

## **Biodiversity Program Related Key Terms for Students**

**Anishinabek-** this group of First Nations people includes the Ojibwa, Potawatami and Odawa nations.

**Biodiversity-** refers to the number of different forms of life within an environment. Environments with great biodiversity are considered healthier than those with little biodiversity.

**Circle of Life-**refers to a basic aboriginal worldview that everything is connected and depends on each other. If the natural balance cannot be maintained then all will suffer.

**Diversity-** relates to things that are different from one another in one or many different ways.

**Ecosystem-** is a community of organisms that rely on each other within an environment.

**Environment-** is a complex of living and non-living things (such as plants, animals, water, soil and weather) that interact with an organism. The environment can determine the organism's form and its ability to survive.

**Extinct-** refers to an organism that is no longer present on earth. The majority of recent extinctions have been caused by the activities of humans which have destroyed natural habitat.

**Genes-** are the small parts within our body that contain all the information on how we look and how our whole body functions. Genes determine if we are tall or short, if we are human or something else, if we are allergic to something or not, and thousands of other things.

**Interdependence-** things that rely on each other to survive or do well in an environment are called interdependent. We all need to have certain things around to be healthy. If these things aren't there we don't live as well as when they are present.

**Invasive Species-** are types of plants or animals that have been brought to new environments or continents by humans. Some invasive species were brought into new areas on purpose and some by accident, but usually invasive species have a very bad effect on the natural native plant and animal communities. Some invasive species grow and spread so quickly that they completely take over and cause native plants and animals to disappear. Invasive species can do this since they have no natural enemies to control them in the environment into which they have been introduced, and some invasive species can outcompete native species within their habitat.

**Invertebrate-** refers to animals that do not have a spinal column. Insects, sow bugs, centipedes and earthworms are just a few examples of the millions of different invertebrates.

**Medicine Wheel-** a small object which represents many different things that connect humans and all living organisms to the Earth. The Medicine Wheel reminds us of our earthly ties and responsibilities to keep the natural balance and keep the Earth and all things in it in harmony.

**Microorganism-** is a very small organism that you need a microscope to see. Bacteria, protozoans, and amoeba are just a few examples of the millions of microorganisms present on Earth.

**Monoculture-** refers to growing a single type of crop on agricultural or forested land. Huge fields of corn or a large pine tree plantation would be examples of a monoculture.

**Replenish-** means to fill or build up again. Some habitats and environments have been very badly damaged by humans, causing many species of animals and plants to suffer, even disappear. If humans act to repair these habitats, they can usually recover and replenish themselves to contain the species they once had.

**Shelterbelts-** are barriers of trees and shrubs that protect crops from storms and winds and also prevent soil erosion. Shelterbelts can also help wildlife since they provide cover when animals move from one area to another. Some shelterbelts even provide food and nesting places for animals.

**Species-** are groups of individual organisms that have the same general appearance and have much of the same genes within them. Scientists put all known living things into categories where each thing has a first or Genus name and a second or Species name. Human beings belong to the species *Homo sapiens*. *Homo* is the Genus name, and *sapiens* is the Species name.