

# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

How closely do you observe the world around you? Do you notice how humans use the land around us? In this exercise you will learn to make scientific observations as you compare and contrast agricultural with non-agricultural landscapes.

1. Photographs of two types of landscapes will be projected for you to view. You may also have two stacks of photographs, one of agricultural land and one of natural land. Your instructions are as follows:

- Each person in your group should make at least one observation of the physiographic properties of each of these types of land, but make as many observations as you can. Physiographic properties include: attitude (is the land horizontal or sloped?); topography (flat or hilly?); vegetative cover; evidence of erosion (gullies, exposed plant roots); exposed bedrock (large rock formations that extend out of the ground); and, physiographic setting (is the site surrounded by hills? Flatlands? Is there a nearby body of water?) If you can see the soil at the surface, describe it. (Is it dry or wet? Cracked or smooth? Light or dark? Compacted or loose? Rocky?)
- Is there anything else you see? Write the observations down on the table provided but do not yet try to interpret what your observations mean.

2. Now spend time with your group listing and discussing the similarities and the differences between the physiographic features of the two types of land.

- What do you think are the most significant differences between the two types of land? Why?
- What are the apparent effects of farming the land and which effect is the most noticeable?
- Do any of the farmed lands look like they are better suited for agriculture than others? If so, what attributes make them seem better suited?
- Can you identify the original type of natural landscapes that the farmed landscapes once were? If so, what specific types of natural landscapes do you think they were?
- What other factors may affect the condition of either of these land use types?