

Oak - Pine Woodland

State Rank S4

Community Description

These woodlands support a partial canopy (20-70%) dominated by red oak, or red oak with white pine or red spruce (rarely with red pine). The trees are widely spaced and often stunted, with an open understory. Gray birch is a common small tree. The herb layer is well developed (>25% cover), with one-third to nearly all of the layer consisting of dwarf shrubs. Lowbush blueberry is the most abundant dwarf shrub; sheep laurel is also common. Herbs form up to 20% cover among the dwarf shrubs. The bryoid layer is patchy, sparse, and variable in composition. While this is categorized as a “mixed” type, individual examples may be either mixed (>25% conifer and >25% deciduous) or deciduous (<25% conifer); they are otherwise very similar.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occupy upper hillsides and low ridgelines, with slopes up to 30% and elevations up to 1500'. South aspect is more likely than north. The substrate is typically thin sandy to loamy soil (<25 cm) over bedrock or coarse till, occasionally with a layer of poorly decomposed duff over the mineral horizons. Soils are acidic (pH 5.0-5.2). Many sites were former pasture and/or have evidence of past fire.

Diagnostics

Canopy closure is less than 65% and red oak is dominant. Trees are short and spreading, or pines are dominant with lesser amounts of red oak, beech, sugar maple, or ash. The herb layer

exceeds 20%, with lowbush blueberry, sheep laurel, or sweetfern prominent; graminoids are often abundant.

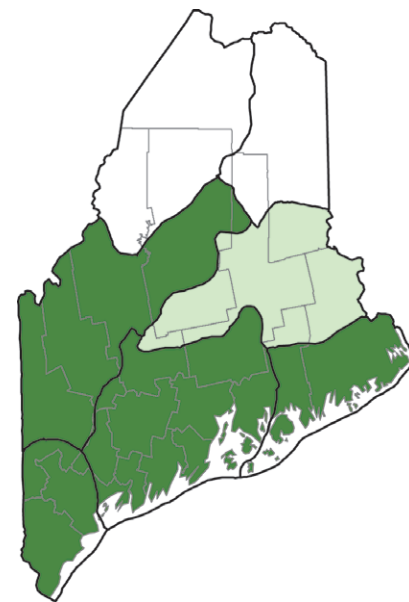
Similar Types

Oak - Pine Forests are similar and may be contiguous with this type. They are distinguished by their higher canopy cover (>75%), taller and straighter trees, and more sparse herb layer (generally <30%) with little cover of heath shrubs.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

This community appears to be relatively stable in Maine, with little habitat conversion. Fire has apparently played a role at some sites by preventing the invasion of fire sensitive hardwood

Location Map



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



Oak - Pine Woodland

trees and shrubs. Many sites receive recreational use. In a few locations that use is heavy enough to have degraded the community, but most recreational foot traffic is compatible. Communications or wind power towers have degraded some sites on mid-elevation summits.

This community type hosts several rare Lepidopteran species that feed on oaks, including red-winged sallow, barrens chaetagnaea, barrens xylotype, similar underwing, and oblique zale.

Distribution

Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province and southern portions of the New England - Adirondack Province and Laurentian Mixed Forest Province, extending southward and westward from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Blueberry Mountain, White Mountain National Forest - Oxford Co.
- Round Mountain, Donnell Pond Public Lands - Hancock Co.
- Spring River Mountain, Donnell Pond Public Lands - Hancock Co.
- Styles Mountain, White Mountain National Forest - Oxford Co.

Characteristic Plants

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

Canopy

Red maple
Red oak*
Red pine
Red spruce
Shadbush*
White pine*

Sapling/shrub

Black huckleberry*
Lowbush blueberry*
Shadbush

Dwarf Shrub

Lowbush blueberry*
Sheep laurel*

Herb

Bracken fern*
Canada mayflower
Sheep fescue*
Starflower
Wintergreen

Bryoid

Dicranum moss
Large hair-cap moss
Reindeer lichen

Associated Rare Plants

New Jersey tea
Scarlet oak

Associated Rare Animals

Barrens chaetagnaea
Barrens xylotype
Edward's hairstreak
Oblique zale
Red-winged sallow
Similar underwing
Sleepy duskywing
The buckmoth
Whip-poor-will