



Circumneutral Outcrop

State Rank S2

Community Description

These rock faces are sparsely vegetated with herbs and scattered meadowsweet and paper birch. Composition varies from site to site, but includes at least some species indicative of higher pH conditions, such as shrubby cinquefoil, ebony sedge, rock whitlow-cress, lance-leaved draba, Laurentide primrose, smooth woodsia, etc. Graminoids, including brownish sedge, and ferns, such as fragile fern and bulblet fern, may be locally abundant in moist pockets.

Soil and Site Characteristics

This community occurs on low- to mid-elevation (<2700') outcrops of limestone, dolomite, or other rock where weathering produces circumneutral to calcareous substrates. Sites are usually below the hill summit, on side slopes or cliffs rather than ridges. Slope varies, often with vertical faces and near horizontal shelves within the same area. Sites are typically dry but may have moist spots where seepage occurs.



Fragrant Wood Fern

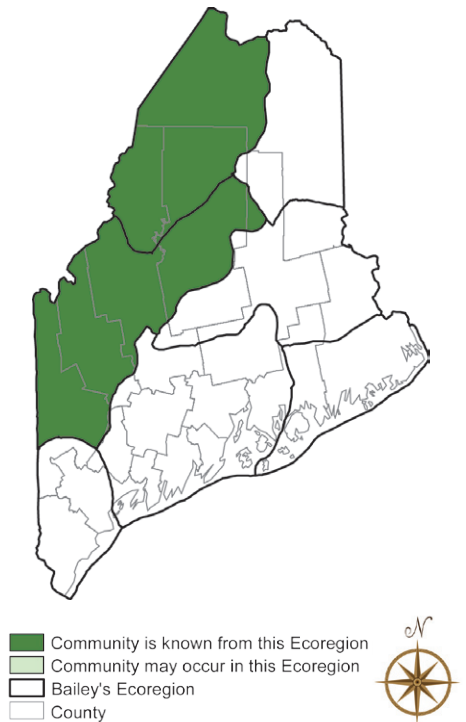
Diagnostics

A sparsely vegetated cliff/outcrop setting occurs below treeline, with herbs dominant; circumneutral indicator species are present.

Similar Types

Acidic Cliff - Gorge vegetation is also on bare rock faces, but on more acidic rock, and lacks any circumneutral indicator species. Three-toothed Cinquefoil - Blueberry Low Summit Balds likewise lack circumneutral indicators and typically occur on summits. Alpine Cliff vegetation can have some circumneutral indicators but is found at higher elevations (>3000').

Location Map



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Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

Most known sites are relatively inaccessible and minimally affected by either forestry or recreational activities. Retaining a wooded buffer, where one would naturally occur, is important in maintaining the natural microclimate of the cliff and outcrop areas. Several known sites are within public lands or private conservation ownership.

Distribution

Hills of northwestern and north-central Maine (mostly the New England - Adirondack Province, extending into the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province). Distribution outside of Maine is poorly understood.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch



Bulblet Fern

Characteristic Plants

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

Sapling/shrub

Meadowsweet

Dwarf Shrub

Shrubby cinquefoil

Herb

Brownish sedge

Bulblet fern

Fragile fern

Fragrant wood fern

Rusty cliff fern

Bryoid

Juniper hair-cap moss

Associated Rare Plants

Ebony sedge

Intermediate sedge

Lance-leaved draba

Northern woodsia

Rock whitlow-grass

Slender cliffbrake

Smooth rockcress

Smooth woodsia

White bluegrass

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Deboullie Ponds Public Lands - Aroostook Co.
- Little Kineo Mountain Public Lands - Piscataquis Co.
- Mount Kineo Public Lands - Piscataquis Co.
- Trout Brook Mountain, Baxter State Park - Piscataquis Co.