Glossary

Bacteria – single-celled microscopic organisms. Bacteria and other microbes play an important role in forests — they break down plant and animal matter. Once broken down, these nutrients are recycled back into the soil and are used by other plants growing in the forest.

Chlorophyll – a pigment found in plants that gives them their green color. This pigment is important as it allows **photosynthesis** to take place.

Conifer (Coniferous) – a tree that produces seeds in cones. Confers are often called softwood or evergreens. Conifers keep their needles year-round (or even longer) or until new ones appear. Examples of coniferous trees: Pine, Hemlock, Larch, Spruce and Fir.

Deciduous – a tree that sheds its leaves for part of every year. Unlike evergreens, deciduous trees lose their leaves during the cold or dry season. They grow new leaves each spring. Seeds of these trees can be: nut-like (oak), winged (maple), or like a berry (cherry). Deciduous trees are often called hardwoods. Examples of deciduous trees are: Maple, Birch, Ash, Oak and Poplar.

Forest – a forest is an ecosystem (an association of living and non-living things). Trees are the main feature in a forest. The plants and animals that make up the forest depend on each other to stay healthy. Forests play a key role in stabilizing the climate, and they have many other benefits, like providing habitat for wildlife, improving water quality, giving us a place for recreation, and providing raw materials for many products that we use at school and at home.

Hibernation – a state in which certain species of animals pass the winter (or cold season) in a dormant condition with greatly reduced metabolic activity. There are only two true mammals that hibernate in Nova Scotia — the groundhog and bat.

Litter – the surface layer of the forest floor that is just starting to decompose. Litter usually consists of freshly fallen leaves, needles, twigs, stems, bark and fruits.

Photosynthesis – a process that allows green plants to turn light energy from the sun into an energy-rich sugar called glucose. During photosynthesis, the plant takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen. The word photosynthesis means "making things with light."

Stomata – tiny openings on the surface of plant leaves that allow oxygen, carbon dioxide and water vapour to pass into and out of the leaves. Stomata also control the plant's transpiration (how it gives off water through its leaves).

NOVA SCOTIA
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