

November 10, 2009

We are a second grade class in Ferrisburgh, Vermont. We chose the Stone Oak Elementary School in San Antonio, Texas to compare our squares. Our squares were in our backyard habitat with trails through the fields and woods.

We saw a lot of similarities between our two schools. We



started examining our squares from the bottom up. The first thing we looked at was the soil. We both have clay soil, although ours was moist and Stone Oak Elementary School's soil was dry. We had a lot of rain over the summer and very few sunny days. From the letter of introduction from Stone Oak Elementary, it

sounds like they had a lot of really hot days and not very much rain, which made their clay hard. The ground for both our schools was covered in dead grass and leaves. It seems that their grass died from the drought, but our grass dies back naturally in the late fall. Their soil had large and small rocks but we didn't find very many rocks at all. They reported finding some paper bits and a coffee cup and we did not find any litter. Our squares were located out in our habitat, away

from roads and houses and when we went to Google Earth their school seems to be surrounded by houses. This may be the reason they had litter and we did not.

We noticed that both our squares had cedar trees and a mixture of dead and live grass and dandelions. We had a lot of different kinds of wildflowers and shrubs. We also had several different kinds of trees.



Probably we have more variety of vegetation because our habitat is not mowed. We try to leave our habitat as undisturbed as possible. We went online to see how Live Oak trees look. We were pretty impressed with the Live Oak tree. We don't have that type of oak tree in Vermont. We were

surprised to see that their square had mushrooms growing in the dead bark of a tree. Usually we see mushrooms after a very wet season.

Many of the insects were the same in both squares. We didn't have any lizards or cockroaches, but we found different types of caterpillars and a garter snake. We also saw a Red-Tailed Hawk which we forgot to mention in our report.

We noticed how much farther north we are than Texas. Texas is much closer to the equator than we are, this probably explains the warmer temperatures. We can't imagine having 50 days over 100 degrees Fahrenheit! We had a lot more

variety of plant life, we think that this is because we had more average rainfall than they did. We were not surprised that we both had spiders and ants because they seem to live everywhere! We didn't have lizards, but we do have salamanders in Vermont. They need to have more moisture than lizards.

We are hoping that other schools will share their findings with us. We would love to know if anyone chose Ferrisburgh as a school for comparison. We love looking at nature and learning more about it!

