

West Slope Tussey Mountain BDA

Description

Core Habitat: this BDA includes a portion of the West Slope of Tussey Mountain where there is a high quality example of oak-heath forest community that includes a population of a plant species of special concern in PA, the Maryland hawkweed (*Hieracium traillii*). See species fact sheet on pg. 154 for more information. Along much of this section of the ridge, the forest has low species diversity and bears signs of past soil disturbance. It may have been logged in the past and not recovered well. The area highlighted by this BDA is an exception, with a species composition and maturity typical of the community expected in this setting, the oak-heath forest. The canopy contains chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*), sweet birch (*Betula lenta*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), hickory species (*Carya* sp.) and common serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), the shrub layer is dominated by mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), and black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), and the herb layer includes a sedge (*Carex albicans*), common cinquefoil (*Potentilla simplex*), poverty grass (*Danthonia* sp.), Maryland hawkweed (*Hieracium traillii*), and longleaf summer bluets (*Houstonia longifolia*).

Supporting Landscape: none identified as necessary for these features.

Threats and Stresses

Core Habitat: any disturbance greater than light foot traffic will likely cause erosion along this steep slope, and may damage the population of the Maryland hawkweed.

Recommendations

Core Habitat: the unique features of this area will be best protected if it is allowed to remain undisturbed.