Unit 08 GeoClips: Meet Peat!

We're on the outer beach at Cape Cod at Nauset, and we're looking at where the ocean has been cutting back a little bit of the bluffs to reveal what's behind. Now, most of the Cape is sand and gravel. It's outwash from the glaciers from the Ice Age. But what we see here is the filling of a lake. A block of ice fell off the glacier, was buried in sand and gravel, and then melted out to leave a little spot, a lake, which is filled with peat that you see here. The peat is the remains of dead plants. And if you look very carefully, you will see within the peat many of the dead plants.

On top here are grasses of the modern world, but they are not down in the material. Lakes die. They fill with this stuff. When you see a lake on the landscape, you should ask yourself, why is this here? Because something recent has happened to make the lake.