

RUNNING TITLE: Community assembly and microbial metabolism

Coupling spatiotemporal community assembly processes to changes in microbial metabolism

Emily B. Graham¹, Alex R. Crump¹, Charles T. Resch¹, Sarah Fansler¹, Evan Arntzen¹, David W. Kennedy¹, Jim K. Fredrickson¹, James C. Stegen¹

¹Biological Sciences Division, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Richland, WA USA

Correspondence: Emily B. Graham, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, PO Box 999, Richland, WA 99352, 509-372-6049, emily.graham@pnnl.gov

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1 Abstract

2 Community assembly processes generate shifts in species abundances that influence
3 ecosystem cycling of carbon and nutrients, yet our understanding of assembly remains largely
4 separate from ecosystem-level functioning. Here, we investigate relationships between assembly
5 and changes in microbial metabolism across space and time in hyporheic microbial communities.
6 We pair sampling of two habitat types (*i.e.*, attached and planktonic) through seasonal and sub-
7 hourly hydrologic fluctuation with null modeling and temporally-explicit multivariate statistics.
8 We demonstrate that multiple selective pressures—imposed by sediment and porewater
9 physicochemistry—integrate to generate changes in microbial community composition at distinct
10 timescales among habitat types. These changes in composition are reflective of contrasting
11 associations of *Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota* with ecological selection and with
12 seasonal changes in microbial metabolism. We present a conceptual model based on our results
13 in which metabolism increases when oscillating selective pressures oppose temporally-stable
14 selective pressures. Our conceptual model is pertinent to both macrobial and microbial systems
15 experiencing multiple selective pressures and presents an avenue for assimilating community
16 assembly processes into predictions of ecosystem-level functioning.

Introduction

The collective effects of community assembly processes (*e.g.*, dispersal, drift, and selection) on ecosystem functioning remain unclear. Selection and dispersal both have the potential to impact metabolism—selection can enhance rates of metabolism via species sorting mechanisms that optimize community composition for a given environment (Van der Gucht *et al.*, 2007;Lindström and Langenheder, 2012), while dispersal limitation can lead to a dominance of species that are poorly adapted to prevailing environmental conditions with resultant decreases in productivity (Telford *et al.*, 2006;Lindström and Östman, 2011;Hanson *et al.*, 2012;Peres *et al.*, 2016). The extent to which community assembly processes regulate metabolism is contingent on myriad spatiotemporal dynamics including the geographic distance separating communities, the rate of environmental change, and historical abiotic conditions (Fukami *et al.*, 2010;Graham *et al.*, 2014;Nemergut *et al.*, 2014;Hawkes and Keitt, 2015;Graham *et al.*, 2016). Yet, we lack a conceptual basis for how multiple community assembly processes jointly influence microbial metabolism (Prosser *et al.*, 2007;Gonzalez *et al.*, 2012;Shade *et al.*, 2013;Graham *et al.*, 2016).

Community assembly processes act through space and time to impact community membership, which then impacts microbial metabolism (Vellend, 2010;Nemergut *et al.*, 2013). For instance, communities experiencing a history of strong and consistent selection may contain taxa that are well-adapted to their environment and exhibit high metabolic rates. Alternatively, such a history could depress biodiversity and eliminate microbial taxa that metabolize scarce resource pools (Grime, 1998;Loreau and Hector, 2001;Knelman and Nemergut, 2014). If a reduction in biodiversity limits the flexibility of community metabolism, more diverse communities (*e.g.*, those experiencing higher rates of dispersal or more variable selection) would be expected to exhibit higher and more consistent rates of metabolism than those structured by a

dominant selective pressure. Further, spatial processes (*i.e.*, dispersal) can impact microbial metabolism (Hooper *et al.*, 2012; Nemergut *et al.*, 2014). Dispersal limitation can inhibit the ability of organisms to reach their optimal environment, resulting in a poorly functioning community. High rates of dispersal can reduce microbial metabolism by allowing for immigration of organisms that are poorly adapted to prevailing conditions or can enhance metabolism by increasing biodiversity.

Additionally, individual taxa are differentially impacted by community assembly processes. Only some taxa contain traits that are under selection in given environmental conditions, and changes in the environment may affect some taxa to a greater extent than others (Poff, 1997; Lebrija-Trejos *et al.*, 2010; Knelman and Nemergut, 2014; Krause *et al.*, 2014). For example, a change in a certain nutrient should have a larger influence on taxa that directly metabolize it than those that utilize it as a secondary resource. Similarly, traits that facilitate dispersal (*e.g.*, spore formation) are preferentially contained within certain taxa (Martiny *et al.*, 2006; Tremlová and Münzbergová, 2007) such that changes in abiotic transport mechanisms should have contrasting effects on taxa with or without traits that facilitate dispersal. Thus, taxon-specific relationships between assembly processes and microbial communities may inform our understanding of the ecological processes influencing changes in environmental microbiomes beyond trends we observe at the community-level.

Environmental transition zones present a unique opportunity for examining interactions between microbial metabolism and both long- and short-term assembly processes, as they experience extreme spatiotemporal variation in physicochemical characteristics and microbial community composition across tractable spatial and temporal scales. Here, we leverage inherent variation in hydrology, habitat heterogeneity, and aerobic respiration in a zone of subsurface

groundwater-surface water mixing to examine the interplay of community assembly processes and microbial metabolism through time. We employ null modeling in conjunction with temporally-explicit multivariate statistics to characterize assembly processes driving shifts in microbial communities and microbial metabolism in the Columbia River hyporheic zone. We examine two co-occurring, yet ecologically distinct, habitat types—attached and planktonic communities. Further, we extend the analysis of community assembly processes to individual taxa that likely contribute to observed shifts in microbial metabolism. Our results culminate in a broadly-applicable conceptual model coupling changes in selective environments, trait abundance, and ecosystem-level functioning through time.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This study was conducted in Hanford Reach of the Columbia River adjacent to the Hanford 300A (approximately 46° 22' 15.80"N, 119° 16' 31.52"W) in eastern Washington, as described elsewhere (Slater *et al.*, 2010; Zachara *et al.*, 2013; Stegen *et al.*, 2016). The hyporheic zone of the Columbia River experiences geographic variation in groundwater-surface water mixing, porewater geochemistry, and microbial community composition on sub-hourly to annual timescales (Peterson and Connelly, 2004; Arntzen *et al.*, 2006; Slater *et al.*, 2010; Lin *et al.*, 2012; Stegen *et al.*, 2012; Zachara *et al.*, 2013; Stegen *et al.*, 2016). Accordingly, the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River embodies a model system to facilitate the integration of community ecology and microbial metabolism.

We monitored physicochemical conditions for three hydrologically connected geographic zones (nearshore, inland, river) via aqueous sampling (Table S1). The inland environment is

characterized by an unconfined aquifer within the Hanford formation and more recent illuvial deposits and maintains a distinct hydrologic environment with stable temperatures ($\sim 15^{\circ}\text{C}$) and high concentrations of anions and inorganic carbon relative to the river. River water contains high concentrations of organic material and low concentrations of ions with seasonally variable temperatures. The waters from these discrete hydrologic environments experience dynamic mixing in a nearshore zone that is regulated by fluctuations in river stage; we focus on ecological dynamics within this zone. To monitor groundwater-surface water mixing across space and time, we utilize Cl^{-} as a conservative tracer for groundwater contributions to hyporheic porewater chemistry as employed by Stegen *et al.* (2016).

Detailed sampling and analytical methods are in the Supplemental Material. Attached and planktonic communities were obtained from deployed colonization substrate and aqueous samples in the hyporheic zone. Samples to construct the regional species pool for null models were simultaneously obtained at three inland wells and at one location in the Columbia River. These samples were collected at three-week intervals from March through November 2014, with the first planktonic samples collected in March and the first attached samples collected after a six-week incubation period from piezometers installed to 1.2m depth near the riverbed. Samples collected at each time point were assumed to represent sub-hourly variation in hydrologic conditions, as hydrology fluctuates at sub-hourly rates within a single day in our system (Arntzen *et al.*, 2006), whereas samples collected across the full sampling period were assumed to represent seasonal variation.

Aqueous samples were obtained via pumping water from piezometers adjacent to colonization substrates and used to derive physicochemical conditions as well as to sample planktonic communities. Attached microbial communities were sampled by deploying mesh

stainless steel incubators of locally-sourced colonization substrate in piezometers within one meter of piezometers from which aqueous samples were obtained. All incubators were deployed six weeks prior to removal. For each sample, we collected the following data according to procedures outlined in the Supplementary Material: physicochemical characteristics (aqueous samples only), metabolism (aerobic metabolism per unit active biomass defined by Raz:ATP, attached samples only), and 16S rRNA amplicon sequences (all samples).

Null Modeling Approach.

We implemented null modeling methodology developed by Stegen et al. (2013;2015) using *R* software (<http://cran.r-project.org/>) to disentangle community assembly processes (Supplemental Material). The approach uses turnover pairwise phylogenetic turnover between communities, calculated using the mean-nearest-taxon-distance (β MNTD) metric (Webb *et al.*, 2008; Fine and Kembel, 2011), to infer the strength of selection. Communities were evaluated for significantly less turnover than expected (β NTI < -2, homogeneous selection) or more turnover than expected (β NTI > 2, variable selection) by comparing observed β MNTD values to the mean of a null distribution of β MNTD values—and normalizing by its standard deviation—to yield β NTI (Stegen *et al.*, 2012). Pairwise community comparisons that did not deviate from the null β MNTD distribution were evaluated for the influences of dispersal limitation and homogenizing dispersal by calculating the Raup-Crick metric extended to account for species relative abundances (RC_{bray}), as per Stegen *et al.* (2013;2015). Observed Bray-Curtis dissimilarities were compared to the null distribution to derive RC_{bray} . RC_{bray} values > 0.95, > -0.95 and < 0.95, or < -0.95 were assumed to indicate dispersal limitation, no dominant assembly process, or homogenizing dispersal, respectively. Significance levels for β NTI and RC_{bray} are respectively

based on standard deviations— $|\beta\text{NTI}| = 2$ denotes two standard deviations from the mean of the null distribution—and alpha values— $|\text{RC}_{\text{bray}}| = 0.95$ reflects significance at the 0.05 level. Inferences from both βNTI and RC_{bray} have previously been shown to be robust (Dini-Andreote *et al.*, 2015; Stegen *et al.*, 2015).

Statistical Methods

Regressions and one-sided Mann Whitney *U* tests were conducted using the base statistics package in *R*. Variation in community composition was assessed with PERMANOVA in QIIME (Caporaso *et al.*, 2010). We fit porewater characteristics to NMDS plots of Bray-Curtis dissimilarities with and without stratifying by time within attached and planktonic communities using the ‘vegan’ package in *R* (999 permutations, Oksanen *et al.*, 2013). Further details are available in the Supplemental Material.

Because we observed large seasonal differences in species richness in both attached and planktonic communities, we performed similarity percentage (SIMPER) analysis to identify individual species driving community dissimilarity between time periods of high and low richness in each environment (Clarke, 1993). SIMPER was conducted across all attached and planktonic communities and within attached and planktonic communities across time periods of high and low species richness, defined by time rather than species numbers to control for seasonal effects (Supplemental Material). We extracted taxonomic groups of organisms at the class-level containing at least one species identified as having a significant impact on community composition by SIMPER ($P < 0.05$) for subsequent analyses. Organisms were grouped at the class-level to provide sufficient statistical power for analysis. Mantel tests were used to compare the average relative abundance of taxonomic groups identified by SIMPER across samples to

associated β NTI and RC_{bray} values ('vegan', 999 permutations). Finally, we compared dissimilarity in species richness between samples within and across attached and planktonic communities to β NTI and further, if $-2 < \beta$ NTI < 2 , to RC_{bray} using Mantel tests to infer community assembly processes generating species turnover between samples.

Results

Hydrologic shifts through time

We observed distinct temporal trends in groundwater-surface water mixing, characterized by an abrupt increase in Cl^- concentration (Figure 1A) and decrease in NPOC (Figure 1B) associated with a seasonal shift in water stage (Figure S1, Table S1). Temperature peaked during August and followed a smooth temporal trend (Figure 1C). Species richness in both attached and planktonic communities mirrored the trend in temperature, with the highest number of species observed during the warmest summer months (Figure 1D). Further, species richness was more tightly correlated with temperature (Figure S2, regression, attached: $R^2 = 0.25$, $P = 0.001$, planktonic: $R^2 = 0.22$, $P = 0.002$) than Cl^- (regression, attached: $P = 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.14$, planktonic: $P > 0.05$) and NPOC (regression, attached: $P = 0.04$, $R^2 = 0.10$, planktonic: $P > 0.05$).

Spatiotemporal assembly processes

Attached and planktonic communities remained taxonomically distinct through time (PERMANOVA, $R^2 = 0.19$, $P = 0.001$). The composition of both attached (PERMANOVA, $R^2 = 0.44$, $P = 0.001$) and planktonic (PERMANOVA, $R^2 = 0.44$, $P = 0.001$) communities changed across our sampling period. Assembly processes governing variation in community composition varied by environment type (Figure 2A-B). β NTI was positively correlated with differences in

species richness in planktonic samples (Mantel, $P = 0.001$, $r = 0.41$, Figure 2B), with weaker correlations in attached communities (Mantel, $P = 0.02$, $r = 0.24$, Figure 2A) and between attached and planktonic communities (Mantel, $P = 0.006$, $r = -0.26$, Figure 2C).

When examining selective processes at discrete timescales, planktonic communities were correlated to more environmental variables than attached communities at a sub-hourly timescale (stratified NMDS, Figure 3A and B, Table S2). Conversely, attached communities correlated more tightly with physicochemical attributes over a seasonal timescale (unstratified NMDS, Figure 3A and B).

Phylogenetic variability in assembly and associated shifts in metabolism

SIMPER analysis revealed species driving differences among attached and planktonic communities during periods of high versus low species richness (Table S3). In separate analyses of attached and planktonic communities, 231 species were identified as significant drivers of community composition in each habitat, while 863 species were identified as drivers of community composition across planktonic versus attached environments. We extracted phylogenetic classes of organisms containing species identified by SIMPER and examined relationships between their relative abundances and β NTI and RC_{bray} . All significant correlations with absolute r values greater than 0.30 are listed in Table S4. Taxa in planktonic communities exhibited no relationships with β NTI (Table S4), but the mean relative abundance of many taxa, including *Thaumarchaeota* (positive, Figure 4A), a class of *Acidobacteria* (positive, Figure 4B), *Actinobacteria* (negative, Figure 4C), and *Alphaproteobacteria* (negative, Figure 4D), displayed correlations with RC_{bray} . The mean relative abundance of *Parvarcheota* and a class of candidate phyla OP3 (*koll11*) were positively correlated with β NTI derived from comparisons across

attached and planktonic communities (Figure 4E-F). Finally, within attached communities, β NTI was correlated with the mean relative abundance of *Thaumarchaeota* (positive, Figure 4G) and *Betaproteobacteria* (negative, Figure 4H). No correlations were observed between RC_{bray} and taxa within attached communities or across attached-vs.-planktonic communities. (Table S4)

We also observed a seasonal increase in the abundance of *Thaumarchaeota* in attached communities and a concomitant decrease in *Betaproteobacteria* (Figure 5A) that corresponded with shifts in hydrology (Figure 5B). Oxygenated conditions persisted throughout our sampling period, and Raz:ATP increased seasonally within attached communities, an effect that correlated with day of year (Figure 5C) but not temperature, NPOC concentration, or hydrology (regression: temperature $P = 0.10$, NPOC $P = 0.21$, $\log(Cl^-)$ $P = 0.15$). The relative abundance of *Thaumarchaeota* and *Betaproteobacteria* in attached communities also correlated positively and negatively, respectively, with Raz:ATP (Figure 5D) and exhibited contrasting responses to porewater physicochemical properties (Table S5).

Discussion

Our results show pronounced seasonal changes in hydrologic and microbial characteristics within the Columbia River hyporheic zone. Our analyses also indicate that the importance of selection and dispersal varied between attached and planktonic communities in our system and, moreover, that selection operated at distinct timescales in each habitat. These community assembly processes were also associated with changes in the relative abundance of certain taxa. Specifically, changes in selection exhibited contrasting relationships with putative heterotrophic and autotrophic taxa in attached communities. Microbial metabolism in attached communities also changed seasonally in our system and correlated with changes in the

abundance of these same taxa. Based on our findings, we present a conceptual model applicable within both macrobial and microbial systems that links trait selection, organismal fitness, and ecosystem-level functioning in habitats that are characterized by opposing selective pressures across multiple timescales.

Microbial responses to environmental change

Hyporheic microbial community composition shifted in conjunction with seasonal changes in organic carbon concentration, temperature, and groundwater-surface water mixing conditions. These variables each explained some variation in temporal community dissimilarity within attached and planktonic communities, indicating potential influences of selection—mediated by environmental change—and dispersal—mediated by hydrologic transport—over microbial community composition (Table S6). Both selection by the geochemical environment and dispersal from local sediment communities have been demonstrated within the groundwater aquifer in our system (Stegen *et al.*, 2012); however, the balance of these two processes in structuring hyporheic microbial communities remains unclear.

Our results indicate that homogeneous selection (*i.e.*, consistently imposed selection for a given set of traits, $\beta\text{NTI} < -2$) was the dominant assembly process in attached communities, while planktonic communities were influenced by a combination of homogeneous selection, variable selection (*i.e.*, selective pressures that change through space or time, $\beta\text{NTI} > 2$), and spatial processes (*i.e.*, dispersal, $-2 < \beta\text{NTI} < 2$ and $|\text{RC}_{\text{bray}}| > 0.95$). Because planktonic communities consistently displayed higher βNTI values in comparison to attached communities, often with $-2 < \beta\text{NTI} < 2$, dispersal processes may play a greater role in structuring planktonic vs. attached communities. In contrast, attached communities always yielded large negative βNTI

values suggesting that features of the physical sediment environment may impose stronger selective pressures than aqueous physicochemistry.

Because we observed pronounced seasonal trends in species richness associated with changes in the environment, we used null modeling to assess the extent to which selection versus dispersal influenced community composition across changes in species richness. Homogenous selection prevailed in attached communities as differences in species richness increased (Figure 2A), indicating strong and consistent selective pressures imposed by a relatively stable environment across temporal changes in microbial diversity. Strong consistent selection through time in attached communities suggests that the physical substrate may inherently contain a limited number of ecological niches—potentially related to mineralogy or physical structure—with slow changes in available niche space. In this case, temporal increases in richness were likely due to the addition of taxa that were ecologically similar to existing taxa and occupied similar niche space.

In contrast, differences in planktonic species richness were positively correlated with β NTI, with β NTI values supporting a role for more variable selection as differences in richness increased (Figure 2B). In this case, increases in species richness were likely due to the addition of taxa occupying newly available niche space generated by changes in the selective environment, yielding new taxa that were ecologically dissimilar to existing taxa.

Variation in assembly processes between attached and planktonic communities may be due to inherent differences among these environments, such as influences of mineralogy (Carson *et al.*, 2007; Jorgensen *et al.*, 2012), physical matrix composition (Vos *et al.*, 2013; Breulmann *et al.*, 2014), and/or relative rates of change in environment characteristics (discussed below). Further, differences in assembly processes and niche dynamics between the attached and

planktonic communities may also be reflective of differing rates of organismal response to fluctuations in the hyporheic environment.

Timescales of selection

The timescales at which selection imposes constraints on microbial community composition are poorly understood (Shade *et al.*, 2012; Nemergut *et al.*, 2013). Here, we provide new insights into these timescales within the hyporheic zone, showing that selection on planktonic communities operates at the timescale of shifting porewater conditions (sub-hourly to seasonal), while selection on attached communities operates primarily at seasonal timescales (Figure 3). Both communities experienced a seasonal change in composition; however, variation in planktonic communities correlated with porewater physicochemistry at both the sub-hourly and seasonal timescales (Figure 3A, red and blue arrows respectively). In our system, planktonic organisms may therefore be influenced by short-term fluctuations in groundwater-surface mixing, either through rapid changes in the selective environment or dispersal via hydrologic transport.

In contrast, selection on attached communities was detectable only at the seasonal timescale and exhibited resistance to short-term hydrologic fluctuations (Figure 3B). This short-term stability could be facilitated by a number of potentially complementary mechanisms. For example, attached communities may reside within biofilms, whereby microbial cells are imbedded in a matrix of extracellular polymeric substances. Biofilms are prevalent in aquatic systems and buffer communities against fluctuations in the hydrologic environment (Battin *et al.*, 2016). Attached microbial communities may also have adhesion mechanisms (Hori and Matsumoto, 2010) that confer stability. Community assembly processes, such as priority effects,

may also contribute to relatively slow rates of community turnover (Fukami, 2004;Fukami *et al.*, 2010). Attached communities contained more species (on average) than planktonic communities (Figure 1D), further suggesting that temporal stability in attached communities may be enhanced by high species richness reducing susceptibility to invasion (Stachowicz *et al.*, 2002).

Taxon-specific assembly processes

Taxon-specific assembly processes are masked when relating β NTI and RC_{bray} to environmental variables. To elucidate taxon-specific selection and dispersal mechanisms, we compared the relative abundance of taxa identified by SIMPER to β NTI and RC_{bray} values.

In light of rapid hydrologic fluctuations in the porewater environment, relationships between RC_{bray} and taxa abundances in planktonic communities provide evidence for a role of taxon-specific dispersal mechanisms (Table S4). In particular, positive relationships of *Thaumarchaeota* (Figure 3A) and a class of *Acidobacteria* (Figure 3B) with RC_{bray} and negative relationships of *Actinobacteria* (Figure 3C) and *Alphaproteobacteria* (Figure 3D) with RC_{bray} were among the strongest correlations (Table S4). These positive or negative relationships indicate higher or lower relative abundances, respectively, under higher levels of dispersal limitation. No relationships existed between planktonic taxa abundances and β NTI.

Although we cannot be certain of the mechanisms responsible for RC_{bray} -abundance relationships in planktonic communities, the trends we observed help elucidate ecological dynamics impacting the abundance of microbial taxa within hyporheic zones. For example, taxa showing positive relationships with RC_{bray} —*Acidobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota*—are widely distributed globally (Francis *et al.*, 2005;Fierer and Jackson, 2006;Jones *et al.*, 2009;Pester *et al.*, 2011), suggesting these organisms may be able to disperse under community-level dispersal

limitation. Conversely, taxa exhibiting negative relationships with RC_{bray} have physiologies that may diminish dispersal ability. *Alphaproteobacteria* can produce filaments that aid in attachment (Kragelund *et al.*, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2007), and dispersal limitation has been demonstrated in soil *Actinobacteria* (Eisenlord *et al.*, 2012). Thus, negative relationships between these taxa and RC_{bray} may reflect an enhanced ability of these organisms to persist locally relative to other community members.

Additionally, when we examined assembly processes governing differences between attached and planktonic communities, we observed selection for microbial taxa in planktonic communities with unique ecological properties (Table S4). No correlations with RC_{bray} were found in these comparisons; however, we identified positive relationships between βNTI and the average relative abundance of two classes of organisms—a candidate class of archaea (*Parvarchaeota*, Figure 3D) and a class of the candidate phylum *OP3 (kollll)*, Figure 3E). Positive correlations between a particular taxon and βNTI across habitat types imply that the taxon increases in abundance as the habitats diverge in selective environments (*i.e.*, selection becomes more variable).

In our system, *Parvarchaeota* and *kollll* were almost exclusively found in planktonic communities suggesting that selection in the porewater environment favors these organisms. Although the specific selective pressures regulating the abundance of these organisms are unknown, archaea and members of the PVC superphyla to which *OP3* belongs have a cell membrane lacking peptidoglycan that conveys resistance to common antibiotics and have the genetic potential to metabolize C1 compounds such as methane (Fuerst and Sagulenko, 2011). The distinctive features of these organisms and abundance within our system merits future investigating into their role in carbon cycling in hyporheic environments.

Finally, we observed changes in the abundance of two major taxa—*Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota*—within attached communities that correlated with changes in β NTI. Members of *Betaproteobacteria* increased in relative abundance with increases in the strength of homogeneous selection (Figure 4H), which occurred during times of low groundwater intrusion (Figure 5A). In contrast, members of *Thaumarchaeota* (Figure 4G) increased as homogeneous selection waned during times of high groundwater intrusion (Figure 5B). In this scenario positive correlations between a taxon and β NTI indicate that the taxon becomes more abundant as homogeneous selection wanes, and thus, that selection targets traits outside the taxon. In contrast, negative correlations between a taxon and β NTI should indicate that the primary selective pressure is for traits contained within that taxon. Because organisms with wider niche breadths are favored by selection in a greater variety of environmental conditions, positive relationships should be more probable for organisms occupying niches defined by a narrow subset of environmental attributes, whereas negative relationships should be more probable for organisms occupying broader niches. Indeed, *Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota* respectively contain organisms with diverse and limited metabolic capabilities (Amakata *et al.*, 2005; Yang *et al.*, 2005; Sato *et al.*, 2009; Pester *et al.*, 2011; Beam *et al.*, 2014; Weber *et al.*, 2015).

Functional effects through time

Shifts in the relative abundances of *Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota* also correlate with changes in groundwater-surface water mixing and in rates of microbial metabolism, denoting a link between community assembly processes and seasonal trends in autotrophic vs. heterotrophic metabolism. *Betaproteobacteria* is a metabolically diverse taxon,

exhibiting a range of aerobic and facultative metabolisms including methylotrophy (Kalyuzhnaya *et al.*, 2006), ammonia-oxidation (Freitag *et al.*, 2006), nitrogen fixation (Rees *et al.*, 2009), phototrophy (Gifford *et al.*, 2013), and a variety of heterotrophic metabolisms (Amakata *et al.*, 2005; Yang *et al.*, 2005; Sato *et al.*, 2009). Although we cannot be certain of the primary metabolic role(s) of these organisms, a positive correlation between their abundance and NPOC concentration supports their important contribution to heterotrophy in this system (Table S5). *Betaproteobacteria* remained in high abundance relative to other organisms throughout our study period, despite a seasonal decline, possibly indicating a broad metabolic role for these organisms. In contrast, metabolic activity of *Thaumarchaeota* is primarily constrained to ammonia-oxidation (Pester *et al.*, 2011; Beam *et al.*, 2014; Weber *et al.*, 2015). *Thaumarchaeota* abundance was negatively correlated with NPOC, consistent with their involvement in ammonia-oxidation (Table S5). The relative abundance of *Thaumarchaeota* also correlated with physicochemical properties associated with increased groundwater-surface water mixing (SO₄, NO₃, IC, Table S5), suggesting a heightened importance of *Thaumarchaeota*-mediated nitrification when enhanced groundwater discharge into the hyporheic zone leads to organic carbon limitation (Taylor and Townsend, 2010).

Taken together, we hypothesize that selective pressures, both from sediment composition and from porewater physicochemistry, favor diverse heterotrophs within *Betaproteobacteria*. However, when the porewater environment changes due to a seasonal change in groundwater-surface water mixing, selective pressures shift to facilitate ammonia-oxidizing *Thaumarchaeota*. More broadly, we propose that community composition in dynamic environments is often the product of multiple selective pressures that operate across different timescales, resulting in an increase of specialist organisms during periods in which selection by an oscillating environment

(e.g., hydrologic change) opposes that of a temporally-stable environment (e.g., consistent sediment chemistry).

Importantly, changes in community composition in our system are associated with a seasonal increase in microbial metabolism, consistent with work in both micro- and macroecology demonstrating that productivity increases with niche diversification (Hooper *et al.*, 2005;Cardinale *et al.*, 2007;Cardinale, 2011;Gravel *et al.*, 2011;Hunting *et al.*, 2015). Specifically, we observed positive correlations between Raz:ATP and *Thaumarchaeota* abundance coincident with negative correlations between Raz:ATP and *Betaproteobacteria* (Figure 5D). We therefore infer that seasonally fluctuating selective pressures from the porewater environment impact microbial metabolism via their influences on niche dynamics. We propose that community-level niche diversification generated by a seasonal rise of specialized autotrophs leads to an increase in community metabolic activity despite selection for heterotrophs imposed by the consistent sediment environment.

Ecological implications

Our findings lead to a conceptual model describing relationships between trait selection, organismal fitness, and ecosystem functioning for communities experiencing multiple selective pressures (Figure 6). The conceptual model focuses on the combined influences of stable and oscillating selective pressures, which should be prevalent across ecosystems. For example, in terrestrial ecosystems, physical soil properties and soil water content are relatively stable and oscillating, respectively, from the perspective of associated plant communities. Likewise in subsurface systems (such as presented here), sediment geochemistry is relatively stable over

monthly timescales and hydrologic conditions are continuously fluctuating generating dual selective pressures for benthic organisms.

We specifically hypothesize that selection imposed by a stable feature of the environment can favor organisms possessing traits that oppose traits selected for by the oscillating environment (Figure 6A). Because the stable environment applies consistent selective pressures, shifts in the strength of homogeneous selection are driven by changes in the oscillating environment. For instance, given a stable environment represented by the black dot in Figure 6A, the strength of homogeneous selection in Figure 6B is influenced by selection imparted by the oscillating environment, denoted as a gradient from blue to red. In this scenario, increased selection from the oscillating environment causes a decrease in homogeneous selection that results in niche diversification and enhanced microbial metabolism (Figure 6B-C).

Conclusions

While future work is needed to validate our conceptual model, our research represents a key step forward in spatiotemporal ecological research by assimilating shifts in community composition, assembly processes, and microbial metabolism. We develop this model by repeatedly sampling attached and planktonic microbial communities within an environmental transition zone over a 9-month time period. Our results indicate a rise in specialist autotrophs associated with increased rates of microbial metabolism when the direction of selection imposed by an oscillating hydrologic environment opposes that of stable selective pressures imposed by sediments. Further, we show that assembly processes operate at different temporal scales in planktonic and attached communities and have taxon-specific effects within each community. Our work is an advancement in the integration of individual and community-level ecology theory

with ecosystem function and develops a conceptual framework for coordinating assembly processes, changes in species abundance, and predictions of ecosystem-level functioning in response to environmental change.

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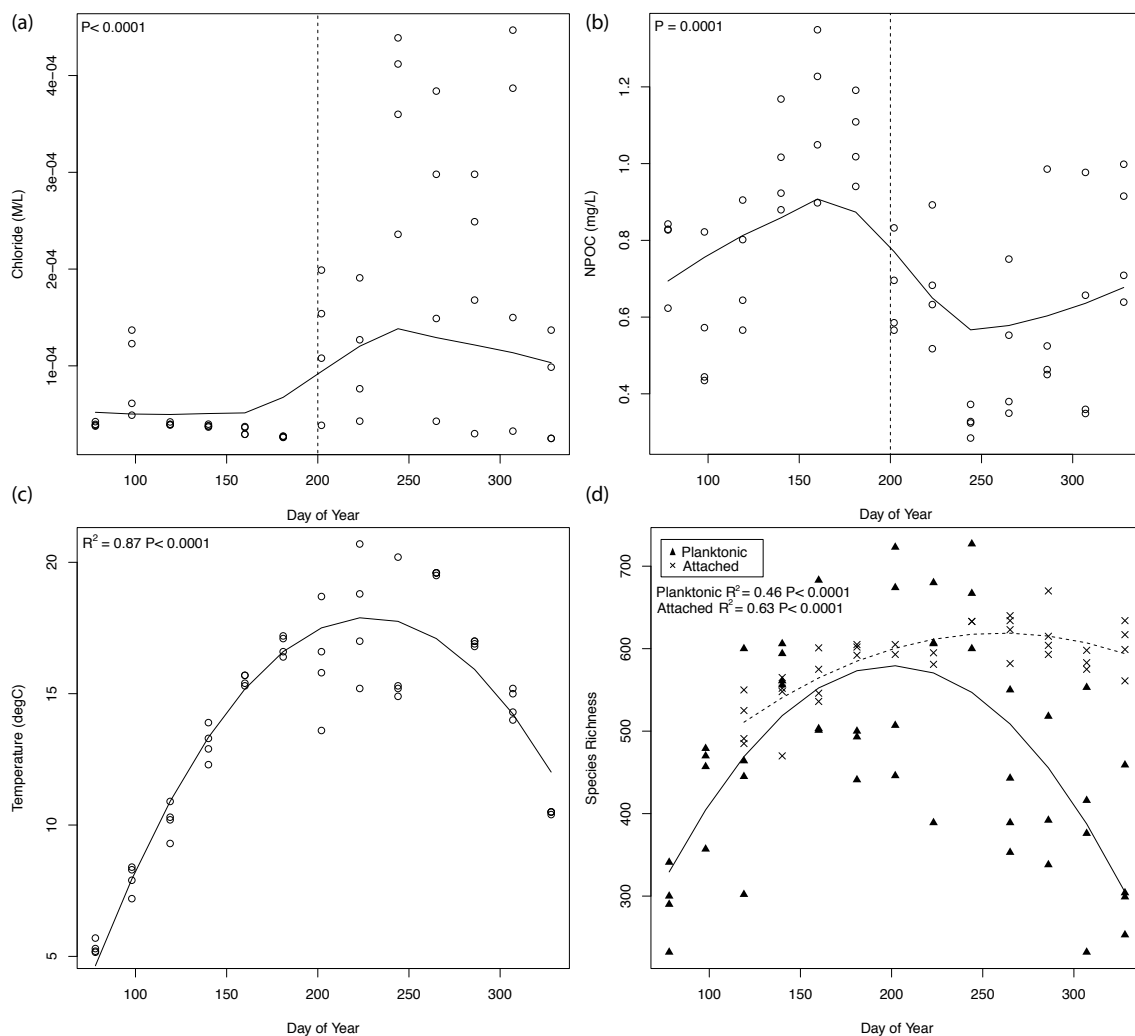
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657 FIGURES



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659 **Figure 1** Changes in (A) chloride concentration, (B) NPOC concentration, (C) temperature, and
660 (D) species richness across our sampling period are depicted in Figure 1. Chloride and NPOC
661 concentration show abrupt shifts beginning at our July 22 sampling point (vertical dashed lines).
662 P-values in (A) and (B) denote one-sided Mann-Whitney U test results of samples taken before
663 versus on or after July 22, while trends through time in (A) and (B) are displayed using locally
664 weighted scatterplot smoothing (LOWESS). Quadratic polynomials were fit to temperature and

665 species richness data and plotted in (C) and (D). Triangles in (D) represent planktonic
666 communities; X's represent attached communities.

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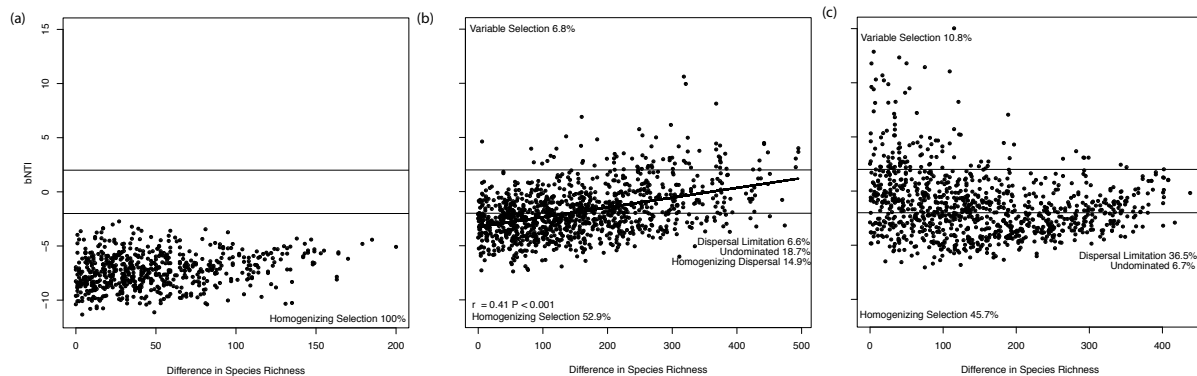


Figure 2 (A) Bray-Curtis dissimilarity within each sampling time point increased as mean species richness increased in attached (X's) and planktonic (triangles) communities. In addition, βNTI values across differences in species richness are shown for (B) attached, (C) planktonic, and (D) attached vs. planktonic communities. Horizontal lines at $\beta\text{NTI} = -2$ and $\beta\text{NTI} = 2$ denote thresholds for assembly processes. βNTI values less than -2 suggest assembly is governed by homogeneous selection, while values greater than 2 suggest assembly is governed by variable selection. Stochastic assembly processes (dispersal limitation, homogenizing dispersal) and undominated assembly processes lie between $\beta\text{NTI} -2$ and 2. The proportion of βNTI values within each category are listed as text in (B), (C), and (D). A linear regression trend line is depicted in (C) with significance assessed via Mantel test.

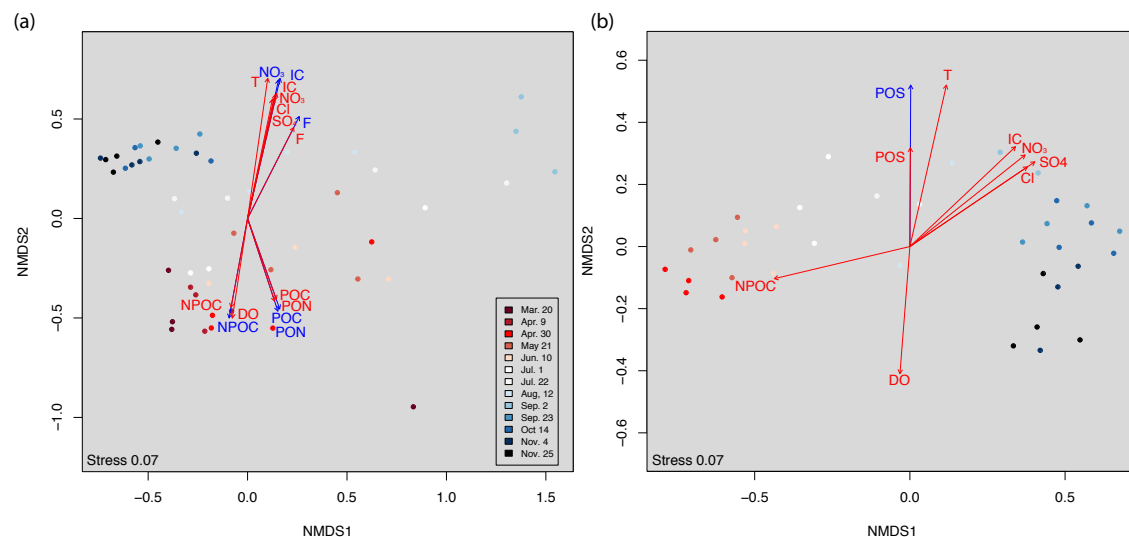


Figure 3 Non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS) analysis was conducted on Bray-Curtis distances within (A) planktonic and (B) attached communities. Colors denote seasonal shifts in community structure along a gradient from March (red) to November (blue). Physicochemical characteristics were fit to each plot with (blue arrows) and without (red arrows) stratifying permutations by sampling time to assess short- and long-term community responses, respectively, to the aqueous environment.

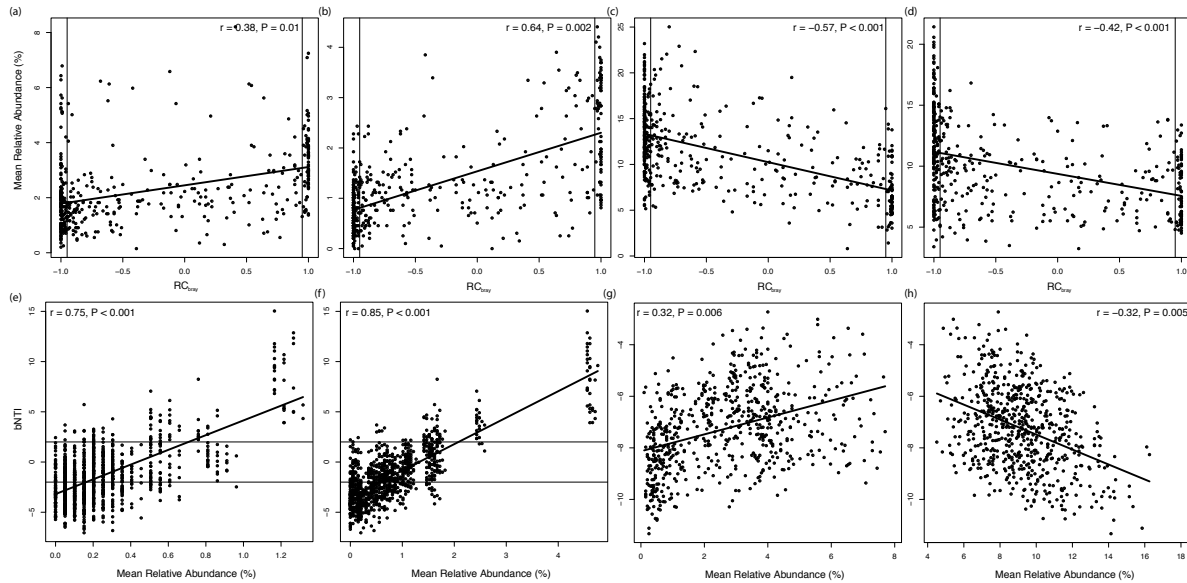


Figure 4 Relationships between β NTI or RC_{bray} and the mean abundance (across samples) of selected taxa identified by SIMPER analysis are depicted in Figure 4. (A-D) demonstrate relationships of *Thaumarchaeota*, *Acidobacteria-6*, *Actinobacteria*, and *Alphaproteobacteria*, respectively, versus RC_{bray} in planktonic communities. Horizontal lines at β NTI = -2 (homogeneous selection) and β NTI = 2 (variable selection) and vertical lines at $RC_{bray} = -0.95$ (homogenizing dispersal) and 0.95 (dispersal limitation) denote thresholds for assembly processes. Trend lines in all panels were derived from linear regressions and significance was assessed via Mantel test. (E) and (F) show relationships of β NTI with *Parvarchaeota* and *koll11* in attached vs. planktonic communities; while (G) and (H) denote relationships of β NTI with *Thaumarchaeota* and *Betaproteobacteria* within attached communities, respectively.

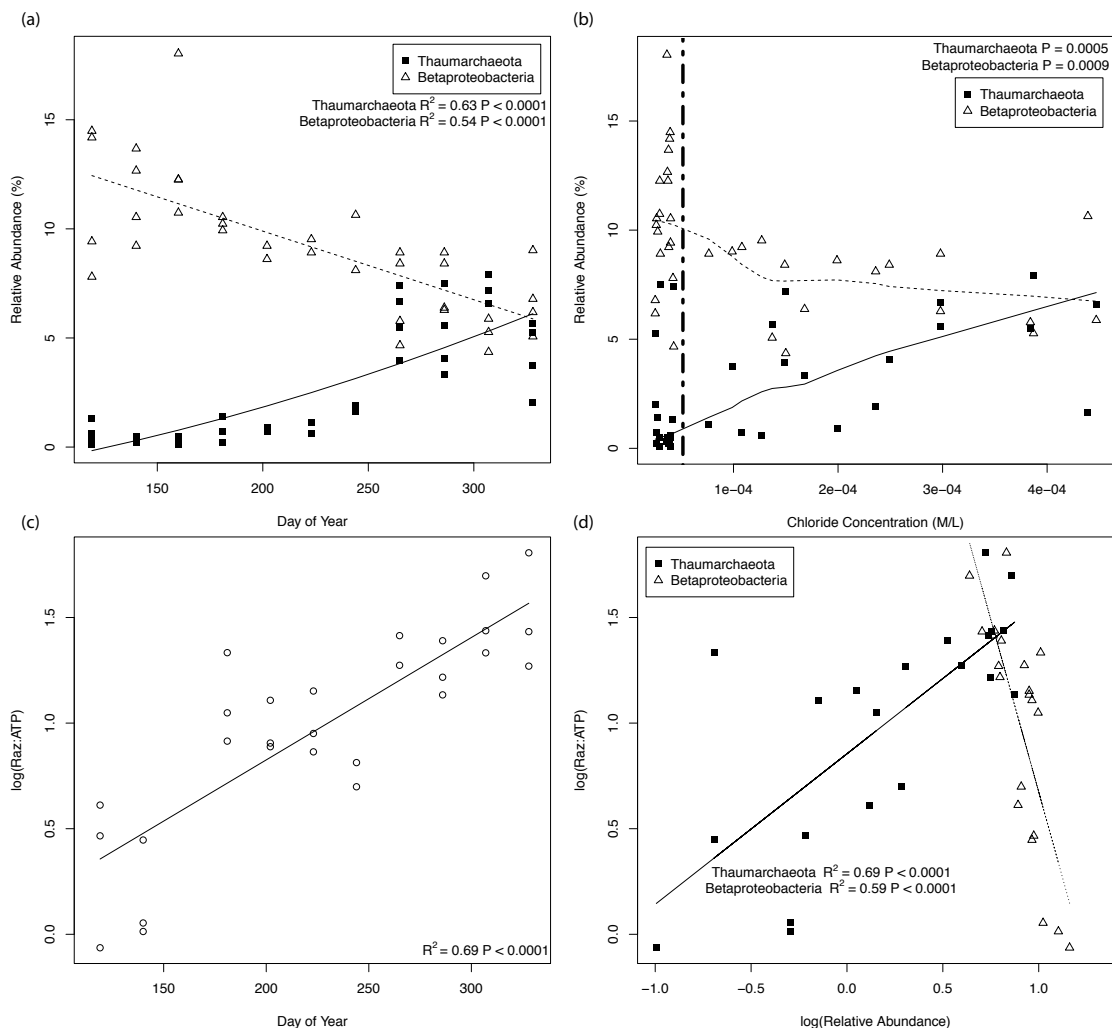


Figure 5 Figure 5 (A) and (B) show changes in *Thaumarchaeota* and *Betaproteobacteria* across changes in time (A) and chloride concentration (B). Trend lines in (A) denote linear (*Betaproteobacteria*) and quadratic (*Thaumarchaeota*) regressions. The vertical line and statistics in (B) denote one-sided Mann-Whitney U test results of *Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota* when chloride concentrations are above or below the maximum Cl^- concentration in the Columbia River ($5.16\text{e-}05$ M/L). Panel (C) shows increases in aerobic

711 respiration normalized to active biomass (Raz:ATP) through time. Finally, (D) shows
712 relationships of *Betaproteobacteria* and *Thaumarchaeota* with Raz:ATP. Trend lines and
713 associated statistics in (C) and (D) were derived with linear regressions. *Thaumarchaeota* and
714 *Betaproteobacteria* are shown as closed squares and open triangles, respectively, in (A), (B), and
715 (D) with trends for each group shown with a solid (*Thaumarchaeota*) or dashed
716 (*Betaproteobacteria*) line.

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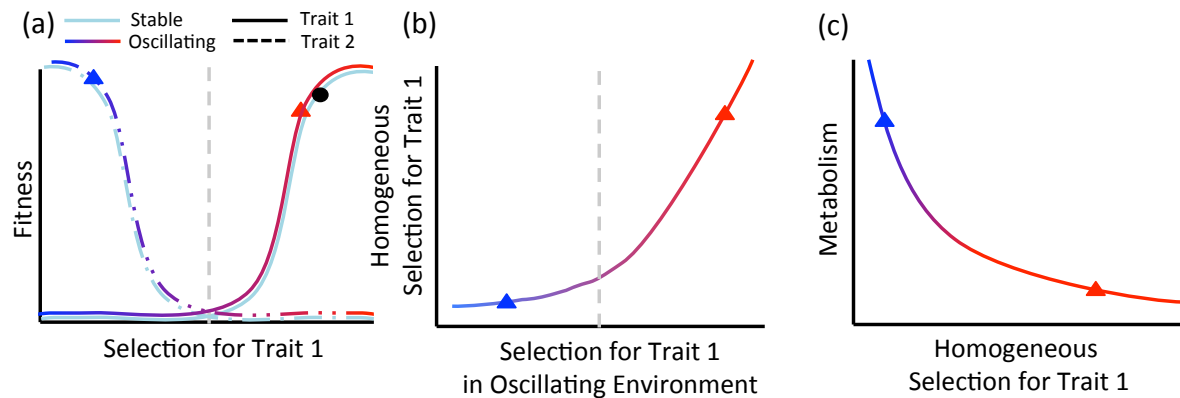


Figure 6 Figure 6 depicts a conceptual model describing relationships between trait selection, organismal fitness, and microbial metabolism for communities experiencing dual selective pressures. (A) Selection for a trait follows a continuous gradient within a stable environment (light blue) and oscillating environment (blue to red gradient). Organisms that contain opposing traits (dashed vs. solid lines) are favored at each end of the spectrum, delineated here as to the left (selection against trait 1 and for trait 2) or right (selection for trait 1 and against trait 2) of the vertical gray line. Given selection in a stable environment denoted by the black dot in (A), variation in homogeneous selection (B) is driven by the magnitude and direction of selection in the oscillating environment. When selection in the oscillating environment opposes selection in the stable environment, homogeneous selection decreases (B) and microbial metabolism increases (C) due to an increase in realized niche space and biodiversity. Blue and red triangles in (B) and (C) correspond to oscillating selection locations on the fitness landscape in (A).