



Strand Map: Flow of Matter in Ecosystems

Introduction

This sequence of benchmarks leads to the goal in *Science for All Americans (SFAA)* that matter is transferred repeatedly between living things, and between them and the physical environment. The total amount of matter remains constant, even though its form and location undergo continual change (*SFAA*, Chapter 5: The Living Environment). This strand builds upon and extends the Conservation of Matter strand. Ideas about food as a source of matter for growth, recycling, and food webs contribute to the strand. Before students have an understanding of atoms, the notion of reusable building blocks common to plants and animals is quite mysterious. Therefore, following matter through ecosystems is linked to the study of atoms. The Flow of Matter in Ecosystems strand contributes to literacy goals related to the storage of energy in fossil fuels and the rate of use of resources (the corresponding strands are not included in this map).



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