

## 94. *Pinus ponderosa* / *Pteridium aquilinum* Forest Association

Ponderosa pine / Western brackenfern Forest Association

This forest community is characterized by a variably dense (40–80% cover) upper canopy (>5 m) solely dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), with an understory dominated (20–40% cover) by western brackenfern (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Ponderosa pine (*P. ponderosa*) is present as large ([15] 20–30 m) trees with variable cover of 40–60%. Southwestern white pine (*Pinus strobiformis*) is a consistent (0.80) associate that, when present, ranges from scattered trees providing <5% cover to dominant inclusions with cover of 15–30%, at times becoming a subdominant or co-dominant tree. Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*) is another consistent (0.80) associate with cover of usually less than 5%. The field stratum (<0.5 m) is characterized by the sole dominance of western brackenfern (*P. aquilinum*). This species contributes cover of 15–40%, with the highest cover occurring in and along low-angle drainages. While cover values may vary across the community, this species should always be present as the dominant field component. Other noteworthy field components include Arizona wheatgrass (*Elymus arizonica*), muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*), fragrant snakeroot (*Ageratina herbacea*), White Mountain sedge (*Carex geophila*), and fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*).

This community is contained within a two-association map class that covers 0.7% (192 ha/474 ac) of the Rincon Mountain District and is present throughout the trail system that surrounds Manning Camp, Spud Rock, Helen's Dome, and the Mica Mountain summit. It is found on low-angle (<20%) slopes and along drainages of varying aspects above 2,400 meters (7,874 ft). The surface cover is dominated by a thick layer of pine-needle litter and duff with patchy boulders and bedrock outcrops. The parent material is a mix of quartz monzonite and mica schist.

### Common species

- *Pinus ponderosa*
- *Pinus strobiformis*
- *Pteridium aquilinum*



