Post-Visit Activity:

Career Critters

Objective: Using this *Ecosystem Matters* activity, students will recognize that all organisms have a place in the environment. They will identify ways these organism can help the environment recover if the primary organisms are removed or if environmental change occurs.

Background: When parts of an ecosystem are removed others can sometimes fill the gap. This overlapping helps repair an ecosystem, but is not a true 'cure'. This activity introduces several different animals that are used for overlapping and filling the gaps that are left by imaginary events that are described on the ecosystem cards. The first part of this activity introduces students to the different types of ecosystem changes that may occur. A map shows imaginary area and helps the students identify where and why the ecosystems were impacted.

Materials: Copies of the maps, critter tokens, critter cards, and ecosystem cards for each group.

Procedure: Divide the class into small groups and set them in different areas of the classroom. Hand out copies of the critter cards and identification paragraphs to each group and have them tape the identification paragraph to the back of each card. Hand out copies of the maps to each group along with sets of the critter tokens and ecosystem cards. Have the groups identify the ecosystems named on the ecosystem cards on their maps. Have the groups predict what they think could threaten these ecosystems and how they would prevent problems if they were in charge of the city.

Have the groups look at the critter cards and read the descriptions of what each animal or plant can do to solve the problems in the ecosystems. Then have the groups draw one ecosystem matters card at a time and decide which critter would 'cure' the problem for that ecosystem. After the group has decided on a critter have them put a token on that ecosystem to represent their solution. More than one token can be used at a time. After the groups have gone through all the ecosystem matters cards assign one or two ecosystem cards to each group and have them present their solution to the class.