Harvard LTER Schoolyard Program

Teacher Developed Lessons and Documents that integrate Harvard Forest Schoolyard Ecology Themes into curriculum.

Title: Starting The Our Changing Forests Project; Year One
Project: Our Changing Forests
Teacher: Judy Gibson
School: Francis W. Parker Charter School
Level: Middle School
Date: April 9, 2015
Our Changing Forests
Francis W. Parker Charter School

Starting the project
Year 1
The Site

• An 80 acre wooded hill just behind the school
• Public land designated for education and recreation
• Shared with public disc golf course
Equity

6 classes, 150 students
How can everyone participate?
12 plots
=2 plots per class
=12 students per plot
=Teams of 4:
    Plotters
    Taggers
    Diameters
Planning

- Negotiations with the director of the disc golf course
- Walked the hill and agreed on 12 plots that would be off the disc golf courses
- Tried to have plots that were different:
  - ecologically
  - orientation
  - proximity to the school
Now for the students

In September

We drew leaf samples of the main tree types found on the hill to familiarize ourselves with them.

Students used field guides to try to identify the species and add features.
Sassafras

Leaf

"A generalist; found on rich and poor sites."

3 prominent veins

Medium-brightish green

Fun Fact

The bark from these trees was used to make not beer (in the fruit) -

Latin Name
Sassafras albidum (syn. Nees) Nees

Elliot S. & Jill Evans
Pin Oak

[Leaf diagram with labeled parts: Deep veins, Rocky Hill, Yellow and green leaves]
Red Maple leaf

Leaf arrangement: Opposite
Latin name: Acer Rubrum

Grows 8 to 20 m tall
Fruit: Paired wings

Wood: Soft
Not strong
In late September and October

- Each team did a short practice session using the equipment and introducing the techniques
- Then taking 12 kids at a time we took trips up to the plot to stake out the plot, tag the trees, and measure the diameter
- Some groups returned later to re-measure
Final check for accuracy

• I went back up in November, alone, and re-measured all the diameters. Probably about 60% of the student data was accurate.

Next time we practice measuring!