



Nature At Home

We hope to inspire kids of all ages to learn about the natural world and discover new connections to nature.



Pond Succession

View the video at DishmanHills.org/Nature-At-Home

It is interesting to look at the succession ponds and lakes go through. Pond succession is the process by which a pond and its community convert from a wetland into a land community.



Earlier this year, this pond in the Dishman Hills had open water all around. Then plants started growing up from the bottom. Now the plants, along with evaporation, have taken most of the water from the pond. It is filled in with vegetation. Eventually this fall, all this vegetation will die when the light goes down and it gets cold. The vegetation will fall to the bottom of the pond and become pond muck as it decomposes over the next few years. Gradually this pond will fill in. In the back, you can already see some tall reeds that are starting to grow. Eventually this pond will fill in completely and become a mountain meadow. The succession process can take many years, decades or longer to complete.



This is a photo of the east pond in Dishman Hills. You can see the pond has almost been taken over by cattails. The water was never really that deep in the pond. Eventually all the cattails and vegetation will die. It will decompose and turn into soil that will fill in this pond.



Some of these aspens and other trees will encroach into the pond and eventually this will become a meadow area with hardly any water in it at all except for in the early spring. The water will stimulate the growth of these larger trees and shrubs that will come along. This is the natural progression of open water to a grassy substrate in the pond; to the cattails; and eventually, an open meadow.

When you see ponds with open water, you will see other kinds of life like ducks. Ducks like to eat off the bottom and they will nest along the banks. You may see ducklings occasionally at the right time of year. You might also see turtles sitting on logs in the open water. When the pond starts to fill in, other types of animals will show up. You might see squirrels, chipmunks and other mammals.



What used to be another pond in Dishman Hills is called Lost Pond because it is at the final stage where it gets water a couple of times a year when it rains, but mostly it is just a meadow with grasses and shrubs. All the ponds will eventually do the same.

If you have any questions, email us at Education@DishmanHills.org