

The pond at Jordan Lake is an Open Water/Emergent Marsh that supports microscopic bacteria, insects, fish such as sticklebacks, small animals and many bird species. Mammals such as muskrats, beavers, voles, and shrews have been observed at Jordan Lake. Bird species found in the area include trumpeter swans, grebes, eagles, greater yellow legs, loons, common snipes and mallard ducks.

7 Upland Depression Swamp

Upland swamps are poorly drained upland flats or depressions that occur on higher ground. They have ponding or standing water potential from rain and seepage. This swamp was created by human made disturbances.

8 Moose Browse

Moose are most abundant in recently burned areas that contain willow and birch and also along the major rivers of Southcentral and Interior Alaska. Moose eat a variety of foods, particularly sedges, equisetum (horsetail), pond weeds, and grasses. Moose feed on emergent vegetation in shallow ponds and marshes during the summer and on large quantities of birch, willow, and aspen in the fall and winter. Vegetation is also important for bedding and there is evidence of moose bedding down on the Felt Leaf Willow saplings in this area.

9 Beaver Dam and Canal

The beaver is a resourceful mammal that uses its broad tail as a rudder for swimming and builds dams out of tree branches, mud and other debris. Their enlarged front teeth act like saws and enable them gnaw at tree branches for home construction. Beavers also dig canals so they can float branches from trees they have cut to move them to safer feeding locations and also to transport materials to make their dams. Beavers become less active in the winter but they do not hibernate.

Jordan Lake Nature Area

- Area is open daily from 8:00 am to 10 pm
- Motorized vehicles and bicycles are prohibited
- No alcoholic beverages
- Animals need to be on a leash at all times
Please clean up after your pet
- Respect the entire area - Report vandalism
- Cutting down plants and removal of plants is prohibited
- Haul it in - Haul it out
Keep the area free of trash

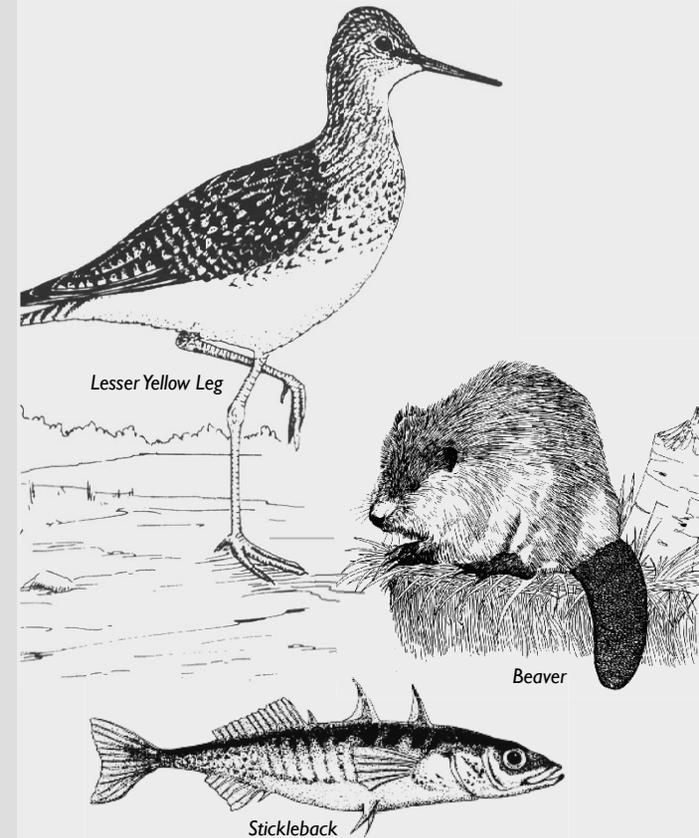
Questions What Can I do to Help?

Come visit us in the Library or contact the Library at 892-6475 or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Department of Community Development at 745-9631.



Jordan Lake

Nature Walk



Lesser Yellow Leg

Beaver

Stickleback

Thank you to the US Fish and Wild life Service and Dr. George West for the wildlife sketches in this brochure.

Jordan Lake Nature Area

INTRODUCTION

The self-guided interpretive walk starts at the Reading Circle entry sign.

Take a brochure from the sign rack or Library front desk and follow the path to the numbered sites.

1 White Spruce Habitat

The place where organisms live is its habitat. A wildland fire creates new habitats through the mosaic of burned and unburned trees, promoting a forest of mixed age trees, clearing out those that are dead and diseased, and opening space for germination of new growth. After a fire, fast growing herbs and grasses like fireweed are the first successional plants to recover a burned area. Shrubs and saplings such as aspen and willow thrive after a fire and will eventually grow into young trees making up the second successional stage. The white spruce forest is the final or climax stage of succession in a boreal forest. As you walk between here and site #2 note the white spruce trees that are 4-6 years old now growing in an area directly affected by the 1996 Miller's Reach Fire.

2 White Birch Bark

The white birch in this area is an example of charcoal remaining on a living tree or fire scar that adds a layer of cells annually and provides a record to determine historically when a fire occurred.

3 Upland Swamp

Swamps are characterized by saturated soils during the growing season, and standing water during certain times of the year. Upland swamps are poorly drained upland flats or depressions. They usually occur on broad upland areas and occasionally on high ridge tops. The vegetation community is also different than that of wetlands as the boundary of upland swamps change to dominant upland plant species over wetland vegetation. Ferns make up the majority of the ground cover vegetation.

4 Stump Ecology

Stumps that re-sprout after a forest fire are an example of fire adaptation. Roots, shrubs, fungus, and grasses sprouting from underground stems, stumps or roots provide shelter and food for other organisms.

5 Insect Life

Ponds support an abundance of insects, in and on the water. Insects such as water striders and water boatmans provide a rich source of protein for the many migratory waterfowl and other bird species in the Jordan Lake area. The water strider can be found at Jordan lake and is named for its ability to skirt across the water's surface. The water boatman

is named for its two very long legs which act like paddles. The boatman can also attach itself to plants at the bottom of a pond while breathing from an air bubble stored around its body.

6 Pond Ecology

Ponds have many names including flats, swamps, bogs, meadows and marshes. Ponds are small bodies of water shallow enough for sunlight to reach the bottom, permitting rooted plants to grow at the pond's deepest point. Ponds are usually 3.6-4.5 meters (12 to 15 feet) in depth and are part of the two types of freshwater habitat: flowing water and standing water. The four distinctive habitats in a pond include surface film habitat, open water habitat, bottom habitat and shore habitat. Ponds have an abundant and rich variety of plant and animal life that are maintained in a delicate ecological balance.

The red-necked grebe has a short body with gray plumage on its upper body and a long red neck. Its long bill is straight and black with yellow at the base. Grebes have white cheeks, dark brown eyes and black legs and feet.

