

# PLANNING RESEARCH

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## CHOOSING A RESEARCH TOPIC

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What invasive species are beginning to enter our area?

Where is species x found in our local nature preserve?

Do species differ in sites with and without purple loosestrife?

Are there invasive species in our local wetlands?

Do sites with garlic mustard have different soil decomposition rates than sites with no garlic mustard?

What plants colonize wetlands after purple loosestrife is controlled by beetles?

1. Make a list of questions you would be interested in investigating using the ecology protocols.

*Example: What plants colonize wetlands after purple loosestrife is controlled by beetles?*

2. Of these questions, which seem the most important and interesting? Pick three:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3. For each of the three questions you have chosen, think of how you might design a research project. Then fill out this form:

Potential Questions

Question	Brief description of research you might do to address this question	What equipment and supplies would you need?	How long would it take to carry out this project?	Would fieldwork or travel to field sites be required?
<i>Example: What plants colonize wetlands after purple loosestrife is controlled by beetles?</i>	<i>Conduct plot sampling in sites where beetles have been released and compare to sites where they were not released.</i>	<i>Quadrat stakes for making permanent plots.</i>	<i>You would have to follow the plots for several years after the beetles were released.</i>	<i>Fieldwork is required. Travel time to site is ...hours.</i>
Question 1:				
Question 2:				
Question 3:				

4. Looking over your questions, consider whether each project would be feasible for you to carry out. Are the equipment and supplies available? Do you have enough time? Are there other students or interested people available to help? Will you be able to do whatever fieldwork is needed? Eliminate any questions that do not seem feasible based on logistics such as these.

	Would this project be feasible?	Why or why not?
<i>Example Project</i>	<u>Yes</u> No	<i>We have a site in our county where purple loosestrife beetles were released 3 years ago and other similar sites where they were not released. The park ranger where they were released is willing to help us with the fieldwork.</i>
Project 1	Yes    No	
Project 2	Yes    No	
Project 3	Yes    No	

5. Choose a project you have decided is feasible and interesting and then continue on to the **Interactive Research Planning Form #1 or #2.**