BIOBLITZ GUIDE

WHAT IS A BIOBLITZ ?

A Bioblitz is a broad term for a citizen science event to record different species within a certain location and time. Some Bioblitzes look for a variety of plant and animal species over several days, others might look for one type of plant, animal, or even species over a few hours. A Bioblitz allows people to get out into nature with friends and family and help collect useful data for conservation and science. It is like a digital library of biodiversity accessible worldwide!

IDENTIFYING SPECIES

iNaturalist is a free app that can be installed on your computer or mobile device (cell phone, etc) that will be the tool you use to add your photos of flora and fauna. Your sightings on iNaturalist can be used by scientists all around the world and within the UNESCO Georgian Bay Biosphere!

The app is now used by researchers to better understand and protect species, so every observation counts and is helpful. iNaturalist allows anyone easy access to partake in a Bioblitz and record their observations, and it tallies all species observed during your Bioblitz and provides a visual for the results of the blitz to your participants.

You do not need to know the species name to add it because iNaturalist will do that for you! It will give you some likely matches for you to select your best guess and then later on your species will be confirmed by experts.

IT IS EASY TO JOIN ¡NATURALIST!

- Create an account on www.iNaturalist.ca
- Then join the "project" called **Georgian Bay Biosphere**
- When you want to upload a photo of a species, be sure to select the "Georgian Bay Biosphere Project" when submitting your observations.
- A direct link to it is: https://inaturalist.ca/projects/georgian-bay-biosphere
- iNaturalist can be used on both a website browser and/or phone app.

HOW TO HOST A BIOBLITZ

First, decide what type of event you want, both options offer some advantages and largely operate in the same way:

a) In-person with a **naturalist leader** and a group of people participating, or
b) If your Bioblitz will simply be **self-guided** by individuals within a certain area and promoted online.

Then you'll need:

- An event location, date & time *(consider providing a location map)*
- Advertising & promotion *(posters, social media)*
- A leader for in-person events, or clear instructions for self-led events
- Volunteers for in-person events, maybe prizes!

Participants will need:

- A smartphone, tablet, or other device with a camera
- iNaturalist downloaded on device & have joined "Georgian Bay Biosphere" project
- For the best use of iNaturalist, instructions for "do's and dont's" (provided below)

You may want to add a theme or goal for your event such as number of total participants, uploaded observations, number of unique species or species types (eg. birds, Monarch butterflies).

RUNNING YOUR BIOBLITZ

1. Help participants join the Georgian Bay Biosphere's iNaturalist project, if needed.
2. Reach out to the Biosphere!
    a) Let us know what your Bioblitz plans are, and if you would like a copy of the observations. (Staff will need to know the user accounts providing observations to provide this information).
3. Pick a location to run the Bioblitz.
    a) For in person events, you'll want a trail or site that can offer lots of space, a variety of species, and is accessible. Ask permission for use of private land.
    b) Ideally, your site will have washrooms, adequate parking, and/or shelter.
    c) Wi-Fi is optional, as participants can upload their photos later.
    d) For self-guided events, pick a designated area such as a municipality, waterbody, or other recognizable area.
4. Decide when and how long your Bioblitz will be.
    a) It can be an all-day or half day event.
    b) Weekends might be best to ensure lots of people will be able to come.
    c) Consider the number of participants, the age range, and weather conditions.
    d) Your goals might help determine length and timing (ie. more birds call in spring, more wildflowers may bloom in late summer).
5. Spread the word! All ages and abilities welcome, no experience is needed.
6. Consider how to accommodate all ages and abilities.
7. Provide a contact information or registration system.

THE DAY OF THE BIOBLITZ

1. Have volunteers on hand to assist with the app, give photography tips, and help upload - WIFI is useful.
2. Have maps available, if required for your event.
3. Explain what a Bioblitz is, why citizen science matters.
4. Explain to participants the premise and goals:
    For example: here to collect useful data, to reach a goal of 100 species identified, and enjoy the day being out in nature!

5. Explain the iNaturalist app and have participants download and set it up, or encourage them to do so in advance.
   a. If there is no reception at the event, photos can be taken to upload to iNaturalist later. (iNaturalist can be used in offline mode, with recordings uploaded later).
6. Before beginning the Bioblitz, try a practice photo upload to ensure everyone is using the application correctly.

DOS & DON'TS

1. Don't pick/disturb any plants or animals observed.
2. Don't falsely identify species. When in doubt, let the experts identify it.
3. Don't compete for the best or coolest thing. Every species matters.
4. Do take clear photos from a safe distance!
5. Do add notes or comments to your photos which can help researchers!
6. Do invite your friends and family and support one another!

TIPS TO PROMOTE

You may wish to promote your event to your community or target audience using:
- An event poster (see template below)
- A social media post with details about the event
- A Facebook "event" that you include event name, date, and description
- A link to learn more or register, including a link to download iNaturalist
- Hashtags such as #biodiversity #iNaturalist #citizenscience
- Tag your partner organizations so they can share, e.g. @GeorgianBayBiosphere

QUESTIONS?

Reach the Biosphere by email at biologist@gbbr.ca or phone, 705.774.0978.
Our staff *may* be able to help with:
- a poster template for your event
- online promotions, if desired
- simple registration to help you record who your participants are
- connecting you with naturalists in the Biosphere region
- other support or presentations about biodiversity

THANK YOU, MIIGWECH!