

Nature Notes

Watery Wonders



The Kimberley Nature Park (KNP) is a wonderfully ecologically diverse area. One of the many types of habitat to be found within its borders is wetlands.



Duck Pond, a marsh with cattails the dominant vegetation
photo by J. Duncan

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on the planet, supporting a diversity of flora and fauna. There are a number of different types of wetlands but all have three basic characteristics in common: water, water-saturated soils and water-tolerant plants. In Canada the National Wetlands Working Group has divided wetlands into five classes: bogs, fens, marshes, swamps and shallow water.

Often under-rated in importance, wetlands play a number of critical ecological roles. Wetlands clean, store, transform and filter the water and at the same time provide flood protection, stabilize shorelines, recharge groundwater, maintain stream flow and provide habitat for a variety of creatures.

Types of Wetlands:

Bogs: composed of decaying sphagnum moss peat, highly acidic and low in nutrients, the water table at or near the surface

Fens: consist of decomposing sedge and brown-moss peat, less acidic and more nutrient rich than bogs.

Marshes: periodically flooded by slow-moving or standing water, water levels vary seasonally, often associated with cattails, bulrushes, grasses & horsetails.

Swamps: nutrient-rich standing or slowly moving water

Shallow-water: open waters covering at least 75% of a total wetland area in summer and have a midsummer depth of less than 2 m.



Dipper Lake at high water,

photo by L. Duncan

The KNP is home to a number of wetland areas. Eimer's Lake is called a lake but it is actually a shallow water wetland bordered by a bog while Dipper Lake and Duck Pond are really marshes. Other marshes in the Park include 2nd and 3rd Eimers, the area near the junction of Pat Morrow Trail and Lower Army Road and the series of wetlands to be found between Myrtle Junction and Mary's Lunchroom. Take a moment to explore these diverse and productive areas!

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy or more information about Nature Park events