



Spruce Rocky Woodland

State Rank S4

Community Description

These partial canopy woodlands (usually less than 50% cover) support red spruce, mixed with lesser amounts of other conifers, birches, red oak, or beech. Vegetation tends to be very patchy due to the substrate and may include large expanses with little to no vascular vegetation. Beneath the scattered trees and smaller, sapling sized trees, heath shrubs or herbs are found in pockets (15-45% cover overall). Typical species include lowbush blueberry, common polypody, rusty cliff fern, and crinkled hairgrass. Bryoids may include typical forest species in areas where the tree canopy is fairly well developed; in more open areas, rock-tripe lichens and patches of reindeer lichens are characteristic.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occur on talus slopes, with vegetation developing in patches among the rocks. Sites are usually steep (>20% slope), have very limited soil, and are typically on acidic rocks such as granite.



Rock Tripe Lichen

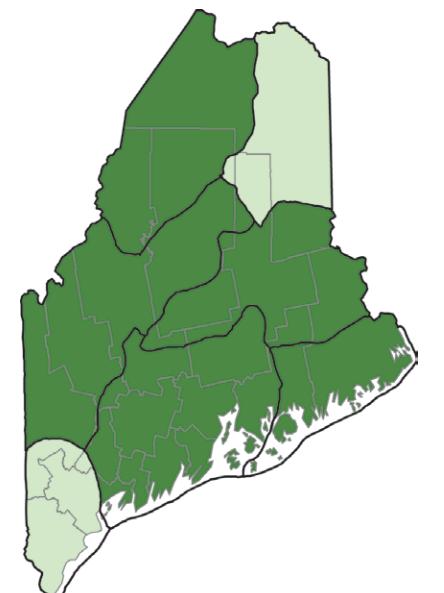
Diagnostics

These are open canopy woodlands or barren talus slopes in which red spruce is dominant.

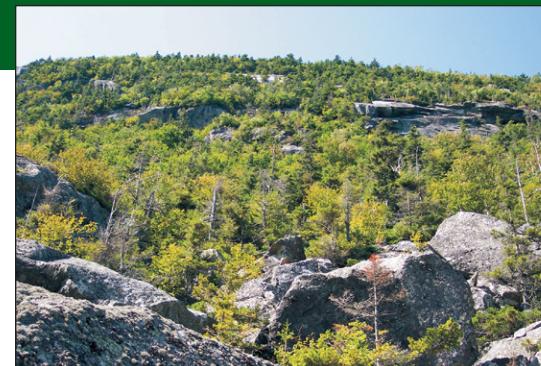
Similar Types

Red Spruce - Mixed Conifer Woodlands have similar canopies but occur on bedrock versus talus and have more heaths and fewer ferns and rock tripe lichens. Other talus woodlands (Birch - Oak Talus Woodlands and Ironwood - Oak - Ash Woodlands) are dominated by deciduous trees, not conifers. Large talus slopes at high elevations habitats (e.g., Mt. Abram) will likely be classified as one of the alpine or sub-alpine types.

Location Map



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



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Characteristic Plants

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

Canopy

Paper birch
Red spruce*

Sapling/shrub

Mountain holly*
Red raspberry*
Red spruce

Dwarf Shrub

Black huckleberry
Lowbush blueberry*
Sheep laurel*

Herb

Common hairgrass
Rock polypody

Bryoid

Dicranum moss
Fringed Ptilidium liverwort
Rock-tripe lichen
Tufted reindeer-lichen*

Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

Most sites have little potential economic use. Sites are generally small and embedded within a coniferous or mixed forest hill slope.

The cool, moist crevices in these talus slopes provide excellent habitat for the rock vole and long-tailed shrew. This community may also host the Gaspé shrew, a species not currently known from Maine that occurs just to the north in Canada.



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Distribution

New England - Adirondack Province and Laurentian Mixed Forest Province, extending westward (and probably eastward and northward) from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Acadia National Park – Hancock Co.
- Deboullie Ponds Public Lands – Aroostook Co.