



## Managing Your “Home Forest”

Forest Managers get to know the forest they work in through lots of exploration, observation and recording of information. They look to see how plants and animals in that forest are meeting their basic needs. A Forest Manager then makes a plan for how people can improve the area by providing a balance of all things needed for survival in that area. In this activity, you will become a manager of an area near where you live.

### Materials:

- Notebook, several sheets of paper or nature journal
- Pencil
- A spot outside near where you live

### Resources:

[The Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Backyard Wildlife](#)

### Procedure:

#### Step 1 - Get to know your area

1. Find an area around where you live that you would like to investigate and manage. This should be a small plot around 30'x30'
2. Spend some time in that area and use your senses to observe the area in detail.

3. Record which animals you either see or hear. How many of each of these animals are in the area at this time? Start your entry with details like the date and weather conditions.
4. Count the number of plants in that area. Record how many trees, bushes, flowers and other types of vegetation you discover.
5. What does the soil look like? Record the color, smell, texture of the soil.
6. You could even take some photos of the area.

### **Step 2 – How are basic needs being met?**

1. Now that you know this area well, let's record some data! How do animals meet their basic needs here? What do they do for food? water? shelter? space?
2. Write down all of these needs by each animal you have discovered. (\*hint – Don't forget to look for signs. Sometimes we only see signs that an animal uses this spot, and sometimes we have to look high and low to see how living things are meeting their needs. )

### **Step 3 – Making a plan for caring for the area**

1. Make a detailed map of your special area. Be sure to include where the plants are, where you discovered the animals or saw signs of the animals. Point out the resources animals could use to meet their basic needs.
2. What are some ways you can protect the living things in this area so they can continue to find the things they need to survive? What things should we make sure stay in the area? Is there anything you can add that would help the area?

### **Step 4 – Take action!**

1. After a Forest Manager has a plan for how to improve an area of forest, they then take the steps to care for it.
2. As a Junior Forest Manager choose a couple of small ways to improve your area from your plan. Check in with an adult to see if it is safe to make them happen.
3. After making your changes, come back in a week and see your special area is different.