

# Who's Eating the Carbon? Linking microbial community structure to decomposition

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# Why PLFA (Phospholipid Fatty Acids)?

- Microbes breakdown C substrates → incorporate some of this C into their biomass

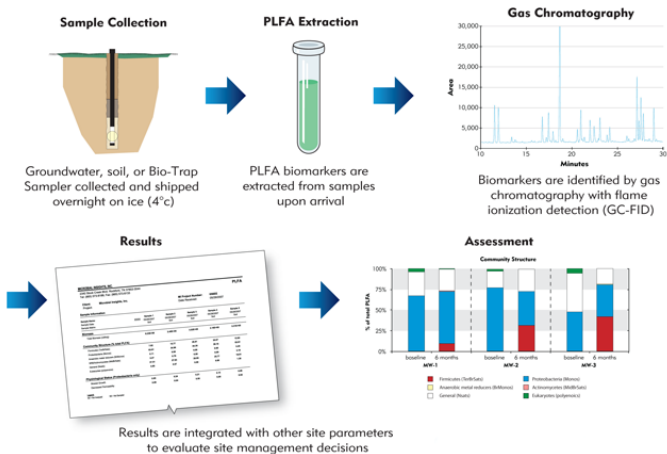
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- Microbes that breakdown  $^{13}\text{C}$  labeled substrates incorporate this isotopic signature into their biomass

# Breaking Down PLFA Analyses



13C PLFA includes an extra step where  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  is calculated. PLFA compounds with 13C label will be heavier and have a different GC-MS peak.