

# AGRISCIENCE EXERCISE

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE SYSTEMS/WILD LIFE

Key Concept: Natural Resource Management

Agricultural Application: Game Management

Exercise: **Who Lives in These Woods?**

Applied Principle(s): Biological relationships in ecosystems

Goals:

1. Identify animals by the tracks they leave behind.
2. Discover the interrelationships between species.
3. Develop an awareness of man's effect on the environment
4. Recognize ways that man can assist in the preservation of wild life.

Materials:

- Plaster of Paris
- Mixing Container
- Spoon
- Form -Flexible Plastic Strips, Cut-Off Margarine Container, or Wax Coated Cardboard

References: Provide the students with wildlife guides

Teacher Preparation Notes:

►Practice working with the plaster of Paris ahead of time, so that you can be assured of obtaining a workable mixture.

►Scout the area that you are working in ahead of time. If there are no tracks visible at your chosen location you may: consider a new location; provide food at the location you have chosen to attract visitors; purchase rubber tracks to allow students to make plaster casts and identify tracks where none were naturally available (modify exercise accordingly).

►If this activity requires a field trip, make sure you have obtained the proper permission from the land owner and follow school field trip procedures.



### Procedures for Conducting the Activity:

1. Divide the class into pairs of students, and provide each with a data sheet and the necessary materials for this exercise.
2. Instruct the students to complete the activity as directed on their data sheets. You may wish to monitor their progress as they work; however, it is suggested that the students be left to follow the instructions and complete the activity on their own.
3. Once all groups have completed the exercise, discuss the answers to the discussion questions as a class. Be sure to make note of the practical agricultural applications of the principles demonstrated.

# AGRISCIENCE EXERCISE

## Who Lives in These Woods?

### STUDENT DATA SHEET

1. Look for signs of life along trails and creek bed. Thing to look for can include tracks, trails, feces, or chewed or broken vegetation. Record the signs of life and animals you have seen.

TYPE (TRACK, FECES, ETC.)	LOCATION	ANIMAL INVOLVED	TIME

2. Use the form to surround a track that you have located. Remove any large sticks or rocks. Ask your instructor to pour plaster of Paris into your mold. After the plaster of Paris is dried, carefully remove the form and lift the mold into a box to carry back to the classroom. Record the location and surroundings of the place where you made the mold. Repeat for as many different tracks your group can find.
3. What features of the area do you think made it possible to find animal tracks?

4. If you were going out to look for tracks again, where would you look first?
  
5. Did you find a pattern in the animals that you could identify as living together?
  
6. Are there certain animals that you would have expected to find living in the area that you found no signs of?
  
7. What features of the area you studied made this a good/poor location to look for signs of life?
  
8. If you were to come back in 100 years, what would you expect to find in the location you studied?

In 1000 years?

In 100,000 years?

9. What do you think caused the changes you predicted?

10. What factors limit the types of animals that can live in an area?

11. What could you change to cause other species to move into the area?

When would that be desirable?

12. What effect do wildlife species have the use of the surrounding land?

13. If there were an endangered animal living in the area, what things might you do to protect it?