

Natural Communities of Louisiana



Pondcypress-Swamp Blackgum Swamp

Rarity Rank: S1/G3

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

Synonyms: Pondcypress Flooded Woodland

Ecological Systems:

CES203.489 East Gulf Coastal Plain Large River Floodplain Forest



General Description:

- *Taxodium ascendens* (pondcypress), along with *Nyssa biflora* (swamp blackgum) dominate a limited number of swamps making this natural community rare in Louisiana
- Pondcypress/blackgum swamps appear to occupy the backwater portions of larger swamplands, in places much removed from active stream channels
- Related to and often grade into baldcypress swamps more influenced by river flooding
- Soils are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water on a nearly permanent basis throughout the growing season except during periods of extreme drought
- Subject to seasonal fluctuations in water levels
- Floristic diversity higher than that of traditional cypress swamps or cypress-tupelo swamps
- Herbaceous species may occur as a “flotant” on a fibrous root mat
- Provide important ecosystem functions including maintenance of water quality, productive habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species, and regulation of flooding and stream recharge

Plant Community Associates

Common overstory tree species include:

Taxodium ascendens (pondcypress)

Nyssa biflora (swamp blackgum)

Common midstory & understory woody species include:

Nyssa sylvatica var. *biflora* (swamp blackgum)

Fraxinus profunda (pumpkin ash)

Fraxinus pennsylvanica (green ash)

Salix nigra (black willow)

Acer rubrum var. *drummondii* (swamp red maple)

Planera aquatica (water elm)

Gleditsia aquatica (water locust)

Itea virginica (Virginia willow)

Cephalanthus occidentalis (buttonbush)

Cyrilla racemiflora (titi)

Common herbaceous species include:

Ludwigia pilosa (hairy primrose-willow)

Bacopa caroliniana (blue waterhyssop)

Carex decomposita (cypress knee sedge, state rare)

Saururus cernuus (lizard’s tail)

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Common herbaceous species continued:

Xyris smalliana (Small's yelloweyed grass)
Lachnanthes caroliana (Carolina redroot)
Triadenum walteri (greater marsh St. Johnswort)
Osmunda regalis var. *spectabilis* (royal fern)
Andropogon glomeratus (bushy bluestem)

Xyris fimbriata (fringed yelloweyed grass)
Ptilimnium sp. (bishopweed)
Pluchea rosea (rosy camphorweed)
Andropogon glaucopsis (purple bluestem)
Woodwardia areolata (netted chain fern)

Federally-listed plant & animal species:

Haliaeetus leucocephalus (bald eagle)

Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act;
G4; S2N, S3B

Range:

This type seems to be confined to areas along the lower Pearl River, and adjoining north shore of Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas. The historic extent is unclear, but it is currently only known from one site in Tangipahoa Parish.

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Pearl

Threats:

- Agricultural, industrial and residential development
- Saltwater intrusion and subsidence
- Hydrological alterations (to include adjacent areas)
- Construction of roads, pipelines or utilities
- Logging on permanently flooded sites where natural or artificial regeneration is not feasible
- Soil damage from timber harvesting or industrial activities
- Contamination by chemicals (herbicides, fertilizers)
- Invasive exotic species

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Prevent conversion of existing natural forests to other land uses
- No logging on permanently flooded sites where natural or artificial regeneration is not feasible
- No logging or heavy equipment use on flooded or saturated soils
- Strictly follow [Best Management Practices](#) guidelines
- Remove any invasive exotic plant species with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means

