

Data Collection Protocols - 2017
NY-NJ Trail Conference Lower Hudson PRISM Blockbuster Survey

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: Ensure that you have all the necessary equipment. Several data sheets, clipboard, pencils, GPS unit with extra batteries or phone fully charged, trail map, camera, plant ID guide(s), data collection protocols (this doc) plus your usual hiking gear such as water, snack & sunscreen/bug repellent.

Instructions for the paper data collection forms are similar to those for the SmartPhone App.

A survey should cover a distance of four 100 meter segments. If you find different invasive species in the 'last' 100 meters that were not present earlier, please survey an additional 100 meters ... for a total of 500 meters. Note: 100 meters is approximately 330 feet.



Choose a site where you have permission to enter, is easy to access, and is a safe place to observe. (i.e. Avoid busy roadsides and active railroad tracks.)

❖ **There are three methods for taking GPS Coordinates.**

- * use the (new) Blockbuster SmartPhone application which has built-in GPS capability.
- * use a dedicated GPS Unit (e.g. Garmin)
- * use a GPS application on your SmartPhone

If you're using a hand-held GPS unit, ensure your GPS is communicating with satellites. You may need to do this before you enter the tree canopy.

❖ Record a starting waypoint and report it as a Segment boundary.

Note: if using paper form, write as : "Start of Survey".

If using the SmartPhone App, answer "yes" to Segment Boundary question.

❖ Record the following **required** Survey summary information :

Survey **Date**

Full **name of Lead** and each additional Surveyor

Area Type (choose one of three: Parking Lot Trailhead; Trail; HPA)

Site Name (e.g. park name, trailhead)

Block Code (one per survey)

❖ Notes about taking **Waypoints**.

- Plant species observations will be associated with GPS locations.
- When handwriting GPS coordinates in the **Lat/Long** space(s), use **decimal degrees** (e.g., 40.76542 N, -74.54163 W) to **5-decimal precision**.
- We need you to tell us **WHERE** the **END of each 100 meter segment** is (i.e. ~ 330 feet). Please indicate when the GPS reading is a Segment boundary.
Note: if using paper form, write as "End of Segment #" -- where # represents the current segment number.
If using the SmartPhone App, answer "yes" to Segment Boundary question.

❖ **SCAN FOR INVASIVES.** Look around about 15 feet on either side of your chosen walking route. Slowly walk your section while scanning for invasive plants listed on the data form, as well as any "Other" invasives you recognize.

Data Collection Protocols - 2017
NY-NJ Trail Conference Lower Hudson PRISM Blockbuster Survey

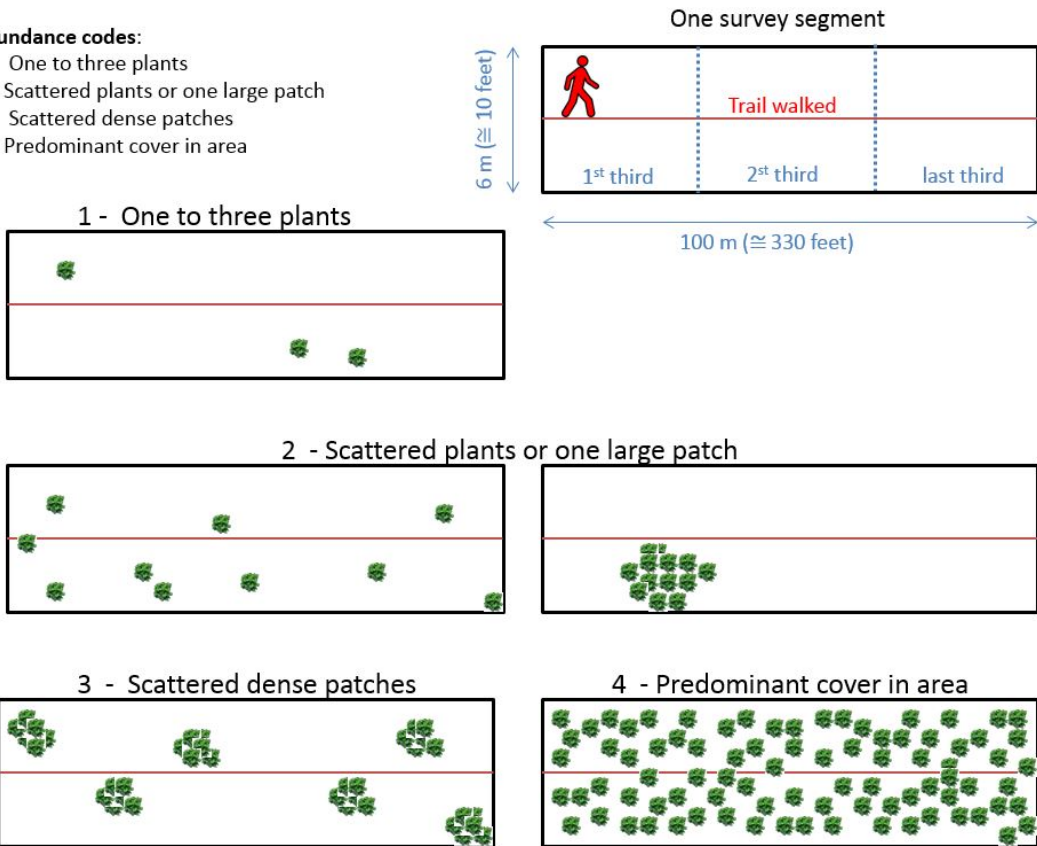
❖ **RECORD OBSERVATIONS.**

- ❖ Mentally divide each Segment into thirds (i.e. 110 feet each). (Refer to diagram)
 For each one-third, when you do see a focal species, record the following:
 - ❖ the **plant's name**: Report each species no more than once per third.
 - ❖ **Habitat** Code where the plant is found. (select all that apply)
 - ❖ if applicable, provide Trail Code and / or HPA Code (select all that apply)
 - ❖ the plant's **Abundance** - estimated for the **ENTIRE** current Segment (i.e. 330 feet)
 - ❖ take a GPS reading.
 - ❖ FYI Group One plants never require a photo
 - ❖ However, always take a **photo of Group Two** plants.
 If you using paper forms, include the Survey Summary info in the photo.
- ❖ Stop and take a **GPS reading after every 330 feet**, and report these as **END of the current Segment**.
 This is important for Abundance reports.
- ❖ Observations also include the absence of focal species. When you haven't seen **ANY** focal species within any 'one-third' of a segment, take a Waypoint and report **NONE found**.

❖ **Abundance is one single estimate for the entire population of this species within one (330 foot) Segment.**
 As you walk, you may see the same focal species several times within the current segment. Sometimes you'll decide that your earlier report of a plant's abundance (within the current segment) needs to change. **Example:** you already reported a low abundance, but later you realize it is actually a higher abundance for that entire segment. You should report that plant **AGAIN** with the **REVISED** abundance **plus** all of the other required info. The Blockbuster Office Staff will analyze your findings over the length of that segment. The **IMPORTANT** thing is that you are taking Waypoints every 110 meters (i.e. 330 feet) to mark Segment boundaries.

Abundance codes:

- 1 - One to three plants
- 2 - Scattered plants or one large patch
- 3 - Scattered dense patches
- 4 - Predominant cover in area



Data Collection Protocols - 2017
NY-NJ Trail Conference Lower Hudson PRISM Blockbuster Survey

- ❖ Record the Habitat Code that best describes where this plant was found.

Note: Adjacent Habitat has the same values.

FM	field meadow	(Habitat)
WD	woodland	(Habitat)
SH	shrubland	(Habitat)
WT	wetland	(Habitat)
IF	infrastructure bldgs	(Habitat)

- ❖ If applicable, record a Trail Code

FP	foot bike path	(Trail)
TV	trail shared with vehicles	(Trail)
RD	road	(Trail)
NT	no trail (bushwacking)	(Trail)

- ❖ If applicable, record an HPA Code

RS	roadside	(HPA)
PL	parking lot	(HPA)
AL	abandoned lot	(HPA)
AA	abandoned agricultural land	(HPA)
RR	area adjacent to RR	(HPA)
UT	utility right of way	(HPA)

- ❖ Remember to look for, and record any **“Other” known invasives** species within each segment location. “Other” refers to species listed in the Official **iMAP** Invasives list that are NOT named on the data collection form. Estimate its Abundance in the same way as described elsewhere.
- ❖ Repeat this process for a total of four 100-meter segments (i.e. approximately 1,300 feet). If you find different invasive species in the ‘last’ 100 meters that were not present earlier, please survey an additional 100 meters ... for a total of 500 meters.
- ❖ **Instructions for saving and submitting.**

~~~~~

**Thank You:**

By participating in the 2017 Lower Hudson PRISM Blockbuster Survey, you are making an important contribution to the knowledge and understanding of invasive plants in our region, which is greatly appreciated. We hope that you find this an enjoyable and rewarding experience.