

# Rivershore Shrub Thicket

*State Rank S2*

## Community Description

Dense riparian shrub vegetation (>80% cover) is dominated by a mixture of red osier dogwood and shrub willows. Alders may be present but are not dominant. A band of bush-honeysuckle often forms at the upslope edge, where the shrub vegetation abuts upland forest. Herb richness may be high in openings among the shrubs and may include some calciphiles as well as more widespread species. Bryoids are minor, and consist of bryophytes rather than lichens. More study of alluvial shrub communities is needed.

## Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occupy shores of larger rivers, below the annual high-water line, in areas somewhat protected from the extremes of ice scour and flooding. Riverbanks are moderate to steep, not flat; and the silty to sandy soils are not constantly saturated. Successional dynamics have not been studied, but at least some sites appear to persist through disturbance.



*Pussy Willow Leaves*

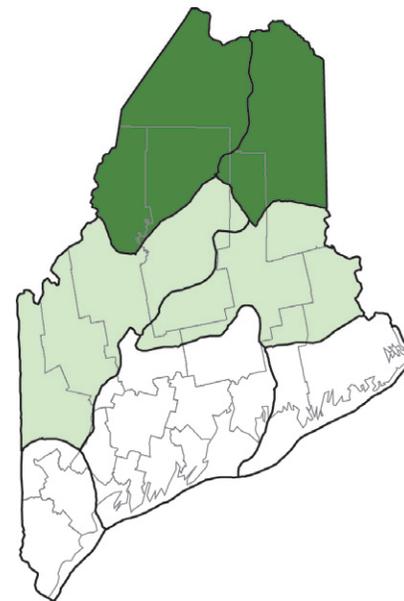
## Diagnostics

This type is characterized by 1-3 m tall shrub vegetation, with red osier dogwood and willows prominent, on riverbanks where annual disturbance creates a non-forested zone between the summer water level and adjacent forest. It occurs on soils that are not regularly saturated, and mostly on larger rivers.

## Similar Types

Related to and sometimes contiguous with other rivershore communities. Bluejoint Meadows are strongly dominated by bluejoint and occur on flatter substrates. Circumneutral Riverside Seeps have more sweetgale and sedges, often have seepage waters at the surface, and have indicators such as grass-of-parnassus and yellow

## Location Map



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



*Slender Willow*

sedge. Sand Cherry - Tufted Hairgrass River Beaches are dominated by herbs and low shrubs.

## Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

Natural river hydrology, with annual fluctuations, is important in the maintenance of this community. These areas receive little direct use but may be affected by adjacent land use, so an intact buffer of adjoining upland would be helpful. No studies of the dynamics of this community have been done.

These rivershore shrublands provide habitat for bird species that inhabit open shrublands such as common yellowthroat, alder flycatcher, Wilson's warbler, and Lincoln's sparrow. Wood turtles may also use this riparian habitat.

## Distribution

Documented from northern Maine along the St. John and Allagash Rivers, and may occur on other fairly large rivers in northern Maine (Laurentian Mixed Forest Province and New England - Adirondack Province). Presumably extends into Quebec and New Brunswick.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch, linear.

## Characteristic Plants

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

### Sapling/shrub

Bush-honeysuckle\*  
Red osier dogwood\*  
Red-tipped willow\*  
Round-leaved dogwood  
Shining willow  
Speckled alder

### Herb

Bluejoint  
Flat-topped white aster  
Fringed bromegrass  
Fringed loosestrife  
Spotted joe-pye weed

## Associated Rare Plants

Auricled twayblade  
Blueleaf willow  
Furbish's lousewort  
Nantucket shadbush  
Northern painted-cup  
Sandbar willow

## Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- The Nature Conservancy's St. John River lands - Aroostook Co.



*Furbish's Lousewort*