

Balsam Poplar Floodplain Forest

State Rank S2

Community Description

These partly open to closed canopy forests are dominated by balsam poplar and occur along medium-sized rivers. This type includes a wide range of early seral, wetland, and floodplain species. These typically include American elm, black or green ash, ostrich fern, lady fern, sensitive fern, bluejoint, red-osier dogwood, virgin's bower, speckled alder, dwarf raspberry, broad leaved goldenrod, inflated sedge, and wood nettle.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occur on seasonally inundated floodplains or slightly elevated terraces flanking low gradient rivers in central and northern Maine. Sites are often embedded within a matrix of open oxbows and shrub thickets. These forests have lower frequency

and duration of flooding than Silver Maple Floodplain Forests. Soils are alluvial fine sand or silt, usually with good drainage capacity.

Diagnostics

Sites occupy a floodplain or river terrace setting with mineral soil. Balsam poplar is dominant or co-dominant; black or green ash and American elm may be present or codominant. The dense herb layer includes ferns, bluejoint, sedges, and shrubs such as red-osier dogwood and speckled alder.

Similar Types

Silver Maple Floodplain Forests and Hardwood River Terrace forests do not



Balsam Poplar Leaves

have balsam poplar or black ash as a dominant or co-dominant.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

The few known examples of this type have been influenced by past disturbances, including harvesting, beaver damage, and potentially fire. As a result, long term successional trends are not clear. Exotic plant species, which may displace those native to our area, may be easily transported to sites by river waters and represent a threat to the integrity of these forests. The biggest threat may be hydrologic alteration. All known sites in Maine are on private land.

Little data is available on wildlife use of this specific community type, but it is suspected that it would support many of those species associated with Hardwood River Terrace Forests in central and northern Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch

Characteristic Plants

These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

Canopy

- American elm
- Balsam fir
- Balsam poplar*
- Black ash

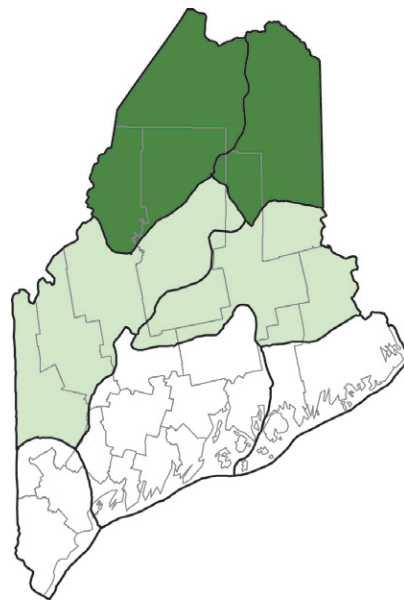
Dwarf Shrub

- Dwarf raspberry

Herb

- Bluejoint
- Ostrich fern*
- Royal fern
- Sensitive fern
- Wood nettle

Location Map



Community is known from this Ecoregion
 Community may occur in this Ecoregion
 Bailey's Ecoregion
 County



Balsam Poplar Floodplain Forest



Sensitive Fern

Distribution

Narrow floodplains along the shores or islands of medium and smaller rivers in northern Maine, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces.