

### 3.3 Floodplain Vegetation and Soils

In a typical floodplain forest of north Florida, riparian habitats border the river channel, and associations of trees grouped into vegetative communities extend across the floodplain. Soil and land-surface topography vary across the floodplain, creating an irregular distribution of wetland communities based on soils and water requirements. Trees common to the hydrology of the lower and upper terraces may be found also within sloughs and swamps behind the confining levees of the river channel (Figure 39).

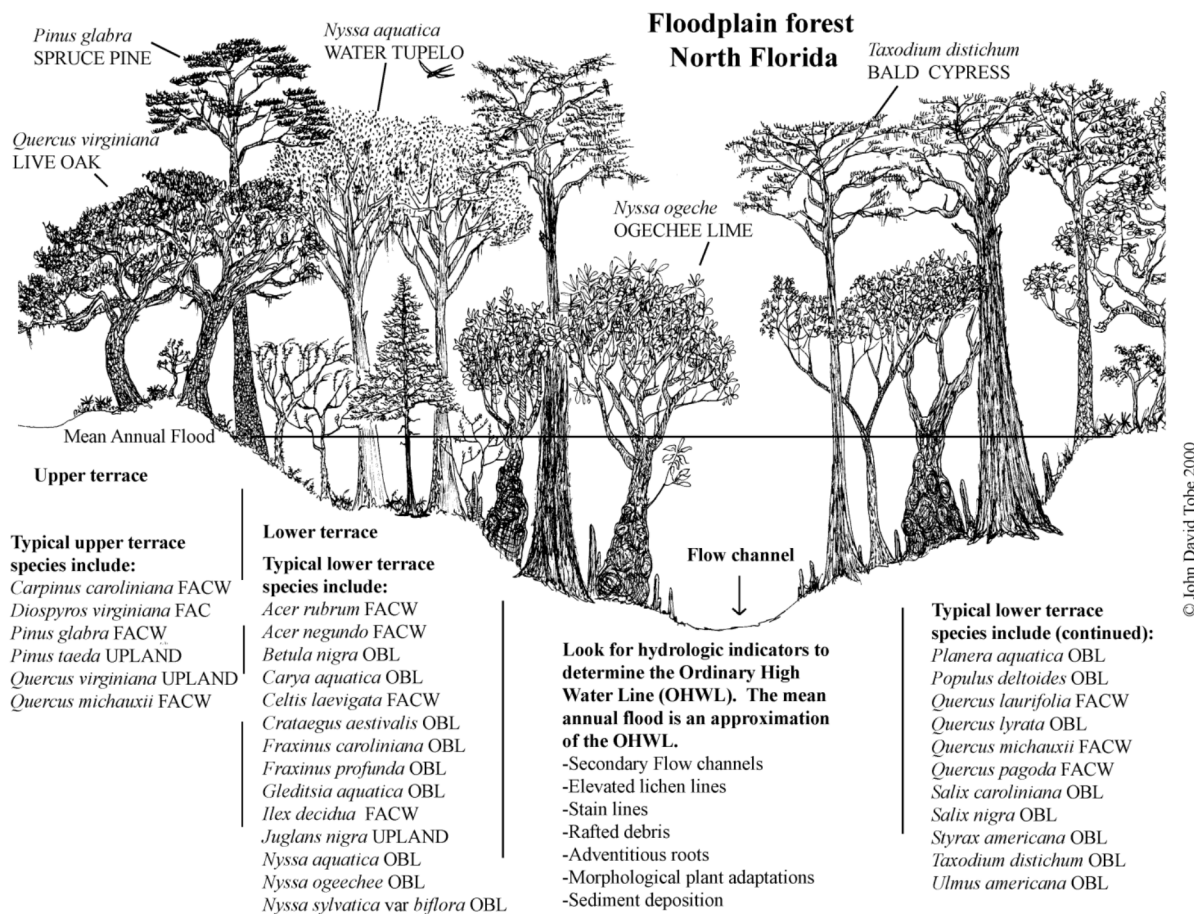


Figure 39. Conceptual diagram of floodplain forest of north Florida [Source: (FDEP, 2012); (Cowardin, Carter, Golet, & LaRoe, 1979)]

The general floodplain characteristics of the upper Suwannee River are summarized in an earlier assessment of environmental resource constraints (HSW, 2010).

**Reach 1 - Upper River Blackwater Reach:** The river channel in ecological Reach 1 (Figure 38, Figure 40 top panel, and Figure 41) is more deeply incised into the landscape, as compared to the downstream Reach 2 (Figure 40 bottom panel) and varies from 100-160 feet in width. At lower flows, depths in the channel are mostly less than 3 feet. Shoals of exposed clay and shallow sandy runs are a prominent habitat feature in the river channel along this reach, and the river-channel bottom is generally coarse