

## 5. *Populus angustifolia* / *Salix irrorata* Riparian Woodland Association

### Narrowleaf cottonwood / Dewystem willow Riparian Woodland Association

This riparian woodland and forest community is characterized by an upper canopy (>5 m) dominated by the facultative riparian tree, narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), and a lower canopy (2–5 m) dominated by the facultative riparian shrub, dewystem willow (*Salix irrorata*). Narrowleaf cottonwood (*P. angustifolia*) is generally present as a large tree (~16 m), with variable cover across the community, ranging from 6% to 63% and averaging to 37%. Arizona alder (*Alnus oblongifolia*) and boxelder (*Acer negundo*) are patchy associates with occasional areas of dominance or co-dominance with narrowleaf cottonwood (*P. angustifolia*). Arizona walnut (*Juglans major*) is a widespread, but low-cover associate. In the lower canopy, dewystem willow (*S. irrorata*) provides cover of 20–45%, predominately in dense bands at the margins of the river and along historical, abandoned river channels. The subcanopy (0.5–2 m) layer is characterized by a variable mix of riparian shrubs, subshrubs, new tree recruits, tall grasses, and large forbs. Rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), Chihuahuan brickellbush (*Brickellia floribunda*), tarragon (*Artemisia dracuncululus*), canyon grape (*Vitus arizonica*), and golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) are the most abundant and consistently occurring species. At the margins of the watercourse, a mix of large grasses and forbs often forms a dense band of vegetation commonly dominated by non-native forbs and grasses, including barnyardgrass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*), sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*), spotted ladythumb (*Polygonum perisacaria*), and rice cutgrass (*Leersia oryzoides*).

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. The majority of the community is in a state of regeneration and is no longer classified as riparian woodland. Currently, this community covers 1.0% (10.18 ha/25.16 ac) of the project area, with only the margin of one occurrence falling within the monument.

#### Common species

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

