

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program

Rock Creek Park

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Strata

Canopy

Species

Pinus virginiana, *Quercus prinus*, *Q. velutina*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Sub-canopy

Quercus velutina, *Q. rubra*, *Q. alba*

Shrubs

Viburnum acerifolium and ericaceous species

Herbaceous

(sparse)

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Pinus virginiana, *Liriodendron tulipifera*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

This broadly-defined association is an early to mid-successional forest characterized by the presence of Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*) in the canopy. Younger stands have greater percent cover of pine, more mature stands contain less than 30% cover of pine. Oaks (*Quercus rubra*, *Q. velutina*, *Q. prinus*) are usually co-dominant with the pine, but tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) may be present as well. Over time these areas succeed to hardwood forests dominated by oak, beech and tulip poplar.

At Rock Creek Park, this association contains sparse to moderate cover of Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*). Historically, table mountain pine (*Pinus pungens*) was an infrequent component of this association but this species has since diminished or died out in the park. Associates include oaks (*Quercus rubra*, *Q. velutina*, *Q. prinus*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). Maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) is typical in the shrub layer and herbs tend to be sparse. Species composition in the shrub and herb layers is consistent with the surrounding forest types of the *Fagus grandifolia* – *Quercus alba* / *Podophyllum peltatum* association and the *Quercus (pinus, velutina)* / *Gaylussacia baccata* association.

NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

CONSERVATION RANK G?

RANK JUSTIFICATION

This is a successional forest type.

COMMENTS

In 1977 (Anderson et al. 1977) this association was not uncommon at the park. Now, twenty years later, almost all of these areas have succeeded to hardwood forest. Only a few plots were assigned to this type. These contained a substantial component of pine and could not be clearly assigned to one of the existing hardwood forest types. Plots that contained a small percent of pine and a better developed hardwood canopy and sub-canopy were assigned to either the *Fagus grandifolia* - *Quercus alba* / *Podophyllum peltatum* association or the *Quercus (pinus, velutina)* / *Gaylussacia baccata* association.

REFERENCES

Anderson, R. R., D. M. McFaden, R. J. Kramer, J.C. Dee, and G. C. Jones. 1977. Rock Creek Park and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway: vegetation community structure and automated classification of vegetation communities. Unpublished report. Department of Biology, The American University, Washington, D.C. National Park Service Contract number CX6000-3-1452.

PLOTS

81, 84, 85