

Succession

Biology

How communities change over time, and where each type starts.

The stages of primary succession.

1

Bare rock or new surface

Volcanic rock, sand dune, retreating glacier.

2

Pioneer species

Lichens and mosses; tolerant of extremes, they begin soil formation.

3

Soil accumulates

From weathering and dead organisms.

4

Intermediate communities

Grasses, then shrubs. Each modifies conditions for the next.

5

Climax community

Stable, self-sustaining, given the climate.

THROUGH SUCCESSION

Biodiversity increases

Biomass increases

Soil depth increases

Stability increases

Deflected succession is a community held below climax by management — grazing or mowing produce and maintain grassland.