FERN
FOREST ECOLOGY RESEARCH NETWORK
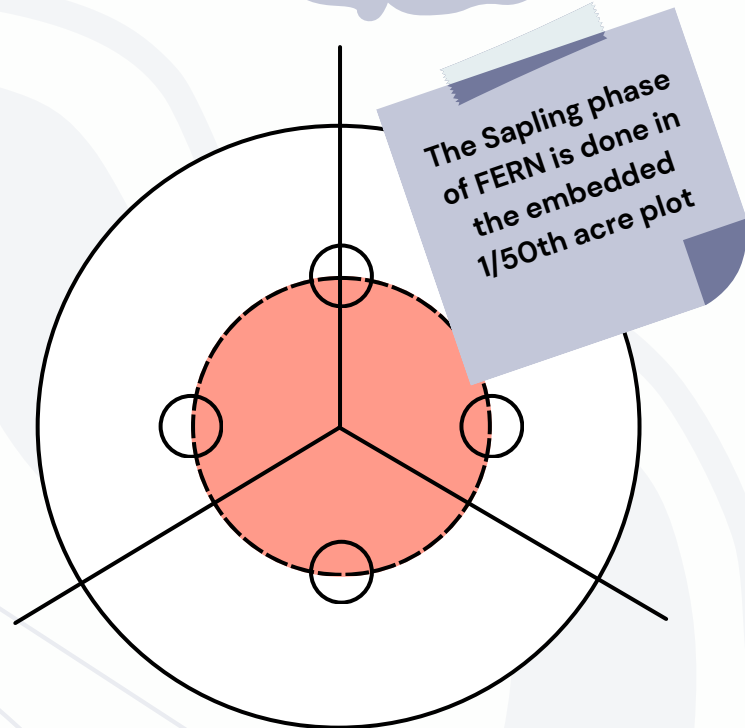
Saplings Data Collection

Take a few minutes to walk around your FERN plot and record your thoughts.
Work with your classmates to find the boundaries of the 1/10 acre plot and the embedded 1/50 acre and 1/1000 acre plots. Find and walk your transect lines. Make a note of the date, the weather, and any other information you think might impact how you move through the activity today.

The Sapling phase of FERN is done in the embedded 1/50th acre plot

What do you notice about the forest around you?

What do you wonder?

The Saplings activity collects data on the middle size trees, the "teenagers" of a FERN plot.
Saplings are defined in this activity as trees that have a diameter at breast height (DBH) between 1 inch and 4.9 inches AND are at least 4.5 feet tall. Hint: use your measuring stick to help you figure out if a tree is tall enough to count as a sapling (4.5 feet = 54 inches)!

Why do you think we collect sapling data at this scale and not at the larger 1/10 acre scale or smaller 1/1000 acre scale?

Why do you think we use size classes when collecting FERN data on saplings?

Why don't we use size classes when collecting data on overstory trees?

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Saplings Data Collection

Tree Species	Diameter Size Classes			
	1	2	3	4

Saplings are easiest to identify when they have leaves and needles, because their bark can be different than mature/adult trees.

Diameter Size Classes:

Class 1: 1.0 in to 1.9 in   **Class 3:** 3.0 in to 3.9 in

Class 2: 2.0 in to 2.9 in   **Class 4:** 4.0 in to 4.9 in

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