Greenspace Discovery – Leader Notes

What skills will the group develop?

The greenspace discovery session gives young people an experience of practical skills such as:

- Mapping to scale
- Classification and possibly identification of species
- Surveying for invertebrates
- Setting up survey techniques to suit an area
- Decision making linked to the above

Who is the activity suitable for?

The resource has been designed to be differentiated by the leader to suit the group and to be useful for an upper KS2 up to KS3 group.

Do we need to do the whole booklet?

You might not use all the activities in the booklet, this is not exhaustive and is designed to be a useful tool to focus your exploration of the school grounds/greenspace in an accessible way. If you are conducting these activities independently you need to have a suitable risk assessment and also have permission of the landowner (if it is not the school grounds).

How long will it take?

The activities in this booklet could be spread out across and time period in spring or summer. You could split activities between different groups and then come together to share your findings. It would take more than 1 day to complete all these activities as a group. Equally, you can take a very thorough approach meaning one element could take a full day.

What is the point of the activity?

Greenspace discovery is about finding a new appreciation for the variety of life on our doorstep. Our aim is to give the young people involved a new look at a place they have seen many times before, and a new appreciation for the many different plants and animals that live there.

It goes without saying that spending time learning outdoors and forging a stronger connection with, and understanding of, the natural world has hugely positive impacts on wellbeing and resilience. We hope that more time looking at the “everyday” wildlife that can be found around our local area will help young people to access benefit this more independently in the future.

Where are the Padlet resources?

Key Stage 2 https://padlet.com/BeyondTheClassroom/BuxtonWildWeeksKS2

Key Stage 3 https://padlet.com/BeyondTheClassroom/BuxtonWildWeekSecondary

Below are some tips for each section, and any additional resources that will be useful in each of the activities. **You'll find all these links on your Padlet** (if it is a KS2 or secondary one).

Activity 1: How many different types of habitat area there?

Drawing to scale might not work for the greenspace you have chosen and obviously pacing out might be a challenge in a large area, especially if the boundaries of it are not safe to pace in. It might work better to choose a smaller zone of a greenspace if this is the case. You could also use Google Maps to get a satellite view of the area and use the "measure distance" function to work out the size of the area.

Concepts to cover:

- What is a habitat?
- Why a larger variety of habitats is better than a smaller one
- How to draw to scale (if deemed suitable for the group) – possibly using pacing out

The group should use pencil to label the habitats and then enjoy deciding on a colour scheme and colouring in when the actual surveying is complete.

You can tailor this activity to suit the group taking part, older groups may want to be quite specific about the placement of habitats on the map. Younger groups may need a lot of support visualising the area from an aerial view.

You can keep adding information to this map as you do more activities so if you want to keep a base map you could photocopy/photograph a full habitat map once they are completed. You could also keep copies of the map you do this year and revisit the same area next year to see what has changed.

For secondary groups, there is a different version of this activity created by Bumblebee Conservation Trust called **Habitat Classification and Vegetation Survey** – you could complete this or include some elements of both if you prefer.

Activity 2: How many different types of flowering plants can we find?

Concepts to cover:

- Why lots of plants flower at this time of year
- What different species rely on flowering plants
- Another link to diversity of plant life and diversity of animals

You can tailor this activity to suit the group too, gathering as much or as little detail as is suitable for the level of the group. If you've been working on flower anatomy it's a good opportunity to put that into practice on a range of different flowers.

The FSC guides (in Wild Weeks kits if you have one) are a good place to start if you would like to try and identify some of the flowers but you can also download the **iNaturalist app** to take photos which should give you an indication of where to start looking.

If you want to focus on particular species of plants you could use the seasonal **Herbology Hunt spotter sheets** to help target easy to identify species.

If you have a large area to explore and enough staff to support splitting into groups each group could focus on a different area and then you could add up all the different flowers you have seen (being careful not to duplicate). You could also set out a route around the habitat and use this again each year for a survey.

Activity 3: How many different types of invertebrates can we find in the different habitats?

Concepts to cover:

- What is an invertebrate?
- Classification of invertebrates
- Importance of diverse invertebrate population on the rest of the food web
- Pollination services (not just bees, but some wasps, flies, butterflies, moths, beetles)
- Possibly life cycles of invertebrates – why we don't see as many in winter etc.

Tailor the level of detail you go into to the group. The FSC name trail guides are a really good starting point for classification but there are some other sheets which you will find on the Padlet that allow you to narrow down what you are looking at.

You don't need to identify what you find. What we are looking at is the number of different species present (species richness). If you do have a keen interest among the group take a few clear pictures from different angles and upload to iNaturalist or use one of the popular UK invertebrate groups on Facebook with details of time/location etc.

Techniques used to survey are covered in video format and in some useful links on your Padlet in sections on habitats, wildlife and/or ecology.

Activity 3: How many different types of tree are there? How many of each type?

Key Concepts:

- Difference between deciduous and coniferous trees
- Importance of the nutrient cycle
- Importance of associated fungi for trees

Although you'll be able to answer this question through this activity you can also gather more information about the trees you look at.

You may want to download the OPAL Tree Health Survey guide if you're interested in carrying out a more in-depth survey of trees. You'll need to download and print the page on estimating tree height from there to use with this activity.