

Ecosystem Investigation – Meadow

- Walk around defined area – slowly and quietly
- Ask students what type of ecosystem is this
- Students brainstorm benefits of this ecosystem
- Read definition of ecosystem and statement of benefits

Meadow

Definition:

- Field habitat characterized by grasses and other non-woody plants aka grassland
- Open, sunny area that attracts a great diversity of flora and fauna (plants and animals)

Benefits of meadow

- Plant diversity attracts insects and other invertebrates, many of which act as pollinators
- Many flowering plant species
- Better pollination means more food for other animals and food crops for humans
- Habitat for nesting, food gathering, shelter,
- Less mowing – less air pollution from machinery
- Reduce runoff – runoff soaks into ground
- Reduces flash floods and pressure on drainage facilities
- Limits erosion
- Flowering plants add pleasing color to environment
- Recreation opportunities – ranging from nature studies to art lessons

Loss of meadows over time

- During the twentieth century there was a sharp decrease in the percentage of land covered with meadows in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. This was due, in part, to urban sprawl (development of roads, housing, etc) and agricultural development.

Sources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meadow>

<https://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/urgc-7edjrg>

<http://www.capel.ac.uk/meadows/meadow-benefits.asp>