

ECOSYSTEM MATTERS USERS GUIDE

*Instructional activities within **ECOSYSTEM MATTERS** are designed for easy use by both educators and resource managers. Classroom teachers, scout leaders, nature camp instructors, forest rangers, naturalists, and others will all find the activities relevant, fun, quick-to-prepare, and user-friendly.*

***ECOSYSTEM MATTERS** activities are designed to be supplemental to existing courses and programs. Each activity is designed to stand alone without other **ECOSYSTEM MATTERS** activities. There is no need to do all of the activities in order nor do all of the activities, even for a given grade level. For this reason, instructors may choose to use a few activities as part of their study or use all of the activities to serve as the bases for a unit on ecosystem management. Each activity can also be used to teach required concepts and skills while teaching children about ecosystems and how they are managed.*

Where Do I Begin?

*Imagine this guide is a new cookbook full of recipes which you have never seen or attempted to prepare. Review the Table of Contents for an overview of what **ECOSYSTEM MATTERS** has to offer. Then scan every page in the book. Look at the pictures. What looks good to you? What would you like to try? Mentally note activities which interest you. Begin to think about some ideas you have for using those activities.*

If you were preparing a recipe, you would want to think about the time of day you might want to eat the dish, how much time it takes to prepare, who might share the meal with you, and what your guests food preferences are. If you only had thirty minutes to make your meal, you would probably not choose to roast a twenty pound turkey. You would probably not fix a lobster dinner for a guest allergic to seafood. Think about the activities that interest you in the same way. When will you do the activity? What age group will you do it with? What are the students' needs, skill level, and preferences? Do the students like games, drama, art, or stories?

*This book gives you plenty of coaching to find the right activity to suit your purpose. The **SIDE-BAR** on the first page of each activity will help you choose an activity which fits your time slot, is suited to the age of the group you are instructing, and covers the particular concepts and skills you want to address. The **SIDE-BAR** contains the following important information:*

****LEVEL** indicates the grade levels for which various parts of the activity are recommended. Activities can usually be geared up or down with some modifications.*

****PROCESS** provides two or three sentences describing the activity.*

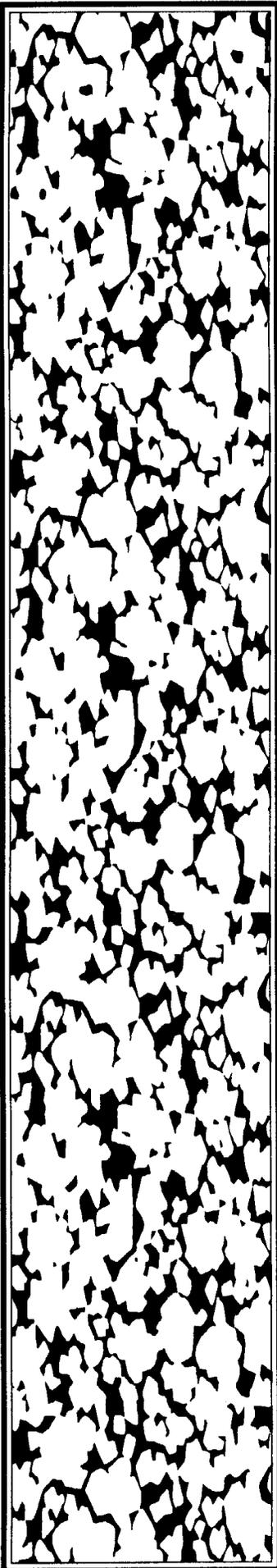
****OBJECTIVES** states the concepts that the activity addresses.*

****TIMEFRAME** includes the recommended time allotments for each part of the activity.*

****SKILLS** lists the thinking processes and skills that the activity develops.*

****MATERIALS** lists materials needed to do the activity.*

****VOCABULARY** lists key words used in the lesson. The definition for each of these words can be found in the glossary.*



In the space below, write down some of the activities you might like to use and the context they best fit:

Preparing for the Activity

It can be a bit frightening trying out a new recipe or a new activity. In either case, one just has to take the plunge and begin. When cooking a meal, one needs to gather all of the ingredients together, make sure all the utensils and appliances are available, and then follow the directions step by step. The information from the SIDE-BAR lists the materials necessary. Each activity also contains the following parts to get you cooking:

**The TITLE is the attention grabber which relates to the activity's content.*

**The OVERVIEW is selected information to enhance the educator's understanding and perspective of the activity.*

**The PROCEDURE contains step by step instructions for doing any pre-activity preparation and the activity itself. There are sample questions to be used in discussion.*

**EXTENSIONS contain recommendations for exercises that enrich or extend the learning experience in the activity.*

**RESOURCES are references for information used in the activity and additional resources which might be helpful.*

So take a look and take the plunge. Test the waters.

Getting the Most out of the Guide---Mark It Up!

Keep track of how the activities work for you. Just as with cooking, adjust the recipe to fit your personal style and taste. Experiment! Adjust the activities to fit your presentation style and the age group you are presenting to.

Write in this book! That's right--write! Underline! Highlight! Mark! Deface! Scribble in the margins! Keep a record of your successes and challenges. Fill the blank spaces in the guide with ideas the authors didn't include. Write notes to yourself about the impact of each activity on the students. Did the activity challenge the students to think in different ways? Did you think of additional questions or extensions to the activities? Do whatever it takes to make this book a record of your own learning and growth.

Ask for Feedback

Find out how well the activity went. If you are a classroom teacher, ask your students. If you are a resource person, ask the students and their teacher and/or parents. Involve others!. See if anyone else has tried the activities and what their successes were.

Last, But Not Least, Have Fun!