Unit: Native Plant Knowledge

Title of Activity: Plot Plant Assessment and Evaluation

Developed by: Heidi Bohan
Activity Length: 45 min. Prep time: 5 min (photocopies). Review: 5 min./locate plant list for site

Guiding Questions: How can we assess the native plants at our restoration site.

Brief Description of Activity: Students will apply identification skills in project assessments and evaluations. Students will layout a plot in a natural area and then assess the plot for wildlife, hydrology, soil, native and non-native plant species, percentage of cover, and percentage of native vs. non-native plant species. From this students may evaluate the restoration steps necessary to achieve 100% native plant cover (a successful restoration). If the site is not in restoration this activity is still useful in practicing plant ID and these skills can be applied to other sites in the future.

Materials: Plot Plant Assessment and Plot Plant Evaluation form master; Plant list for site (if possible); Plant ID field guides; Plant ID cards, Herbarium press (to identify unknown plants later); markers to layout plots (flags, rocks, etc), Key to Soil Texture form in plastic sleeves.

Teacher Provided: pencils; clipboards; photocopies of Assessment/Evaluation form for each team of students

Activity

- Discuss site: stage of restoration, project goals, wildlife species present, identification of key non-native invasive plants; plant community, etc.
- Review form with students point by point.
- Show students how to layout plot. Recommend laying out circular plots with a 3 pace radius (mark the center and pace 3 steps out and mark in the cardinal directions). Plots could be larger or smaller. For long term monitoring of site make the center post permanent and number it, and mark it on your site map.
- Point out key non native invasive plant species, difference between native and non native grasses and sedges, other helpful ID information for large group.
- Students lay out plot.
- Students fill out upper part of form. Assist with soil testing as needed (use Key to Soil Texture form).
- Students fill out plant species portion of form, assist with plant ID. For plants that are unknown take a herbarium sample, number the sample and list the unknown plant by that number on the form. Use the herbarium plant sample to identify it at a later date.
- Have students share their results.
- What is the percentage of native cover in your plot? Why is this important to know for restoration? How can you use this information
- Evaluate the priority non native weed removal, and use this to set up an action plan for the site.