

## 88. *Populus tremuloides* Forest Association

### Quaking aspen Forest Association

This forest community is characterized by a dense (40–60% cover) canopy (>2 m) solely dominated by quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), with a variable understory not containing any consistent dominants. This community presents in two distinct formations: mature, broad-canopied groves with limited fire history and regenerating, narrow-canopied groves with recent and potentially severe fire disturbance. Within the mature groves, quaking aspen (*P. tremuloides*) are present in various layers of the canopy structure, and cover is quite high (50+%) due to the dominance of mature, broad-canopied trees. In the fire-disturbed groves, trees are typically of similar heights (4–10 m) and overall cover is similar to mature groves. The understory strata—subcanopy (0.5–2 m) and field (<0.5 m)—vary based on fire history. The mature groves typically have a more robust understory, with cover of 20–60%. California buckthorn (*Frangula californica*) and mountain snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*) were each dominant in at least one example of this community, with cover of around 15% and 20%, respectively. The regenerating groves tend to have a sparse to non-existent subcanopy (0.5–2 m), with cover of less than 5%.

This community covers 0.03% (9 ha/23 ac) of the Rincon Mountain District and is found throughout the upper-elevation reaches of the range, with the largest occurrence located southwest of Spud Rock Campground. It is found on variably steep (20–50%) and predominantly north to northeast-facing slopes from 2,200 to 2,500 meters (7,217–8,200 ft). The surface cover is characterized by moderately deep and well-drained soils underlying a dense layer of litter and downed wood with large, scattered boulders throughout some examples. The parent material ranges from a disordered jumble of coarse blocks at the Spud Rock campground grove to mica schist and gneissic quartz monzonite at the remaining groves.

#### Common species

- *Populus tremuloides*



Rincon Mountain District, Saguaro National Park

