

## Assignment 1 – Study Site

As we discussed in section on Monday, you need to select a study site, on or near campus, with a human population density less than that of your apartment or dorm room. You will revisit your study site through out the semester; therefore, it should be comfortable to you (i.e., not next to a dark alley) and should provide for a variety of ecological observations. The goal is to find a site that will inspire you and motivate your writing about ecology.

1a) Pick your study site. You should spend some time looking for a study site. Again, you are looking for a site that will inspire your writing and allow you to discuss a wide range of ecological interactions. Sites near the boundary of two different habitats – for example at the edge of a wood lot or near a lake or stream – will provide more interactions to discuss. Make sure you pick a place that is close to and easy to access from wherever you live. You will revisit your site regularly. If your favorite place to sit and think is appropriate, use it.

1b) Write a clear and concise site description. Pay attention to things like animals, plants, topography, local climate, sounds, smells, interaction, etc. Do not worry about using correct species names or terminology. Do not spend a lot of time on this description, I just want you to write what you see using your own words. (\_ page)

2) Write 15-20 ecological questions based on the ecology of your study site. Write only questions that truly interest you, ideas that you might seek/find answers for during this semester. Whenever possible, focus on interactions among organisms, and between organisms and their environment. If your study site is located along a habitat boundary, try to develop questions that relate to ecological processes along that boundary. Finally, although your study site is a single place, think about wide ranging organisms and regional processes that might affect the local ecology.

3) Using a style of prose similar to that of the early naturalists (e.g., Leopold), rewrite 1 of your questions based on observations from your study site. Try to create a flow such that your original, likely stark, question dissolves into a discussion of your observations. No more than a short paragraph (4-5 sentences)