**Alabama Outdoor Classroom BioBlitz Observation Sheet**

**Taxonomy Tips & Terminology**

**Example Shapes of Leaves**

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**Specimen –** an individual animal, plant, or fungus that can be used as an example of its species for scientific study.

**Tree** – a woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

**Shrub** – a woody plant that is smaller than a tree and has several main stems arising at or near the ground.

**Vine** – a climbing or trailing woody-stemmed plant.

**Algae** – a simple nonflowering plant that have chlorophyll but lack stems, roots, leaves and vascular tissue.

**Moss** – a small nonflowering green plant that lacks true roots, growing in low carpets in shaded, damp habitats and reproducing by means of spores released from stalked capsules.

**Fern** – a nonflowering plant with a vascular system that has feathery or leafy fronds divided into many leaflets and that reproduces by spores released from the undersides of the fronds.

**Grass** – a short flowering plant that has a long, narrow leaf and parallel veins.

**Forb** – a broad-leaved, herbaceous flowering plant with branching veins.

**Lichen** – a simple slow-growing organism that typically forms a low crust-like, leaf-like, or branching growth on rocks, walls, and trees that is composed of a fungus and algae.

**Mushroom** – a fungus that typically takes the form of a domed cap on a stalk, often with gills on the underside of the cap where spores are released for reproduction.

**Amphibian** – a cold-blooded vertebrate animal with moist skin that have an aquatic gill-breathing larval stage followed (typically) by a terrestrial lung-breathing adult stage, including frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders.

**Bird** – a warm-blooded egg-laying vertebrate with feathers, wings, and a beak.

**Fish** – a limbless cold-blooded vertebrate animal with gills and fins, often covered in scales, living wholly in water.

**Mammal** – a warm-blooded vertebrate animal of a class that is distinguished by the possession of hair or fur, the secretion of milk by females for the nourishment of the young, and (typically) the birth of live young.

**Reptile** – a cold-blooded vertebrate animal with dry scaly skin that typically lays soft-shelled eggs on land, including snakes, lizards, crocodiles, turtles, and tortoises.

**Insect** – a small arthropod animal that has six legs, one or two pairs of wings, with a well-defined head, thorax, and abdomen.