Cobble Rivershore

Twisted Sedge Cobble Rivershore

State Rank: S4

Community Description

Vegetation on these rivershores may be sparse to dense depending on degree of flooding, length of exposure, and substrate type. Characteristic perennial species that tolerate inundation and flood scouring include twisted sedge and low-growing willow species. Associated species tend to vary widely from site to site and may be diverse; they include tufted hairgrass, red osier dogwood, sweetgale, water parsnip, water hemlock, cardinal flower, flat-topped aster, and smartweeds. Bryoids are usually sparse but where present may include Bryum species. Invasive, exotic species may be problematic in these areas, especially coltsfoot, purple loosestrife, and Japanese knotweed.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Herbaceous and shrub vegetation of this type occurs on coarse substrates deposited along medium- to high-energy river channels and, less frequently, exposed lakeshores with heavy wave action. Seasonal flooding and ice-scour maintain the open nature of these communities; generally, they develop in areas of the active channel that are exposed at low water or in drought years.

Cardinal Flower

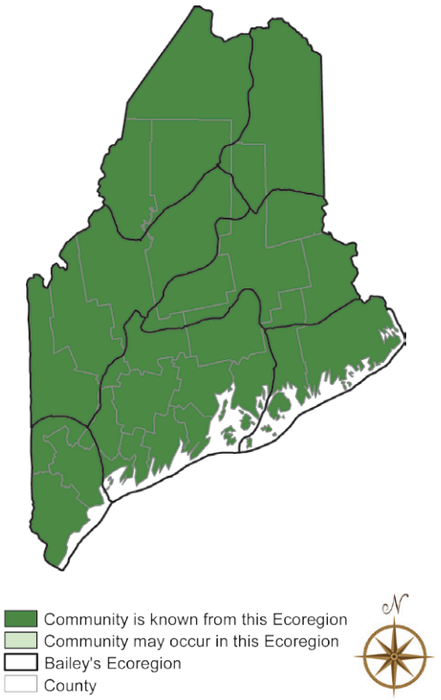
Diagnostics

Herbs and graminoids are dominant or co-dominant with shrubs in a rivershore or streamshore setting.

Similar Types

Sand Cherry Tufted Hairgrass River Beaches are found along the St. John River and contain certain indicator species such as sand cherry and freshwater cordgrass. Dogwood-Willow Shoreline Thickets may be adjacent to (landward of) these types and are dominated by shrubs rather than herbs. Bluebell - Balsam Ragwort Shoreline

Location Map



Cobble Rivershore

Outcrops occur on bedrock outcrops rather than cobble or gravel. The Hudsonia River Beach is restricted to sand and gravel bars of the Saco River and contains beach heather as a characteristic species.

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

This community is linked to naturally fluctuating water levels and occasional ice scour. The rivershore habitat of this natural community suggests that threats from development are relatively low. Hydrologic alteration (i.e., impoundments) would compromise the disturbance regime, but new dams are unlikely on medium and large rivers. Exotic or agricultural species are common at some sites.

The rare White Mountain tiger beetle occurs in this habitat type. Another rare insect, the cobblestone tiger beetle, is currently under consideration for federal listing and in our area is known from Vermont, New Hampshire, and New Brunswick, but not Maine.

Characteristic Plants

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

Herbs

Bluejoint
Boneset
Cardinal flower
Flat-topped aster
Goldenrods
Mad-dog skullcap
Purple-stemmed aster
Red osier dogwood
Smartweeds
Spotted joe-pye weed
Sweetgale
Tufted hairgrass
Twisted sedge
Virgin's bower
Water hemlock
Water parsnip
Wool-grass

Associated Rare Animals

White Mountain tiger beetle

Distribution

One of the predominant rivershore types in the New England - Adirondack Province and Laurentian Mixed Forest Province. Extends in all directions from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small to large patch, linear.