

Pinus ponderosa / Juniperus scopulorum Woodland

COMMON NAME	Ponderosa pine/Rocky Mountain juniper Woodland
SYNONYM	Mixed Conifer Woodland
TNC SYSTEM	Terrestrial
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Woodland
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Evergreen woodland
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Temperate or subpolar needle-leaved evergreen woodland
FORMATION	Rounded-crowned temperate or subpolar needle-leaved evergreen woodland
ALLIANCE	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> Woodland Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

RANGE

The global range of this community includes southeastern Montana, eastern Wyoming, southwestern North Dakota, western South Dakota, western Nebraska, eastern Colorado, and New Mexico.

Scotts Bluff National Monument

This community is found on north-facing slopes of escarpments and sometimes at the base of bluffs. It is common in the rest of the Wildcat Hills.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Globally

This community is found on slopes between 16-45% with a variety of aspects. It is predominantly found on more mesic north-facing slopes. In more mesic local climates or with heavier soils this community can exist on south-facing slopes. Bedrock can be sandstone, limestone, or shale. Soils are usually shallow, very stony, medium textured, and well drained.

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Pinus ponderosa/Juniperus scopulorum Woodland is usually found on moderately steep (25-30%) grades on upper and middle slopes of escarpments. West of Sentinel Rock it may be found on low slopes and in gullies. The soil is absent or loose loamy sand with interspersed rocks.

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Not applicable

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program
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MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Globally

<u>Strata</u>	<u>Species</u>
Tree canopy	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Tall shrub	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>
Short shrub	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> , <i>Rhus trilobata</i> var. <i>trilobata</i>
Herbaceous	Information not available

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<u>Strata</u>	<u>Species</u>
Tree canopy	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Tall shrub	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>
Short shrub	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> , <i>Ribes cereum</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> , <i>B. gracilis</i> , <i>Carex filifolia</i> , <i>Elymus lanceolatus</i> ssp. <i>lanceolatus</i> , <i>Thermopsis rhombifolia</i>

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Globally

Juniperus scopulorum, *Pinus ponderosa*

Scotts Bluff National Monument

Juniperus scopulorum, *Pinus ponderosa*, *Ribes cereum*, *Thermopsis rhombifolia*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Throughout its range this community has a moderately dense to open canopy of *Pinus ponderosa*. This canopy is typically between 10 and 20 m high. The trees are 20-40 cm dbh. *Juniperus scopulorum* forms a subcanopy that is 2-4 m high and is also moderately dense to open. There is usually a shrub layer that contains *Cercocarpus montanus*, *Rhus trilobata* var. *trilobata*, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*, and *Yucca glauca*. The herbaceous layer is sparse or absent in parts of this community, especially under areas of dense canopy or on very steep, eroding slopes. Litter often accumulates where conifers are dense. Where the herbaceous stratum is present it is dominated by prairie graminoids. These include *Schizachyrium scoparium*, *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *Bouteloua gracilis*, and *Carex filifolia*.

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This community has moderately dense to widely spaced *Pinus ponderosa* with usually non-overlapping crowns. *Juniperus scopulorum* forms a subcanopy. The shrub layer is usually well-represented, consisting of *Cercocarpus montanus*, *Ribes cereum*, and occasionally *Rhus aromatica*. The herbaceous stratum is typically composed of prairie graminoids such as *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *B. gracilis*, *Carex filifolia*, and *Elymus lanceolatus* ssp. *lanceolatus*. On steeper eroding slopes there is a significant amount of bare ground. Where juniper is abundant the understory is similar to that of *Juniper scopulorum*/*Oryzopsis micrantha* Woodland.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

Crepis atribarba, an uncommon species in Nebraska, has been found in this community in Scotts Bluff NM.

CONSERVATION RANK G4Q

RANK JUSTIFICATION Information not available.

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program
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COMMENTS

This community is very similar to *Juniperus scopulorum* Woodland in some places, both inside and outside the borders of Scotts Bluff NM. It also intergrades with *Pinus ponderosa* / *Schizachyrium scoparium* Wooded Herbaceous Vegetation, especially on the tops of some of the ridges at Scotts Bluff NM.

REFERENCES

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