

Ecological site F121XY015KY

Somewhat Poorly Drained Terrace Lakebeds

Last updated: 10/01/2024
Accessed: 05/13/2025

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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 121X–Kentucky Bluegrass

General: MLRA 121 is in Kentucky (83 percent), southern Ohio (11 percent), and southern Indiana (6 percent). It makes up about 10,680 square miles (27,670 square kilometers). The cities of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Louisville, Frankfort, and Lexington, Kentucky, are in this area.

Physiography: This area is primarily in the Lexington Plain Section of the Interior Low Plateaus Province of the Interior Plains.

Soils: The dominant soil orders in MLRA 121 are Alfisols, Inceptisols, and Mollisols. The soils in the area dominantly have a mesic soil temperature regime, an udic soil moisture regime, and mixed mineralogy. They are shallow to very deep, generally well-drained, and loamy or clayey. Hapludalfs formed in residuum on hills and ridges (Beasley, Cynthiana, Eden, Faywood, Lowell, and McAfee series) and in loess over residuum on hills and ridges (Carmel and Shelbyville series). Paleudalfs (Crider and Maury series) formed in loess or other silty sediments over residuum on hills and ridges. Fragiudalfs (Nicholson series) formed in loess over residuum on ridges. Hapludolls formed in residuum on hills and ridges (Fairmount series) and in alluvium on floodplains (Huntington series). Eutrudepts (Nolin series) formed in alluvium on flood plains.

Geology: Most of this area has an Ordovician-age limestone that has been brought to the surface in the Jessamine Dome, a high part of a much larger structure called the Cincinnati Arch. The strata of limestone have a propensity to form caves and karst topography. Younger units of thin-bedded shale, siltstone, and limestone occur at the eastern and western edges of the area.

The area has no coal-bearing units. Pleistocene-age loess deposits cover most of the bedrock units in this MLRA, and some glacial lake sediments are at the surface in the northwest corner of the area. Unconsolidated alluvium is deposited in the river valleys.

Classification relationships

Wet flatwoods (Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission)

Ecological site concept

The Somewhat Poorly Drained Terrace Lakebeds ecological site includes soils found generally on terrace lakeplains. Representative soils include: McGary.

The natural vegetation of these sites will vary in relationship to the setting, patterns of drainage, disturbances, and previous vegetation communities. Field work is required to delineate and develop a full ecological site description which can be utilized for conservation uses.

State 1. (Reference), Phase 1.1:

Quercus palustris- *Liquidambar styraciflua* /*Lindera benzoin*-*Vitis* spp. /*Carex* spp.(pin oak-sweetgum/spicebush/sedges)

These locations are characterized by somewhat poorly drained soils. Most of these sites in MLRA 121 are cropland, pasture, urban, or successional woodlands; therefore, the exact characteristics of a true historic reference community is difficult to accurately define.

State: 2. Pasture

State 2, Phase 2.1: Managed Pasture. Plant species dominants: *Schedonorus arundinaceus* (tall fescue)

State 2, Phase 2.2: Minimally Managed Pasture. Plant species dominants: *Rosa multiflora* (multiflora rose)- *Rubus* spp. /*Schedonorus arundinaceus* (tall fescue)-*Eutrochium* spp. (joe pye weed)

State 2, Phase 2.3: Native Grass Pasture. Plant species dominants: *Panicum virgatum* (switchgrass) - *Andropogon gerardii* (big bluestem)

State: 3 – Transitional (Abandoned) Field

State 3, Phases 3.1: *Liriodendron tulipifera* *Acer saccharinum* /*Rosa multiflora*- *Rubus* spp. /*Schedonorus arundinaceus*

State: 4. Old Cropfield Pioneer Woodland

State 4, Phase 4.1: Plant species dominants: henbit deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*)- mouse-eared chickweed (*Cerastium* L.)

State: 5. Cropland

State 5, Phase 5.1: Plant species dominants: *Zea* spp. – *Glycine* spp.

Plants on these sites will be dependent upon seeding and management. Most common crops are corn and soybeans. Due to the drainage issues on these soil, many have been tilled extensively to facilitate crop production.

Associated sites

| | |
|-------------|---|
| F121XY014KY | Poorly Drained & Very Poorly Drained Terrace Lakebed Poorly Drained and Very Poorly Drained Terrace Lakebeds... |
|-------------|---|

Similar sites

| | |
|-------------|---|
| F121XY017KY | Somewhat Poorly Drained Fragipan Terrace Somewhat Poorly Drained Fragipan Terrace |
|-------------|---|

Table 1. Dominant plant species

| | |
|------------|--|
| Tree | (1) <i>Quercus palustris</i> (2) <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> |
| Shrub | (1) <i>Lindera benzoin</i> (2) <i>Vitis</i> |
| Herbaceous | (1) <i>Carex</i> |

Physiographic features

This initial PES group includes soils found generally on terrace lakeplains. The natural vegetation of these sites may vary in relationship to the setting, patterns of drainage, and disturbance.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Landforms | (1) Lake plain (2) Depression (3) Flat |
| Runoff class | Low to high |

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Flooding frequency | None to rare |
| Ponding frequency | None |
| Elevation | 133–311 m |
| Slope | 0–4% |
| Ponding depth | 0 cm |
| Water table depth | 15–36 cm |
| Aspect | Aspect is not a significant factor |

Climatic features

These ecological sites are located in MLRA 121 and are at the northern periphery of the humid subtropical climate zone. Generally characterized by hot, humid summers and cold winter, the area has four distinct seasons. The expected annual precipitation for sites included in this ecological site description is generally in the range of 40 to 50 inches. The majority of precipitations falls during the freeze-free months, and thunderstorms with heavy rainfall are common during the spring and summer months. The freeze-free period varies somewhat based on localized topography and longitude.

MLRA climate summary: The average annual precipitation in most of this area is 41 to 45 inches. It is 45 to 52 inches along the southern edge of the area. About one-half of the precipitation falls during the growing season. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms. The annual snowfall averages about 14 inches (370 millimeters). The average annual temperature is 51 to 57 degrees F (10 to 14 degrees C). From: 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, 2006)

Table 3. Representative climatic features

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Frost-free period (characteristic range) | 171-182 days |
| Freeze-free period (characteristic range) | 190-203 days |
| Precipitation total (characteristic range) | 1,143 mm |
| Frost-free period (actual range) | 169-184 days |
| Freeze-free period (actual range) | 187-206 days |
| Precipitation total (actual range) | 1,143 mm |
| Frost-free period (average) | 177 days |
| Freeze-free period (average) | 197 days |
| Precipitation total (average) | 1,143 mm |

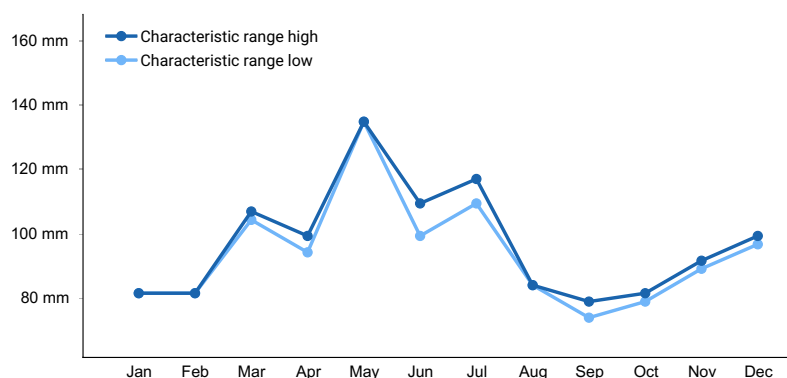


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

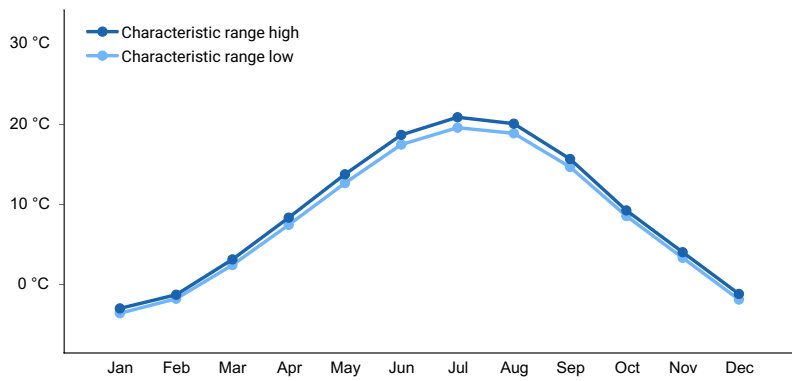


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

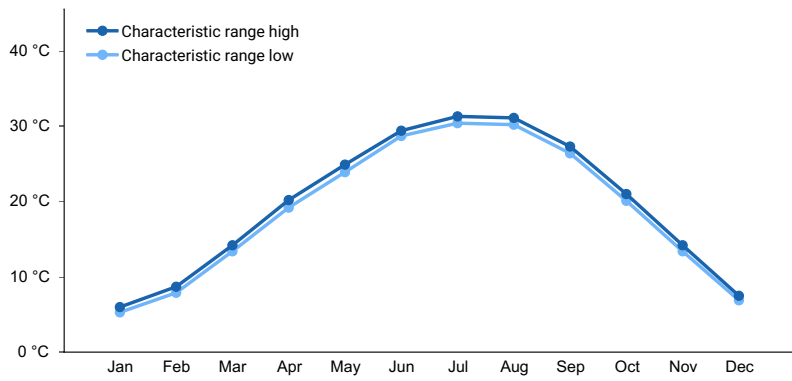


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

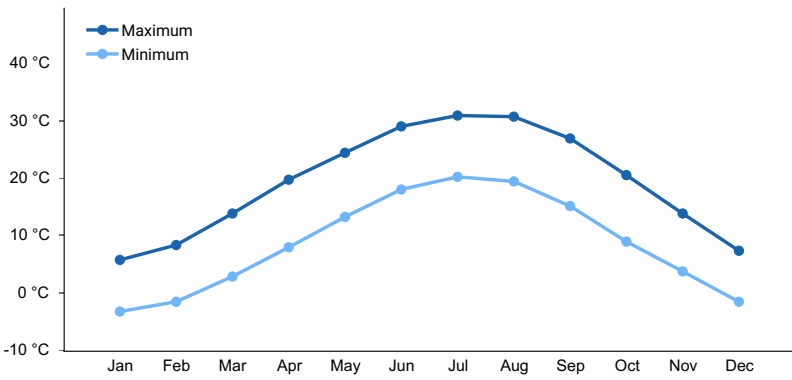


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

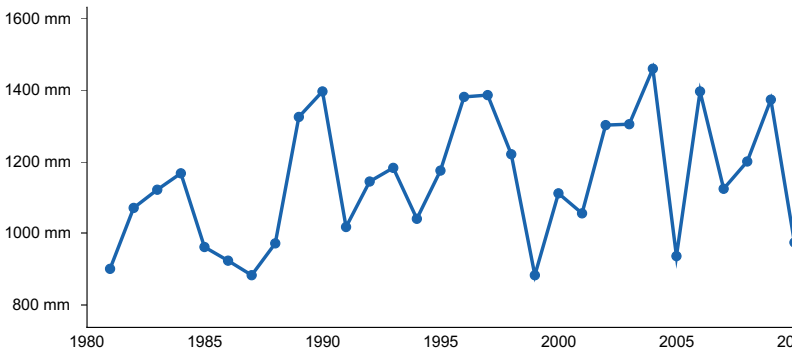


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

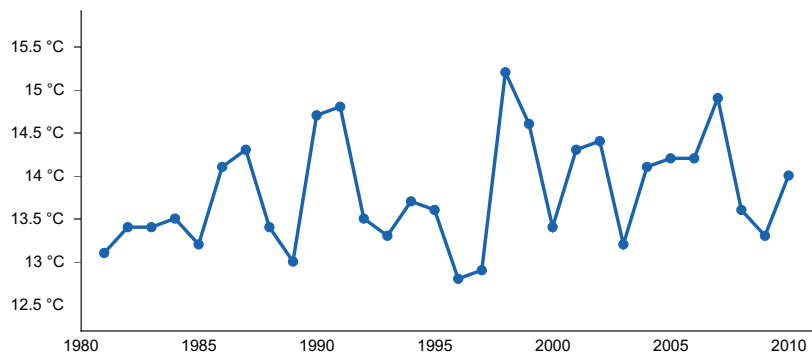


Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) LEXINGTON BLUEGRASS AP [USW00093820], Lexington, KY
- (2) LOUISVILLE INTL AP [USW00093821], Louisville, KY

Influencing water features

There are no influencing water features.

Soil features

This PES group consists of one soil : McGary. A SWPD soil on terrace lakebeds.

Table 4. Representative soil features

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Parent material | (1) Lacustrine deposits |
| Surface texture | (1) Silt loam (2) Clay loam |
| Family particle size | (1) Clayey |
| Drainage class | Somewhat poorly drained |
| Permeability class | Very slow |
| Soil depth | 183 cm |
| Surface fragment cover <=3" | 0% |
| Surface fragment cover >3" | 0% |
| Available water capacity (0-101.6cm) | 12.7–15.24 cm |
| Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm) | 4.5–8.4 |
| Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified) | 0–5% |
| Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified) | 0–1% |

Ecological dynamics

State and transition model

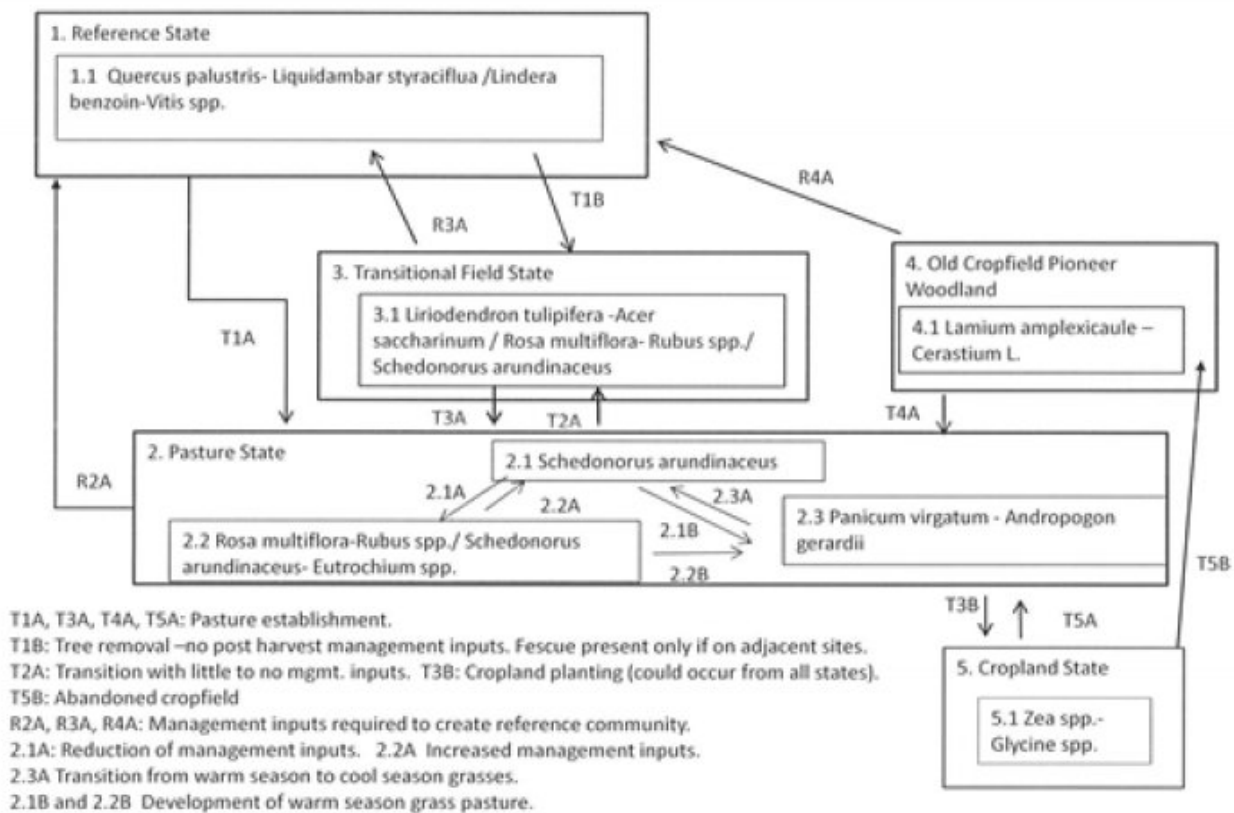


Figure 7. MLRA 121, Group 15

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.

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Contributors

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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 | 05/13/2025 |
| Approved by | Greg Schmidt |
| 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:**
