



## Gather Your Ecological Address

### The Worksheet

My political or street address is \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (number/street)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (town/state/zip)

#### Discovering my Ecological Address

##### I. Water

A. What is the source of your water?

1. Well? How deep? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Municipal Water? Location of pumping station or treatment plant)?  
Source(lake, river, reservoir)? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Where does it go?

1. Household water ( treatment plant, septic tank, etc?)\_\_\_\_\_
2. Outdoor Water (run off, pond or stream, garden water) into what waterway?  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. Problems - Do you suspect or know of any problems involving your water before it reaches you or after it leaves you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. Trace your Watershed

\_\_\_\_\_ flows into  
\_\_\_\_\_ flows into  
\_\_\_\_\_ flows into  
\_\_\_\_\_

If necessary, add more space as you follow the water leaving your yard to the ocean.

E. Conclusion

My backyard is a part of the \_\_\_\_\_ Watershed which flows into the larger \_\_\_\_\_ Watershed.

##### II. Geology and Geography

A. What are the notable features of your yard's contours (slopes, depressions, etc)? \_\_\_\_\_

B. How is your yard positioned in relationship to compass points? For example, the main area of my yard stretches out to the \_\_\_\_\_ from the house or my house faces to the \_\_\_\_\_

- C. Measure the depth of your top soil \_\_\_\_\_  
What are its characteristics (sandy/clay/loam/etc)
- D. Do you encounter rocks? \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_  
What size? \_\_\_\_\_ What kind? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. What else do you encounter in the ground in your backyard? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- F. Do you know of or suspect any problems regarding your soil? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- G. What is your local physiographic region? \_\_\_\_\_

**III. Climate**

- A. In what climate/plant hardiness zone is your backyard? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. What is the average last freeze date in the first half of the year \_\_\_\_\_
- C. What is the average first freeze date in the second half of the year? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. From what direction is the prevailing wind? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. What is your average yearly precipitation? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. What extreme weather events have impacted your backyard in the past 10 years?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- G. Are you aware of any climatic changes that have or are taking place in your area?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Land Use**

- A. How was your backyard used before your house was built?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- B. Did Native Americans use this land?  
If so, how was it used? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Has the land containing your backyard been farmed? What was raised there?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. Have minerals or timber or other resources been extracted from this land? If so, what?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- E. How is the land within 1 mile of your backyard used?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- F. Has its use changed in the last 20 years? How? \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Do you have plans to change the use of your backyard or do you know of local land use changes that will occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**V. Ecoregions and Biological Communities**

A. In what Biome is your backyard? \_\_\_\_\_

B. In what ecoregion is your backyard? \_\_\_\_\_

C. List a few of the ecosystems that are at work in your backyard.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

D. Plants - An inventory

1. Create a list of the plants that you can identify that are growing in your yard. You might group them as

- a. Trees
  - 1) deciduous
  - 2) coniferous
- b. bushes & shrubs
- c. vines
- d. grasses
- e. herbaceous/annuals
- f. others.

2. Code your list

- a. N = native species
- b. E = Exotic or non-native
- c. P = Planted intentionally
- d. A = Arrived naturally
- e. + = Positive addition to your yards (attractive, good for wildlife, provides shade, provides food, etc)
- f. - = Negative resident of your yard ( weed, unattractive, invasive, no wildlife benefit

3. List plants that grow naturally in your ecoregion that you would like to have growing in your yard.

E. Insects, Arachnids, & others - An Inventory

1. Create a list of the insects you can identify in your yard. You might group them as

- a. arachnids (spiders, ticks, centipeds, etc)
- b. mollusks (slugs, snails, etc)
- c. beetles
- d. flies (house flies, mosquitoes)
- e. true bugs (bugs like stink bugs and water striders whose sucking mouthparts come from the tips of their heads)
- f. bees, wasps, & ants
- g. Butterflies & moths
- h. Mayflies, dragonflies, and lacewings
- i. Grasshoppers & crickets
- j. Others

2. Code your list

- a. N = native species
- b. E = Exotic or non-native
- c. + = Positive addition to your yard (attractive, pollinator, controls pests, provides food for wildlife etc)
- d. - = Negative resident of your yard ( pest, bites, invasive, no wildlife benefit, damages plant or animal life, etc)

3. List insects and others that live naturally in your ecoregion that you would like to have living or visiting your yard.

#### F. Birds & Other Wildlife - An Inventory

1. Create a list of the birds that you can identify that use your backyard. You might group the species as
  - a. waterbirds
  - b. shorebirds
  - c. daytime birds of prey
  - d. owls & nightbirds
  - e. crows & jays
  - f. doves & pigeons
  - g. gamebirds/chicken-like birds
  - h. woodpeckers & nuthatches
  - i. swallows, swifts, and hummingbirds
  - j. ground birds
  - k. mid-sized perching birds
  - l. small perching birds
2. Create a list of the other wildlife that frequent your yard.
  - a. mammals
  - b. reptiles
  - c. amphibians
  - d. fish
3. Code your lists
  - a. Y = year round
  - b. W = winter only
  - c. S = summer only
  - d. N = non-native
  - e. F = uses feeder
  - f. H = uses bird house or hollow tree
  - g. C = common
  - h. O = occasional
  - i. R = rare
4. List the birds and other wildlife that occur in your ecoregion that you would like to see in your yard but have not yet encountered.

### Conclusion

Using the information you have discovered as you have explored the various elements of your backyard, try to write down your ecological address. In addition, list some characteristic organisms that are a part of your biological community and interact in your local ecosystems.

Here's an example to help you get started:

The Audubon Science Office's Ecological Address in Bucks County, PA

Temperate Deciduous Forest \_\_\_\_\_ (Ecoregion)

Delaware River \_\_\_\_\_ (Watershed)

Piedmont Lowland \_\_\_\_\_ (Physiographic Region)

6b (0 to -5) \_\_\_\_\_ (Plant Hardiness Zone)

suburban/agricultural \_\_\_\_\_ (Land Use)

spicebush, common fleabane, \_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Plants)  
& American beech

Indigo Bunting, Red-tailed Hawk, & \_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Birds)  
Eastern Towhee

Black Rat Snake, East Cottontail \_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic animals  
& Red Fox other than birds)

tiger swallowtail, green lacewing, \_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Insects)  
& yellow jacket

**Now it's your turn:**

My Ecological Address \_\_\_\_\_ (Ecoregion)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Watershed)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Physiographic Region)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Plant Hardiness Zone)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Land Use)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Plants)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Birds)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic animals  
other than birds)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3 Characteristic Insects)