

Virtual Forest: Mammals and Habitats Module

Playground Grid Instructions

These steps will familiarize you and your students with the Virtual Forest's Mammals and Habitats module. It is used for random sampling in live trapping and release activity that takes place at Black Rock Forest.

It is strongly recommended that you do all related pre-forest trip activities (random sampling, compass use, measuring tape use, etc.) with your students PRIOR to your visit to maximize your time at the Forest.

Steps to find the latitude and longitude of your location using Google Maps

1. Go to Google Maps <https://maps.google.com/>
2. Enter the name of your school in the search field.
3. Click on the search button.
4. A red pin appears on the map, representing your school.
5. Zoom in to have a better view of the surroundings.
6. Locate a park or green patch nearby where you can conduct the pre-forest trip activities with your students.
7. Right-click your mouse on that spot. That spot marks the center of your grid.
8. Select "What's Here".
9. A green arrow appears.
10. The latitude and longitude of the green arrow appear in the search field at the top of the page.
11. Copy the latitude and longitude.

Steps to use the Playground Grid: Location Square Selection page

1. Go to the Playground Grid
<http://blackrock.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/mammals/sandbox/grid/>
2. Paste the latitude and longitude of the nearby park in the correct "Center of grid" fields.

3. Type the number of squares in height and width for your grid. The grid should cover the entire park or green patch.
4. Type the desired length of each square's side.
5. Click "Draw grid".
6. You might have to redo steps 3-4-5 a few times before you find a grid sampling that is suitable.
7. To zoom in further on your grid, switch to the satellite view on the map.
8. Select a square in which you can conduct the pre-forest trip activities.
9. This brings you to the Bearings and Traps page.

Steps to use the Playground Grid: Bearings and Traps page

1. To zoom on your grid, switch to the map view.
2. Type the number of teams in your classroom. We suggest forming teams of two students.
3. Type the number of flags each team will plant.
4. Click "Generate Bearings".
5. Click "Print" to have a copy with all the suggested bearings on hand when you go to the park.
6. Have students fill in the Mammals and Habitats Data Collection Sheet (found in Teaching Resources) with the available info.
7. Armed with the data collection sheet, pens, measuring tape, compasses and flags, go out to the park and plant some flags! Remind students that at the Forest, they will also be setting traps.