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Mercury

7. Examine the slide beneath a microscope. (Diatoms are usually studied under 970X magnification.) If the sample population is too dense, dilute your specimen material with distilled water before making additional slides.
8. Place a label on each end of the glass slide as outlined in (Fig. 1). The left-hand label should include collection data such as state, county, locality or legal description, habitat, sample number, date and name of collector. The right-hand label is used for identification information.
9. Usually not more than three specimens are identified per slide. Select some specimens to be named on the right-hand label and circle their location on the coverslip.

You are now ready to make determinations; the next article will deal with this topic.

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Mercury

Teachers and students who are involved in activities involving liquid mercury should be aware of potential poisoning resulting from handling mercury or inhaling mercury vapors. All personnel should develop procedures for the safe storage and handling of mercury. Spilled mercury should be recovered immediately as it tends to flow into hidden cracks and crevices and slowly vaporize. Mercury should not be removed with a standard vacuum cleaner since the vacuum cleaner tends to spray mercury into the air.

Small amounts of mercury in visible droplet form, or pools, can be picked up with a medicine dropper.

Another procedure in the event of a mercury spill requires the following steps:

1. Moisten 20 mesh zinc with 0.1 N hydrochloric acid.
2. Allow the moistened zinc to stand for 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Pour the "activated zinc" on and around the mercury spill and leave it for a little while.

The spilled mercury combines with the "activated zinc," making it possible to sweep up with a little or no danger. A commercial powder is available from some chemical supply houses.

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