

Canopy Cover

Note: At each point where you record greenline data you will also record canopy cover data.

1. Point the laser pointer straight up in the air (90 degree angle).
2. Tell the recorder whether the laser points at the sky (a “miss”) or hits a tree or bush (a “hit”). Record this on your “canopy cover data chart.”
3. Repeat these steps for the rest of the greenline.
4. Add up the total hits and misses and record in the second row.
5. Add the two scores recorded in row 2. This will tell you the “total number of steps” you took along the transect (the greenline). Record this total in row 3.
6. Divide the number of “hits” in row 2 by the total observations in row 3 and multiply by 100. This will give you the percent canopy cover for the transect.

Time – 30 minutes

Persons – 2

Materials –

- Laser pointer
- Measuring tape
- Riparian Zone Data Collection Sheet

Ground Cover

Note: Riparian ground cover transects start at the stream edge and extend 15 paces away from the stream, into the riparian vegetation. A pace is a normal stride you would take while walking.

1. You will collect data along five separate transects in your stream stretch, spaced out at approximately equal distances along your stream reach. If possible, you should run two transects on one side of the stream and three on the other to get a better picture of the total riparian zone. Refer to the figure on page 1 of these instructions for help locating these transects.
2. Starting at the stream’s edge take one pace away from the stream. Touch your finger to the ground at the tip of your front foot.
3. Note the ground cover type that your finger touches. The categories are: bare ground, live vegetation, litter (dead vegetation or sticks) or rock. Record the type with a slash in the appropriate box on the “ground cover data chart.” Note that each column on the data chart is for a separate transect.
4. Repeat steps 2 – 3 for 15 paces. Then move on to the second transect. Repeat.
5. When you’ve finished with all five transects, add the totals for each row or cover type. Record your totals for each ground cover category in the category total column. In the next column, divide the category total by 75 (your total number of steps) and multiply by 100. This will give you a percentage of ground cover for each type in the riparian zone. To check your math, add up your percentages for each ground cover type. They should total 100%.