



## Raincoast Field School @home

### Bogs Question and Answers

**1. Why did Mark talk so much about butter in the video?**

Mark was showing, in a humorous way, how things do not decompose in a bog. In some European countries, thousand-year-old butter was found in a few bog locations. Way back in the day, the humans living near these sites realized the preserving potential of bogs. They would dig holes in the bog to store foods to ensure they did not break down. It was kind of like an olden day fridge!

**2. What are the carnivorous plants in a bog called?**

These are sundew! Because a bog is so low in available nutrients, some plant species have adapted, finding new ways of taking in energy requirements. The sundew plant has adapted a sticky surface to trap insects flying by. Those bugs that become trapped are then digested by the sundew for food and energy!

**3. What does pH mean?**

The pH of a solution is a term used in chemistry to measure the acidity and alkalinity of a solution. Bog ecosystems have acidic waters in comparison to stream ecosystems.

**4. Are bogs found in other areas throughout BC?**

Most definitely! Bog ecosystems are spread throughout BC. However, the amount of bogs has dramatically been reduced over time. Human and bog relationships historically have been quite poor. Bog ecosystems were viewed as a wet waste land- no agriculture could come from a bog and no homes could be built. And so, humans would drain bog regions to create more productive lands- destroying and decreasing these unique, fragile sites.

## **5. What happens if I step in a bog?**

Remember all those layers of dead sphagnum? They accumulate extremely slowly over time. Bog ecosystems can take thousands of years to develop and therefore are very fragile. When we step in a bog, we compact these layers of sphagnum. It is important as humans to reduce our impact we have on bogs. Try your best to avoid stepping in bogs to allow for the preservation and longevity of these sites.

## **6. Where can I access a bog in our local region?**

There are many bog ecosystems throughout our peninsula, however we want to ensure good bog health, so that means reducing our impact. Luckily, we have two board walk bog trails that are easily accessible and even have informational signage to help you learn more. You can access the Shorepine Bog Trail in the Pacific Rim National Park. As well, the Wild Pacific Trail in Ucluelet has created the Bog Interpretive Trail.

## **7. What exactly is Sphagnum?**

Sphagnum is a genus of moss species. Its most common type being peat moss. This moss is common in bog areas due to its potential to store water, both living and dead plants can hold large quantities. A bog doesn't have a ground made up of soil like most environments. Instead the ground is made up of layer upon layer of dead sphagnum moss. This moss decomposes at an extremely slow rate; therefore, the dead layers build up upon one another. This layering of dead sphagnum is able to soak up a ton of water- which raises the water table. This moss creates a very challenging environment for most forest plant species. That's why bogs are so unique!