



# Winooski Valley Park District

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## Habitat Assessments

### Objectives

Students will (1) learn the key habitat components and (2) understand how environmental factors can affect habitats and which animals can live there.

### Standards

Next Generation Science Standard 2-LS4-1: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

- 2- Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats. [Clarification Statement: **LS4-** Emphasis is on the diversity of living things in each of a variety of different habitats.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does **1** not include specific animal and plant names in specific habitats.]

### Materials Needed

- Habitat explanations
- Habitat assessment sheets
- Pencils & clipboards

### Background

Students will take a walk, examine different types of habitats, and learn what animals could be living there.

### Procedure

1. Nature walk route: river walk. Bring all materials. Preface the walk with “Leave No Trace” principles. “We will take only pictures and leave only footprints.”
2. Talk about what wildlife consists of, including insects, invertebrates, birds, fish, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. Explain that, today, we are going to ask ourselves “What lives here?”
3. Introduce habitat. What is habitat? Habitat is the scientific term for an animal’s home.
4. Example: Think about when we go to the store and get a new pet. We have to think about what it needs to survive, right? Let’s imagine we are getting a pet turtle. Can you think some things that we would need to get?
  - Compare with a turtle that lives out of doors. What would it need?
  - Compare the two lists. What are the basics? (Food, water, shelter, space)

5. “Oh Deer!” game, aimed at getting kids to understand habitat components (Project WILD pages 36-40).
  - Students will identify the four main components of habitat and describe limiting factors, carrying capacity, and fluctuations in population.
6. There are many very different types of habitat. We could compare the dessert to the rainforest, or the ocean to grassland. Those are vastly different. But right here in Vermont, at the homestead, we have a variety as well! As we walk, we will get a chance to explore four different habitats.

Along the walk stop at these different habitats:

1. **Deciduous forest**
2. **Field**
3. **River**
4. **Wetland**

7. At each stopping point, explain the type of habitat they are going to explore. Ask them to think about what is unique to this habitat.
8. Explain that the things that make each habitat unique will make it a habitat for a certain animal. At each stop have them use their habitat assessment sheet to fill out the unique specifications of the area.
9. At each spot, talk about the special characteristics the habitat offers. Have students hypothesize about what animals could live there.

## Evaluation

Habitat assessment sheets.

## Habitat Explanations

# River

### Characteristics

- Normally freshwater
- Water that continuously flows
- Flows in one direction
- Flows to larger body of water
  - o Lake Champlain
- Have flood planes

### Habitat! What's that? Could these animals live here?

- Raccoon
- Brook Trout
- Painted Turtle
- Crocodile
- Otter

### What makes this habitat special?

The river is a special habitat because it provides one of the basic needs for animals: water. Animals can come here to get water. Also for some animal's waters is a crucial part of their shelter and space!

# Field

### Characteristics

- Provides a lot of open space
- Generally dry
- Low/Medium length grasses
- Has forest on one or more sides

### Habitat! What's that? Could these animals live here?

- Rabbit
- Hawk
- Frog
- Turtle
- Fox

### What makes this habitat special?

A lot of animals need the shelter of the forest. However fields produce a lot of food for animals to forage for. For example: Owls that live in trees in the forest may go to a field to hunt for mice and other small mammals that live in the field.

# Deciduous Forest

## Characteristics

A variety of living things:

- Trees (That loose leaves)
- Shrubs
- Wildflowers
- Ferns
- Mosses
- Fungi

AND non-living things:

- Water
- Nutrients
- Sunlight
- Air
- Rocks

## What makes this habitat special?

The leaves that fall from the trees cover the soil and begin to decompose. Offering both habitat and food for small critters as well as valuable nutrients for the soil.

## Habitat! What's that? Could these animals live here?

- Eastern Newt
- Iguana
- Blue Jay
- Moose
- Trout

# Wetland

## Characteristics

- Covered or saturated with water
- Not totally dry and not totally underwater
- Some vegetation (trees, grasses, mosses)
- Slow moving water

## Habitat! What's that? Could these animals live here?

- Spotted Salamander
- Painted Turtle
- White tail Deer
- Moose
- Woodpecker

## What makes this habitat special?

This habitat is special because it provides slow moving water, which acts as a nursery for aquatic creatures. Another important feature of a wetland is that its continuously working to clean the water that flows gently through.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethan Allen Homestead: Habitat Assessments**

Habitat 1 Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Who's home? \_\_\_\_\_

Food	
Water	
Shelter	
Space	

Habitat 2 Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Who's home? \_\_\_\_\_

Food	
Water	
Shelter	
Space	

Habitat 3 Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Who's home? \_\_\_\_\_

Food	
Water	
Shelter	
Space	

Habitat 4 Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Who's home? \_\_\_\_\_

Food	
Water	
Shelter	
Space	

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