-puddling" is a common behavior in which butterflies seek out mud (and other gooey, brown things found on the ground) and suck up the liquid and salts.

#### MUD IS A SAFE WAY TO TRAVEL

If you're a worm, a wet, muddy surface gives you a chance to move above ground without drying out.

## ARE YOU A "MUDOLOGIST"?

**Some activities for "mudologists" like you!**

**Wear washable clothes and go have some mushy muddy fun!**

Make your own mud mixing water and soil. How much water can the soil absorb before it becomes mud? How quickly does the mud form and how long does it last before it dries up?

Create a tiny-sized village out of mud using little sticks, acorn caps, stones, and sprigs of vegetation. Sculpt mud into all sorts of fun shapes and structures using your hands, clay molds, or cookie cutters.



Send photos of your mud nest, sculpture, or village to us at [explore@massaudubon.org](mailto:explore@massaudubon.org). We'd love to feature it on our Young Explorers web page!

