USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ecological site F124XY010OH
Fine Terrace and Plain

Last updated: 9/26/2024
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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 124X–Western Allegheny Plateau

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 124—Western Allegheny Plateau (USDA-NRCS, 2006)
MLRA 124, Western Allegheny Plateau extends from and includes western PA just north of Pittsburgh through southeastern OH to and includes northeastern KY. This area is primarily in the Kanawha Section of the Appalachian Province of the Appalachian Highlands. This MLRA is on an unglaciated dissected plateau with narrow level valley floors, rolling ridgetops, and hilly to steep slopes with dendritic stream drainages. A notable exception is the broad, Teays Valley, and other glacio-fluvial and glacio-lacustrine features attributed to nearby Pleistocene glaciation. Elevation ranges from 660 to 1310 feet (200 to 400 meters). The geology is predominantly cyclic beds of sandstone, siltstone, clay, shale and coal of Pennsylvanian age. Soils are dominated by Udalfs, Udults, and Ochcrepts with a mesic temperature regime in combination with five parent materials, residuum, colluvium, alluvium, eolian, and extra-glacial material of glacio-fluvial and glaciolacustrine mesic materials. The climate is predominately a humid continental to temperate, with 940 to 1145 millimeters (37 to 45 inches) of precipitation. Average annual temperature is 8 to 13 degree C (46 to 56 degrees F) with a freeze-free period averaging 185 days. Much of the areas is either forest or in farms, principally for hay and pasture, with fruits and vegetables grown locally. Coal and gas extraction are important industries in the northern part of the MLRA.

Classification relationships

USDA-NRCS (USDA 2006):
Land Resource Region (LRR): N—East and Central Farming and Forest Region
Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 124—Western Allegheny Plateau

USDA-FS (Cleland et al. 2007):
Province: 221 - Eastern Broadleaf Province
Section: 221E - Southern Unglaciated Allegheny Plateau
Subsection: 221Ea - Pittsburgh Low Plateau
221Eb - Teays Plateau
221Ee - Unglaciated Muskingam Plains
221Ef - Western Hocking Plateau
221Eg - Lower Scotio River Plateau
221En - Kinniconick and Licking Knobs
Section: 221H - North Cumberland Plateau (in Part)
Subsection: 221Hb - Kinniconick and Licking Knobs
221He - Miami - Scioto Plain - Tipton Till Plain

Ecological site concept

Within the dissected plateau of the unglaciated Western Allegheny Plateau, the Fine Terrace and Plain ecological site is set in upland landscapes such as valleys, river valleys, plateaus, hills, and uplands consisting of a range of

parent materials including [old] alluvium, glaciofluvial materials, glaciolacustrine materials, and fine loess. The soils texture family is fine, clayey, fine-silty, fine-loamy, and coarse-loamy. These soils are somewhat poorly drained to well-drained. Representative soils include: Glenford, Fitchville, Caneadea, Mentor, Shinrock, Rush, Rainsboro, Chili, Negley, Fox, Conotton, Bogart, Cidermill, Chenango, Casco, Ockley, Martinsville, Alford, Mcgary, Otwell, Omulga, Tyler, Doles, Allegheny, Euclid, Sciotoville, Monongahela, Elkinsville, Weinbach, Wheeling, Cotaco, Johnsburg, Morehead, Whitley, Licking, Caneycreek, Rowdy, Ezel, Markland, Wyatt, Tygart, Kanawha, Sardinia, Skidmore Variant, Ashton, Elk, Riney, Frankstown Variant, Gavers, Wellston, Westmore, Tarhollow, Zanesville, Keene, Coolville. Representative plant communities include: Western Allegheny White Oak - Beech Forest, and/or Interior Low Plateau Beech - Maple Forest.

Associated sites

F124XY009OH	**Coarse Terrace and Plain** Coarse Terrace and Plain occur on similar parent materials composed of coarser textured materials.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) *Quercus alba* (2) *Fagus grandifolia*
Shrub	(1) *Cornus florida*
Herbaceous	(1) *Goodyera repens*

Physiographic features

The Fine Terrace and Plain ecological site consists of several parent materials including materials including [old] alluvium, glaciofluvial materials, glaciolacustrine materials, and fine loess. This ecological site can be found within a variety of landscape settings including valleys, river valleys, plateaus, hills, and uplands. Terraces and plains of the unglaciated, Western Alleghany Plateau are variable, with some sites derived from old alluvium derived from sandstone and siltstone, and other sites derived from fine eolian sands, and still other sites from glacial outwash. and proglacial lake beds . Even though this region of the Alleghany Plateau was not glaciated, meltwater rivers and stream deposited outwash sands along their course. Glacial meltwaters also created proglacial lake beds, and fine windblown sediments were deposited nearby.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Terrace (2) Lake plain
Runoff class	Very low to very high
Elevation	350–1,300 ft
Slope	0–40%
Water table depth	0–72 in
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

The regional climate of the unglaciated Western Allegheny Plateau is predominately a humid continental climate grading at the extreme southwestern corner a to humid temperate climate with hot summers and cool winters (Beck et al., 2018; Bailey, 2014). However, the local climate is highly influenced by the dissected terrain, where climatic variations may be greater at the local scale, e.g., cooler temperatures and shorter growing season at higher elevations and more northerly latitudes. Winter precipitation is mostly snow.

Climate change is occurring, and the resiliency of any ecological site will depend upon the direct and indirect effects upon component species and shifting atmospheric and soil conditions.

On these ecological sites, dry-mesic upland forests are at a low vulnerability risk with some impacts considered

positive and mixed mesophytic forests are at a moderate vulnerability risk to climate change with impacts considered neutral-negative. Large gap disturbances from greater storm events, drier summer and fall conditions, and a potential increase in fire frequency, can favor oaks and hickories over American Beech and tuliptree and more southern plant species. Greater frequency and magnitude of storm events may increase large gap disturbances coupled with drier conditions in summer and fall may increase wildfires (Butler et al., 2015). Longer growing seasons may change plant species composition.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	122-142 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	156-178 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	40-44 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	115-148 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	148-184 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	38-46 in
Frost-free period (average)	132 days
Freeze-free period (average)	167 days
Precipitation total (average)	42 in

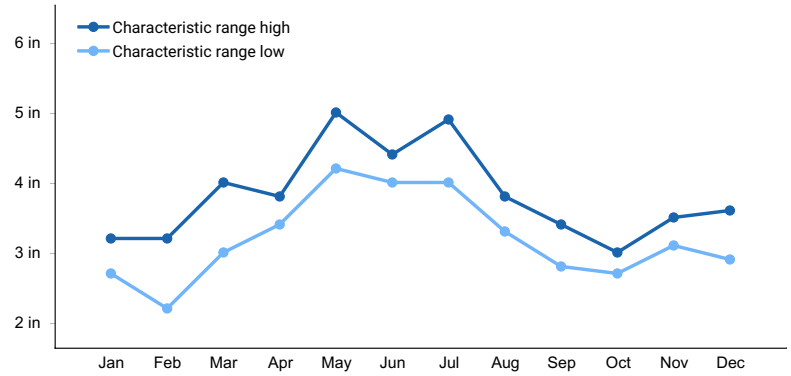


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

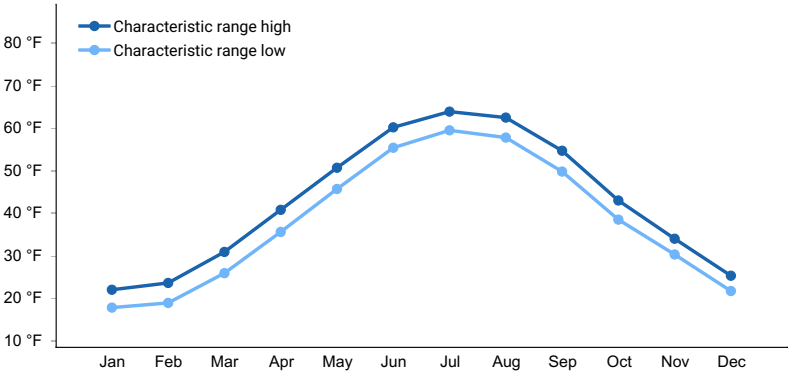


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

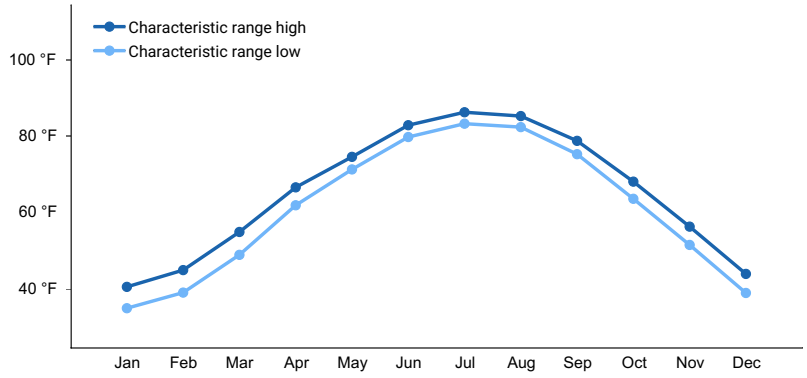


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

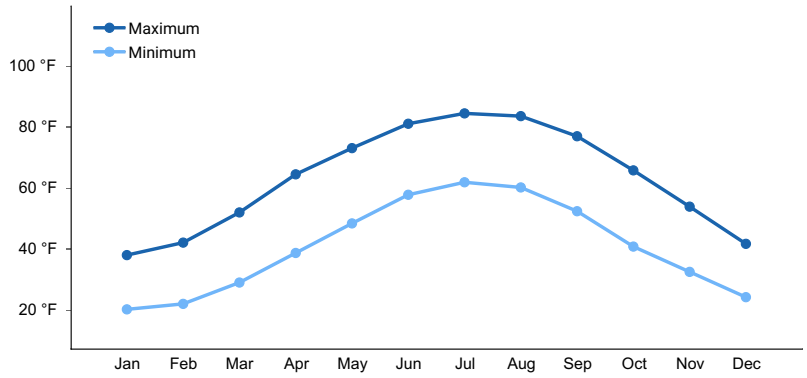


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

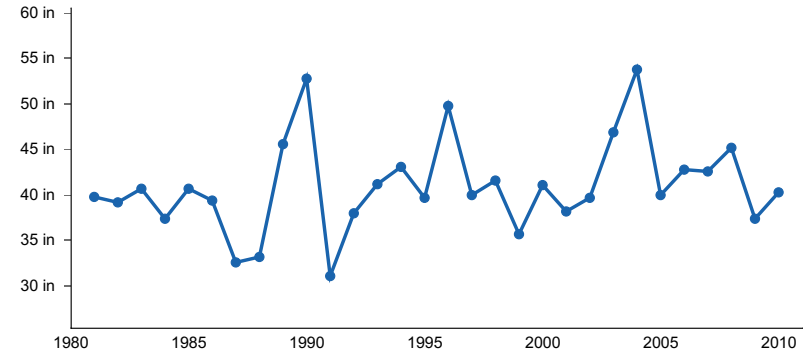


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

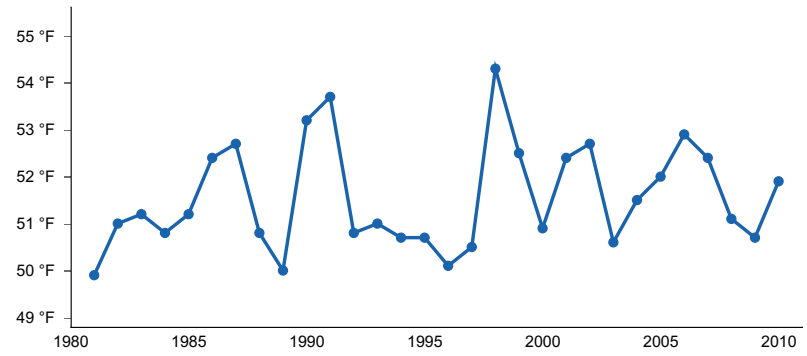


Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) PUTNEYVILLE 2 SE DAM [USC00367229], Dayton, PA
- (2) FORD CITY 4 S DAM [USC00362942], Ford City, PA
- (3) BUTLER 2 SW [USC00361139], Butler, PA

- (4) DENISON WTR WKS [USC00332160], Dennison, OH
- (5) NEW PHILADELPHIA FLD [USW00004852], New Philadelphia, OH
- (6) MILLERSBURG [USC00335297], Millersburg, OH
- (7) DANVILLE 2 W [USC00332044], Danville, OH
- (8) COSHOCTON AG RSCH STN [USC00331905], Fresno, OH
- (9) COSHOCTON WPC PLT [USC00331890], Coshocton, OH
- (10) ZANESVILLE MUNI AP [USW00093824], Zanesville, OH
- (11) PHILO 3 SW [USC00336600], Philo, OH
- (12) NEW LEXINGTON 2 NW [USC00335857], New Lexington, OH
- (13) LOGAN [USC00334672], Logan, OH
- (14) JACKSON 3 NW [USC00334004], Jackson, OH
- (15) WAVERLY [USC00338830], Waverly, OH
- (16) PORTSMOUTH-SCIOTOVILLE [USC00336781], South Shore, OH
- (17) WARNOCK2 [USC00158432], Greenup, KY
- (18) GRAYSON 2 E [USC00153389], Grayson, KY
- (19) OLIVE HILL 5NE [USC00156012], Olive Hill, KY
- (20) GRAYSON 3 SW [USC00153391], Grayson, KY
- (21) GIMLET 9N [USC00153230], Olive Hill, KY
- (22) CAVE RUN LAKE [USC00152791], Morehead, KY
- (23) ASHLAND [USC00150254], South Point, KY

Influencing water features

Water features are not typically associated with this ecological site, but may be incidental.

Wetland description

N/A

Soil features

Representative soils include: Glenford, Fitchville, Caneadea, Mentor, Shinrock, Rush, Rainsboro, Chili, Negley, Fox, Conotton, Bogart, Cidermill, Chenango, Casco, Ockley, Martinsville, Alford, Mcgary, Otwell, Omulga, Tyler, Doles, Allegheny, Euclid, Sciotoville, Monongahela, Elkinsville, Weinbach, Wheeling, Cotaco, Johnsburg, Morehead, Whitley, Licking, Caneycreek, Rowdy, Ezel, Markland, Wyatt, Tygart, Kanawha, Sardinia, Skidmore Variant, Ashton, Elk, Riney, Frankstown Variant, Gavers, Wellston, Westmore, Tarhollow, Zanesville, Keene, Coolville. . The soils texture family is fine, clayey, fine-silty, fine-loamy, and coarse-loamy. These soils are somewhat poorly drained to well-drained.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Alluvium (2) Lacustrine deposits
Surface texture	(1) Silt (2) Silt loam (3) Silty clay loam
Drainage class	Somewhat poorly drained to well drained
Soil depth	15–72 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	1–2%
Surface fragment cover >3"	1–10%
Available water capacity (Depth not specified)	1–12 in
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (Depth not specified)	3.5–8.5
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0–85%

Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0–80%

Ecological dynamics

[Caveat: The vegetation information contained in this section is only provisional, based on concepts, not yet validated with field work.*]

The vegetation groupings described in this section are based on the terrestrial ecological system classification and vegetation associations developed by NatureServe (Comer et al., 2003). Terrestrial ecological SYSTEMS are specifically defined as a group of plant community types called ASSOCIATIONS that tend to co-occur within landscapes with similar ecological processes, substrates, and/or environmental gradients. They are intended to provide a classification unit that is readily mappable, often from terrain and remote imagery, and readily identifiable by conservation and resource managers in the field. A given system will typically manifest itself in a landscape at intermediate geographic scales of tens-to-thousands of hectares and will persist for 50 or more years. A vegetation association is a plant community that is much more specific to a given soil, geology, landform, climate, hydrology, and disturbance history. It is the basic unit for vegetation classification and recognized by the US National Vegetation Classification (FDGC, 2008; USNVC, 2017). Each association will be named by the diagnostic and often dominant species that occupy the different height strata (represented by tree, shrub, and herb layers). Within the NatureServe Explorer database, ecological systems are numbered by a community Ecological System Code (CES) and individual vegetation associations are assigned an identification number called a Community Element Global Code (CEGL).

Additional and more localized vegetation information can be provided by the various State Heritage Programs. Additional insights to the vegetation were provided by Plant Communities of Ohio: A Preliminary Classification (Anderson, 1982)) and Terrestrial and Palustrine Plant Communities of Pennsylvania, 2nd Edition (Zimmerman et al., 2012). .

Due to a long history of human activity, the reference condition more accurately reflects the current naturalized, minimally-managed state rather than the historic, pre-European settlement condition. Terraces and plains of the unglaciated, Western Alleghany Plateau are variable, with some sites derived from old alluvium derived from sandstone and siltstone, and other sites derived from eolian sands, and still other sites from glacial outwash.

The vegetation of the Fine Terrace and Plain ecological site is quite varied and can be dominated by oak-maple-tuliptree, with other co-associates like American beech, white ash, basswood, yellow buckeye and sporadically eastern hemlock. Within the reference state, the plant associations are predominately part of the South Central Interior Mesophytic Forest system (CES202.887) and to a lessor degree the Central Appalachian Dry Oak-Pine Forest system (CES202.591) (NatureServe 2020). Besides the mature plant community-types listed, other spontaneous, successional plant community-types may exist following natural disturbances.

Agents-of-change within any ecological site include both natural and anthropogenic stressors. Canopy disturbances such as fire, wind, and ice storms, will tend to favor oaks and pines. (Lafon et al., 2017). Conversely, fire suppression, a changing climate, and natural forest succession effect mesophication, a trend toward more shade tolerant species, e.g., white ash, sugar maple, red maple, American beech. (Nowacki et al., 2008). However, site conditions do influence the degree of mesophication. Within the the Fine Terrace and Plain ecological site, mesophication is more pronounced in more common mesic conditions, while more subdued on less common xeric conditions. Where deer densities are high, deer browse has a pronounced effect on plant regeneration, structure, and species diversity. However, deer browse can vary across the landscape (Royo et al., 2017). Currently, deer browsing pressure in southeastern Ohio is relatively low (Apsley and McCarthy, 2004). Invasive and incursive plants can directly affect forest ecosystems in many ways; through direct competition for resources, alter fire or hydrologic conditions and affect species diversity. Insect pests and diseases such as the Gypsy moth, oak decline and armillaria root rot can cause reduced productivity and mortality in target oak species (Butler et al., 2015). With increasing moisture stress and drought, beech bark disease may increase. (Butler et al., 2015). Within the unglaciated Western Alleghany Plateau, most of the hills remain forested, with some agriculture on lands flat enough to support it. Agriculture and residential development are concentrated in the valleys. Surface mining for

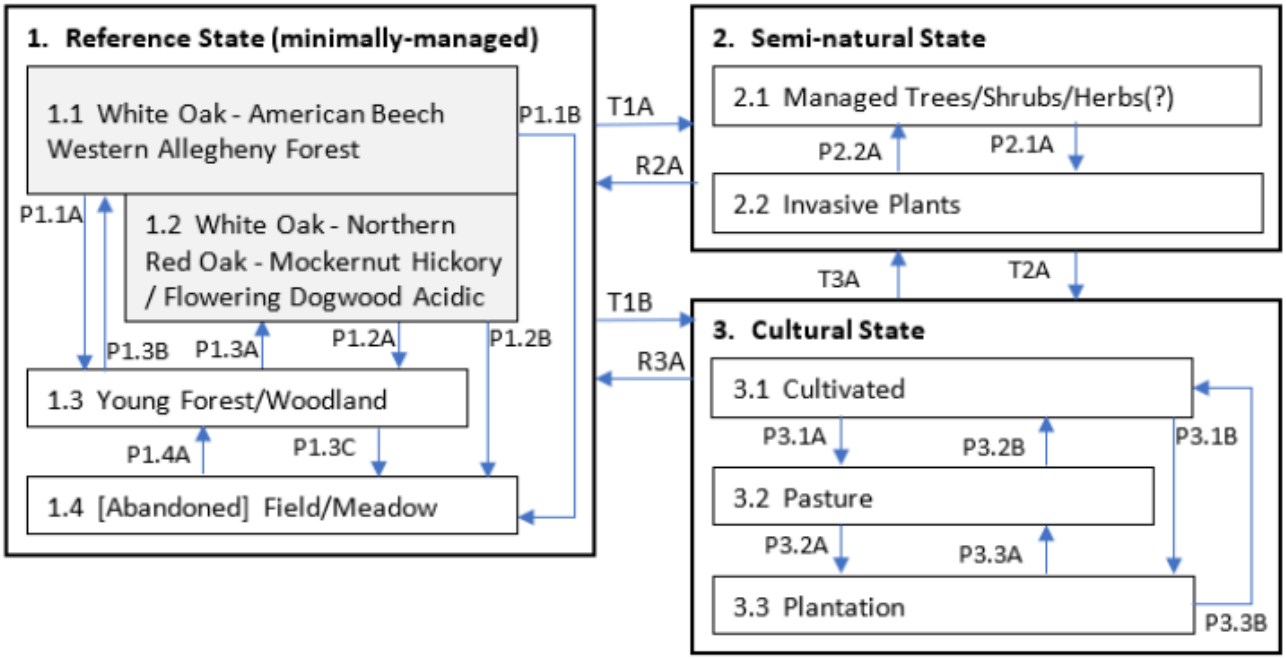
coal affects land and water to varying degrees (Ohio Div. of Wildlife, 2015; USDA-NRCS, 2006).

Other ecological states, a Semi-natural State and a Cultural State are recognized. The Semi-natural State would expect plant communities where ecological processes primarily operate with some conditioning by land management, e.g., managed forests, or plant communities that are an artifact of land management e.g., predominately invasive plants. The Cultural State is a completely converted or transformed state; heavily or completely conditioned by land management, e.g., cultivated lands, pasture/haylands, vineyards, and plantations, etc. Generally, the form of vegetation in the Semi-natural State or the Cultural State is not able to be specified until field work is conducted.

[*Caveat] The vegetation information presented is representative of complex plant communities. Key indicator plants 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 geography. The reference plant community is not necessarily the management goal. The drafts of species lists are merely 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.

State and transition model

124XY010 – Fine Terrace and Plain



Transition	*Drivers/practices*
T1A	Forest mgmt., Disturbance
T1B, T2A	Disturbance/cutting/clearing, Brush removal
R2A, R2B	Restoration & Mgmt, Forest Stand Improvement, Early Successional Habitat Development, Upland Wildlife Mgmt, Invasive spp. Control, Plant establishment
T3A	Abandonment, Plant establishment, Forest mgmt.
P2.1A	Disturbance, Invasive species establishment
P2.2A	Invasive spp. Control, Forest mgmt..
P1.4A, P1.3A, 1.3B	Abandonment, succession
P1.1A, P1.1B, P1.2A, P1.2B, P1.3C	Disturbance, Early Successional Habitat Development
P3.1A, P3.2A, P3.3A, P3.1B, P3.2B, P3.3B	Changing Agricultural phases

State 1
Reference State (minimally-managed)

As a result of a long history of human activity, the associations listed below, may in reality, reflect the current naturalized, minimally-managed state rather than the historic, pre-European settlement condition. Notice transition pathways are not always designated between some of the communities in the reference state because the differences in vegetation are more controlled by landscape position, rather than disturbances or management, or that the relationships are not understood. In addition, undisclosed successional plant community-types following disturbance may be included as community phases. Within the reference state, the plant communities are quite variable and may include: • *Quercus alba* - *Fagus grandifolia* Western Allegheny Forest (CEGL006144) (Translated Name: White Oak - American Beech Western Allegheny Forest) [Common Name: Western Allegheny White Oak - Beech Forest], • *Fagus grandifolia* - *Acer saccharum* - *Liriodendron tulipifera* Unglaciated Forest (CEGL002411)

(Translated Name: American Beech - Sugar Maple - Tuliptree Unglaciated Forest) [Common Name: Interior Low Plateau Beech - Maple Forest], And also other plant communities: • *Quercus velutina* - *Quercus alba* - Carya (glabra, ovata) Forest (CEGL002076) (Translated Name: Black Oak - White Oak - (Pignut Hickory, Shagbark Hickory) Forest) [Common Name: Black Oak - White Oak - Hickory Forest] • *Tsuga canadensis* - *Fagus grandifolia* - *Acer saccharum* / (*Hamamelis virginiana*, *Kalmia latifolia*) Forest CEGL006304). (Translated name: Eastern Hemlock - American Beech - Sugar Maple / (American Witch-hazel, Mountain Laurel) Forest) [Common name: East-Central Hemlock - Hardwood Forest]. (Source: NatureServe 2020)

Community 1.1
White Oak - American Beech Western Allegheny Forest

Quercus alba - *Fagus grandifolia* Western Allegheny Forest (CEGL006144) (Translated Name: White Oak - American Beech Western Allegheny Forest) [Common Name: Western Allegheny White Oak - Beech Forest] The tree canopy is dominated by white oak (*Quercus alba*), with associates including American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and hickories (Carya spp.). The subcanopy includes American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), and pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*). The shrub layer contains flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), and American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) sprouts. The herbaceous layer is composed of lesser rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera repens*), fourleaf yam (*Dioscorea quaternata*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), white snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), black baneberry (*Actaea racemosa* [= Cimicifuga racemosa]), eastern woodland sedge (*Carex blanda*), rattlesnake fern (*Botrychium virginianum*), white bear sedge (*Carex albursina*), hairy Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum pubescens*), early blue violet (Viola x.palmata,) and yellow fairybells (*Prosartes lanuginosa* [= Disporum lanuginosum]). (Source: NatureServe 2020 [accessed April 2020], USNVC 2019 [accessed April 2020]).

Community 1.2
American Beech - Sugar Maple - Tuliptree Unglaciated Forest

Fagus grandifolia - *Acer saccharum* - *Liriodendron tulipifera* Unglaciated Forest (CEGL002411) (Translated Name: American Beech - Sugar Maple - Tuliptree Unglaciated Forest) [Common Name: Interior Low Plateau Beech - Maple Forest] The forest canopy is dominated by American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Other canopy species include tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*), and bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*). Shrubs commonly found in this community are pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) and northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). The herb layer can be dense and diverse, including plants like northern maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Canada wildginger (*Asarum canadense*), eastern woodland sedge (*Carex blanda*), squirrelcorn (*Dicentra canadensis*), fourleaf yam (*Dioscorea quaternata*), licorice bedstraw (*Galium circaezans*), Canada moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*), broad beechfern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). To the south, in the Appalachians of eastern Kentucky, other typical trees include yellow buckeye (*Aesculus flava*) (locally abundant), butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*), chinquapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*), and slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*). A variable shrub cover may include alternateleaf dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). An equally variable, moderate ground cover may include Canada wildginger (*Asarum canadense*), white wood aster (*Eurybia divaricata* [= Aster divaricatus]), narrowleaf gladefern (*Diplazium pycnocarpon* [= Athyrium pycnocarpon]), sharplobe hepatica (*Hepatica nobilis* var. acuta [= Hepatica acutiloba]), bland sweet-cicely (Osmorhiza claytonia), woodland bluegrass (*Poa sylvestris*), hooked buttercup (*Ranunculus recurvatus*), woodland stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*), and largeflower bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), and other plants. (Source: NatureServe 2020 [accessed April 2020], USNVC 2019 [accessed April 2020]).

Community 1.3
Successional forest/shrublands

(to be developed)

Community 1.4
Sucessional/[Abandoned] Field/Meadow

to be developed

Pathway P1.1A
Community 1.1 to 1.3

disturbance

Pathway P1.2A
Community 1.2 to 1.3

disturbance

Pathway P1.3A
Community 1.3 to 1.1

vegetation development/succession

Pathway P1.3B
Community 1.3 to 1.2

vegetation development/succession

Pathway P1.3C
Community 1.3 to 1.4

Pathway P1.4A
Community 1.4 to 1.3

Abandonment, succession

State 2
Semi-natural State

The Semi-natural State would expect plant communities where ecological processes are primarily operating with some land conditioning in the past or present, e.g., managed forests, or plant communities that are an artifact of land management e.g., predominately invasive plants.

Community 2.1
Managed Forest/Woodland

(to be developed)

Community 2.2
Invasive Plants

(to be developed)

Pathway P2.1A
Community 2.1 to 2.2

invasive plant establishment, vegetation development/succession

Pathway P2.2A
Community 2.2 to 2.1

invasive plant management, forest management

Conservation practices

Forest Stand Improvement
Invasive Plant Species Control

State 3
Cultural State

The Cultural State would expect the ecological site to be very strongly conditioned by land management, i.e., transformed/converted to cultivated, pasture, or plantation.

Community 3.1
Cultivated

(to be developed)

Community 3.2
Pasture

(to be developed)

Community 3.3
Plantation

(to be developed)

Transition T1A
State 1 to 2

forest management, disturbance, invasive plant establishment

Conservation practices

Forest Stand Improvement

Transition T1B
State 1 to 3

cutting, land clearing, plant establishment

Conservation practices

Land Clearing

Restoration pathway R2A
State 2 to 1

plant removal, plant establishment, successional management

Conservation practices

Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control

Transition T2A
State 2 to 3

cutting, land clearing, plant establishment

Conservation practices

Land Clearing

Restoration pathway R3A
State 3 to 1

plant removal, plant establishment, successional management

Conservation practices

Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control

Restoration pathway R3B
State 3 to 2

forest management, disturbance, invasive plant establishment

Conservation practices

Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management

Additional community tables

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

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Contributors

Nels Barrett, Ph.D.

Jason Teets

Approval

Greg Schmidt, 9/26/2024

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	06/30/2020
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):**

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

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

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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:

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

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

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

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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:**
