

Overstory Data Collection

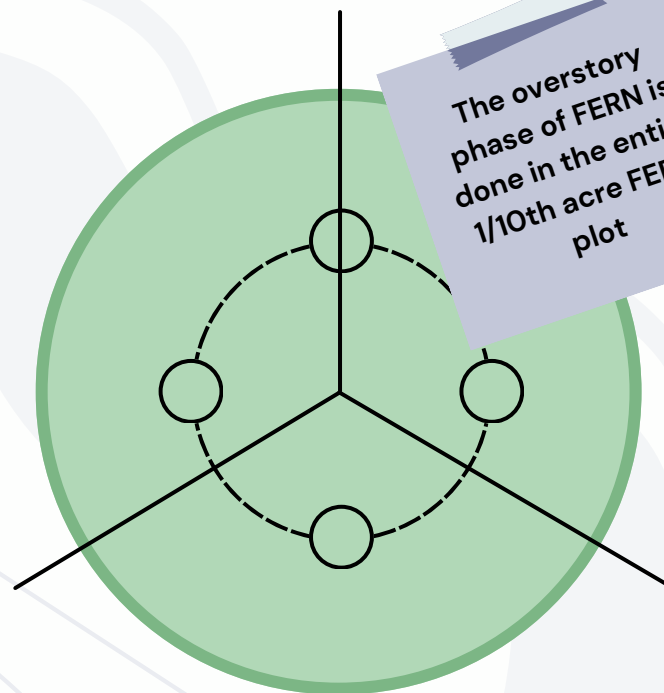
Take a few minutes to walk around your FERN plot and record your thoughts.

Work with your classmates to find the boundaries of the 1/10 acre plot and the embedded 1/50 acre and 1/1000 acre plots. Find and walk your transect lines. Make a note of the date, the weather, and any other information you think might impact how you move through the activity today.



What do you notice about the forest around you?

What do you wonder?



The Overstory activity takes an inventory of the tallest trees in the FERN plot.

Overstory trees are defined in this activity as trees that have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of at least 5 inches. Look around you to get a sense of what trees you anticipate will fall into the overstory category. Look up. **How much of the sky do you see?**

What season is it and how does that impact how much sky you see?

How much sky do you predict you'd be able to see from this spot in different seasons?

One thing foresters pay attention to when they think about the overstory of a forest is canopy closure, or how much sky is covered by tree tops when you look up from the forest floor. **Why do you think canopy closure is important in the forest ecosystem?**

How do the crowns or tops of overstory trees impact smaller plants and animals in the forest?

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Student names:

Plot name:

Date:

Plot coordinates:
Latitude
Longitude

Weather conditions:

Don't forget to take pictures of the plot from plot center facing North, South, East and West!

Tree Tag #	Tree Species	Tree Status	DBH (inches)

Tree Classes:

Live: In the spring, summer, and early fall, you can tell if a standing tree is alive by the presence of needles or leaves. In the winter it's harder to tell, but you can look for mushrooms, woodpecker holes, and/or patches without bark.

Dead Downed: refers to a tree that has died and fallen over. You will see a tree, or a large section of a tree, lying horizontal on the ground and the end will either be a root ball or an uneven/"natural" break (not cut)

Dead Harvested: refers to a tree that was harvested, which you identify by a cleanly cut stump.

Dead Standing: a tree that is still upright, but is no longer living.