

# Ecological site F120CY002IN

## Fragipan Uplands

Last updated: 10/01/2024  
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### 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.

### MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 120C—Kentucky and Indiana Sandstone and Shale Hills and Valleys, Northeastern Part

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This area is entirely in Indiana and makes up about 1,050 square miles (2,725 square kilometers).

**Physiography:** This area is in the Highland Rim Section of the Interior Low Plateaus Province of the Interior Plains. Both large and small tributaries of the Ohio River and the East Fork of the White River dissect the nearly level to very steep uplands in the area. The major streams and rivers have well defined valleys with broad flood plains and numerous stream terraces. The flood plains along the smaller streams are narrow. Summits are narrow and are nearly level to gently sloping.

**Geology:** The geologic materials in this area are of Early and Middle Pennsylvanian and Late Mississippian age. The rocks consist mainly of flat-lying, interbedded sandstone, shale, coal, and siltstone with minor areas of limestone. Bedrock outcrops are common on the bluffs along the Ohio River and its major tributaries. The surficial geologic materials consist mainly of a layer of loess, typically less than 3.5 feet (1 meter) thick, on the less eroded parts of the landscape and stratified sediments of Pleistocene age along the Ohio River and its tributaries. Unconsolidated alluvium is deposited in the river valleys.

**Soils:** The dominant soil orders in this MLRA are Alfisols, Ultisols, and Inceptisols. The soils in the area have a mesic soil temperature regime, an udic or aquic soil moisture regime, and dominantly mixed mineralogy. They formed dominantly in loess and in residuum derived from siltstone and shale. They range from moderately deep to very deep and from somewhat poorly drained to well drained and are loamy, silty, or clayey. Fragiudults (Spickert and Tilsit series) and Hapludults (Wrays series) are the dominant soils on ridgetops and the upper parts of hills and knobs. Halpudalfs (Kurtz series), Hapludults (Gilwood and Gnowbone series), and Dystrudepts (Brownstown series) are on moderately sloping to very steep side slopes. Hapludalfs (Coolville, Rarden, Stonehead, and Wellrock series) are on the gently sloping to moderately steep lower parts of side slopes. Hapludalfs (Elkinsville series), Fragiudalfs (Pekin series), and Fragiaqualfs (Bartle series) are on stream terraces. Dystrudepts (Beanblossom, Cuba, and Steff series) and Endoaquepts (Stendal series) are on flood plains.

### Classification relationships

NatureServe Ecological System, Scientific Name: Southern Interior Low Plateau Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, Unique Identifier: CES202.898

### Ecological site concept

The Fragipan Uplands ecological sites are consist of soils with fragipans. Representative soils include: Spickert, Zanesville, Pekin.

The communities described in this provisional document reflect those likely to be found and have not been field verified. This PES describes hypotheses based on available data of many different scales and sources and has not been developed utilizing site-specific ecological field monitoring. This PES does not encompass the entire

complexity or diversity of these sites. Field studies would be required to develop a comprehensive and science-based native plant restoration plan for these sites.

The hypotheses below were developed utilizing multiple data sources including NatureServe Explorer, VegBank.org data, Plant Communities of the Midwest – Indiana Subset, Indiana DNR, The Nature Conservancy, and Purdue University data for the Hoosier National Forest. (Andriy Vladimirovich Zhalnin and George R. Parker, 2007, Delineation and spatial analysis of ecological classification units for the Hoosier National Forest in Southern Indiana)

State 1, Phase 1.1. white oak (*Q. alba*) – black oak (*Quercus velutina*) / blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.)- mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) / mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)- licorice bedstraw (*Galium circaezans*).

Dominant trees in this community include white oak, sugar maple, and black oak. Other species present may include northern red oak, scarlet oak, chinquapin oak, chestnut oak, pignut hickory. Minor canopy trees include blackgum, sassafras, red maple and white ash. Subcanopy trees dominant are American beech, sugar maple and red maple.

The herb layer is diverse with a variable composition; however, understory plants on these sites may include nakedflower ticktrefoil (*Desmodium nudiflorum*), dogtooth violet (*Erythronium americanum*), Bosc's panicgrass (*Panicum boscii*), rattlesnake fern (*Botrychium virginianum*), star chickweed (*Stellaria pubera*), and American alumroot (*Heuchera americana*). Species of the *Arisaema* genus may be present.

More mesic inclusions may include common blue violet (*Viola sororia*), Impatiens spp., Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) and mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*).

State 2, Phase 2.1: Pasture. Plant species dominant: *Schedonorus arundinaceus* (tall fescue. Species present are dependent upon seeding and management. State: 3. Transitional (Abandoned) Field

State 3, Phase 3.1:

Plant species dominant: eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) / berries (*Rubus* spp.) – sumac (*Rhus* spp.) /fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*)

This phase is best described as an old field habitat with a mixture of native and introduced grasses and a variety of native and non-native herbs, forbs, seedlings, and saplings.

State 4 Old Pioneer Cropland (lower slopes only)

Phase 4.1: Old (Abandoned) Cropfield. Plant species dominant: henbit deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*) – mouse-eared chickweed (*Cerastium* L. )

Abandonment of cropland would result in many weed species taking over the site. Initially, annual weeds would be predominate followed by a variety of native and non-native grasses, shrubs and trees.

State: 5. Cropland (lower slopes only)

Phase 5.1: Plant species dominant: dependent upon seeding and management. Most common crops are corn and soybeans.

Restoration of states 2-5 to the reference community would require long-term, intensive management inputs.

**Table 1. Dominant plant species**

Tree	(1) <i>Quercus alba</i> (2) <i>Quercus velutina</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Vaccinium</i> (2) <i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> (2) <i>Galium circaezans</i>

## Physiographic features

These sites are found on hills.

Topography and aspect will influence community composition. Field work is needed to refine this grouping and multiple ESDs may result. All soils are deep - very deep with a fragipan layer.

**Table 2. Representative physiographic features**

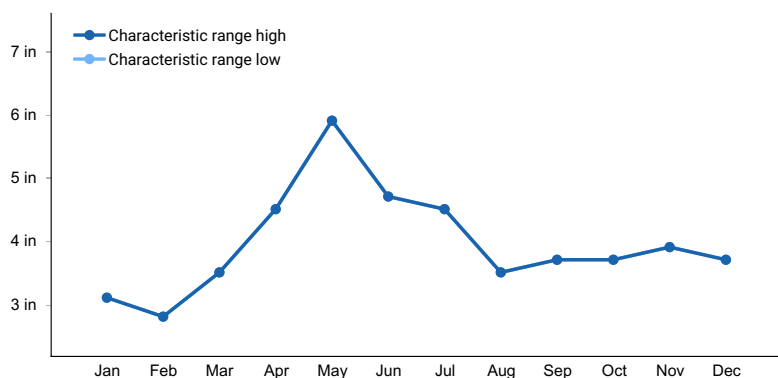
Landforms	(1) Hill
Runoff class	Medium to high
Elevation	350–1,000 ft
Slope	0–12%
Water table depth	15–72 in
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

## Climatic features

Climate: The average annual precipitation in most of this area is 41 to 47 inches (1,040 to 1,195 millimeters). About 60 percent of the precipitation falls during the freeze-free period. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms in summer. Snowfall is common in winter. The average annual temperature is 52 to 56 degrees F (11 to 14 degrees C). The freeze-free period averages 205 days and ranges from 190 to 220 days. The longer freeze-free periods occur along the Ohio River. (Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. United States Department of Agriculture. Natural Resources Conservation Service. United States Department of Agriculture Handbook 296. Issued 2006.)

**Table 3. Representative climatic features**

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	169 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	195 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	47 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	169 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	195 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	47 in
Frost-free period (average)	169 days
Freeze-free period (average)	195 days
Precipitation total (average)	47 in



**Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range**

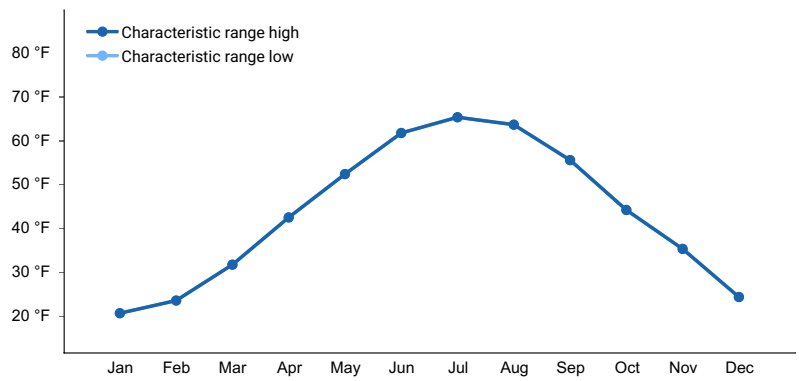


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

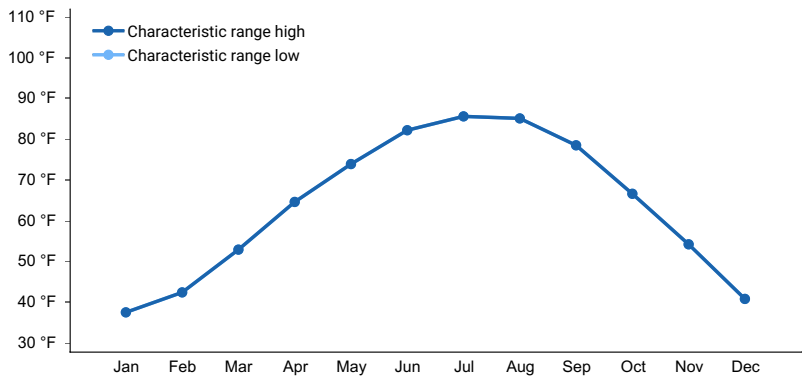


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

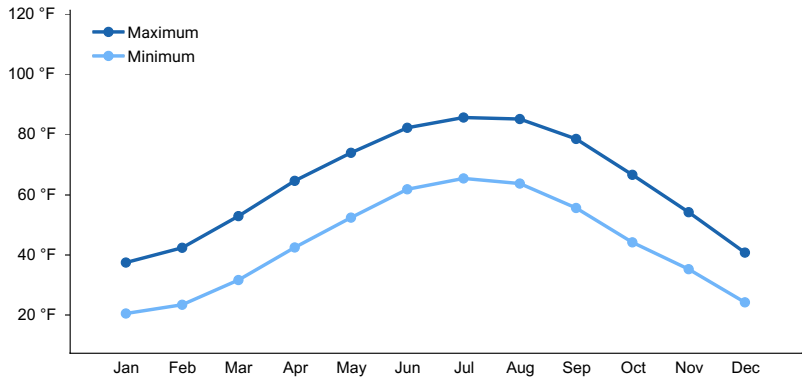


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

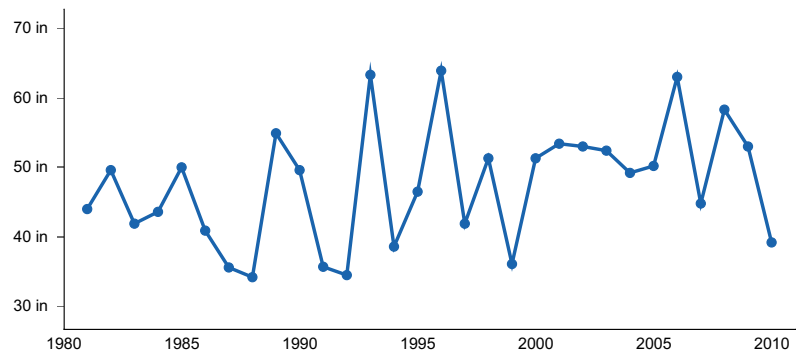
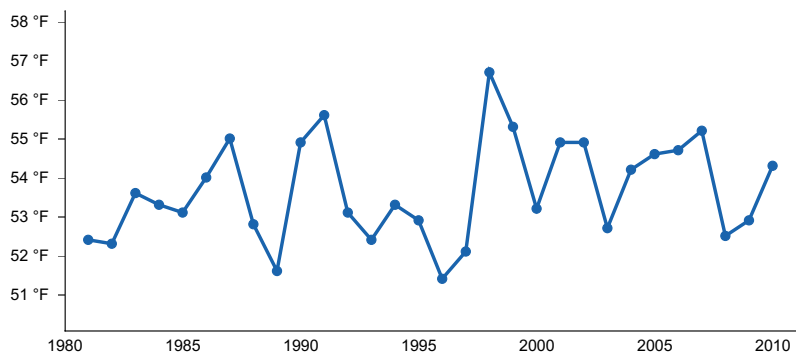


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern



**Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern**

## Climate stations used

- (1) BLOOMINGTON IN UNIV [USC00120784], Bloomington, IN

## Influencing water features

This grouping includes all soil with fragipan layers and elevated water tables will influence site ecology.

## Soil features

This initial PES grouping includes soils that are deep or very deep, moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained and have fragipans. The Fragipan Uplands ecological sites are consist of soils with fragipans. Representative soils include: Spickert, Zanesville, Pekin.

Future field work may result in the group being refined into multiple ESDs.

**Table 4. Representative soil features**

Parent material	(1) Loess–sandstone and shale (2) Residuum–sandstone and siltstone
Surface texture	(1) Silt loam
Family particle size	(1) Fine-silty
Drainage class	Moderately well drained
Permeability class	Very slow
Soil depth	40–72 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	6 in
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	3.5–4.3
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0–3%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	25–45%

## Ecological dynamics

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## State and transition model

## Provisional Ecological Site F120CY002IN – Fragipan Uplands

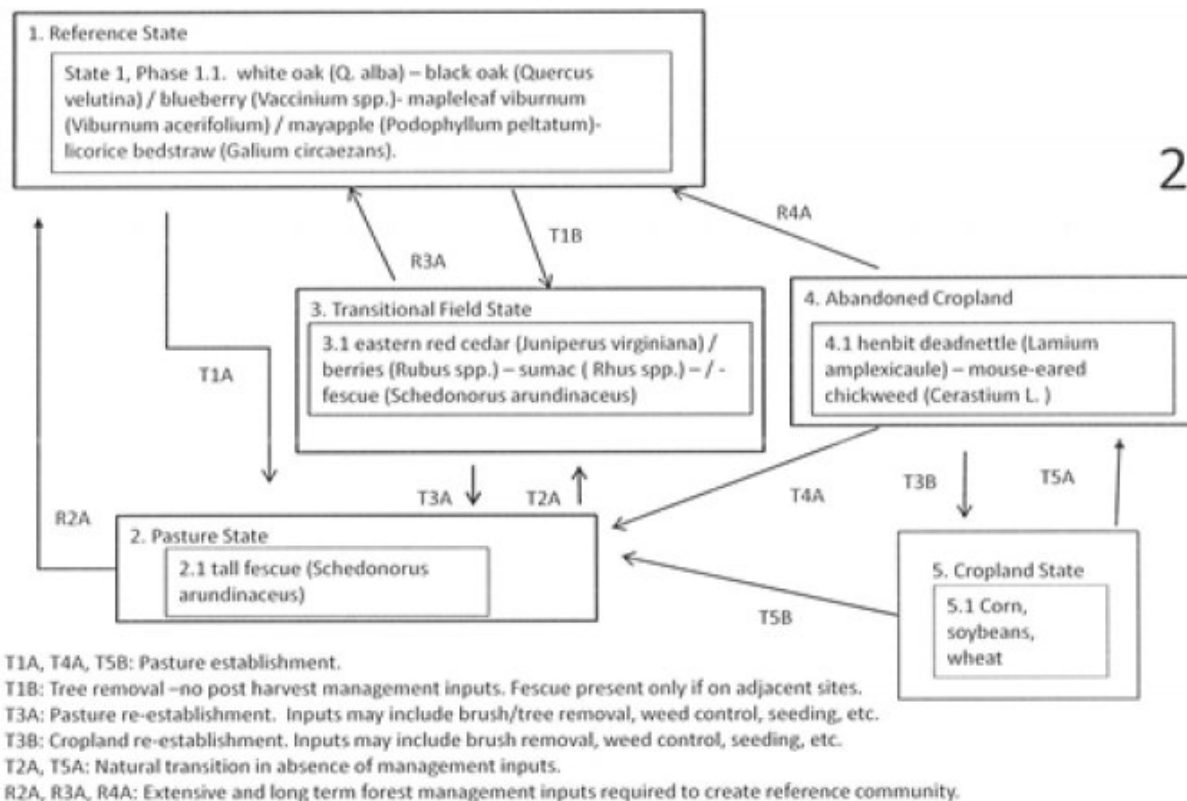


Figure 7. 120C, group2

## Inventory data references

### Site Development and Testing Plan

Future work is needed, as described in a future project plan, to validate the information presented in this provisional ecological site description. Future work includes field sampling, data collection and analysis by qualified vegetation ecologists and soil scientists. As warranted, annual reviews of the project plan can be conducted by the Ecological Site Technical Team. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD are necessary to approve a final document.

## Other references

Cleland, D.T., J.A. Freeouf, J.E. Keys, G.J. Nowacki, C.A. Carpenter, and W.H.McNab. 2007. Ecological Subregions: Sections and Subsections for the conterminous United States. [Map. presentation scale 1:3,500,000, colored; A.M. Sloan, cartographer] Gen. Tech. Report WO-76D. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Washington, DC. ( <https://www.fs.fed.us/research/publications/misc/73326-wo-gtr-76d-cleland2007.pdf> )

Comer, P., D. Faber-Langendoen, R. Evans, S. Gawler, C. Josse, G. Kittel, S. Menard, M. Pyne, M. Reid, K. Schulz, and K. Snow. 2003. Ecological Systems of the United States: A Working Classification of US Terrestrial Systems. NatureServe, Arlington, VA. ( [https://www.natureserve.org/sites/default/files/pcom\\_2003\\_ecol\\_systems\\_us.pdf](https://www.natureserve.org/sites/default/files/pcom_2003_ecol_systems_us.pdf) ).

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Soil Survey Staff-USDA-NRCS [United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service]

2016. National Soils Information Service (NASIS Data Model Version 7.3.4) Lincoln, NE. ([https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/soils/survey/tools/?cid=nrcs142p2\\_053552](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/soils/survey/tools/?cid=nrcs142p2_053552)).

USDA-NRCS [United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service]. 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. ([https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2\\_051845.pdf](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_051845.pdf)).

USNVC [United States National Vegetation Classification]. 2019. United States National Vegetation Classification Database, V2.03. Federal Geographic Data Committee, Vegetation Subcommittee, Washington DC. (<http://usnvc.org> ).

## Approval

Greg Schmidt, 10/01/2024

## 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	Greg Schmidt
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

## Indicators

### 1. Number and extent of rills:

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### 2. Presence of water flow patterns:

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

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

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

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



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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:**

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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:**

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