Investigating Science Outdoors

Investigating Science Outdoors is a supplementary science curriculum, targeted for grades 7-9, that engages students in authentic explorations of a study site—a small piece of land near their school.

The objective of Investigating Science Outdoors is to get students outdoors, exploring the world around them, learning science observation and investigation skills, and actually doing science.

The curriculum consists of two chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Study Site** — Students select, observe, map, document, and otherwise begin investigating a study site.
- **Chapter 2: Systematic Sampling** — Students systematically investigate their study site, conducting more detailed observations, collecting samples and gathering data, identifying the flora and fauna observed, and considering relationships.

Each chapter consists of six (6) activities, which take 1-2 class periods, and which involve a combination of getting outdoors to investigate the study site, continuing investigations indoors, and sharing investigation results via the Web.

Topics addressed include: the investigation process, patterns in nature, observation skills, scientific notetaking, mapping, remote sensing, biotic and abiotic factors, systematic sampling, plant/flora studies, animal/fauna studies, basic taxonomy, biodiversity, biomes, scientific writing & reporting, and peer review.

The curriculum is appropriate for afterschool and camp programs, as well as in-school use.

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