

CFR501
Discussion Question Assignment #3
November 28th, 2007

READ THIS: Write a “rich” answer to the question. Provide evidence that supports your statements. Restrict sources of information to CFR501 materials and carefully cite all sources: readings, lectures (papers used in lectures may be cited), discussions, handouts, and fieldtrips. Adhere to species naming conventions (four letter codes). Address all parts of the question.

Due

Midnight, Friday November 30th by email to cfr510@u.washington.edu

Format

Two pages, double spaced, 1” margins all around. Tables, figures and references do not count towards the page limit. Mac users please supply both MS Word and PDF versions.

The Question

One goal of ecology is to synthesize across empirical studies and develop general ecological theories. Both abiotic and biotic agents damage and kill plants. In a general theory explaining community composition and structure, is it necessary to distinguish between biotic (for example, ungulate herbivory, insect defoliation, or disease) and abiotic (for example, fire, wind, or avalanche) processes affecting the species which comprise the community? Why or why not? A complete answer requires synthesis (and citation) of course material.