

Ecological site F111XA006IN Till Depression

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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): 111X–Indiana and Ohio Till Plain

A PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL SITE is a conceptual grouping of soil map unit components within a Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) based on the similarities in response to management. Although there may be wide variability in the productivity of the soils grouped into a Provisional Site, the soil vegetation interactions as expressed in the State and Transition Model are similar and the management actions required to achieve objectives, whether maintaining the existing ecological state or managing for an alternative state, are similar. Provisional Sites are likely to be refined into more precise group during the process of meeting the APPROVED ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTION criteria.

This PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL SITE has been developed to meet the standards established in the National Ecological Site Handbook. The information associated with this ecological site does not meet the Approved Ecological Site Description Standard, but it has been through a Quality Control and Quality Assurance processes to assure consistency and completeness. Further investigations, reviews and correlations are necessary before it becomes an Approved Ecological Site Description.

111A – Indiana and Ohio Till Plain, Central Part. This area is in the Till Plains Section of the Central Lowland Province of the Interior Plains. It is dominated by broad, nearly level ground moraines that are broken in some areas by kames, outwash plains, and stream valleys along the leading edge of the moraines. Narrow, shallow valleys commonly are along the few large streams in the area. Elevation ranges from 680 to 1,250 feet (205 to 380 meters), increasing gradually from west to east. Relief is mainly a few meters, but in some areas hills rise as much as 100 feet (30 meters) above the adjoining plains.

The extent of the major Hydrologic Unit Areas (identified by four-digit numbers) that make up this MLRA is as follows: Wabash (0512), 46 percent; Great Miami (0508), 30 percent; Scioto (0506), 22 percent; and the Middle Ohic (0509), 2 percent. The major rivers in the area include the East and West Forks of the White River and the Whitewater River in Indiana and the Great Miami, Stillwater, Big Darby, Scioto, and Big Walnut Rivers in Ohio.

Surface deposits in this area include glacial deposits of till, lacustrine sediments, and outwash from Wisconsin and older glacial periods. A moderately thick mantle of loess covers much of the area. Most of this MLRA is underlain by Silurian and Devonian limestone and dolostone. Also, some areas of Late Ordovician shale and limestone are in the western part of the MLRA (USDA, 2006).

Classification relationships

Major Land Resource Area (USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2006)

USFS Ecological Regions (USDA, 2007):

Sections – Southern Unglaciaded Allegheny Plateau (221E), Central Till Plains, Beech Maple (222H), Interior Low Plateau-Transition Hills (223B), Interior Low Plateau-Bluegrass (223F)

Subsections - Lower Scioto River Plateau (221Eg), Bluffton Till Plains (222Ha), Miami-Scioto Plain-Tipton Till Plain

(222Hb), Little Miami Old Drift Plain (222Hc), Mad River Interlobate Plains (222Hd), Darby Plains (222He), Brown County Hills (223Ba), Northern Bluegrass (223Fd), Muscatatuck Flats and Valleys (223Fe), Scottsburg Lowlands (223Ff)

NatureServe Systems anticipated (NatureServe, 2011): Agriculture - Cultivated Crops and Irrigated Agriculture, Agriculture - Pasture/Hay, Allegheny-Cumberland Dry Oak Forest and Woodland, Appalachian (Hemlock)-Northern Hardwood Forest, Central Appalachian Pine-Oak Rocky Woodland, Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus, Central Interior Highlands Calcareous Glade and Barrens, Central Tallgrass Prairie, Clearcut - Grassland/Herbaceous, Introduced Upland Vegetation – Treed, Managed Tree Plantation, Mississippi River Riparian Forest, North-Central Interior and Appalachian Acidic Peatland, North-Central Interior Beech-Maple Forest, North-Central Interior Dry-Mesic Oak Forest and Woodland, North-Central Interior Floodplain, North-Central Interior Freshwater Marsh, North-Central Interior Oak Savanna, North-Central Interior Wet Flatwoods, North-Central Interior Wet Meadow-Shrub Swamp, North-Central Oak Barrens, Northeastern Interior Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, Ruderal Forest, Ruderal Upland - Old Field, South-Central Interior / Upper Coastal Plain Wet Flatwoods, South-Central Interior Large Floodplain, South-Central Interior Mesophytic Forest, South-Central Interior Small Stream and Riparian, Southern Appalachian Oak Forest, Southern Interior Low Plateau Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, Southern Ridge and Valley / Cumberland Dry Calcareous Forest, Successional Shrub/Scrub

LANDFIRE Biophysical Settings anticipated (USGS, 2010): Allegheny-Cumberland Dry Oak Forest and Woodland, Appalachian (Hemlock-) Northern Hardwood Forest, Central Interior and Appalachian Floodplain Systems, Central Interior and Appalachian Riparian Systems, Central Interior and Appalachian Shrub-Herbaceous Wetland Systems, Central Interior and Appalachian Swamp Systems, Central Interior Highlands Calcareous Glade and Barrens, Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens, Central Tallgrass Prairie, Great Lakes Coastal Marsh Systems, North-Central Interior Beech-Maple Forest, North-Central Interior Dry-Mesic Oak Forest and Woodland, North-Central Interior Dry Oak Forest and Woodland, North-Central Interior Oak Savanna, North-Central Interior Wet Flatwoods, South-Central Interior Mesophytic Forest, South-Central Interior/Upper Coastal Plain Flatwoods, Southern Appalachian Oak Forest, Southern Interior Low Plateau Dry-Mesic Oak Forest

Ecological site concept

This site is an upland site formed on glacial till parent materials. It is located on the depressions, toeslopes and footslopes, of glacial till plains and moraines. Soils have loamy surface textures, are poorly or somewhat poorly drained, exhibit little to no ponding and are taxonomically alfisols (surface color lighter than 3/2 on the Munsell scale).

The characteristic vegetation of the site is of a mesic forest with the understory and canopy dominated by sugar maple and American beech, with tulip-tree and basswood also being common. Canopy level associates include white oak, hackberry, and black walnut. Catastrophic windthrow was the most common, large scale disturbance event on this site and even those only occurred about every 300-500 years. Small gap disturbance caused by local windthrow or mortality was the main disturbance event that allowed the site to become dominated by fire sensitive, shade tolerant species. Currently, the majority of this site is being used for corn and soybean rotations. The largest risk to extant natural representation of the site is by invasion of non-native plants that, if unchecked, can dominate the understory.

Associated sites

R111XA010IN	Till Ridge Prairie Site is located in a convex (higher) landscape position; soils are mollisols
F111XA007IN	Till Depression Flatwood Site is occasionally to frequently ponded; soils are mollisols
F111XA008IN	Wet Till Ridge Site is located in a convex (higher) landscape position.
F111XA009IN	Till Ridge Site is located in a convex (higher) landscape position

Similar sites

F111XA012IN	Lacustrine Forest Soil parent materials are lacustrine; soils are somewhat poorly to well drained.
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F111XA020IN	Deep Restricted Soil parent materials are residuum; depth to restrictive layer is 40 inches or greater.
F111XA008IN	Wet Till Ridge Site is located in a convex (higher) landscape position
F111XA009IN	Till Ridge Site is located in a convex (higher) landscape position

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Acer saccharum</i> (2) <i>Fagus grandifolia</i>
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

This site is located in the 111A - Indiana and Ohio Till Plain, Central Part Major Land Resource Area. It is classified as an upland site. This site was formed silt covered or loamy till. It is located on the toeslopes and footslopes of depressions on glacial till plains and moraines.

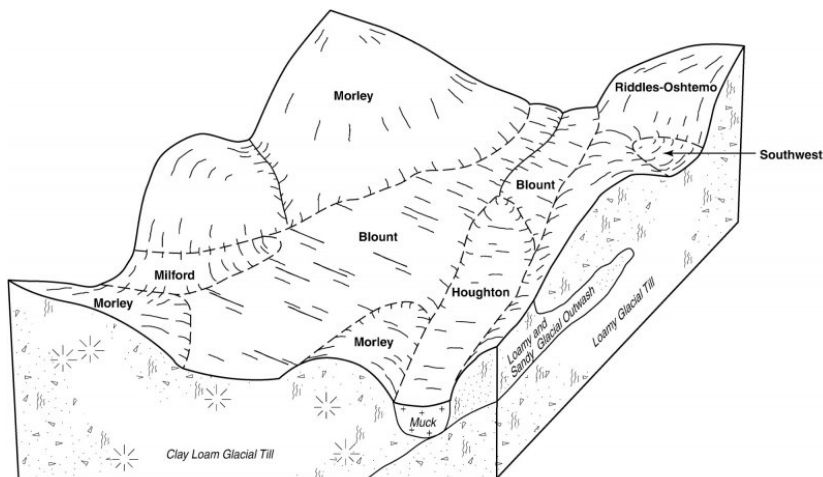


Figure 1. block diagram showing soil series on the landscape

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Depression (2) End moraine (3) Till plain
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding duration	Long (7 to 30 days)
Ponding frequency	None to frequent
Elevation	600–1,300 ft
Slope	0–4%
Ponding depth	0–15 in
Water table depth	0–60 in
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

The average annual precipitation in this area is 36 to 43 inches (915 to 1,090 millimeters). Most of the rainfall occurs

as convective thunderstorms during the growing season. About half or more of the precipitation occurs during the freeze-free period. Snowfall is common in winter. The average annual temperature is 49 to 53 degrees F (9 to 12 degrees C). The freeze-free period averages about 195 days and ranges from 175 to 215 days.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	144-153 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	173-186 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	40-43 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	142-159 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	171-187 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	40-45 in
Frost-free period (average)	149 days
Freeze-free period (average)	180 days
Precipitation total (average)	42 in

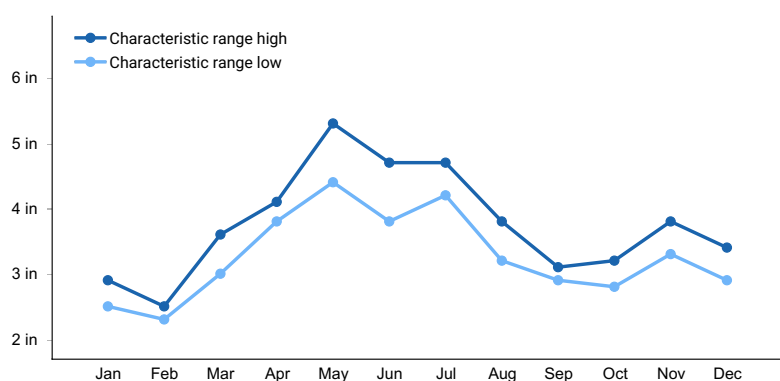


Figure 2. Monthly precipitation range

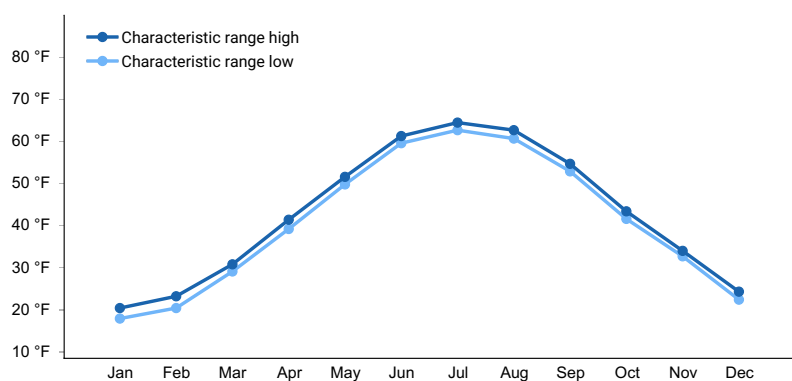


Figure 3. Monthly minimum temperature range

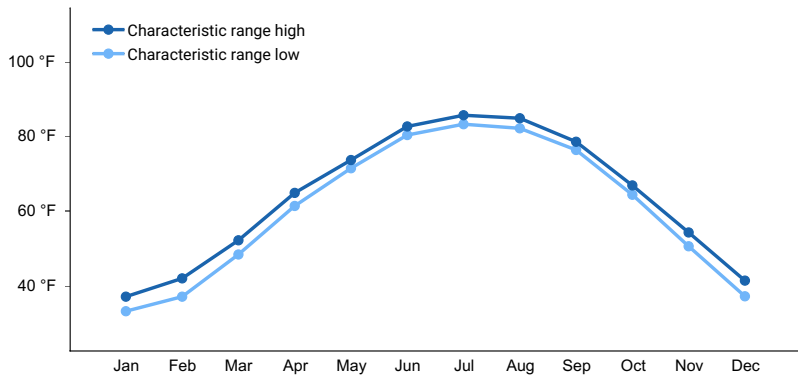


Figure 4. Monthly maximum temperature range

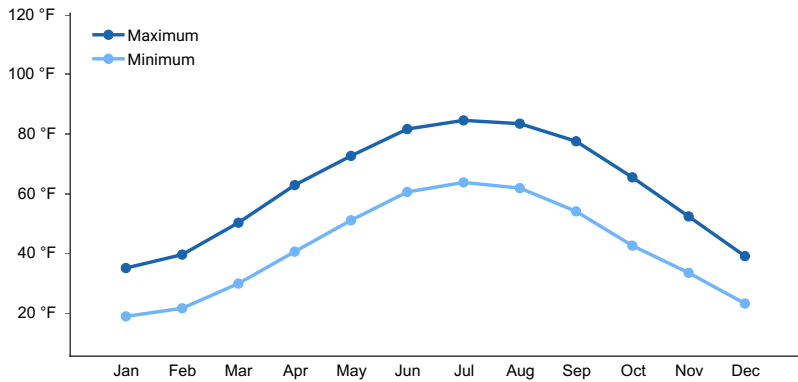


Figure 5. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

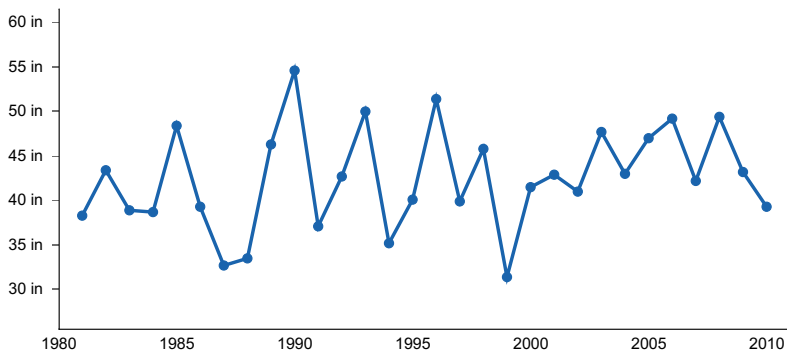


Figure 6. Annual precipitation pattern

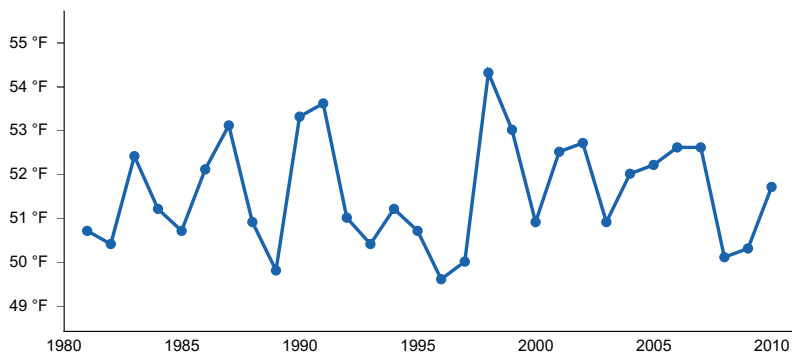


Figure 7. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) INDIANAPOLIS SE SIDE [USC00124272], Indianapolis, IN
- (2) NEW CASTLE 3 SW [USC00126164], New Castle, IN
- (3) WINCHESTER AIRPORT 3 E [USC00129678], Winchester, IN

- (4) COLUMBUS VLY CROSSING [USC00331783], Columbus, OH
- (5) GREENSBURG [USC00123547], Greensburg, IN
- (6) KOKOMO 3 WSW [USC00124662], Russiaville, IN
- (7) CHILLICOTHE MOUND CITY [USC00331528], Chillicothe, OH

Influencing water features

This ecological site is not influenced by wetland or riparian water features.

Soil features

The soil series associated with this site are Wetzels, Reesville, Nappanee, Haskins, Condit, and Blount. They are very deep, very poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained, and very slow to moderate permeable soils, with very strongly acidic to moderately alkaline soil reaction, that formed in glaciolacustrine deposits, loess, till from limestone and shale, limestone, sandstone, and shale.

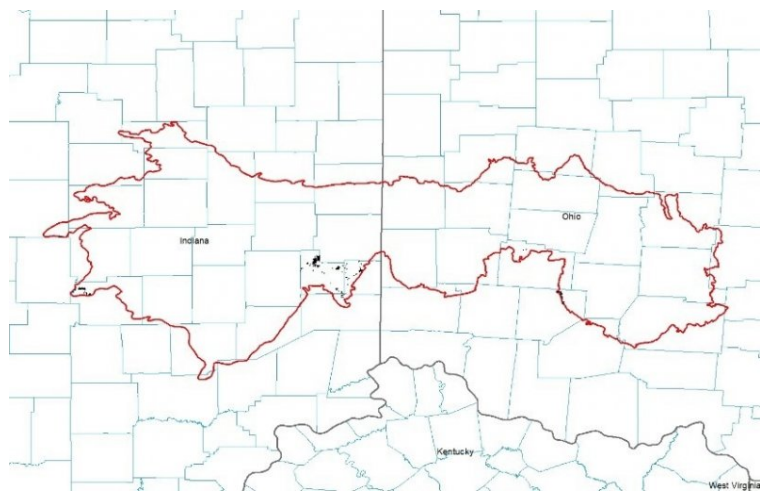


Figure 8. Location of mapunits in MLRA

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Till–limestone and shale (2) Glaciolacustrine deposits–limestone
Surface texture	(1) Loam (2) Silt loam (3) Silty clay loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained
Permeability class	Very slow to moderate
Soil depth	30–59 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	4.7–7.9 in
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-40in)	0–24%
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0

Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	5.9-8
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0-9%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0-3%

Ecological dynamics

The historic plant community of the Till Depression ecological site is a mesic forest. The dominant species in the canopy and understory are sugar maple and American beech, with basswood and tulip-tree. Canopy associates may include white oak, hackberry, and black walnut. Fire was rare (<1000 year intervals) on this site, with catastrophic windthrow occurring in at about half that interval. The site is dominated by fire sensitive and shade tolerant species. Small gap disturbance was the most common disturbance event that allowed propagation of these species. Since settlement, much of this site has been converted to agricultural use with the majority being to grow corn and soybeans. The areas still in natural vegetation are at risk of having their understory invaded and dominated by invasive species such as Asian honeysuckles and even Callery pear.

State and transition model

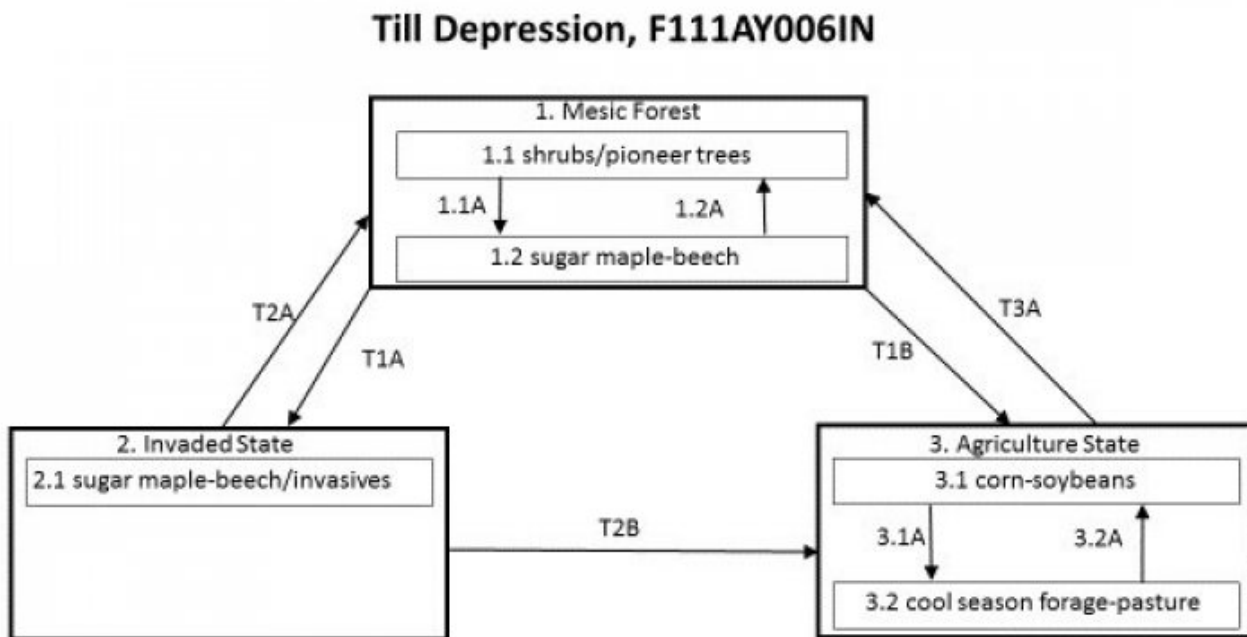


Figure 9. STM

Till Depression, F111AY006IN

Diagram Legend

T1A	Invasive species establishment, no management
T1B	Remove woody species, drainage, site preparation, planting, management
T2A	Chemical/mechanical treatment of invasive species
T2B	Remove woody species, drainage, site preparation, planting, management
T3A	Drainage removal, planting, TSI management
1.1A	Succession
1.2A	Disturbance that removes canopy trees
3.1A	Pasture/forage planting and maintenance
3.2A	Tillage/no-till planting and management of row crops.

Figure 10. Legend

State 1 Mesic Forest

This is the diagnostic plant community for this site. In reference condition, this site was dominated by sugar maple and beech trees. An earlier successional phase of this site is comprised largely of shrubs and pioneering species like white oak and basswood. Stand replacing events were very uncommon. Small gap disturbance was the most common disturbance event that allowed propagation of these species.

Dominant plant species

- white oak (*Quercus alba*), tree
- American basswood (*Tilia americana*), tree

Community 1.1 shrubs/pioneer tree species

This phase is characterized by pioneering woody species that respond rapidly to increased light availability. White oak, basswood and tulip-tree were common. Cover is generally very heavy, but not usually very tall. As time and succession progress, the trees become larger and less dense.

Dominant plant species

- white oak (*Quercus alba*), tree
- American basswood (*Tilia americana*), tree
- tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), tree

Community 1.2 sugar maple/beech

This phase is characterized by tree dominance, particularly sugar maple and beech. Additional canopy species include basswood, tulip-tree, black walnut, white oak, and hackberry.

Dominant plant species

- sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), tree

- American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), tree

Pathway P1.1A **Community 1.1 to 1.2**

Time and succession will move the site from this phase to the full expression of Community Phase 1.2

Pathway P1.2A **Community 1.2 to 1.1**

Disturbance, whether natural or as management, that removes a large portion of the trees will move the site towards phase 1.1

State 2 **Invaded State**

This state is characterized by the establishment and eventual dominance of invasive species in the understory. This greatly reduces the species richness and diversity of the site as a whole. Common invasives for this site include, but are not limited to, species of Asian bush honeysuckle, Callery pear, autumn olive and ailanthus.

Dominant plant species

- honeysuckle (*Lonicera*), shrub
- Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), shrub
- autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), shrub
- tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), shrub

Community 2.1 **sugar maple/beech/invasives**

This phase is characterized by the understory being dominated by woody, mostly non-native, invasive species.

Dominant plant species

- sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), tree
- American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), tree

State 3 **Agriculture State**

This state is characterized by the conversion of the site to agricultural use. Most common practice is a corn and soybean rotation of various types. A small portion of the historic acres are used for forage and pasture.

Community 3.1 **corn/soybeans**

This phase is characterized by row crop agriculture of small grains, primarily corn and soybeans.

Community 3.2 **cool season forage/pasture**

This phase is characterized by forage or grazing agriculture. Different mixes of, generally, cool season grasses and forbs, largely clovers, are grown.

Pathway CP 3.1-3.2 **Community 3.1 to 3.1**

Planting of cool season pasture/forage species and management to maintain them.

Pathway P3.1A
Community 3.1 to 3.2

establishment of forage / pasture species

Pathway P3.2A
Community 3.2 to 3.1

Establishment of row crops

Transition T1A
State 1 to 2

site invaded by non-native species

Transition T1B
State 1 to 3

Site cleared and converted to agricultural use.

Restoration pathway R2A
State 2 to 1

Chemical and mechanical treatment of the invasive species. Planting of desired species may be needed if they are not enough left to recolonize the site.

Transition T2B
State 2 to 3

Removal off trees and other wood species. Install drainage system (if warranted), prepare the site for planting the agricultural crop, and regular agricultural practices.

Restoration pathway R3A
State 3 to 1

Removal of drainage system (if warranted), site preparation, and tree planting.

Additional community tables

Inventory data references

Site concept developed through expert opinion, review of the literature, and field work.

Other references

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Contributors

Tyler Staggs

Approval

Chris Tecklenburg, 5/01/2020

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)	TYLER STAGGS
Contact for lead author	
Date	05/01/2020
Approved by	Chris Tecklenburg
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:**
