

Activity 15

Investigate Biodiversity

Goals:

- Inform participants of local projects and initiatives related to sustainability
- Provide an enhanced learning environment through the use of kinaesthetic learning activities
- Elicit a sense of individual responsibility to living sustainably

Outcomes:

- A heightened awareness of local processes and issues
- An understanding of the importance of local action

Suggested Time: At least two periods of 1-3 hours each

Place: The main campus grounds of Dalhousie and/or a local park (e.g. Point Pleasant Park).

People:

- Group leader
- Participants

Materials:

- A biodiversity manual to provide insight into the importance of biodiversity in urban green spaces. An example is “Making contracts work for wildlife: How to encourage biodiversity in urban parks”, found at http://www.eauc.org.uk/file_uploads/8068.pdf.
- Nature Watch Programs such as Plant Watch - <http://www.plantwatch.ca/english/>; Thousands Eyes Program – Monitoring NS plant and wildlife through the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History - https://thousandeyes.ca/english_en/whatis.php.
- Notepads and pens.
- Environmentally friendly transportation.

NOTES:

STEP 1

- Notify potential participants using email or word-of-mouth of the proposed time and date for both walks.

Be sure to include a brief excerpt of biodiversity, highlighting its importance to the economy and society, or attach an electronic manual.

STEP 2

- Meet on campus grounds to begin a biodiversity inventory of an area.
- Divide participants into small groups and designate each group to a general area

STEP 3

- Have participants count the number of species – both flora and fauna – within a 5 minute time period. Record results.
- Repeat in a different area of campus.
- Discuss findings and take time to enjoy the natural surroundings.

STEP 4

- Repeat steps 2 and 3 in a densely covered area of a park like Point Pleasant.

Emphasize sustainable methods of transportation for travel to and from the park.

STEP 5

- Compare and contrast results from both trips.
- Use a biodiversity manual to provide background information for discussion of potential ways to improve species richness on campus.

For further information on this activity and others, search 'campus-based learning' at <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/index.html>.

Follow Up:

- Contact Grounds Services the Office of Sustainability to discuss concerns or questions regarding on-campus landscaping.
- Check out resources at Hinterlands Who's Who such as videos and information on species. This may help with species identification. <http://www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=222>.
- For your home are check our Clean Nova Scotia's Sustainable Landscaping team come in and do a free "Greenyards Sustainable Lawn Assessment": <http://www.clean.ns.ca/default.asp?mn=1.274.275>.