Skill Building: How to Take Field Notes

A Format for Field Journals

A journal acts as a record of student observations and research activities. It should include: class notes, field observations and data, sketches, reading notes, as well as response/reflection to articles assigned.

Each entry should be marked by the date and begin on a new page. Number each page and use the format for the "type" of entry as shown below.

The journal should be organized, not cramped and include diagrams, sketches, and maps where appropriate. Thoroughness and accuracy are important.

Sample Pages from a Student's Journal 1/23/05 Peterson, Tory Roger. A Field Guide To The B The Rockies. The Peterson Field Guide Ses. Houghton Location: front yard by I feeder Black-capped Chickadee Sci. name: Habitat: near river wood habitat. Time: morning - between 8: -11:00 a.m. Weather: snowing The birds included = Tuffed Titmouse Isci, name ~ Parus brooks Habitat Willow thickets; mixed a deciduous forests, groves, shade Visits fooders in eats sunflower se and suet. Habitat Woodlards shade trees, Downy Woodpecker / sci. name: White-Breasted Nuthatch Sci. name " sitta carolinensis * takes woodlots, river woods, groves shade trees; visits feeders Habitat woodlots, forests willow feature/can habitually groves, orchards, shade trees. walk down trees

Sample Pages

Table of Contents (leave 4 blank pages for this!)

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Date Activity Page #

9/05 Terrestrial Succession - class notes 1-2

9/06 BioPlot work on quadrats 3-4

9/08 Kritcher, "Ecological Disturbance",
Ecology, 4/09, Reading Response 5

(Journal Page for outdoor research)

Date: 9/06/09 Page 3

Location: Brandwein Nature Learning Preserve

Habitat: Mixed Deciduous Forest

Time: 8:30 AM Temp: 68° Humidity: 55%

(Your Notes, Sketches, Data, Comments)

(Journal Page for Reading Response)

Title: Ecological Disturbance Page 5

Author: Kritcher

Publication: Ecology - April, 2009

(Your thoughts on the topic and connections to our

course work.)

What did you learn? What does this article make you think about? How might it "influence" you in this course?