



## **DECOMP ROMP: Explore Rotten Logs!**

The woodlands at Spring Creek Prairie are a great place to look for all kinds of living things, especially **decomposers**, those living things (insects, plants, animals, and special others that aren't plants or animals) that help make dead things turn into soil!

Make your way to the **woodlands** - the windbreak beside the picnic area is a great place to start - or follow the trail map (on line) to the trail through the woods along Spring Creek.

The best places to find decomposers are rotting logs and leaf litter (old leaves from past years) on the forest floor. Dig In!



- 1) Find a sturdy, small stick, one about the size of a pencil, to be your digging tool.
- 2) Find a nice rotting log like the one above. It might have small plants, moss, or fungus (mushrooms) growing on it. It should be soft enough that you can dig into it with your stick, or pull it apart with your hands.
- 3) **Gently** start digging in the log or pulling off small pieces. The more careful you are, the more likely you will find critters to observe in the log. Be careful not to smash them (even the spiders), they're doing an important job. Remember, you are exploring THEIR home!
- 4) How many of the living things in the pictures on this page can you find?
- 5) Try many different spots and logs and see if you can find the 3 living organisms (living things) that are NOT a plant or an animal. They are LICHEN, MOSS, and FUNGUS.

