

## Glossary

**Adaptation** - a physical/biological or behavioral feature of a plant or animal that helps it to survive in its habitat.

**Aestivation** – an animal that passes the heat of the day or summer in a state of dormancy.

**Biodiversity** – the variety of living things on Earth, reflected in the variety of ecosystems and species, their processes and interactions, the genetic variation within and among species.

**Cactus** – a plant with fleshy stems and branches with modified leaves, which form scales or spines instead of leaves.

**Carnivore** – an animal that eats meat only.

**Desert** – a region receiving less than ten inches of precipitation each year.

**Diurnal** – active during the day

**Ecosystem** - the interaction of the biological community (all living things) and the physical environment (water, air, minerals).

**Environment** – all factors living and non-living, which make up surroundings of an organism.

**Endangered Species** - any species of plant or animal at risk of extinction.

**Erosional Forces** – the movement of particles of the land surface by wind, water, ice, or earth movements.

**Exotic/Nonnative Species** - not native, something that did not exist in the area before humans brought it from another place.

**Extinct** - a species that has vanished from existence-not a single one left.

**Fire** – a rapid, persistent chemical reaction that releases heat and light, especially the combination of a combustible substance with oxygen.

**Floodplain** – an area near a stream or river that floods regularly. These areas hold floodwaters, minimizing flood damage to other areas.

**Foliage** – the leaves of growing plants.

**Ground Fire** – a fire that consumes the organic material on or beneath the surface litter of the forest floor.

**Habitat** - a place where a plant or animal lives.

**Herbivore** – an animal that eats plants only.

**Limestone** – a rock type formed chiefly of the remains of shells or coral.

**Native Species** - a plant or animal that evolved or was transported to an area through natural means.

**Nocturnal** – active at night

**Omnivore** – an animal that eats plants and animals.

**Paiute** – a Native American Indian tribe that inhabited southern Nevada for hundreds of years.

**Parasite** – an organism that grows, feeds, and is sheltered on or in a different organism while contributing nothing to the survival of its host.

**Predator** – an animal that hunts other live animals for food.

**Prey** – an animal hunted for food by other animals.

**Riparian** – Areas where land and water meet along stream and lake margin. Plants need to have their roots in the water or moist ground for most of the year.

**Sandstone** – a rock type composed predominantly of small quartz grains cemented by iron oxide, lime, silica, or other material.

**Symbiotic** – a relationship of two or more organisms in a close association, which may be, but is not necessarily of benefit to each other.

**Threatened Species** – a plant or animal whose numbers are declining.

**Transpiration** – water loss through the stomata of the plants tissue.

**Wash** – a riverbed created by flash floods. It is normally dry except after heavy rains when it flows with a strong current.

**Watershed** – The larger geographic area that drains into a given stream, river, or body of water.