

Ecological site F116AY002MO Chert Protected Backslope Forest

Last updated: 9/24/2020
Accessed: 05/11/2025

General information

Provisional. A provisional ecological site description has undergone quality control and quality assurance review. It contains a working state and transition model and enough information to identify the ecological site.



Figure 1. Mapped extent

Areas shown in blue indicate the maximum mapped extent of this ecological site. Other ecological sites likely occur within the highlighted areas. It is also possible for this ecological site to occur outside of highlighted areas if detailed soil survey has not been completed or recently updated.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 116A—Ozark Highland

The Ozark Highland constitutes the Salem Plateau of the Ozark Uplift. Elevation ranges from about 300 feet on the southeast edge of the Ozark escarpment, to about 1,600 feet in the west, adjacent to the Burlington Escarpment of the Springfield Plateau. The underlying bedrock is mainly horizontally bedded Ordovician-aged dolomites and sandstones that dip gently away from the uplift apex in southeast Missouri. Cambrian dolomites are exposed on deeply dissected hillslopes. In some places, Pennsylvanian and Mississippian sediments overlie the plateau. Relief varies, from the gently rolling central plateau areas to deeply dissected hillslopes associated with drainageways such as the Buffalo, Current, Eleven Point and White Rivers.

Classification relationships

Terrestrial Natural Community Type in Missouri (Nelson, 2010):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to a Dry-Mesic Chert Forest.

Missouri Department of Conservation Forest and Woodland Communities (MDC, 2006):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to White Oak Forest.

National Vegetation Classification System Vegetation Association (NatureServe, 2010):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to a *Quercus alba* / *Cornus florida* Unglaciaded Forest (CEGL002066).

Geographic relationship to the Missouri Ecological Classification System (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002):
This ecological site is widespread across the Ozark Highlands Section.

Ecological site concept

NOTE: This is a “provisional” Ecological Site Description (ESD) that is under development. It contains basic ecological information that can be used for conservation planning, application and land management. After additional information is collected, analyzed and reviewed, this ESD will be refined and published as “Approved”.

The Chert Protected Backslope Forests occupy the northerly and easterly aspects of steep, dissected slopes, and are mapped in complex with the Chert Exposed Backslope Woodland ecological site. This ecological site is common throughout the Ozark Highlands where major streams have dissected deeply into the Salem Plateau. Soils are typically very deep, with an abundance of chert fragments. The reference plant community is forest with an overstory dominated by white oak, an understory dominated by flowering dogwood and blackgum, and a rich herbaceous ground flora.

Associated sites

F116AY004MO	Fragipan Upland Woodland Fragipan Upland Woodlands are upslope, on summit crests that have a fragipan in the subsoil.
F116AY008MO	Loamy Upland Woodland Loamy Upland Woodlands are upslope, on summits and shoulders.
F116AY011MO	Chert Upland Woodland Chert Upland Woodlands are upslope, on gently sloping shoulders and upper backslopes.
F116AY016MO	Chert Dolomite Protected Backslope Forest Chert Dolomite Protected Backslope Forests are downslope in places, on steep lower backslopes.
F116AY037MO	Gravelly/Loamy Upland Drainageway Forest Gravelly/Loamy Upland Drainageway Forests are downslope.
F116AY062MO	Chert Exposed Backslope Woodland Chert Exposed Backslope Woodlands are mapped in complex with this ecological site, on steep backslopes with southern to western aspects.

Similar sites

F116AY019MO	Loamy Dolomite Protected Backslope Forest Loamy Dolomite Protected Backslope Forests have similar overstory composition and aspects positions but are less productive due to a shallower soil depth.
F116AY030MO	Loamy Protected Backslope Forest Loamy Protected Backslope Forests occur on similar north and west aspects. Productivity on these sites is generally higher.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Quercus alba</i> (2) <i>Quercus rubra</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Cornus florida</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i> (2) <i>Claytonia virginica</i>

Physiographic features

This site is on upland backslopes with slopes of 15 to 70 percent. It is on protected aspects (north, northeast, and east), which receive significantly less solar radiation than the exposed aspects. The site receives runoff from

upslope summit and shoulder sites, and generates runoff to adjacent, downslope ecological sites. This site does not flood.

The following figure (adapted from Larsen & Cook, 2002) shows the typical landscape position of this ecological site, and landscape relationships with other ecological sites. It is within the area labeled “2” on the figure, on lower backslopes with northerly to easterly exposures. Chert Exposed Backslope Woodland sites are on the corresponding southerly to westerly exposures. Upper slopes and shoulders within the area are in the Chert Upland Woodland ecological site. In one area of the figure, the thickness of the residuum decreases downslope, resulting in Chert Dolomite Backslope ecological sites, labeled “3”. Upslope crests that have a layer of loess may be Loamy Upland Woodland sites, labeled “1”, or Fragipan Upland Flatwoods sites.

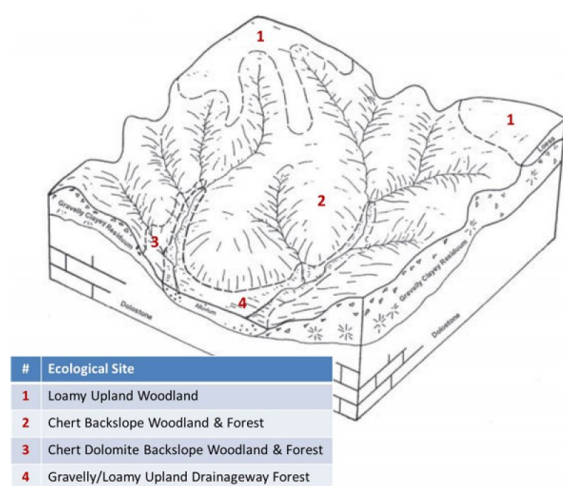


Figure 2. Landscape relationships for this ecological site.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Hill (2) Hillslope
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Slope	15–70%
Water table depth	27–60 in
Aspect	NW, N, NE, E

Climatic features

The Ozark Highland has a continental type of climate marked by strong seasonality. In winter, dry-cold air masses, unchallenged by any topographic barriers, periodically swing south from the northern plains and Canada. If they invade reasonably humid air, snowfall and rainfall result. In summer, moist, warm air masses, equally unchallenged by topographic barriers, swing north from the Gulf of Mexico and can produce abundant amounts of rain, either by fronts or by convectional processes. In some summers, high pressure stagnates over the region, creating extended droughty periods. Spring and fall are transitional seasons when abrupt changes in temperature and precipitation may occur due to successive, fast-moving fronts separating contrasting air masses.

The Ozark Highland experiences regional differences in climates, but these differences do not have obvious geographic boundaries. Regional climates grade inconspicuously into each other. The basic gradient for most climatic characteristics is along a line crossing the MLRA from northwest to southeast.

The average annual precipitation in almost all of this area is 38 to 45 inches. Snow falls nearly every winter, but the snow cover lasts for only a few days. The average annual temperature is about 53 to 60 degrees F. The lower temperatures occur at the higher elevations in the western part of the MLRA. Mean January minimum temperature follows a stronger north-to-south gradient. However, mean July maximum temperature shows hardly any geographic variation in the MLRA. Mean July maximum temperatures have a range of only two or three degrees

across the area.

Mean annual precipitation varies along a northwest to southeast gradient. Seasonal climatic variations are more complex. Seasonality in precipitation is very pronounced due to strong continental influences. June precipitation, for example, averages three to four times greater than January precipitation. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms in summer.

During years when precipitation comes in a fairly normal manner, moisture is stored in the top layers of the soil during the winter and early spring, when evaporation and transpiration are low. During the summer months the loss of water by evaporation and transpiration is high, and if rainfall fails to occur at frequent intervals, drought will result. Drought directly affects plant and animal life by limiting water supplies, especially at times of high temperatures and high evaporation rates.

Superimposed upon the basic MLRA climatic patterns are local topographic influences that create topoclimatic, or microclimatic variations. In regions of appreciable relief, for example, air drainage at nighttime may produce temperatures several degrees lower in valley bottoms than on side slopes. At critical times during the year, this phenomenon may produce later spring or earlier fall freezes in valley bottoms. Deep sinkholes often have a microclimate significantly cooler, moister, and shadier than surrounding surfaces, a phenomenon that may result in a strikingly different ecology. Higher daytime temperatures of bare rock surfaces and higher reflectivity of these unvegetated surfaces may create distinctive environmental niches such as glades and cliffs.

Slope orientation is an important topographic influence on climate. Summits and south-and-west-facing slopes are regularly warmer and drier than adjacent north- and east-facing slopes. Finally, the climate within a canopied forest is measurably different from the climate of a more open grassland or savanna areas.

Source: University of Missouri Climate Center - <http://climate.missouri.edu/climate.php>; Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin, United States Department of Agriculture Handbook 296 - <http://soils.usda.gov/survey/geography/mlra/>

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	147-155 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	183-191 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	44-47 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	144-156 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	182-193 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	43-49 in
Frost-free period (average)	151 days
Freeze-free period (average)	188 days
Precipitation total (average)	46 in

Climate stations used

- (1) GROVESPRING 1NE [USC00233483], Grovespring, MO
- (2) BENTONVILLE 4 S [USC00030586], Bentonville, AR
- (3) VERSAILLES 2W [USC00238603], Versailles, MO
- (4) EVENING SHADE 1 NNE [USC00032366], Evening Shade, AR
- (5) MTN GROVE 2 N [USC00235834], Mountain Grove, MO
- (6) POTOSI 4 SW [USC00236826], Potosi, MO

Influencing water features

Water features associated with this upland ecological site are influenced by karst landscapes throughout the area (see diagram). Rainfall enters the groundwater system through the soil or by flowing into sinkholes and streams.

Springs form where land drops low enough to meet underground water tables. Dissolution of carbonate rocks along fractures and faults has produced cave systems, sinkholes (closed and open), springs, and natural tunnels in the region. These sinkholes and losing streams can rapidly transfer water from upland recharge areas to spring outlets. The most common mechanism for groundwater recharge occurs by the relatively slow downward movement of water through soil and carbonate bedrock over a large area known as diffuse recharge, which maintains a high storage volume providing a consistent supply of water to springs. In addition to diffuse recharge, aquifers in karst terrain receive the relatively rapid transfer of water through sinkholes or losing streams connected by subsurface conduits. Surface water entering the aquifer in this fashion has very little contact with soil or rock and consequently the chemical nature of the water changes little in route. Discharge variability does not seem to be controlled by drainage area, but rather the conduit capacity of losing stream sections that can transport the entire volume of base-flow during dry periods in the year. High variability in base flow shows the impact of karst in the form of losing and gaining stream sections (Owen and Pavlowsky 2010).

The accompanying map depicts the distribution of these karst-related features in the state of Missouri. Relative cave density per USGS 7.5" quadrangle is depicted by shades of red, deeper red signifying a larger number of caves in the quadrangle. Stretches of losing streams are shown in yellow. Known springs are shown as blue dots. Image from Wikimedia Commons developed from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Land Survey

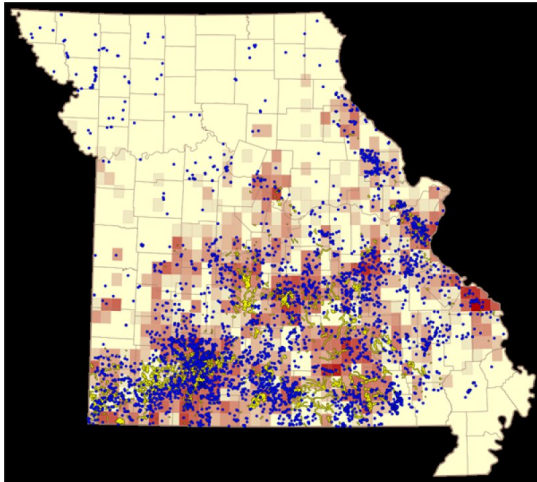


Figure 9. Distribution of karst-related features in Missouri

Soil features

These soils have no rooting restriction, and subsoils are not low in bases. The soils were formed under woodland vegetation, and have thin, light-colored surface horizons. Parent material is slope alluvium over residuum weathered from limestone and dolomite. They have gravelly or very gravelly silt loam surface horizons, and skeletal subsoils with high amounts of chert gravel and cobbles. They are not affected by seasonal wetness. Some soils have bedrock between 40 and 60 inches, but this does not significantly affect native vegetation. Soil series associated with this site include Alred, Beemont, Gepp, Gobbler, Goss, Hailey, Mano, Niangua, Ocie, Rueter, and Swiss.

The accompanying picture of the Goss series shows a thin, light-colored surface horizon underlain by very cobbly reddish clay. Scale is in inches. Picture from Henderson (2004).



Figure 10. Goss series

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Slope alluvium–limestone and dolomite (2) Residuum–limestone and dolomite
Surface texture	(1) Gravelly silt loam (2) Very gravelly loam
Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Moderately well drained to somewhat excessively drained
Permeability class	Very slow to moderately slow
Soil depth	40–72 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	15–50%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0–39%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	2–6 in
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-40in)	0%
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0–2 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	4.5–7.3
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	35–60%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	2–30%

Ecological dynamics

Information contained in this section was developed using historical data, professional experience, field reviews, and scientific studies. The information presented is representative of very complex vegetation communities. Key indicator plants, animals and ecological processes are described to help inform land management decisions. Plant communities will differ across the MLRA because of the naturally occurring variability in weather, soils, and aspect. The Reference Plant Community is not necessarily the management goal. The species lists are representative and are not botanical descriptions of all species occurring, or potentially occurring, on this site. They are not intended to cover every situation or the full range of conditions, species, and responses for the site.

Chert Protected Backslope Forests occur in the most protected landscape positions on lower, steep slopes in the deeper valleys furthest from the prairie uplands. The historic reference community for Chert Protected Backslope Forests is a well-developed forest canopy (80 to 100 feet tall and 90 to 100 percent canopy closure) and subcanopy dominated by white oak, a structurally diverse understory and an abundant forest ground flora. While the upland prairies and savannas had an estimated fire frequency of 1 to 3 years, Chert Protected Backslope Forests burned less frequently (estimated 10 to 25 years) and with lower intensity.

The composition and structure of the Chert Backslope ecological sites varies in relation to slope aspect. Exposed, south and west facing slopes are doughtier and more fire-prone than are the protected north and east facing slopes, which are relatively cool and moist. These two ecological sites intergrade on neutral, northwest and southeast exposures.

Historically, grazing by native large herbivores, such as bison, elk, and white-tailed deer, and periodic fires kept understory conditions more open. In addition, these ecological types were subject to occasional disturbances from wind and ice, which opened the canopy up by knocking over trees or breaking substantial branches of canopy trees.

Today, these communities have been cleared and converted to pasture, or have undergone repeated timber harvest and domestic grazing. Most existing occurrences have a younger (50 to 80 years) canopy whose composition has been altered by timber harvesting practices. An increase in hickory over historic conditions is common. In addition, in the absence of fire, the canopy, sub-canopy and woody understory layers are better developed. The absence of periodic fire has allowed more shade-tolerant tree species, such as sugar maple, white ash, or hickory to increase in abundance.

Domestic grazing has diminished the diversity and cover of woodland ground flora species, and has introduced weedy species such as gooseberry, coralberry, poison ivy and Virginia creeper created a more open understory and increased soil compaction.

Chert Protective Backslope Forests are some of the most productive timber sites in the Ozark Highlands. Carefully planned single tree selection or the creation of small group openings can help regenerate more desirable oak species and increase vigor on the residual trees. Clear-cutting does occur and results in dense, even-aged stands of primarily oak. This may be most beneficial for existing stands whose composition has been highly altered by past management practices. However, without some thinning of the dense stands, the ground flora diversity can be shaded out and productivity of the stand may suffer.

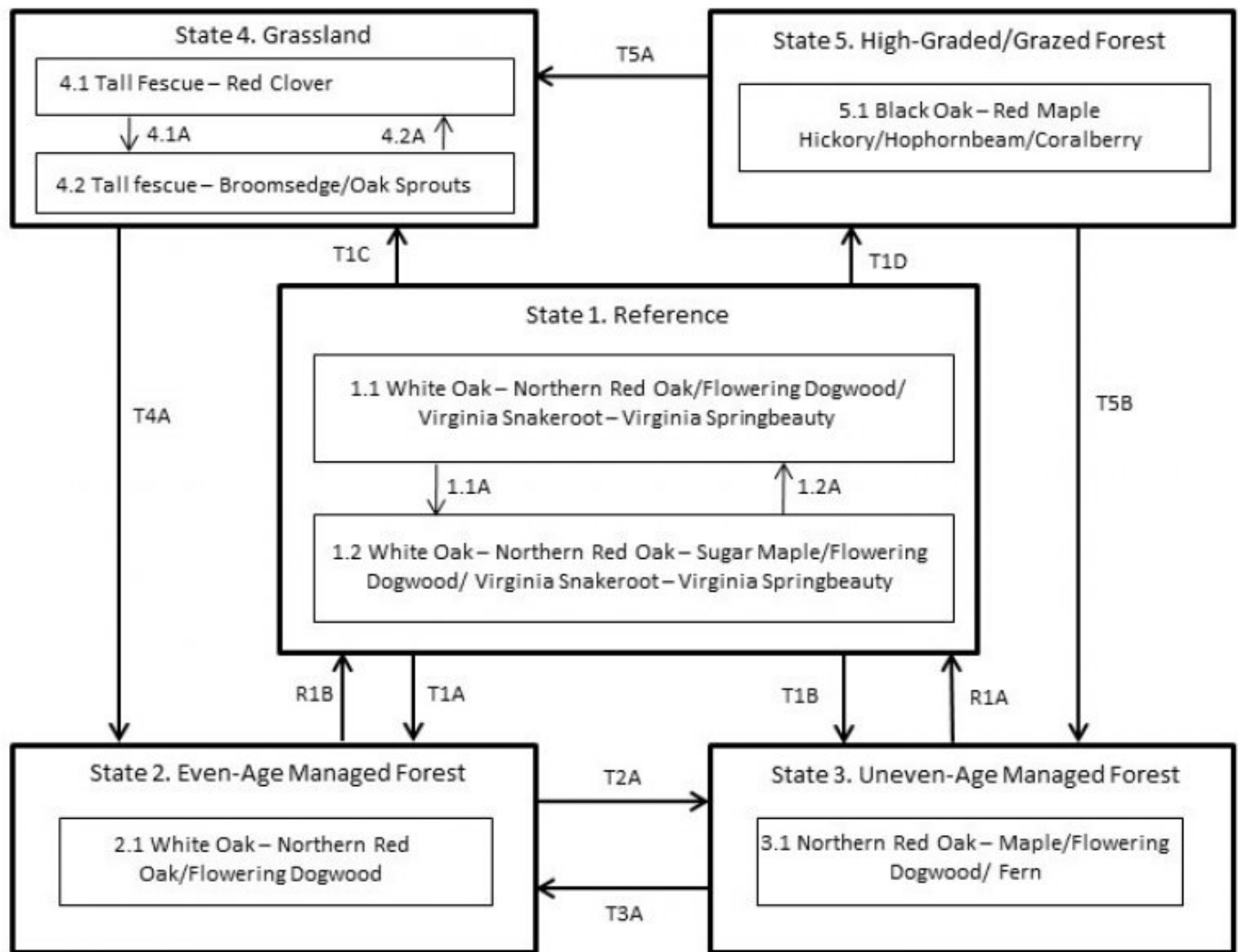
Prescribed fire can play a beneficial but limited role in the management of this ecological site. The higher productivity of these sites makes it more challenging than on other forest sites in the region. Protected aspect forests did evolve with some fire, but their composition often reflects more closed, forested conditions, with fewer woodland ground flora species that can respond to fire.

Consequently, while having protected aspects in a burn unit is acceptable, targeting them solely for woodland restoration is not advisable.

A State and Transition Diagram follows. Detailed descriptions of each state, transition, plant community, and pathway follow the model. This model is based on available experimental research, field observations, professional consensus, and interpretations. It is likely to change as knowledge increases.

State and transition model

Chert Protected Backslope Forest, F116AY002MO



Code	Event/Process
T1A	Harvesting; even-aged management
T1B	Harvesting; uneven-age management
T1C, T5A	Clearing; pasture planting
T1D	High-grade harvesting; uncontrolled grazing
T2A	Uneven-age management
T3A	Even-age management
T4A, T5A	Tree planting; long-term succession; no grazing
T5B	Uneven-age management; tree planting; no grazing

Code	Event/Process
1.1A	No disturbance (10+ yrs)
1.2A	Disturbance (fire, wind, ice) < 10 yrs
4.1A	Over grazing; no fertilization
4.2A	Brush management; grassland seeding; grassland management

Code	Event/Process
R1A	Extended rotations
R1B	Uneven-age mgt, extended rotations

Figure 11. State and transition diagram for this ecological site

Reference

The reference state was dominated by white oak and northern red oak. Periodic disturbances from fire, wind or ice maintained the dominance of white oak by opening the canopy and allowing more light for white oak reproduction. Long disturbance-free periods allowed an increase in more shade tolerant species such as northern red oak and sugar maple. Two community phases are recognized in this state, with shifts between phases based on disturbance frequency. Existing reference states are uncommon. Some sites have been converted to grassland (State 4). Others have been subject to repeated, high-graded timber harvest coupled with domestic livestock grazing (State 5). Fire suppression has resulted in increased canopy density, which has affected the abundance and diversity of ground flora. Many reference sites have been managed for timber harvest, resulting in either even-age (State 2) or uneven-age (State 3) forests.

Community 1.1

White Oak – Northern Red Oak/Flowering Dogwood/ Virginia Snakeroot – Virginia Springbeauty



Figure 12. Reference state at St. Joe State Park, Park Hills, Missouri; photo credit - Dennis Meinert, MDNR

This community is one of the more productive upland forests in the MLRA. While the overstory is dominated by white oak, northern red oak, black gum can also be common. This forest community has a multi-tiered structure, and a canopy that is tall with 80 to 100 percent closure. The sub-canopy and understory are well developed, with flowering dogwood as a dominant understory tree and sapling. A moderate abundance of shade tolerant forest generalists, such as mayapple, Christmas fern, ticktrefoil and Virginia snakeroot, cover the ground. Periodic disturbances, including fire, ice and wind create canopy gaps, allowing white oak to successfully reproduce and enter the canopy. Periodic disturbances, including fire, ice and wind create canopy gaps, allowing white oak to successfully reproduce and enter the canopy.

Forest overstory. The Overstory Species list is based on field reconnaissance as well as commonly occurring species listed in Nelson 2010; names and symbols are from USDA PLANTS database.

Forest understory. The Understory Species list is based on field reconnaissance as well as commonly occurring

species listed in Nelson 2010; names and symbols are from USDA PLANTS database.

Community 1.2

White Oak – Northern Red Oak – Sugar Maple/Flowering Dogwood/ Virginia Snakeroot – Virginia Springbeauty

The overstory is a mixture of white oak and more shade tolerant species such as northern red oak, sugar maple, hickory, white ash and others. This forest community has a multi-tiered structure, and a canopy that is 75 to 100 feet tall with 90 to 100 percent closure. In the absence of disturbance, more shade tolerant species such as northern red oak, sugar maple, hickory, white ash and others increase in importance and add increased structural diversity to the system. In addition, more shade-loving forest shrub (e.g., northern spicebush) and herbaceous (e.g., bloodroot) species also increase.

Pathway P1.1A

Community 1.1 to 1.2

This pathway is a gradual transition that results from extended, disturbance-free periods of roughly 50 years or longer.

Pathway P1.2A

Community 1.2 to 1.1

This pathway is a transition that results from extended, disturbance periods returning, such as native fires.

State 2

Even-Age Managed Forest

These forests tend to be rather dense, with an underdeveloped understory and ground flora. Thinning can increase overall tree vigor and improve understory diversity. Continual timber management, depending on the practices used, will either maintain this state, or convert the site to uneven-age (State 3) forests.

Dominant resource concerns

- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

Community 2.1

White Oak - Northern Red Oak/Flowering Dogwood

This is an even-aged forest management phase. Logging activities are removing higher volumes of white oak causing a decrease in white oak in the canopy and an increase in northern red oak. Large group, shelterwood or clearcut harvests create a more uniform age class structure throughout the canopy layer while also opening up the understory and allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor.

State 3

Uneven-Age Managed Forest

Uneven-Age Managed forests can resemble the reference state. The biggest difference is tree age, most being only 50 to 90 years old. Composition is also likely altered from the reference state depending on tree selection during harvest. In addition, without a regular 15 to 20 year harvest re-entry into these stands, they will slowly increase in more shade tolerant species such as sugar maple and white oak will become less dominant.

Dominant resource concerns

- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition

- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

Community 3.1

Northern Red Oak – Maple/Flowering Dogwood/ Fern

This is an uneven-aged forest management phase. Selective logging activities are removing higher volumes of white oak causing a decrease in white oak in the canopy and an increase in northern red oak and sugar maple. Density numbers, especially more shade tolerant species, are increasing in the lower size-class levels.

State 4

Grassland

Type conversion of forests to planted, non-native pasture species such as tall fescue has been common in this MLRA. Steep slopes, abundant surface fragments, low organic matter contents and soil acidity make non-native pastures challenging to maintain in a healthy, productive state on this ecological site. If grazing and active pasture management is discontinued, the site will eventually transition to State 2 (Even-Age).

Community 4.1

Tall Fescue - Red Clover

This phase is a well-managed grassland, composed of non-native cool season grasses and legumes. Grazing and haying is occurring. The effects of long-term liming on soil pH, and calcium and magnesium content, is most evident in this phase. Studies show that these soils have higher pH and higher base status in soil horizons as much as two feet below the surface, relative to poorly managed grassland and to woodland communities (where liming is not practiced).

Dominant resource concerns

- Plant structure and composition
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

Community 4.2

Tall Fescue - Broomsedge/Oak Sprouts

This phase is the result of poor grassland management. Over grazing and inadequate or no fertility application has allowed tall fescue, multi-flora rose, thistle and other weedy species to increase in cover and density reducing overall forage quality and site productivity. Clovers will decrease or go away with no fertilization and overgrazing. Soil pH and bases such as calcium and magnesium are lower, relative to well-managed pastures.

Dominant resource concerns

- Ephemeral gully erosion
- Nutrients transported to surface water
- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Plant pest pressure
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- Feed and forage imbalance

Pathway P4.1A

Community 4.1 to 4.2

This pathway is the result of over grazing and lack of proper grassland management.

Pathway P4.2A

Community 4.2 to 4.1

This pathway is the result of brush management, grassland re-seeding and proper grassland management.

State 5

High-Graded / Grazed Forest

Forested sites subjected to repeated, high-graded timber harvests and uncontrolled domestic grazing transition to this state. This state exhibits an over-abundance of hickory and other less desirable tree species, and weedy understory species such as coralberry, gooseberry, poison ivy and Virginia creeper. The vegetation offers little nutritional value for cattle, and excessive stocking damages tree boles, degrades understory species composition and results in soil compaction and accelerated erosion and runoff.

Dominant resource concerns

- Ephemeral gully erosion
- Nutrients transported to surface water
- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Plant pest pressure
- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- Feed and forage imbalance

Community 5.1

Black Oak – Red Maple Hickory/Hophornbeam/Coralberry

This is the only phase associated with this state at this time. See the corresponding state narrative for details.

Transition T1A

State 1 to 2

This transition typically results from even-age forest management practices, such as clear-cut, seed tree or shelterwood harvests and fire suppression.

Transition T1B

State 1 to 3

This transition typically results from uneven-age timber management practices, such as single tree or group selection harvests.

Transition T1C

State 1 to 4

This transition is the result of clearing and conversion to non-native cool season grassland.

Transition T1D

State 1 to 5

This transition is the result of high-grade harvesting and uncontrolled domestic livestock grazing. .

Restoration pathway R1B

State 2 to 1

This restoration pathway generally requires uneven-age timber management practices, such as single tree or group selection harvest, with extended rotations that allow mature trees to exceed ages of about 120 years.

Transition T2A

State 2 to 3

This transition typically results from uneven-age timber management practices, such as single tree or group selection harvest.

Restoration pathway R1A
State 3 to 1

This restoration transition is the result of extended rotations and minimal disturbance.

Transition T3A
State 3 to 2

This transition typically results from even-age forest management practices, such as clear-cut, seed tree or shelterwood harvests.

Transition T5B
State 5 to 3

This transition typically results from uneven-age timber management practices, such as single tree or group selection harvest, tree planting and no grazing.

Transition T5A
State 5 to 4

This transition is the result of clearing and conversion to non-native cool season grassland.

Additional community tables

Table 5. Community 1.1 forest overstory composition

Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Nativity	Height (Ft)	Canopy Cover (%)	Diameter (In)	Basal Area (Square Ft/Acre)
Tree							
white oak	QUAL	<i>Quercus alba</i>	Native	–	20–40	–	–
northern red oak	QURU	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Native	–	20–40	–	–
shagbark hickory	CAOV2	<i>Carya ovata</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
red maple	ACRU	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
sugar maple	ACSA3	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
shortleaf pine	PIEC2	<i>Pinus echinata</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
black oak	QUVE	<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–

Table 6. Community 1.1 forest understory composition

Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Nativity	Height (Ft)	Canopy Cover (%)
Grass/grass-like (Graminoids)					
slender woodland sedge	CADI5	<i>Carex digitalis</i>	Native	–	2–5
rock muhly	MUSO	<i>Muhlenbergia sobolifera</i>	Native	–	2–5
poverty oatgrass	DASP2	<i>Danthonia spicata</i>	Native	–	2–5
hairy woodland brome	BRPU6	<i>Bromus pubescens</i>	Native	–	2–5
Forb/Herb					
nakedflower ticktrefoil	DENU4	<i>Desmodium nudiflorum</i>	Native	–	1–5
manyray aster	SYAN2	<i>Symphotrichum anomalum</i>	Native	–	1–5
eastern beebalm	MOBR2	<i>Monarda bradburiana</i>	Native	–	1–5

largebract ticktrefoil	DECU	<i>Desmodium cuspidatum</i>	Native	—	1–5
late purple aster	SYPA11	<i>Symphytotrichum patens</i>	Native	—	1–5
elmleaf goldenrod	SOUL2	<i>Solidago ulmifolia</i>	Native	—	1–5
fourleaf milkweed	ASQU	<i>Asclepias quadrifolia</i>	Native	—	1–5
American hogpeanut	AMBR2	<i>Amphicarpaea bracteata</i>	Native	—	1–5
gravelweed	VEHE	<i>Verbesina helianthoides</i>	Native	—	1–5
Virginia snakeroot	ARSE3	<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Native	—	1–5
Virginia springbeauty	CLVI3	<i>Claytonia virginica</i>	Native	—	1–5
lesser yellow lady's slipper	CYPAP4	<i>Cypripedium parviflorum var. parviflorum</i>	Native	—	1–5
white fawnlily	ERAL9	<i>Erythronium albidum</i>	Native	—	1–5
hepatica	HENO2	<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Native	—	1–5
goldenseal	HYCA	<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	Native	—	1–5
feathery false lily of the valley	MARA7	<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i>	Native	—	1–5
wild blue phlox	PHDI5	<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	Native	—	1–5
mayapple	POPE	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Native	—	1–5
toadshade	TRSE2	<i>Trillium sessile</i>	Native	—	1–5
largeflower bellwort	UVGR	<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	Native	—	1–5
Fern/fern ally					
rattlesnake fern	BOVI	<i>Botrychium virginianum</i>	Native	—	1–5
Christmas fern	POAC4	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Native	—	1–5
lowland bladderfern	CYPR4	<i>Cystopteris protrusa</i>	Native	—	1–5
ebony spleenwort	ASPL	<i>Asplenium platyneuron</i>	Native	—	1–5
Shrub/Subshrub					
northern spicebush	LIBE3	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Native	—	2–5
common serviceberry	AMAR3	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Native	—	2–5
fragrant sumac	RHAR4	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Native	—	2–5
Blue Ridge blueberry	VAPA4	<i>Vaccinium pallidum</i>	Native	—	2–5
Tree					
blackgum	NYSY	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Native	—	2–5
hophornbeam	OSVI	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Native	—	2–5
flowering dogwood	COFL2	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Native	—	2–5
Vine/Liana					
Virginia creeper	PAQU2	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Native	—	1–5
cat greenbrier	SMGL	<i>Smilax glauca</i>	Native	—	1–5
summer grape	VIAE	<i>Vitis aestivalis</i>	Native	—	1–5

Animal community

Wildlife (MDC 2006):

Wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and eastern gray squirrel depend on hard and soft mast food sources and are typical upland game species of this type.

Bird species associated with early-successional community stages are Prairie Warbler, Field Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, Blue-winged Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, and Eastern Towhee. Birds associated with mid-successional stages include Whip-poor-will and Wood Thrush while birds associated with late-successional stages include Worm-eating warbler, Whip-poor-will, Great Crested

Flycatcher, Ovenbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush (near streams), and Broad-winged Hawk.

Reptile and amphibian species associated with mature forests include: ringed salamander, spotted salamander, marbled salamander, central newt, long-tailed salamander, dark-sided salamander, southern red-backed salamander, three-toed box turtle, western worm snake, western earth snake, and American toad.

Other information

Forestry (NRCS 2002, 2014)

Management: Field measured site index values range from 48 to 75 for oak. Timber management opportunities are good. Create group openings of at least 2 acres. Large clearcuts should be minimized if possible to reduce impacts on wildlife and aesthetics. Uneven-aged management using single tree selection or group selection cuttings of ½ to 1 acre are other options that can be used if clear cutting is not desired or warranted. Using prescribed fire as a management tool should be used with caution on a particular site if timber management is the primary objective. Favor white oak and northern red oak.

Limitations: Large amounts of coarse fragments throughout profile; bedrock may be within 60 inches. Surface stones and rocks are problems for efficient and safe equipment operation and will make equipment use somewhat difficult. Disturbing the surface excessively in harvesting operations and building roads increases soil losses, which leaves a greater amount of coarse fragments on the surface. Hand planting or direct seeding may be necessary. Seedling mortality due to low available water capacity may be high. Mulching or providing shade can improve seedling survival. Mechanical tree planting will be limited. Erosion is a hazard when slopes exceed 15 percent. On steep slopes greater than 35 percent, traction problems increase and equipment use is not recommended.

Inventory data references

Potential Reference Sites: Chert Protected Backslope Forest

Plot HATOSP03 - Alred soil

Located in Ha Ha Tonka State Park, Camden County, MO

Latitude: 37.979681

Longitude: -92.75488949

Plot ALSPNP04 - Rueter soil

Located in Alley Springs National Park Service, Shannon County, MO

Latitude: 37.155582

Longitude: -91.43861515

Plot CAMOCA03 - Ocie soil

Located Caney Mountain CA, Ozark County, MO

Latitude: 36.679196

Longitude: -92.38845

Plot CAMOCA04 - Mano soil

Located Caney Mountain CA, Ozark County, MO

Latitude: 36.699935

Longitude: -92.436296

Plot ONONSP04 - Alred soil

Located Onondaga Cave State Park, Crawford County, MO

Latitude: 38.056048

Longitude: -91.237138

Other references

Anderson, R.C. 1990. The historic role of fire in North American grasslands. Pp. 8-18 in S.L. Collins and L.L.

Wallace (eds.). Fire in North American tallgrass prairies. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Batek, M.J., A.J. Rebertus, W.A. Schroeder, T.L. Haithcoat, E. Compas, and R.P. Guyette. 1999. Reconstruction of early nineteenth-century vegetation and fire regimes in the Missouri Ozarks. *Journal of Biogeography* 26:397-412.

Harlan, J.D., T.A. Nigh and W.A. Schroeder. 2001. The Missouri original General Land Office survey notes project. University of Missouri, Columbia.

Henderson, Richard L. 2004. Soil Survey of Cedar County, Missouri. U.S. Dept. of Agric. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Ladd, D. 1991. Reexamination of the role of fire in Missouri oak woodlands. Pp. 67-80 in G.V. Brown, James K.; Smith, Jane Kapler, eds. 2000. Wildland fire in ecosystems: effects of fire on flora. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-42-vol. 2. Ogden, UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 257 p.

Larsen, Scott E., and Michael A. Cook. 2002. Soil Survey of Crawford County, Missouri. U.S. Dept. of Agric. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Missouri Department of Conservation. 2010. Missouri Forest and Woodland Community Profiles. Missouri Department of Conservation, Jefferson City, Missouri.

NatureServe, 2010. Vegetation Associations of Missouri (revised). NatureServe, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Nelson, Paul W. 2010. The Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri. Missouri Department of Conservation, Jefferson City, Missouri. 550p.

Nigh, Timothy A. and Walter A. Schroeder. 2002. Atlas of Missouri Ecoregions. Missouri Department of Conservation, Jefferson City, Missouri. 212p.

Owen, Marc R. and Robert T. Pavlowsky. 2010. Baseflow hydrology and water quality of an Ozarks spring and associated recharge area, southern Missouri, USA. *Environ Earth Sci* (2011) 64:169–183.

Schoolcraft, H.R. 1821. Journal of a tour into the interior of Missouri and Arkansas from Potosi, or Mine a Burton, in Missouri territory, in a southwest direction, toward the Rocky Mountains: performed in the years 1818 and 1819. Richard Phillips and Company, London.

United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296. 682 pgs.

Contributors

Doug Wallace
Fred Young

Approval

Nels Barrett, 9/24/2020

Acknowledgments

Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Department of Natural Resources personnel provided significant and helpful field and technical support during this project.

Rangeland health reference sheet

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health is a qualitative assessment protocol used to determine ecosystem condition based on benchmark characteristics described in the Reference Sheet. A suite of 17 (or more) indicators

are typically considered in an assessment. The ecological site(s) representative of an assessment location must be known prior to applying the protocol and must be verified based on soils and climate. Current plant community cannot be used to identify the ecological site.

Author(s)/participant(s)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	05/11/2025
Approved by	Nels Barrett
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. **Number and extent of rills:**

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:**

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:**

4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):**

5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:**

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:**

7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):**

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):**

9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):**

10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:**

11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):**

-
12. **Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground annual-production or live foliar cover using symbols: >>, >, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):**

Dominant:

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

-
13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):**

-
14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):**

-
15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):**

-
16. **Potential invasive (including noxious) species (native and non-native). List species which BOTH characterize degraded states and have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the ecological site if their future establishment and growth is not actively controlled by management interventions. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g., short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants. Note that unlike other indicators, we are describing what is NOT expected in the reference state for the ecological site:**

-
17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:**
-