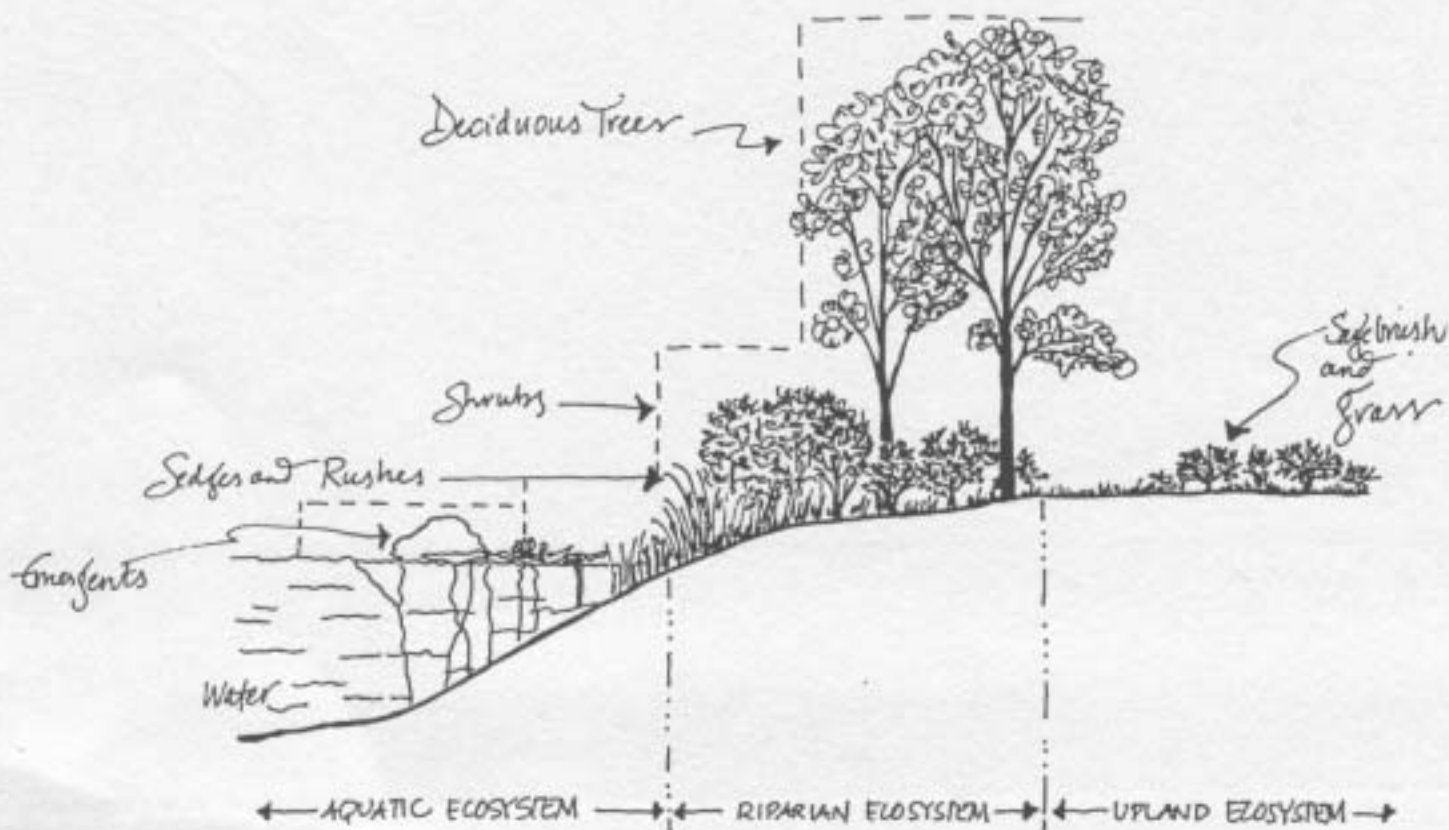


Riparian and Wetland Community Inventory of 14 Reference Areas in Southwestern Idaho

by
Robert K. Moseley
Conservation Data Center



**RIPARIAN AND WETLAND COMMUNITY INVENTORY OF
14 REFERENCE AREAS IN SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO**

By

**Robert K. Moseley
Conservation Data Center**

January 1998

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 South Walnut, P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707
Stephen P. Mealey, Director**



**Prepared for:
Lower Snake River District
Bureau of Land Management
Order No. 1422-D010-P97-0116**

SUMMARY

The low-elevation riparian and wetland communities of southwestern Idaho are the least known of anywhere in the state, in terms of classification of plant associations for management and biodiversity conservation purposes. While many community types described from adjacent, mostly higher elevation portions of Idaho and surrounding states may be applicable, unique environmental and physical conditions contribute to the formation of undescribed types that may be endemic to southwestern Idaho. This modest project is a preliminary step in filling this significant gap in our knowledge of riparian ecosystems in Idaho. It is not a community classification project, but an effort to inventory the community diversity of wetlands and riparian areas considered to be in high ecological condition in southwestern Idaho, focusing on the Lower Snake River District (LSRD) of the BLM.

The purpose of this project is to assess the diversity of wetland and riparian communities of the LSRD through field inventory and sampling, using high quality reference areas, such as BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Research Natural Areas, and private conservation lands of The Nature Conservancy. From this inventory, I prepared a preliminary guide to the riparian types of southwestern Idaho, including a key to their identification and supporting descriptive material for each community.

The 14 study sites lie in four counties in southwestern Idaho and span the latitudinal gradient of BLM land on the LSRD, from southern Hells Canyon to the Nevada border. One of the main outcomes of the inventory was that existing riparian and wetland classifications from surrounding areas do not work well at low elevations in southwestern Idaho. I encountered what I have tentatively identified as 34 riparian and wetland community types. Community Characterization Abstracts were prepared for the 15 community types I believe have high classification certainty. The 19 types for which there is low classification certainty at this time are called the "Tentative Community Types" and shorter descriptions were prepared. More inventory and sampling are needed to determine their repeatability and more fully characterize compositional and structural variation. We received funding to continue this project in 1998, which should shed more light on these types. So, stay tuned.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iii
List of Appendices	iii
SECTION 1	
Introduction	1
Methods	
Field Methods	2
Site and Community Data Bases	4
Riparian and Wetland Reference Areas	4
Riparian and Wetland Flora	7
Riparian and Wetland Vegetation	8
Conclusions	11
SECTION 2	
Key to Community Types	12
Community Type Descriptions	
Community Characterization Abstracts	
<i>Populus trichocarpa/Salix lasiandra</i>	16
<i>Populus trichocarpa/Symphoricarpos albus</i>	17
<i>Alnus rhombifolia/Philadelphus lewisii</i>	19
<i>Betula occidentalis/Mesic forb</i>	21
<i>Betula occidentalis/Poa pratensis</i>	23
<i>Salix exigua</i> /Barren	24
<i>Salix exigua</i> /Mesic graminoid	26
<i>Alnus incana/Cornus sericea</i>	28
<i>Artemisia tridentata</i> var. <i>tridentata</i> / <i>Elymus cinereus</i>	29
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	31
<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus/Distichilis stricta</i>	33
<i>Carex utriculata</i>	35
<i>Scirpus acutus</i>	36
<i>Scirpus pungens</i>	38
<i>Camassia cusickii</i> seep	40
Tentative Community Types	
<i>Alnus rhombifolia/Cornus sericea</i>	42
<i>Betula occidentalis/Philadelphus lewisii</i>	42
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	42
<i>Prunus virginiana/Elymus glaucus</i>	43
<i>Salix lasiandra/Cornus sericea</i>	43
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i> cover type	44
<i>Salix lutea</i>	44
<i>Crataegus douglasii/Rosa woodsii</i>	45
<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> /Mesic forb	45
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	45

<i>Carex sheldonii</i>	46
<i>Scirpus pallidus</i>	46
<i>Artemisia cana</i> /Dry graminoid	46
<i>Artemisia cana</i> / <i>Muhlenbergia richardsonis</i>	46
<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	47
<i>Artemisia papposa</i> ephemeral wetland	47
<i>Danthonia californica</i> ephemeral wetland	47
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i> vernal pool	47
<i>Lepidium davisii</i> vernal pool	48

SECTION 3

References	49
------------------	----

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Riparian and wetland classifications from Idaho and surrounding states used as references in this study.	3
Table 2. Inventory sites in southwestern Idaho for riparian and wetlands communities. Sites are arranged from north to south.	5
Table 3. Distribution and habitats of the rare plant species encountered in 1997.	7
Table 4. Community occurrences in the 14 study sites in southwestern Idaho.	10

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Location of reference areas used in riparian and wetland community type inventory.	6
---	---

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. CDC site and community reporting forms: Site Survey Form, Idaho Community Observation Form, and Community Survey and Ocular Plant Species Data forms.
Appendix 2. Site Basic Records for CDC data base for the 14 reference areas used in inventory.
Appendix 3. Checklist of vascular plants encountered in riparian, wetland, and aquatic zones of southwestern Idaho study sites.
Appendix 4. Presence of wetland and riparian vascular plants in the 14 reference areas.