Once a WHALE Lived Here

Written and illustrated by *Amy Huntington*

Inspired by real-life events, *Once a Whale Lived Here* uses collage, illustrations, and a graphic novel narrative style to show how places can change dramatically over time. It will inspire readers to look at their own surroundings and think about what they might have seen thousands and thousands of years ago. This guide will expand the geology concepts in the book and give you a few activity ideas to inspire your students to think deeply and creatively about the history of their own backyards!

Glacier Experiment:
Once a Whale Lived here starts with the story of a huge glacier. When it melted, its footprint left room for a giant lake. Help your students understand this process with this fun, simple experiment.

Try THIS!

Place a large saturated sponge on a tray and place a heavy object on the sponge. What happens when the object is removed?

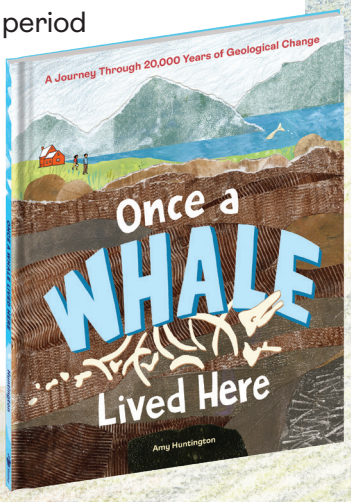
The heavy object is similar to the weight of the glacier on the land, leaving an indent on the surface. The indent, as it disappears, shows the "rebound" of Earth's crust after the glacier has melted.

Timeline Coloring Page:
Readers travel through twenty thousand years of geologic history in this story. In the attached timeline, students will learn about the complex and fascinating change one region has undergone in this time, from the melting of a thick glacier to the formation of freshwater Lake Champlain!

Have your students color in the timeline so they can see how whale bones ended up hundreds of miles from any ocean!

Interview an Animal:
We meet a lot of animals in this story. Have your students pick one—maybe a woolly mammoth, beluga whale, caribou, or wolf. Ask them to imagine what it would be like to talk to this animal and learn about its surroundings and how it lived. Understanding what their habitat looked like can tell us a lot about what the world looked like during a specific time period and how it has evolved since then.

Questions can include:
- What do you like to eat?
- How do you stay warm?
- What other types of animals live near you?
- What do you like or not like about your life?



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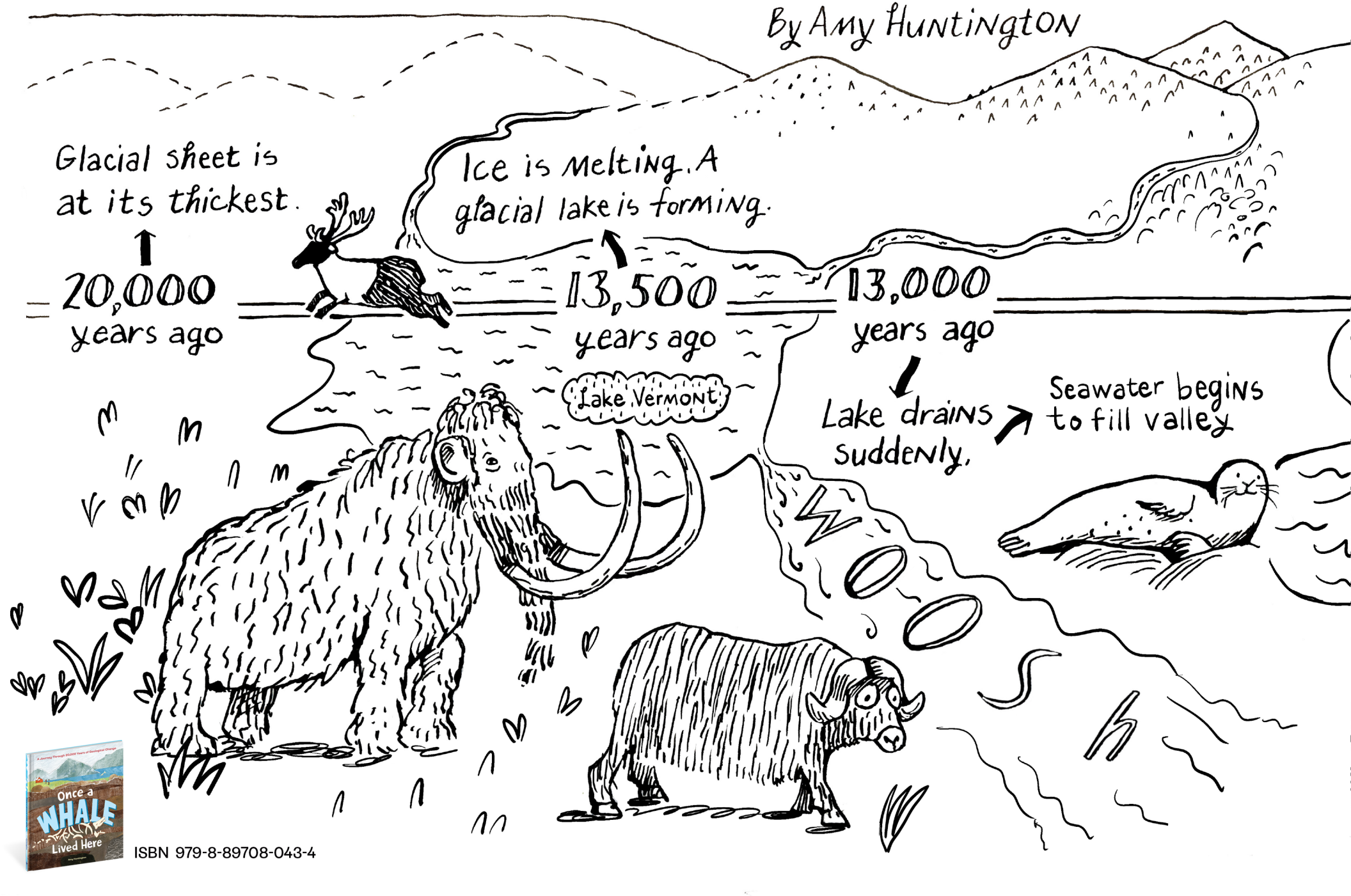

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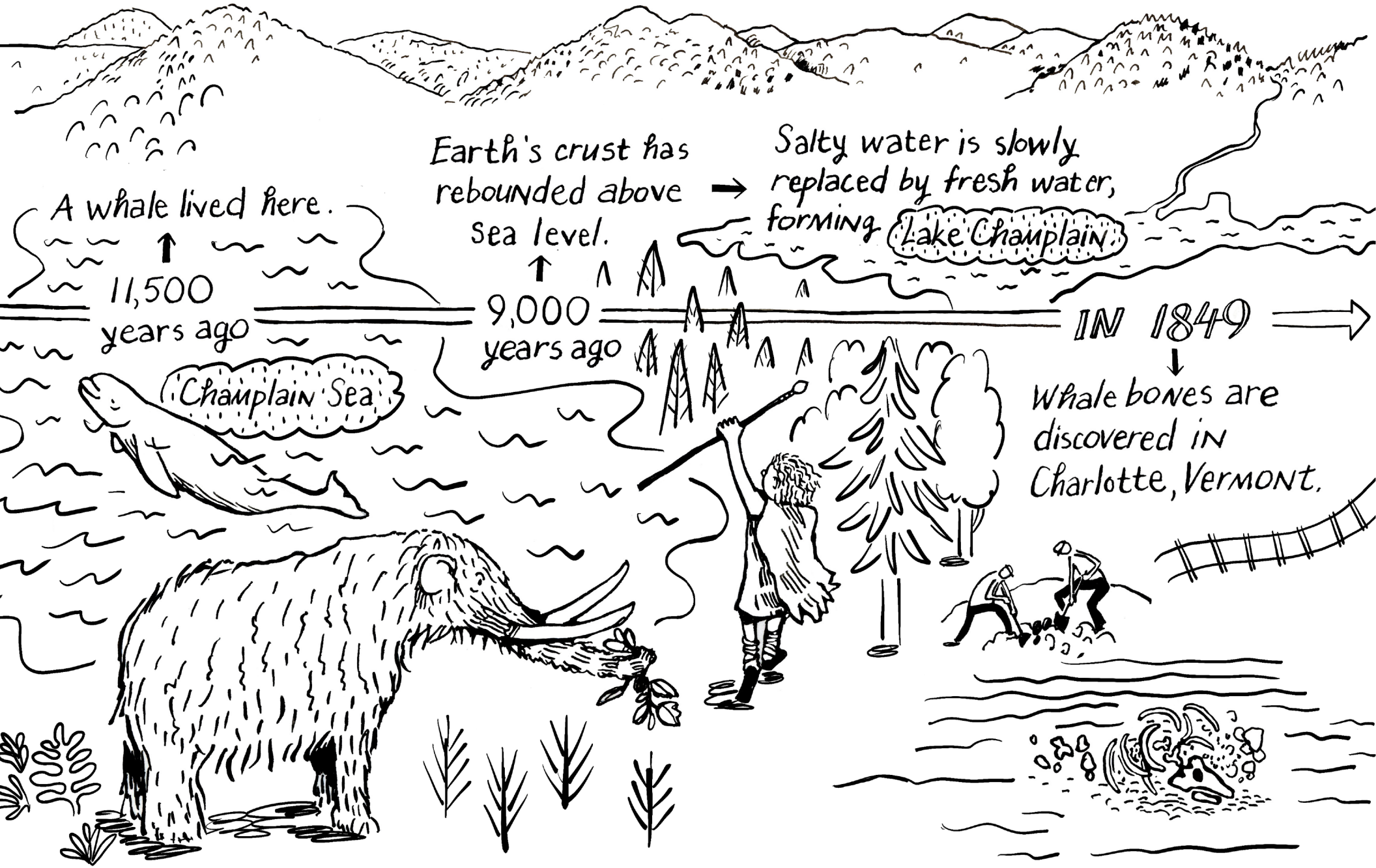
A whale lived here.
11,500 years ago
Champlain Sea
Earth's crust has rebounded above sea level.
9,000 years ago
Salty water is slowly replaced by fresh water, forming Lake Champlain.
IN 1849
Whale bones are discovered in Charlotte, Vermont.