

Special Attention Plant Communities

Bald cypress swamp. Sites observed within these communities are dominated by pure stands of cypress in permanent standing water, as well as sites where water is intermittent. Permanently watered sites are characterized by dense cypress stands with occasional openings. The trees usually are laden with Spanish moss. Openings may have floating and emergent aquatic plants (Figures 39 and 40). Tree canopies on observation sites are 3-81% closed with a mean closure of 29%. Dominant trees are 40-80 ft. in height, mean height is 51 ft. Tree dbh range is 10-28 in. The mean is 17 in.

Cypress stands on intermittently watered swamp had trees that averaged larger size. Appendix F lists plants and animals encountered on cypress swamps. This unique cover type supports large numbers of waterfowl (Gregg, 1993; USFWS, 1993) and other migrant birds not present during the reconnaissance. Numerous beaver lodges are within the cypress swamp (Figure 41).

Bald cypress - water tupelo swamp. This cover type (Site No. 93) was only encountered on James Bayou at Hwy. 49 in Caddo Parish, LA (Appendix B). The site is characterized by hydric, permanently to intermittently inundated soils and relatively low species diversity (Figure 42; Appendix F).

Water oak - willow oak bottomland. Two percent of the bottomland forests on the reconnaissance area are willow oak-water oak communities (Figure 43). The tree canopy is 81% closed and ranges from 63-91% on sites observed. Mid-level vegetation closure is 39-63%, with a mean closure of 16%. Low vegetation covers 24% of the ground and ranges from 3-63%. Dominant trees are 70-95 ft. tall with a mean height of 83 ft. Measured trees ranged up to 35 in. dbh and averaged 17 in. The density of trees greater than 2 in. is 150-350 per ac. with a mean of 250.

Water oak-willow oak communities are poor to excellent habitat, and average good habitat for native wildlife. These communities were included with other bottomland hardwoods in WHV and EQR assessments. Appendix F lists plant and animal species that characterized the summer aspect of water oak-willow oak sites.



Figure 39. Typical permanently watered bald cypress swamp. Caddo Lake complex, Marion County, TX.

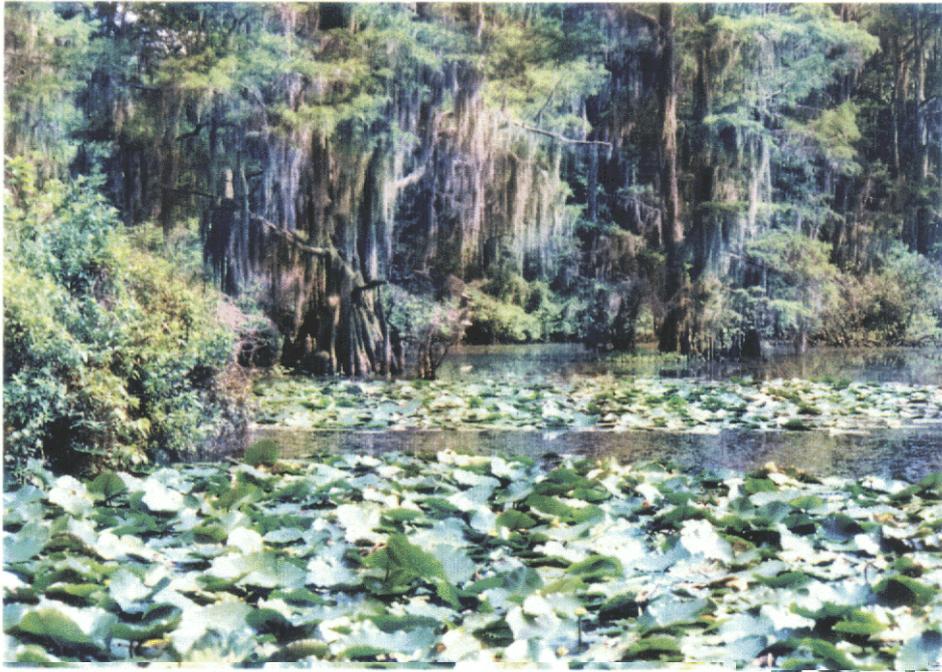


Figure 40. Emergent aquatic vegetation-choked opening in bald cypress swamp
Caddo Lake complex, Marion County, TX



Figure 41. Beaver lodge on Clinton Lake component of Caddo Lake, Marion county, TX.

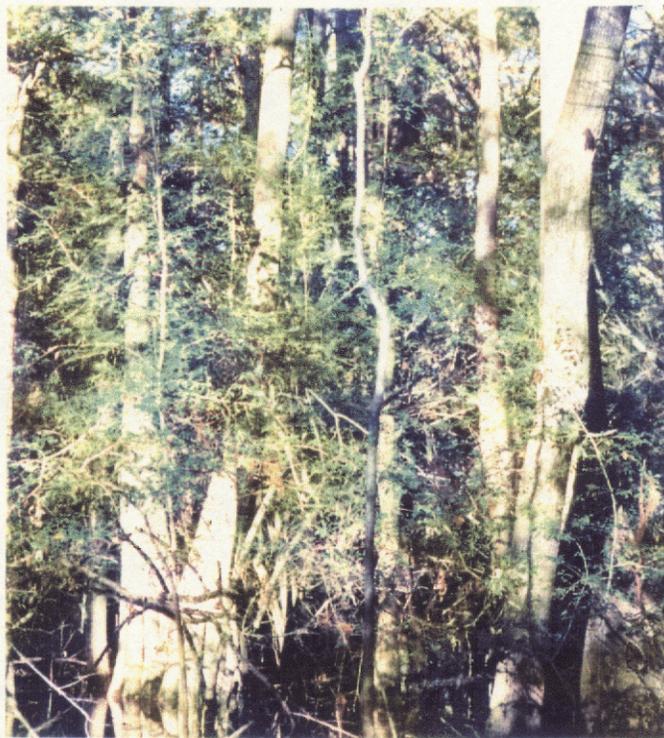


Figure 42. Bald cypress-water tupelo swamp community on James Bayou, Caddo Parish, LA.

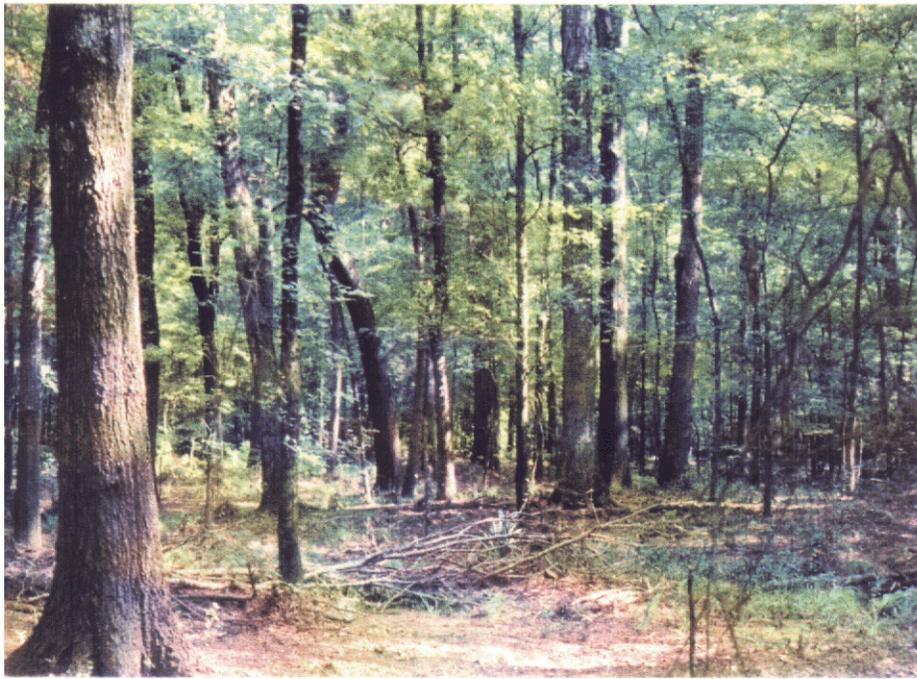


Figure 43. Water oak - willow oak bottomland hardwood community, Big Cypress Bayou floodplain, Upshur County, TX.

Shortleaf pine-oak upland. This diminishing cover type is on dry sandy uplands (Figure 44). Only bluejack oak-post oak uplands, mentioned below, are dryer. Tree canopies on observed sites are 51.85% closed the mean closure is 69%. Mid-level vegetation varies from 6-50% with a 27% mean Ground cover varies from 67-85% with a mean of 45% Tree height is 40-50 ft.; the mean is 46 ft

Bluejack oak - post oak upland. These sites are very dry, sandy uplands and slopes. Some understory plants are similar to those that occur in major arid regions of the State (Appendix F) Trees on sites observed are stunted, ranging from 40-50 ft in height; with a mean height of 46 ft. The mean dbh is 9 in Mean canopy and mid-story closure is 63%. Low vegetation covers 16% of the ground.

This type was judged very poor to fair, and averaged poor summer-fall habitat for native wildlife. However, it is the most likely habitat observed for presence of the Texas homed lizard (a threatened species, Appendix H). The WHV and environmental quality needs study.



Figure 44. Shortleaf pine-oak community, Camp County, TX

Unique Plant Communities Within Cover Types

Bamboo-sweetsum. Bamboo found is an exotic plant, perhaps established to make fishing poles and for their uniqueness. Two bamboo sites were encountered. They were on mesic terrain and near waterbodies (Figure 45).

Smooth alder swamp. This shrub-dominated community was surveyed once on a branch of Mill Creek in Cass Co., TX (Figure 15). The site is characterized by hydric soils and plants including peat moss, chain fern, netted chain fern, rushes, spike rush, sedges, pennywort, poneyfoot, lizardtail, false nettle, silver bells, buttonbush, smooth alder, and black willow. The Carolina wren was the only animal species observed



Figure 45. Unique bamboo-sweetgum community Camp County, TX

there is a clear tendency in American conservation to relegate to government all jobs that private landowners fail to perform.

Industrial landowners and users are inclined to wail long and loudly about the extension of government ownership and regulations to land, but (with noble exceptions) they show little disposition to develop the only alternative: the voluntary practice of conservation on their own lands

Aldo Leopold