

6. Regenerating *Populus angustifolia* / *Salix irrorata* Riparian Woodland Association (PS)

Regenerating Narrowleaf cottonwood / Dewystem willow Riparian Woodland Association (PS)

This regenerating riparian woodland community was severely damaged during the Miller Fire in 2011. It is currently characterized by a lower canopy (2–5 m) co-dominated by rapidly resprouting narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and dewystem willow (*Salix irrorata*). In the worst-affected areas, most mature narrowleaf cottonwoods (*P. angustifolia*) were killed, with scorch heights reaching 16 meters, leaving only standing blackened stumps and deep ash piles where flood debris had formerly accumulated on the ground. Dewystem willow (*S. irrorata*), Arizona walnut (*Juglans major*), Arizona alder (*Alnus oblongifolia*), and boxelder (*Acer negundo*) were all equally affected, leaving little living cover. Species composition was not seen to drastically change between the burned and unburned examples of this association, but cover values in the subcanopy increased dramatically, as the two dominant species boomed with fresh growth. In most cases, narrowleaf cottonwood (*P. angustifolia*) remains dominant, with average cover ranging from 25% to 30%, compared with 8–10% for dewystem willow (*S. irrorata*). Canyon grape (*Vitus arizonica*), Fendler's globemallow (*Sphaeralcea fendleri*), and common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) are still the most common subcanopy and field-layer associates in these regenerating areas.

This association is present across the floodplains and alluvial terraces adjacent to the Gila River, from 1,720 to 1,760 meters (5,643–5,772 ft). This area was heavily disturbed by the 2011 Miller Fire, and the majority of the community is in a state of regeneration. Currently, this community covers 5.10% (53.43 ha/132.02 ac) of the project area and 7.36% (15.69 ha/38.77 ac) of the monument, exclusively at the main unit.

Common species

- *Populus angustifolia*
- *Salix irrorata*
- *Alnus oblongifolia*
- *Acer negundo*
- *Juglans major*

