

Ecological site F144BY504ME Enriched Loamy Cove

Last updated: 9/27/2024
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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): 144B—New England and Eastern New York Upland, Northern Part

This major land resource area (MLRA) is in Maine (56 percent), New Hampshire (22 percent), Vermont (14 percent), Massachusetts (6 percent), Connecticut (1 percent), and New York (1 percent). It makes up about 22,728 square miles (58,864 square kilometers). The MLRA consists of a relatively young landscape shaped by the Laurentide Ice Sheet, which covered the region from 35,000 to 10,000 years ago. Rolling hills of dense basal till converge on ridges of shallow bedrock that were scoured by glacial ice. River valleys that were flooded by melting glacial water or seawater house large expanses of glacial outwash and stratified drift in inland areas and, to a lesser extent, glaciomarine and glaciolacustrine sediment deposits in coastal areas. Organic bogs, ablation till, and alluvial flood plains make up the remaining portions of the MLRA.

The soils in this region are dominantly Entisols, Spodosols, and Inceptisols. They commonly have a fragipan. The dominant suborders are Ochrepts, Orthods, Aquepts, Fluvents, and Saprists. The soils in the region dominantly have a frigid soil temperature regime with some cryic areas at higher elevation, a udic soil moisture regime, and mixed mineralogy. Most of the land is forested, and 98 percent is privately owned. Significant amounts of forest products are produced including lumber, pulpwood, Christmas trees, and maple syrup. Principal agricultural crops include forage and grains for dairy cattle, potatoes, apples, and blueberries. Wildlife habitat and recreation are important land uses. Stoniness, steep slopes, and poor drainage limit the use of many of the soils.

Classification relationships

NRCS:

Land Resource Region: R—Northeastern Forage and Forest Region

MLRA: 144B—New England and Eastern New York Upland, Northern Part

Ecological site concept

This site occurs in well-drained coves, drainageways, and other protected areas where nutrients accumulate. These are typically small inclusions within larger hardwood stands and are often not mapped as major soil components. However, the soils and vegetation are distinctive, with a thick dark-colored mineral horizon at the surface indicating high organic matter inputs. White ash, sugar maple, and yellow birch are often abundant on this site, with other rich site indicators such as royal fern and blue cohosh.

Associated sites

F144BY502ME	Loamy Till Toeslope The somewhat poorly- and poorly-drained Loamy Till Toeslope site occurs in similar landscape positions as the Enriched Loamy Cove site, but tends not to accumulate quite as many nutrients and water.
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F144BY501ME	Loamy Slope (Northern Hardwoods) The Loamy Slope site typically occurs upslope of the Enriched Loamy Cove site.
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Similar sites

F144BY506ME	Semi-rich Till Slope The Semi-rich Till Slope site is very similar to the Enriched Loamy Cove site, but it derives its nutrients primarily from calcareous parent material and does not accumulate nutrients due to its more exposed landscape position. Therefore it tends to be less rich than the Enriched Loamy Cove.
F144BY507ME	Semi-rich Till Toeslope The Semi-rich Till Toeslope is somewhat poorly- and poorly-drained, supporting wetter species than the Enriched Loamy Cove site. Otherwise, these two sites may be very similar.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Acer saccharum</i> (2) <i>Betula papyrifera</i>
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

This site occurs in small concave areas that are highly protected, such that nutrients accumulate and enrich the site. There are often small ephemeral streams and drainageways through these sites, though they also occur at the base of hills, cliffs, or other areas receiving nutrient inputs from higher in the watershed. The site occurs from sea level to 2500 feet, mostly on gentle slopes.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Upland > Hill
Runoff class	Medium to high
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	0–2,500 ft
Slope	0–35%
Water table depth	0–72 in
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

The climate is humid and temperate and is characterized by warm summers and cold winters. Precipitation generally is evenly distributed throughout the year. Near the coast, it is slightly lower in summer. In inland areas, it is slightly higher in spring and fall. Rainfall occurs during high-intensity, convective thunderstorms in summer. In winter, most of the precipitation occurs as moderate-intensity storms (northeasters) that produce large amounts of rain or snow. Heavy snowfalls commonly occur late in winter. Temperatures and the length of the freeze-free period increase from north to south and closer to the coast.

This major land resource area (MLRA) covers four states and may have substantial climate variability among locations: Maine (56 percent), New Hampshire (22 percent), Vermont (14 percent), Massachusetts (6 percent), Connecticut (1 percent), and New York (1 percent).

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	117–140 days
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Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	144-170 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	42-48 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	98-146 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	133-180 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	40-54 in
Frost-free period (average)	126 days
Freeze-free period (average)	159 days
Precipitation total (average)	46 in

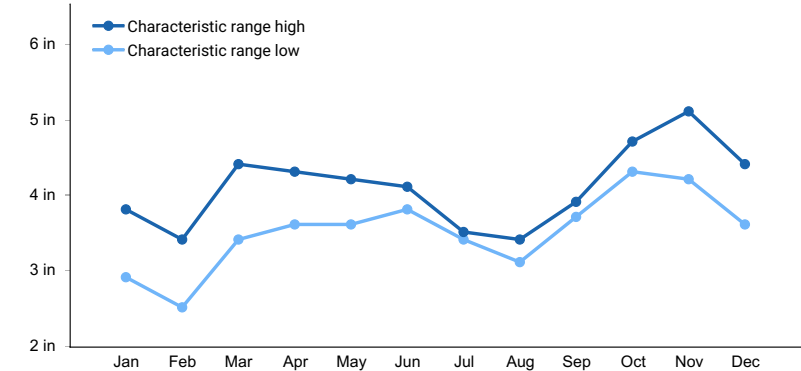


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

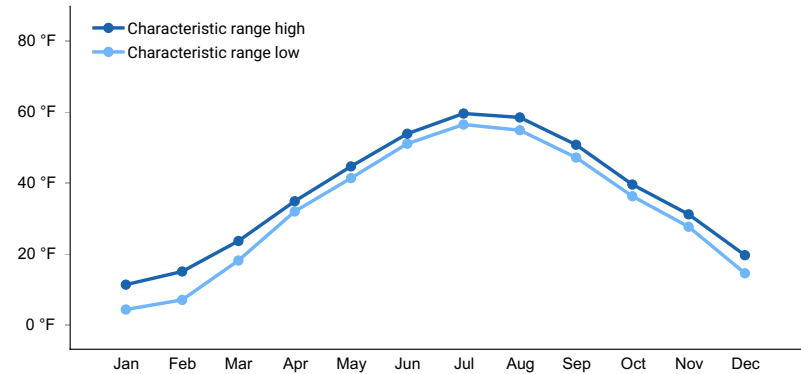


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

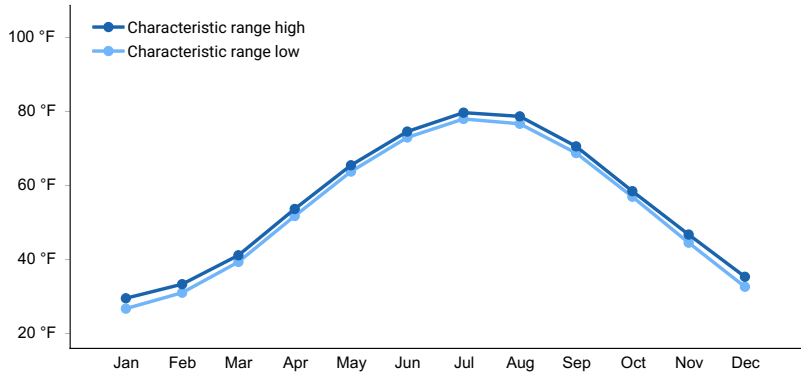


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

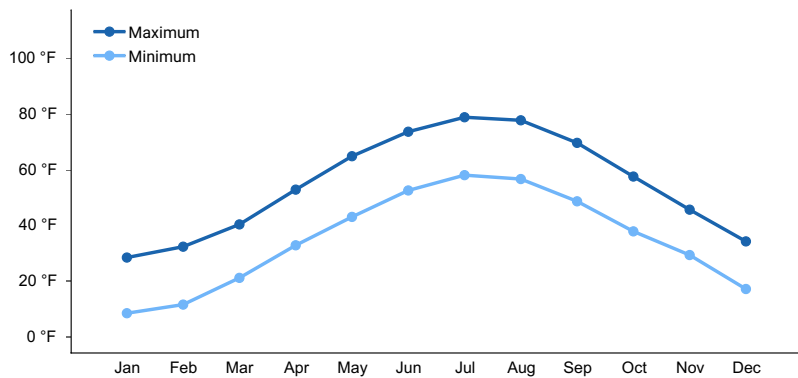


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

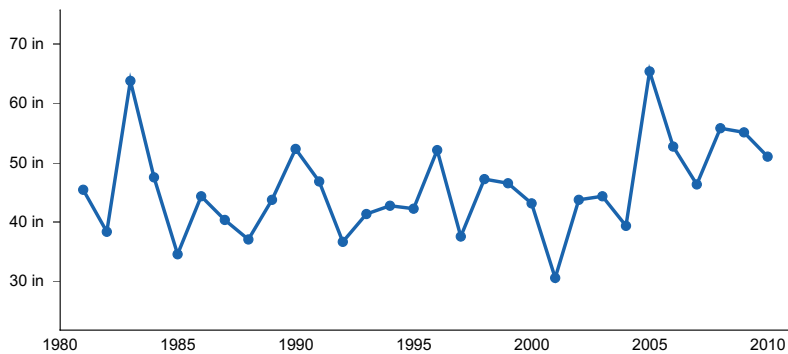


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

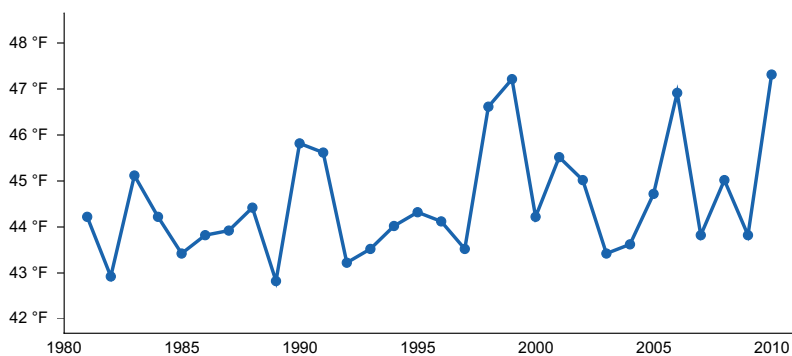


Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) BELFAST [USC00170480], Belfast, ME
- (2) ACADIA NP [USC00170100], Bar Harbor, ME
- (3) CORINNA [USC00171628], Corinna, ME
- (4) DOVER-FOXCROFT WWTP [USC00171975], Dover Foxcroft, ME
- (5) FARMINGTON [USC00172765], Farmington, ME
- (6) GARDINER [USC00173046], Gardiner, ME
- (7) JONESBORO [USC00174183], Addison, ME
- (8) LEWISTON [USC00174566], Auburn, ME
- (9) MADISON [USC00174927], Anson, ME
- (10) NEWCASTLE [USC00175675], Newcastle, ME
- (11) ORONO [USC00176430], Old Town, ME
- (12) WATERVILLE TRTMT PLT [USC00179151], Waterville, ME
- (13) WEST ROCKPORT 1 NNW [USC00179593], Rockport, ME
- (14) AUGUSTA STATE AP [USW00014605], Augusta, ME
- (15) BANGOR INTL AP [USW00014606], Bangor, ME
- (16) PORTLAND INTL JETPORT [USW00014764], Portland, ME

Influencing water features

This site is an enriched upland that may experience occasional pulses of overland flow during the wettest periods. Although it is often associated with very small ephemeral streams and drainages, this site does not function as a riparian or wetland area.

Soil features

The soils of this site are characterized by a thick, dark surface horizon high in organic matter. Soil pH ranges from 5.1 to 7.3, with high organic matter. These soils are moderately well- to well-drained with loamy textures and few rock fragments throughout. These soils are often not mapped because of their small size, so existing data is limited. However, these small patches are common and show consistent soil-vegetation patterns throughout the MLRA. The representative soil is Herkimer.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Till–igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rock (2) Saprolite
Surface texture	(1) Silt loam
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Very slow
Soil depth	40 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0–2%
Surface fragment cover >3"	1–7%
Available water capacity (4–6in)	Not specified
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (3.5–7.3in)	Not specified
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (0–10in)	Not specified
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (0–7in)	Not specified

Ecological dynamics

[Caveat: The vegetation information contained in this section and is only provisional, based on concepts, and future projects support validation through 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) and localized associations provided by the New York Natural Heritage Program (Edinger et al., 2014), Maine Natural Areas Program (Gawler and Cutko, 2010), New Hampshire Natural Heritage Program (Sperduto and Nichols, 2011), and Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (Swain, 2020).

Northern hardwoods dominate this site, particularly white ash, yellow birch, sugar maple and beech. Enriched site indicators (such as blue cohosh and maidenhair fern) are common on this site.

Treethrow and logging are the most common disturbances affecting this site. The site is resilient following these disturbances and succeeds through an herbaceous and shrubby phase prior to tree establishment and eventual return to the reference community. The young forest stands include several species not typically dominant in the reference community, including pin cherry, white birch, aspen, balsam fir, etc.

On gentler slopes, this site may be cultivated for crop or pasture. When cropland or pastureland management ceases, the site either returns to northern hardwoods or may transition to a white pine forest. Once white pine is established, it tends to form a single age stand with low diversity and little understory.

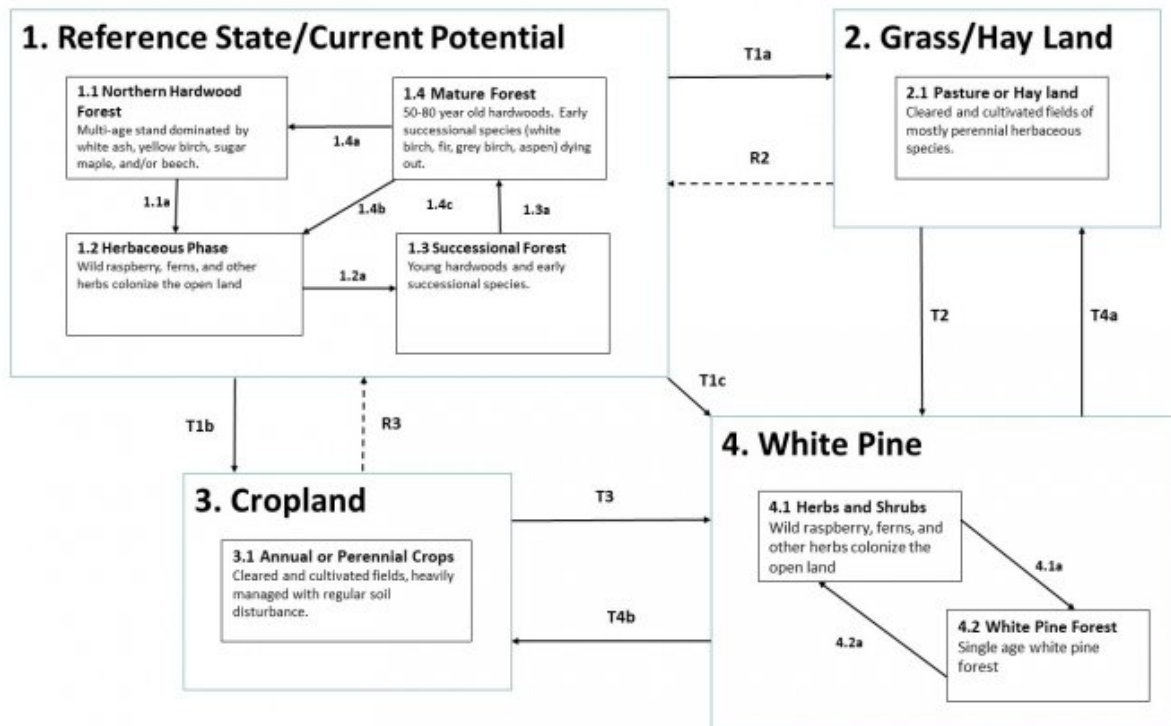
This site includes the following state natural heritage program types:

- Rich Mesic foresst (Sperduto and Nichols 2004)

- Enriched Northern Hardwoods Forest (Gawler and Cutko 2010)
- Sugar Maple Forest (Gawler and Cutko 2010)
- Rich Mesic Forests (Thompson and Sorenson 2000)

State and transition model

F144BY504ME – Enriched Loamy Cove



State 1

Reference State / Current Potential

Community 1.1

Northern Hardwood Forest

Multi-age stand dominated by white ash, yellow birch, sugar maple, and/or beech.

Community 1.2

Herbaceous Phase

Wild raspberry, ferns, and other herbs colonize the open land

Community 1.3

Successional Forest

Diverse young hardwoods, including species not dominant in the reference community

Community 1.4

Mature Forest 50-80 yr

50-80 year old hardwoods. Early successional species (white birch, fir, grey birch, aspen) dying out.

Pathway P1.1-1.2
Community 1.1 to 1.2

windthrow, blowdown, fire

Pathway P1.2-1.3
Community 1.2 to 1.3

vegetation development (succession)

Pathway P1.3-1.4
Community 1.3 to 1.4

vegetation development (succession)

Pathway P1.4-1.1
Community 1.4 to 1.1

windthrow, blowdown, fire

Pathway P1.4-1.2
Community 1.4 to 1.2

windthrow, blowdown, fire

State 2
Grassland / Hay land

Community 2.1
Pasture or Hay Land

Cleared and planted fields of mostly perennial herbaceous species.

State 3
Crop Land

Community 3.1
Annual or Perennial Crops

Cleared and cultivated fields, heavily managed with regular soil disturbance.

State 4
White Pine

Community 4.1
Herbs and Shrubs

Wild raspberry, ferns, and other herbs colonize the open land

Community 4.2
White Pine Forest

Single age white pine forest.

Pathway P4.1-4.2

Community 4.1 to 4.2

Vegetation development (succession)

Pathway P4.2-4.1

Community 4.2 to 4.1

harvest, logging

Conservation practices

Forest Stand Improvement
Forest Land Management

Transition T1-2

State 1 to 2

tree removal, pasture or hayfield establishment

Conservation practices

Clearing and Snagging
Land Clearing
Invasive Plant Species Control
Managed Haying/Grazing

Transition T1-3

State 1 to 3

Tree clearing, crop establishment

Conservation practices

Clearing and Snagging
Cover Crop
Land Clearing

Transition T1-4

State 1 to 4

selective harvest

Conservation practices

Forest Stand Improvement
Forest Land Management

Transition R2-1

State 2 to 1

abandonment, vegetation development (succession), planting

Conservation practices

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation

Tree/Shrub Establishment
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control
Managed Haying/Grazing

Transition T2-4

State 2 to 4

tree establishment

Conservation practices

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
Tree/Shrub Establishment
Invasive Plant Species Control

Restoration pathway R3-1

State 3 to 1

abandonment, vegetation development (succession), tree planting

Conservation practices

Tree/Shrub Establishment
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
Tree/Shrub Pruning
Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control

Transition T3-4

State 3 to 4

tree planting

Conservation practices

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
Tree/Shrub Establishment
Invasive Plant Species Control

Restoration pathway R4-1

State 4 to 1

abandonment, vegetation development (succession), plantings

Conservation practices

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation

Tree/Shrub Establishment
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control

Restoration pathway T4-2

State 4 to 2

Tree removal, pasture or hay land establishment

Conservation practices

Clearing and Snagging
Land Clearing

Transition T4-3

State 4 to 3

tree removal, cropland establishment

Conservation practices

Clearing and Snagging
Cover Crop
Land Clearing

Additional community tables

Inventory data references

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

Christopher Mann

Approval

Nels Barrett, 9/27/2024

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Nels Barrett and Nick Butler provided considerable review of this ecological site concept.

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	06/29/2020
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:**
