44. *Populus fremontii* / *Muhlenbergia rigens* Riparian Woodland Association

Fremont cottonwood / Deergrass Riparian Woodland Association

Common species

- *Populus fremontii*
- *Salix gooddingii*
- *Muhlenbergia rigens*

This community is characterized by a moderately sparse (10–20% cover) canopy (>2 m) dominated by Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) with Goodding's willow (*Salix gooddingii*) and an understory of deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*). This woodland can range from expanses of exposed bedrock with very sparse and inconsistent cover to sandy stretches where these species provide a more consistent sparse woodland. Fremont cottonwood (*P. fremontii*) provides variable cover, ranging from a few scattered individuals providing less than 5% cover to areas of more consistent dominance, with cover up to 20%. Deergrass (*M. rigens*) is a consistent (1.0) component of the community but provides highly variable dominance (0.5), with cover ranging from less than 1% to dense areas of up to 30%. Areas of low cover are typically associated with stretches of dominant, exposed bedrock. Other documented species include Mexican blue oak (*Quercus oblongifolia*), Emory oak (*Quercus emoryi*), Arizona white oak (*Quercus arizonica*), Lehmann lovegrass (*Eragrostis lehmanniana*), bullgrass (*Muhlenbergia emersleyi*), rough bentgrass (*Agrostis scabra*), Texas bluestem (*Schizachyrium cirratum*), and pinyon ricegrass (*Piptochaetium fimbriatum*).

This community covers 0.01% (3.3 ha/8.2 ac) of the Rincon Mountain District and is primarily found within the mid-slope drainages flowing off the north side of Tanque Verde Ridge. The most notable occurrences are above Bridal Wreath Falls and around the Douglas Spring campground. It is restricted to low-angle drainages with intermittent flow, often where geologic and hydrologic features, such as tinajas, springs, and seeps allow for high water retention and/or availability throughout the drier seasons. The surface cover is typically dominated by slabs of exposed bedrock, with underlying pockets of variable, deep sand and gravel that shift with each flood event.

Rincon Mountain District, Saguaro National Park