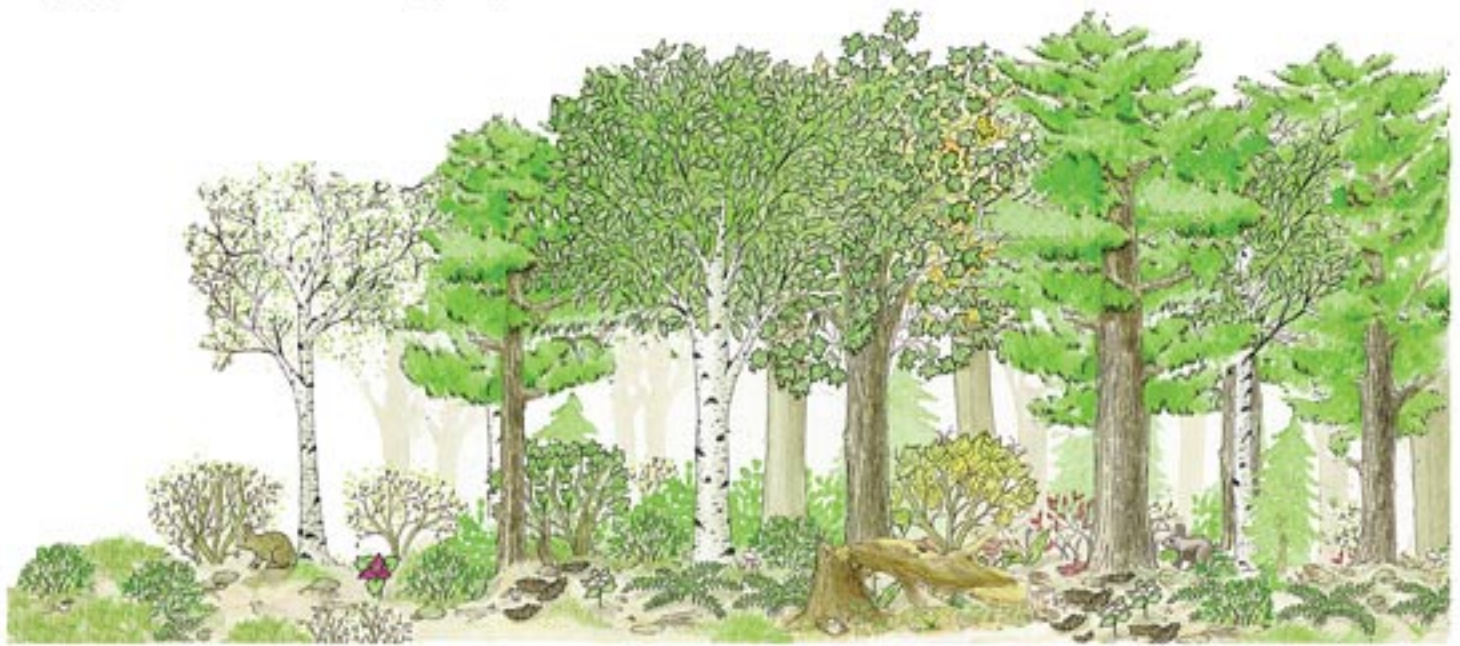


SHORT FILM WORKSHEET



The History of Trees - Forest Succession

Forest succession is the change over time of the plants and animals in a forest as it matures. It is a cyclic process because a disturbance, like a forest fire, can start the forest back at the beginning. Forests are changing all the time. Plants grow and die and are broken down by decomposers, like insects, fungi and microorganisms, returning their nutrients to the soil. Plants also feed animals that will eventually die and return *their* nutrients to the soil. So the process goes round and round, renewing the forest generation after generation. Below you can see the progression of a forest from grassy meadow to climax forest.



Plants Stage First 5 years

Pioneer plants like grasses and wildflowers, give way to shrubs and tree seedlings. Insects, small rodents, amphibians, reptiles, songbirds and birds of prey make up a thriving food web here.

Shrub Stage 6-25 years

Tree seedlings and larger shrubs take over from plants and provide habitat for rodents, small mammals, nesting birds and deer. These attract hunting predators like weasels, coyote, bobcats and bear.

Young Forest 26 - 50 years

Deciduous trees grow into a shading canopy and dominant the forest. They shade out most plants in the understory except evergreens and shade tolerant wildflowers. Animals needing larger trees, like beaver, take advantage of this forest stage.

Mature Forest 51 - 150 years

Large evergreens take over the forest. The deciduous trees die and open holes in the canopy for plants, shrubs and young trees to come back. This provides habitat for small birds and mammals again.

Climax Forest 150 - 300 years

Fewer, larger evergreens (or forests of oak or maple) dominate the forest and grow massive. Dead trees provide good and nest holes for woodpeckers and small mammals. Large fallen trees become nurse logs to seedlings and cover to animals.



SHORT FILM WORKSHEET



The History of Trees - Forest Succession

Forest succession is the change over time of the plants and animals in a forest as it matures. Using the Succession information sheet as a guide, draw a forest as it goes from plant stage to climax forest.

Plants Stage
First 5 years

Shrub Stage
6-25 years

Young Forest
26 - 50 years

Mature Forest
51 - 150 years

Climax Forest
150 - 300 years

