

How Well Do You Know This Place?

01 July 2005 Barb Davy

One way of defining a bioregion is a place big enough to support communities sustainably, and small enough to be considered home. Part of living bioregionally is knowing the place we live in intimately -- knowing the flora and fauna, the seasons, the moods of a place, the people in our neighbourhoods. These are the things that make a place feel like home. In 1981 a magazine called *CoEvolution Quarterly* (now known as *Whole Earth Review*) published a list of questions aimed at bioregional knowledge titled "Where You At?" Inspired by those questions, I've developed the following bioregional quiz. It's unlikely any individual can answer all the questions, but they are good questions for getting to know a place. Even though I've lived most of my life in this bioregion, and consider myself something of an environmentalist, I can't answer all the questions.

Bioregional Quiz:

1. How and where is your electricity generated?
2. Where does your tap water come from?
3. Where is the food you eat produced?
4. Name five edible plant species native to the bioregion.
5. Who lived here before colonization? Where are those people now?
6. Where does your garbage go?
7. Where are your recyclables processed?
8. What are the major causes of pollution in your community?
9. When was the moon last full?
10. When did you last go for a walk instead of watching television?
11. What are the names of the people on your street?
12. Where is your local food bank?
13. Where does the fuel used to heat your home come from?
14. Where is your coffee grown?
15. How many factory farms are there in the bioregion?
16. Where can you buy local produce in season?
17. When was your community established?
18. How did the geological features of the region form?
19. When is the first snowfall in your area?
20. When is the last frost?
21. How long is the growing season?
22. When does the corn ripen? When do the first strawberries ripen?
23. Where do the wild blackberries grow?
24. When do the trout spawn and the deer rut?
25. Where can you buy locally produced dairy, eggs, and meat?

How about quizzing family and friends when you get together this summer. Or, why not host a workshop on this topic? Divide into small groups and see how many questions you can answer together.

Whether your bioregion is the Ottawa River watershed, or a smaller watershed within the Ottawa River

basin, or another place altogether, getting to know it better is a good step toward living in a sustainable manner.

Barb Davy is a member of the Ottawa River Institute, a non-profit charitable organization aimed at fostering sustainable communities and ecological integrity in the Ottawa River Watershed.