

Subalpine Hanging Bog

State Rank S1

Community Description

A dwarf shrub bog tilted on its side, this community consists of typical heath bog shrubs growing on a dense peat moss carpet over rocky slopes. Typical species include Labrador tea, sheep laurel, and rhodora. Stunted trees, such as northern white cedar, heart-leaved paper birch, or black spruce, may be scattered among the shrubs, but form <25% cover overall. Herbs are sparse, but may include boreal species such as northern comandra.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Known sites are documented from nearly vertical talus slides in at elevations >2000', but this type may occur in other subalpine settings.

Diagnostics

Heath shrubs (sheep laurel, Labrador tea, leatherleaf) are dominant on a peat moss substrate, but this type is not a peatland. Vegetation occurs as a thin layer over bedrock, talus, or scree in a subalpine setting.



Larch

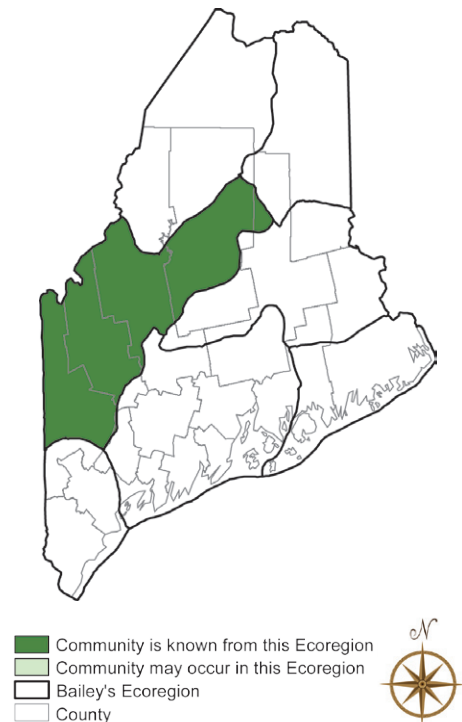
Similar Types

Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog vegetation is compositionally similar, but occurs in a peatland setting. Heath - Crowberry Maritime Slope Bogs are floristically almost identical but occur in a different setting. Cotton-grass - Heath Alpine Bogs occur in basins rather than on slopes and typically have higher herbaceous cover. Labrador Tea Talus Dwarf-shrublands have less vegetation cover (particularly of peat moss) and occur at lower elevations; but the two types may grade into one another.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

The few documented sites are away from

Location Map



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trails. Access is difficult to dangerous, and foot traffic could damage the vegetation, which grows densely enough that one cannot avoid it by picking one's way over rocks, as can be done with some other alpine/subalpine vegetation types. Other subalpine settings where this might occur would have similar access constraints. Because alpine vegetation grows slowly under harsh conditions, recovery from damage can take a long time.

Distribution

Montane western Maine, extending west into New Hampshire and possibly Vermont and upstate New York (New England - Adirondack Province); likely extends northeasterly to the Gaspé Peninsula.

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.

Sapling/shrub

- Black spruce
- Heart-leaved paper birch
- Larch
- Mountain alder

Dwarf Shrub

- Alpine bilberry
- Labrador tea*
- Leatherleaf
- Rhodora
- Sheep laurel*
- Squashberry

Herb

- Bunchberry
- Goldthread
- Northern comandra

Bryoid

- Reindeer lichen*
- Sphagnum mosses*

Associated Rare Plants

- Northern comandra

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Crocker Mountain, Appalachian Trail - Franklin Co.