This forest edge is facing west (the sun hits this forest edge in the afternoon only). Therefore this site has a west aspect. How would this influence the types of plants growing there? These plants would need to be able to tolerate shade most of the day, and then the hot drying sun of late summer afternoons. The sword fern and vine maple, that naturally occur here, are ideal plants for those conditions.

**How-to-do Activity: Four Direction Walk**

**Evaluating Aspect**

**Aspect:** a position, side or surface facing a particular direction

**As an example:** Stand facing south: The left side of your body has an eastern aspect; the front of your body has southern aspect; the right side of your body has a western aspect; your back has a northern aspect. On a sunny day how will this influence your body throughout the day (morning, afternoon, evening)?

This photo shows many different aspects in a habitat area. The vegetation of each aspect is influenced differently by length of sunlight, exposure to storms, and microclimates which are created by shade from other plants and geographic features (such large trees and rocks). By looking at these different slopes you can begin to determine their aspect.