|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  Succession Succession is a ecological process that involves the predictable and orderly changes in the composition or structure of an ecological community. Every year seasonal changes induce observable and predictable changes in the makeup of the creek habitat. The emergence and disappearance of certain species of insects can be predicted to within a few weeks. The annual scouring of the creek channel by flood waters present during most winters causes extreme changes in the populations of fish species. Fish frye are abundant every spring and disappear by early summer. The location and activity of resident bass and bluegill can be predicted based on the annual changes in abundance of [fish frye](http://docs.google.com/about/chronicles/news/spring97.html). Perhaps the most obvious example of succession is the appearance and disappearance of resident annual grasses and herbs (at right is the creek bank in september showing dead grasses - in the winter and spring the hillside is covered with bright green mature grasses). These in turn directly impact the presence and absence of herbivores which in turn impact the presence and absence of many carnivores. To study succession changes in the creek water students have encased river stones in wire mesh cages. Several of these would be placed in a common area of the creek. They would be removed from the water one at a time during different times of the year and checked for organisms. Early research revealed a direct correlation with the appearance of key algae species and certain invertebrates. A problem that we have encountered on more than one occasion is the moving and removing of the cages by visitors to the creek. We are currently working out a solution to this problem. Students will also enter the creek and pick up stones to count the numbers of [snails](http://docs.google.com/field_guide/invert/snail.html) and [flatworms](http://docs.google.com/field_guide/invert/planaria.html) during the different seasons. A significant increase in their number directly correlates the increasing temperatures we see during the transition from early to late spring.     |  | | --- | | Copyright © 2008 Amador Valley High. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of Amador Valley is prohibited. | |