

Peninsula Forests Field Trip Exercise

Forests Through Time and Space Fall/ Winter, 2004/05

Objectives

To gain experience with forest plot sampling and to sample three different forest types.

During this field trip, we will visit three or four different forests. In each forest, you (working in groups of three) will complete the different sampling methods outlined in the *Measuring Forests* handout. This data will form the basis of work that we will continue throughout the quarter, comparing different forests in the PNW.

We will visit at least three different forests:

- Sitka spruce/Hemlock forest at Rialto beach
- Second growth forest on Hoh river road
- Hoh Rainforest

When you are out working in the forest, remember to minimize your impact. Tread lightly, leave no trace.

Tools needed (per each three-person team)

In addition to your standard field gear, you will need

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle gauge or wedge prism • DBH tape • Field tape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner stakes (4) • Field guides • Clinometer |
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Field work

At each forest site, your team will be assigned a beginning location and a compass heading for your sampling transect (line). Before beginning, prepare a data table in your field notebook. Discuss with your partners how the work will be divided.

1. To begin, take about 50 paces into the forest to eliminate any edge-effect bias.
2. Write a brief, but detailed description of the forest. Include the relative amount of light, tree density, size, slope, location, aspect, etc.
3. At this location, you can begin to take variable plot counts. Take ten plots in each forest, separate the centers of each plot by going at least past the furthest “in” tree in the direction of your compass heading.
4. At each variable plot location, assess the canopy cover by counting squares in the sampling grid.
5. Randomly choose a number of paces along your compass line to establish either the corner or center of your fixed plot.
6. Decide on the size of your fixed plot (use 0.05 acre if there are a lot of smaller trees, otherwise use 0.1 acre). Record the plot size and shape.
7. Assess the various layers of the forest using the methods in the *Measuring Forests* handout.
8. If you have the time to complete more than one fixed plot in the allotted time, do so.
9. Back in camp, summarize your data on a Forest Summary data sheet. Make sure that each person in the group has a copy of the data summary.

