

Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

Riverside ice scour community

This community type occurs along the banks of major rivers where rock outcrops are subject to winter ice scour and periodic flooding. Plants grow in soil that accumulates in cracks in the rock. Several rare species are found in this habitat in different parts of the state. These include *Marshallia grandiflora*^S (large-flowered marshallia), *Boltonia asteroides*^S (aster-like boltonia), *Trautvetteria caroliniensis*^S (Carolina tassel-rue), *Hypericum densiflorum*^S (bushy St.-John's-wort), *Prunus pumila* var. *depressa*^S (prostrate sand cherry), *Aristida purpurascens*^I (arrow-feather), *Hibiscus laevis* (halberd-leaved rose-mallow), *Montia chamissoi*^S (Chamisso's miners-lettuce), and *Sida hermaphrodita*^S (Virginia mallow). More common species include *H. pyramidatum* (great St.-John's-wort), *H. ellipticum* (pale St.-John's-wort), *Amorpha fruticosa* (false-indigo), *Toxicodendron radicans* (poison ivy), *Vitis* spp. (grapes), *Osmunda regalis* (royal fern), *Rhododendron arborescens* (smooth azalea), *R. maximum* (rosebay), *Spartina pectinata* (freshwater cordgrass), *Eupatorium* spp. (joe-pye weed), *Phalaris arundinacea*^(I) (reed canary-grass), *Senecio* spp. (groundsel), *H. mutilum* (dwarf St.-John's-wort), *Physocarpus opulifolius* (ninebark), *Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea), *Zizia aurea* (golden-Alexander), *Salix* spp. (willows), and *Betula nigra* (river birch). This community type is part of the "River bed - bank - floodplain complex."

Related types: Although *Betula nigra* (river birch) may occur in this community as scattered individuals or in small clumps, it does not dominate the community as in the "River birch sycamore floodplain scrub" type. Substrate and hydrology (temporarily flooded rock outcrops) distinguish this type from the other riverside herbaceous types.

Range: Piedmont, Pittsburgh Plateau, Glaciated Northeast, Glaciated Northwest, Ridge and Valley.

Selected references: PNDI field surveys.

[Crosswalk: Smith's "Riverside Outcrop / Cliff Community," TNC—no direct crosswalk.]