

**USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program**  
**Congaree Swamp National Monument**

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***Nyssa biflora* - (*Acer rubrum*) / *Ilex opaca* / *Leucothoe axillaris* / *Carex atlantica* ssp. *capillacea* Forest**

COMMON NAME Swamp Blackgum - (Red Maple) / American Holly / Coastal Doghobble / Howe Sedge Forest

SYNONYM

PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS Forest (I.)

PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS Deciduous forest (I.B.)

PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP Cold-deciduous forest (I.B.2.)

PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP Natural/Semi-natural (I.B.2.N.)

FORMATION Saturated cold-deciduous forest (I.B.2.N.g.)

ALLIANCE *Nyssa biflora* - *Acer rubrum* - (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) Saturated Forest Alliance  
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 1

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Palustrine

RANGE

*Globally*

This community is currently known from big river floodplains in the Coastal Plain of South Carolina.

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This community is found west of the Ranger Station along the Bluff Trail, near the end of Garrick Road within the park, and possibly other slope bases.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

*Globally*

The global description currently is the same as the park-specific description below.

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This community occurs in floodplain edges of brownwater floodplains, in situations that are very rarely flooded by alluvial waters, but which receive regular seepage from adjacent upland slopes. The hydrology is constantly saturated, and soils are acidic and organic. At Congaree, this community is associated almost exclusively with Dorovan muck soils.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

*Globally*

Stratum

Species

Tree canopy

*Nyssa biflora*, *Acer rubrum*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Subcanopy

*Ilex opaca*, *Acer rubrum*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Short shrub

*Leucothoe axillaris*

Herbaceous

*Carex atlantica* ssp. *capillacea*, *Carex bromoides* ssp. *bromoides*, *Woodwardia areolata*, *Saururus cernuus*

Nonvascular

*Sphagnum* sp.

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Stratum

Species

Tree canopy

*Nyssa biflora*, *Acer rubrum*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Quercus laurifolia*

Subcanopy

*Ilex opaca*, *Acer rubrum*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Short shrub

*Leucothoe axillaris*

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DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

*Globally*

The global concept currently is the same as the park-specific concept.

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*Macbridea caroliniana*, *Sphagnum* sp., *Carex atlantica* ssp. *capillacea*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

*Globally*

The canopy is strongly dominated by *Nyssa biflora*, with some *Acer rubrum* and *Liquidambar styraciflua*. The subcanopy has abundant *Ilex opaca*, with *Acer rubrum* and *Liquidambar styraciflua*. The shrub layer is dominated by *Leucothoe axillaris*, with *Itea virginica*, *Clethra alnifolia*, *Persea palustris*, and *Arundinaria gigantea* also present. Woody vines such as *Decumaria barbara*, *Toxicodendron radicans*, and *Vitis* sp. are locally common. The herb layer is well-developed and is dominated by species such as *Carex atlantica* ssp. *capillacea*, *Carex bromoides* ssp. *bromoides*, and *Woodwardia areolata*. Other herbs include *Boehmeria cylindrica*, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, *Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis*, *Hydrocotyle verticillata* var. *verticillata*, and *Mitchella repens*. *Sphagnum* spp. have substantial cover.

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Similar to above. Other tree species which may be present include *Quercus michauxii*, *Magnolia virginiana*, and *Liriodendron tulipifera*. Among the other herbaceous species which may be present are *Ludwigia palustris*, *Macbridea caroliniana*, *Carex leptalea*, and *Platanthera clavellata*.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES            The exotics *Lonicera japonica* and *Murdania keisak* may be present.

CONSERVATION RANK            G2G3

RANK JUSTIFICATION            The specialized habitat required for this community is scarce.

DATABASE CODE            C EGL004427

COMMENTS

*Globally*

Few stands of this vegetation type have been studied, and rangewide information is limited.

REFERENCES