

# Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore Community

State Rank: S4 - Secure



Dense emergents and shrubs at the edge of a pond. Photo: Jennifer Garrett, NHESP.

**Description:** The Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore Community is broadly defined to cover most of the pondshores in the state that are not explicitly excluded such as calcareous pondshores and shores of ponds or lakes in isolated depressions on sand or gravel with regular low water cycles. Many occurrences are narrow (often <1m wide) and are submerged or saturated for a significant part of the year or continuously in wet years. In ponds or lakes that have little natural fluctuation in water levels, the shores are often shrub dominated. Shallow ponds with gradual slopes may have broader shores with emergents along the shore or, if there is regular disturbance such as water level changes or ice scour, the vegetation may be sparse.

The Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore Community includes all freshwater pond shorelines that do not meet the tighter definitions of more specialized communities. The broadly defined, variable community type occurs statewide.

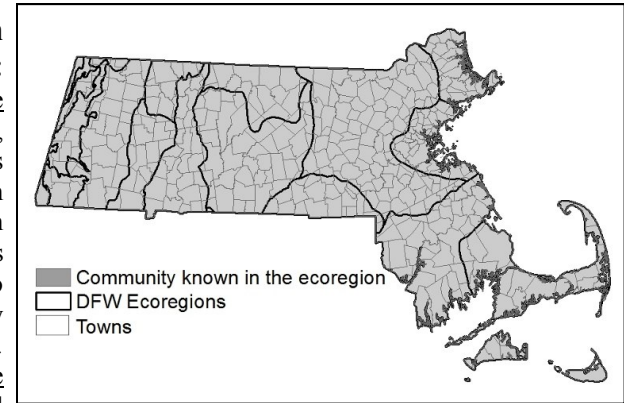
**Characteristic Species:** The vegetation is highly variable among Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore Community occurrences, with hydrology and topography of the basin and geographic location in the state strongly influencing the plants that are present. Shore vegetation often includes shrubs such as mountain laurel, maleberry, mountain holly, smooth arrow-wood, and leatherleaf with rhodora, steple-bush, and American filbert. Herbaceous vegetation on the shoreline is diverse and commonly includes spotted Joe-pye-weed, tussock-sedge, northern water-horehound, and royal fern. Emergent aquatic species grow adjacent to the shoreline and can merge into it. Gradual shores may have more beach-like conditions with herbaceous species such as golden pert.



Summer shoreline of a lake. Photo: Jennifer Garrett, NHESP.

## Differentiating from Related Communities:

Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore Community is broadly defined, variable, and includes shorelines not explicitly included in calcareous or coastal plain pondshores. The shore line is often not distinct, merging into marsh or other wetlands. Many ponds have inflow or outflows. Coastal Plain Pondshore Communities are in the coastal plain, generally on sand around ponds in closed basins that intersect groundwater that affect pond levels. The seasonally and annually fluctuating water table typically leaves an exposed shoreline by late summer that supports common and rare, often coastal or southern, herbaceous species. Coastal Plain Pondshores – Inland Variant also occur in closed basins in sandy outwash, but are in the Connecticut River Valley. Some coastal plain species grow in them. Calcareous Pondshores/Lakeshores occur in the Marble Valleys of Berkshire County around ponds that have calcium in the water derived from nearby limestone or dolostone bedrock. The ponds usually have inflow and outflow, and often have mats of stoneworts in the lake bottoms. Freshwater Mud Flat Communities are within ponds rather than along shores. They have low, sparse annual herbaceous vegetation on recently exposed muddy sediments. Extensive, non-linear shrubby pondshores not on peat are considered to be Shrub Swamps. Floating peat mats around ponds are classified as bogs or fens.



## Habitat for Associated Fauna:

Many wide ranging animals include Acidic Pondshores/Lakeshores as part of their habitats while using the entire wetland/pond system. Some shorelines are part of shrub swamps or emergent marshes where inconspicuous (“secretive”) water birds nest. Other shores extend into ponds or lakes as mudflats where shorebirds may forage.

## Examples with Public Access:

Long Pond, Royalston.



Acidic Pondshore/Lakeshore, marshy shoreline. Photo: Ethan Nedeau.

