

## Glossary

**Acidic.** In common usage this term refers to substances having a pH of less than 7.

**Bog.** "A nutrient-poor, acidic wetland dominated by a waterlogged, spongy mat of sphagnum moss that ultimately forms a thick layer of acidic peat; generally has no inflow or outflow; fed primarily by rain water." (USGS n.d.)

**Brackish.** "Water with a salinity intermediate between seawater and freshwater..." (USGS n.d.).

**Canopy.** "An overlapping leaf layer formed by crowns of the tallest trees in a forest" (Lewis 1977).

**Conservation Commission.** (ConCom) The Commission serves to protect and conserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that are dependent upon the wetlands resources of the Town of Falmouth. Likewise they strive to implement the goals of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (CMR 10.00) and the Falmouth Wetlands Regulations (Code of Falmouth chapter 235)

**Coniferous.** Terrestrial Forest/Woodland communities are considered coniferous if there are >75% coniferous trees in the canopy.

**Conservation Restriction.** A legal document that prohibits future development of a property to protect natural resources. The property owner receives tax benefits for giving up development rights.

**Deciduous.** Terrestrial Forest/Woodland communities are considered deciduous if there are >75% deciduous trees in the canopy. Deciduous species are "...plants that shed foliage at the end of the growing season" (USGS n.d.).

**Dominant Vegetation.** The most abundant species of plant in each strata of a natural community. For example, white pine dominates the canopy in the Successional White Pine Community, while black ash and red maple are co-dominant in the Black Ash Swamp Community.

**Emergent Plants.** "Erect, rooted, herbaceous plants that may be temporarily or permanently flooded at the base but do not tolerate prolonged inundation of the entire plant" (USGS n.d.).

**Encroachment.** Undesirable and/or unpermitted activity extending over a property boundary. Ex: dumping, fencing, clearing.

**Estuarine.** "Estuarine communities are subject to varying salinity, tidal actions, and wind. Estuaries include tidal habitats and adjacent tidal wetlands in which ocean water is at least occasionally diluted by freshwater from the land. Estuarine areas extend landward and up

streams to where oceanic salts (formally defined as above 0.5 pH salinity in an annual average low flow period) or tides (including freshwater tidal areas) have an influence on vegetation.” (Swain and Kearsley 2001)

**Fee Owned.** A legal term for a property that is owned outright by an entity. When we use the term fee owned properties for our purposes, we are typically referring to properties that T3C owns.

**Fen.** “Peat-accumulating wetland that generally receives water from surface runoff and (or) seepage from mineral soils in addition to direct precipitation; generally alkaline; or slightly acid” (USGS n.d.)

**Forest/Woodland.** A Terrestrial community is considered to be a Forest/Woodland (i.e., forested) if there is >25% tree canopy.

**Grassland.** A graminoid dominated community with the Terrestrial System and Herbaceous Sub-system. Grasslands have <25% tree and shrub cover. Two grassland communities are recognized under the Massachusetts classification system: Sandplain Grassland and Cultural Grassland.

**Hardwood Dominated.** Palustrine Forested communities are considered hardwood dominated if >75% of canopy is composed of deciduous trees.

**Heathland.** A Terrestrial shrub community dominated by scrub oak. Other characteristic plants include bayberry, golden heather, chokeberry, dwarf chinquapin oak and sweetfern.

**Hummock-hollow.** A term describing the microtopography of wetland communities (e.g. Atlantic White Cedar Swamp) with a basin structure where the vegetation is arranged in elevated clumps (hummocks) surrounded by depressions (hollows).

**Invasive.** Rapidly spreading species without natural checks and balances in place to hinder growth. May require intervention to keep from overtaking an environment.

**Marine.** “Marine habitats are exposed to the waves and currents of the open ocean and the water regimes are determined primarily by the ebb and flow of oceanic tides.” “Shallow coastal indentations or bays without appreciable freshwater inflow, and coasts with exposed rocky islands that provide the mainland with little or no shelter from the wind and waves are also considered . . .” (Cowardin et al. 1979) Under Massachusetts’ natural community classification system the marine environment extends from the Marine Subtidal Flat community to either the Beach Strand Community or an estuarine community.

**Maritime.** Maritime communities are exposed to salt spray, which influences the vegetation. Exposure may be within the daily range of salt spray (e.g., Maritime Juniper

Woodland/Shrubland) or out of the daily range of salt spray (e.g., Maritime Pitch Pine on Dunes).

**Marsh.** “A water-saturated, poorly drained area, intermittently or permanently water covered, having aquatic and grass-like vegetation.” (USGS n.d.)

**Mixed Coniferous-Deciduous.** Terrestrial Forest/Woodland communities are considered mixed if there are 25-75% of deciduous trees in the canopy and 25-75% coniferous trees in the canopy.

**Moraine.** A mass of rocks and sediment carried down and deposited by a glacier, typically as ridges at its edges or extremity.

**Non-native species.** Does not support native insect species. Has not evolved to become a part of the local food web and/or host and support insects and birds found in the local environment.

**Natural community.** A distinct grouping of plant species that occur together in recurring patterns. Communities have definite plant species composition, consistent physical structure, and specific physical conditions (Sperduto and Crowley 2001).

**Northern Hardwoods.** Within the natural community classification system this term refers to deciduous trees typical of northern climates, especially maples. Aspen, and white and yellow birch are also considered northern hardwoods.

**Outwash Plain.** An “alluvial plain formed around the margin of an ice sheet or beyond a glacier fed by subglacial streams carrying glacial drift from the glacier.” (Lewis 1977).

**pH.** “A measure of the acidity (less than 7) or alkalinity (greater than 7) of a solution; a pH of 7 is considered neutral” (USGS n.d.). Alternatively, acid may refer to a pH of 5.5 or less, alkaline to a pH of greater than 7.4 and circumneutral for a pH greater than 5.5 through 7.4 (Cowardin et al. 1979).

**Saline.** “General terms for waters containing various dissolved salts” (Cowardin et al. 1979)

**Sandplain.** A term used synonymously with outwash plain.

**Seep.** “A small area where water percolate . . . slowly to the surface” (USGS n.d.).

**Shrub.** “A woody plant which at maturity is usually less than 6 m (20 feet) tall and generally exhibits several erect, spreading or prostrate stems and has a bush appearance: e.g. speckled alder (*Alnus rugosa*) or buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)” (Cowardin et al. 1979).

**Slope.** Literally a measure of deviation from the horizontal (e.g., a 10% slope). This term is often used to refer to a hillside.

**Sphagnum.** Plants belonging to the genus *Sphagnum* are typically referred to as peat mosses. Within the Palustrine System natural communities with a *Sphagnum* ground cover are classified as either peatlands (e.g., Acidic shrub fen) or bogs (e.g. Atlantic White Cedar Bog).

**Structural Dominance.** A dominant physical characteristic or feature used to classify natural communities. For example, the amount of open space, herbaceous cover, shrub, and tree canopy are structural features used to classify Subsystems within the Terrestrial System.

**Swamp.** “An area intermittently or permanently covered with water, and having trees and shrubs (USGS n.d.). Swamp communities are in the Palustrine System, and either the Non-Forested (e.g., Shrub swamps) or Forested Subsystems.

**Topography.** The position in a landscape, including elevation and change in slope” (Jackson 1995).

**T3C.** The 300 Committee

**Xeric.** Dry conditions, often in association with nutrient-poor conditions.