

PINUS PONDEROSA / CAREX INOPS - FESTUCA ROEMERI

Ponderosa pine / long-stolon sedge - Roemer's fescue

Abbreviated Name: PIPO/CAIN-FERO

Synonym: *Pinus ponderosa* / *Carex pensylvanica* - *Festuca idahoensis* var. *roemeri*

Sample size = 5 plots

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs only in southwestern Pierce County.

GLOBAL/STATE STATUS: GNRS1. Only one or two occurrences remain in a very small area. Condition of remaining vegetation is marginal, but is improving in some areas with active management. Primary threats are Douglas-fir encroachment and non-native species increase.

ID TIPS: Woodland or savanna dominated by ponderosa pine with herbaceous dominated understory (or mix of Scot's broom and herbs) and significant native understory component. Long-stolon sedge and/or Roemer's fescue are co-dominant to dominant.

ENVIRONMENT: Sites are moderately dry and appear to be relatively nutrient-rich. Occurs only on gravelly-sandy outwash plains.

Precipitation: 43-46 inches

Elevation: 280-340 feet

Aspect/slope: Flat or slightly undulating

Slope position: plain

Soil series: Spanaway

DISTURBANCE/SUCCESSION: Fire-associated. Prior to Western settlement, this vegetation was undoubtedly burned frequently with low-severity fires. Tree density within these woodlands has increased with fire suppression, as has the abundance of Douglas-fir. In the absence of fire or active management, most of these stands will be invaded by Douglas-fir and/or shrubs (snowberry, Scot's broom), and will likely to convert to conifer forest or non-native understory vegetation. Adjacent dense stands of Douglas-fir with some ponderosa pine are a result of that conversion to forest. Conversely, a few stands have established relatively recently on what was formerly treeless prairie.

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Vegetation Composition Table (selected species):

Con = constancy, the percent of plots within which each species was found;
Cov = cover, the mean crown cover of the species in plots where it was found.
+ = trace (< 0.5% cover).

Trees	Kartesz 2005 Name	Con	Cov
ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	100	25
Douglas-fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> var. <i>menziesii</i>	100	7
Oregon white oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i> var. <i>garryana</i>	40	+
Shrubs and Dwarf-shrubs			
Scot's broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	100	22
tall Oregongrape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	80	+
Graminoids			
long-stolon sedge	<i>Carex inops</i> ssp. <i>inops</i>	100	25
Roemer's fescue	<i>Festuca roemeri</i>	80	30
tall oatgrass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	80	5
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	60	14
common velvet grass	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	60	1
colonial bentgrass	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	40	6
blue wildrye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	40	2
Forbs and Ferns			
common St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	100	4
English plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	100	3
western buttercup	<i>Ranunculus occidentalis</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>	100	1
yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>	100	1
common camas	<i>Camassia quamash</i> var. <i>azurea</i>	60	20
hairy cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	60	11
common shepherd's-cress	<i>Teesdalia nudicaulis</i>	60	2
common strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i> ssp. <i>platypetala</i>	60	2
cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	60	+
woolly sunflower	<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i> var. <i>lanatum</i>	40	6
oxeye-daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	40	6
bracken fern	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> var. <i>pubescens</i>	40	3
spring-gold	<i>Lomatium utriculatum</i>	40	3
self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i> ssp. <i>lanceolata</i>	40	2
cut-leaf microseris	<i>Microseris laciniata</i> ssp. <i>laciniata</i>	40	2
chocolate lily	<i>Fritillaria affinis</i> var. <i>affinis</i>	40	2
prairie violet	<i>Viola praemorsa</i> ssp. <i>praemorsa</i>	40	+
white-top aster	<i>Sericocarpus rigidus</i>	20	8

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VEGETATION: Woodland or savanna (10-70% tree crown cover) dominated by ponderosa pine. The understory is dominated by herbaceous vegetation, or a mix of herbs and non-native Scot's broom. All stands are dominated or co-dominated by long-stolon sedge or Roemer's fescue. The non-native Kentucky bluegrass is often prominent to co-dominant. Native shrubs are usually present only in small amounts; Scot's broom is often co-dominant to dominant in extant stands. The most abundant native forb, in terms of cover, is common camas, though it is not consistently present. Yarrow, western buttercup, common strawberry, and cleavers are usually present. Many other prairie-associated plant species are possible.

CLASSIFICATION NOTES: This association has not been previously described. Not recognized by NatureServe (2005).

MANAGEMENT NOTES: Maintenance of this association requires active control (e.g., prescribed fire, cutting, herbicides) of Douglas-fir and Scot's broom. Care should be taken to avoid disturbances so intense that they facilitate loss of native understory or massive increase of non-native herbs. Native species composition is also threatened by apparent ongoing increase and expansion of non-native grasses (e.g., tall oatgrass).

BIODIVERSITY NOTES: State sensitive white-top aster (*Aster curtus*) occurs in this association. Many unlisted plant species associated with this vegetation are probably declining in the Puget Trough. State threatened western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) probably uses this association as part of its larger habitat needs.



Plot locations
of PIPO/CAIN-FERO
in the Puget Trough

Chappell, C.B. 2006. Upland plant associations of the Puget Trough ecoregion, Washington. Washington Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program, Olympia, WA. [\[http://www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/communities/pdf/intro.pdf\]](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/communities/pdf/intro.pdf).