

# Ecological site F116BY034MO

## Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodland

Last updated: 10/07/2020  
Accessed: 04/30/2024

### 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.



Figure 1. Mapped extent

Areas shown in blue indicate the maximum mapped extent of this ecological site. Other ecological sites likely occur within the highlighted areas. It is also possible for this ecological site to occur outside of highlighted areas if detailed soil survey has not been completed or recently updated.

### MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 116B–Springfield Plain

The Springfield Plain is in the western part of the Ozark Uplift. It is primarily a smooth plateau with some dissection along streams. Elevation is about 1,000 feet in the north to over 1,700 feet in the east along the Burlington Escarpment adjacent to the Ozark Highlands. The underlying bedrock is mainly Mississippian-aged limestone, with areas of shale on lower slopes and structural benches, and intermittent Pennsylvanian-aged sandstone deposits on the plateau surface.

### Classification relationships

Terrestrial Natural Community Type in Missouri (Nelson, 2010):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to a Dry Limestone/Dolomite Woodland.

Missouri Department of Conservation Forest and Woodland Communities (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2006):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to a Limestone/Dolomite Woodland.

National Vegetation Classification System Vegetation Association (NatureServe, 2010):

The reference state for this ecological site is most similar to a *Quercus stellata* - *Quercus marilandica* - *Quercus*

velutina - *Carya texana* / *Schizachyrium scoparium* Woodland (CEGL002149).

Geographic relationship to the Missouri Ecological Classification System (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002):

This ecological site occurs primarily within the following Land Type Associations:

Upper Sac River Oak Savanna/Woodland Low Hills

Stockton Prairie/Savanna Dissected Plain

## Ecological site concept

NOTE: This is a “provisional” Ecological Site Description (ESD) that is under development. It contains basic ecological information that can be used for conservation planning, application and land management. After additional information is collected, analyzed and reviewed, this ESD will be refined and published as “Approved”.

Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodlands occur on steep backslopes with southern and western aspects along the Sac River and around Stockton Lake in Dade County and Cedar County, Missouri. This site is mapped in complex with the Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forest ecological site. Soils are typically moderately deep over limestone bedrock, with gravelly surfaces. The reference plant community is woodland with an overstory dominated by post oak and chinkapin oak and a ground flora of native grasses and forbs.

## Associated sites

F116BY003MO	<b>Chert Upland Woodland</b> Chert Upland Woodlands are often upslope on convex summits and shoulders, where depth to limestone is greater than 40 inches.
F116BY006MO	<b>Chert Limestone Upland Woodland</b> Chert Limestone Upland Woodlands are upslope, on shoulders and upper backslopes.
F116BY011MO	<b>Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forest</b> Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forests are mapped in complex with this ecological site, on steep northern and eastern aspects.
F116BY013MO	<b>Loamy Foothill Woodland</b> Loamy Foothill Woodlands are downslope.
F116BY017MO	<b>Gravelly/Loamy Upland Drainageway Woodland</b> Gravelly/Loamy Upland Drainageway Woodlands are downslope.
R116BY024MO	<b>Shallow Limestone Upland Glade/Woodland</b> Shallow Limestone Upland Glade/Woodlands are often adjacent or downslope, where the depth to limestone bedrock is less than 20 inches.

## Similar sites

F116BY011MO	<b>Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forest</b> Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forests are mapped in complex with this ecological site. Slope positions are similar but these sites are on northern and eastern aspects. They are more productive.
F116BY006MO	<b>Chert Limestone Upland Woodland</b> Chert Limestone Upland Woodlands are upslope, on shoulders and upper backslopes. They are more productive.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Quercus stellata</i> (2) <i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Rhus aromatica</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>

## Physiographic features

This site is on backslopes with slopes of 15 to 35 percent. It is on exposed aspects (south, southwest, and west),

which receive significantly more solar radiation than the protected aspects. The site receives runoff from upslope summit and shoulder sites, and generates runoff to adjacent, downslope ecological sites. This site does not flood.

The following figure (adapted from Aldrich, 2003) shows the typical landscape position of this ecological site, and landscape relationships with other ecological sites. The site is within the area labeled “2”, on southerly to westerly exposures of lower backslopes. Chert Limestone Protected Backslope Forest sites are on the corresponding northerly to easterly exposures. Shoulders and upper slopes within the area are in the Chert Limestone Upland Woodland ecological site. In the figure, the thickness of the residuum increases on the shoulders and crests, resulting in Chert Upland ecological sites, labeled “1”.

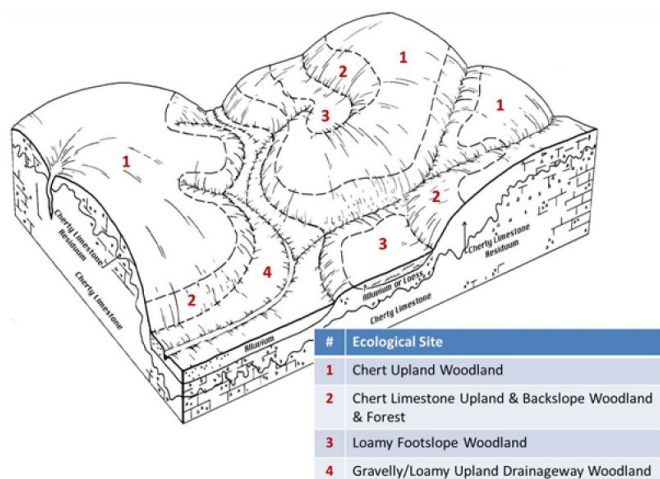


Figure 2. Landscape relationships for this ecological site.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Hill (2) Hillslope
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Slope	15–35%
Water table depth	152 cm
Aspect	W, S, SW

## Climatic features

The Springfield Plain has a continental type of climate marked by strong seasonality. In winter, dry-cold air masses, unchallenged by any topographic barriers, periodically swing south from the northern plains and Canada. If they invade reasonably humid air, snowfall and rainfall result. In summer, moist, warm air masses, equally unchallenged by topographic barriers, swing north from the Gulf of Mexico and can produce abundant amounts of rain, either by fronts or by convectional processes. In some summers, high pressure stagnates over the region, creating extended droughty periods. Spring and fall are transitional seasons when abrupt changes in temperature and precipitation may occur due to successive, fast-moving fronts separating contrasting air masses.

The Springfield Plain experiences few regional differences in climates. The average annual precipitation in this area is 41 to 45 inches. Snow falls nearly every winter, but the snow cover lasts for only a few days. The average annual temperature is about 55 to 58 degrees F. The lower temperatures occur at the higher elevations. Mean July maximum temperatures have a range of only one or two degrees across the area.

Mean annual precipitation varies along a west to east gradient. Seasonal climatic variations are more complex. Seasonality in precipitation is very pronounced due to strong continental influences. June precipitation, for example, averages three to four times greater than January precipitation. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms in summer.

During years when precipitation comes in a fairly normal manner, moisture is stored in the top layers of the soil

during the winter and early spring, when evaporation and transpiration are low. During the summer months the loss of water by evaporation and transpiration is high, and if rainfall fails to occur at frequent intervals, drought will result. Drought directly affects plant and animal life by limiting water supplies, especially at times of high temperatures and high evaporation rates.

Superimposed upon the basic MLRA climatic patterns are local topographic influences that create topoclimatic, or microclimatic variations. In regions of appreciable relief, for example, air drainage at nighttime may produce temperatures several degrees lower in valley bottoms than on side slopes. At critical times during the year, this phenomenon may produce later spring or earlier fall freezes in valley bottoms. Deep sinkholes often have a microclimate significantly cooler, moister, and shadier than surrounding surfaces, a phenomenon that may result in a strikingly different ecology. Higher daytime temperatures of bare rock surfaces and higher reflectivity of these unvegetated surfaces may create distinctive environmental niches such as glades and cliffs. Slope orientation is an important topographic influence on climate. Summits and south-and-west-facing slopes are regularly warmer and drier than adjacent north- and-east-facing slopes. Finally, the climate within a canopied forest is measurably different from the climate of a more open grassland or savanna areas.

Source: University of Missouri Climate Center - <http://climate.missouri.edu/climate.php>; Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin, United States Department of Agriculture Handbook 296 - <http://soils.usda.gov/survey/geography/mlra/>

**Table 3. Representative climatic features**

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	164-168 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	192-194 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	1,118-1,194 mm
Frost-free period (actual range)	162-170 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	192-194 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	1,118-1,219 mm
Frost-free period (average)	166 days
Freeze-free period (average)	193 days
Precipitation total (average)	1,168 mm

### Climate stations used

- (1) ASH GROVE 4S [USC00230304], Ash Grove, MO
- (2) LOCKWOOD [USC00235027], Lockwood, MO
- (3) STOCKTON DAM [USC00238082], Stockton, MO

### Influencing water features

This ecological site is not influenced by wetland or riparian water features. This site generates runoff to adjacent, downslope ecological sites. This site does not flood.

The water features of this upland ecological site include evapotranspiration, surface runoff, and drainage. Each water balance component fluctuates to varying extents from year-to-year. Evapotranspiration remains the most constant. Precipitation and drainage are highly variable between years. Seasonal variability differs for each water component. Precipitation generally occurs as single day events. Evapotranspiration is lowest in the winter and peaks in the summer. Water stored as ice and snow decreases drainage and surface runoff rates throughout the winter and increases these fluxes in the spring. The surface runoff pulse is greatly influenced by extreme events. Conversion to cropland or other high intensities land uses tends to increase runoff, but also decreases evapotranspiration. Depending on the situation, this might increase groundwater discharge, and decrease baseflow in receiving streams.

### Soil features

These soils are underlain with limestone bedrock at 20 to 40 inches. The soils were formed under woodland vegetation, and have thin, light-colored surface horizons. Parent material is slope alluvium over residuum weathered from limestone, overlying limestone bedrock. They have gravelly or cobbly silt loam surface layers, with clayey subsoils that have moderate to high amounts of chert gravel and cobbles. These soils are not affected by seasonal wetness. Soil series associated with this site include Sonsac.

**Table 4. Representative soil features**

Parent material	(1) Residuum—cherty limestone (2) Slope alluvium
Surface texture	(1) Gravelly silt loam (2) Cobbly silt loam
Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Well drained
Soil depth	51–102 cm
Surface fragment cover <=3"	20–30%
Surface fragment cover >3"	5–20%
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	5.08–10.16 cm
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm)	0%
Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm)	0–2 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm)	0
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	5.1–6.5
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	30–50%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	20–30%

## Ecological dynamics

Information contained in this section was developed using historical data, professional experience, field reviews, and scientific studies. The information presented is representative of very complex vegetation communities. Key indicator plants, animals 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 aspect. The Reference Plant Community is not necessarily the management goal. The species lists are 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.

The somewhat shallow, droughty, cherty soils of Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodlands limit the growth of trees and support an abundance of native grasses and forbs in the understory. Fire played an important role in the maintenance of these systems. It is likely that these sites, along with adjacent glades and woodlands burned at least once every 5 years.

These periodic fires kept woodlands open, removed the litter, and stimulated the growth and flowering of the grasses and forbs. They also further limited the growth and dominance of trees, especially eastern red cedar. Fire tolerant post oak and chinkapin oak, dominated an open overstory. During fire free intervals, woody species, such as especially eastern redcedar and hickory, would have increased and the herbaceous understory diminished. The return of fire would have opened the woodlands up again and stimulated the abundant ground flora. Woodlands are distinguished from forest, by their relatively open understory, and the presence of sun-loving ground flora species.

Characteristic plants in the ground flora can be used to gauge the restoration potential of a stand along with remnant open-grown old-age trees, and tree height growth.

Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodlands were also subjected to occasional disturbances from wind and ice, as well as grazing by native large herbivores, such as bison, elk and white-tailed deer. Wind and ice would have periodically opened the canopy up by knocking over trees or breaking substantial branches off canopy trees. Grazing by native herbivores would have effectively kept understory conditions more open, creating conditions more favorable to oak reproduction and sun-loving ground flora species.

In the long term absence of fire, woody species, especially eastern redcedar, hickory, and black oak have encroached into these woodlands. This is especially true after grazing has reduced grass cover and exposed more surface to the dispersal of seeds by birds. Once established, these woodies can quickly fill the woodland system.

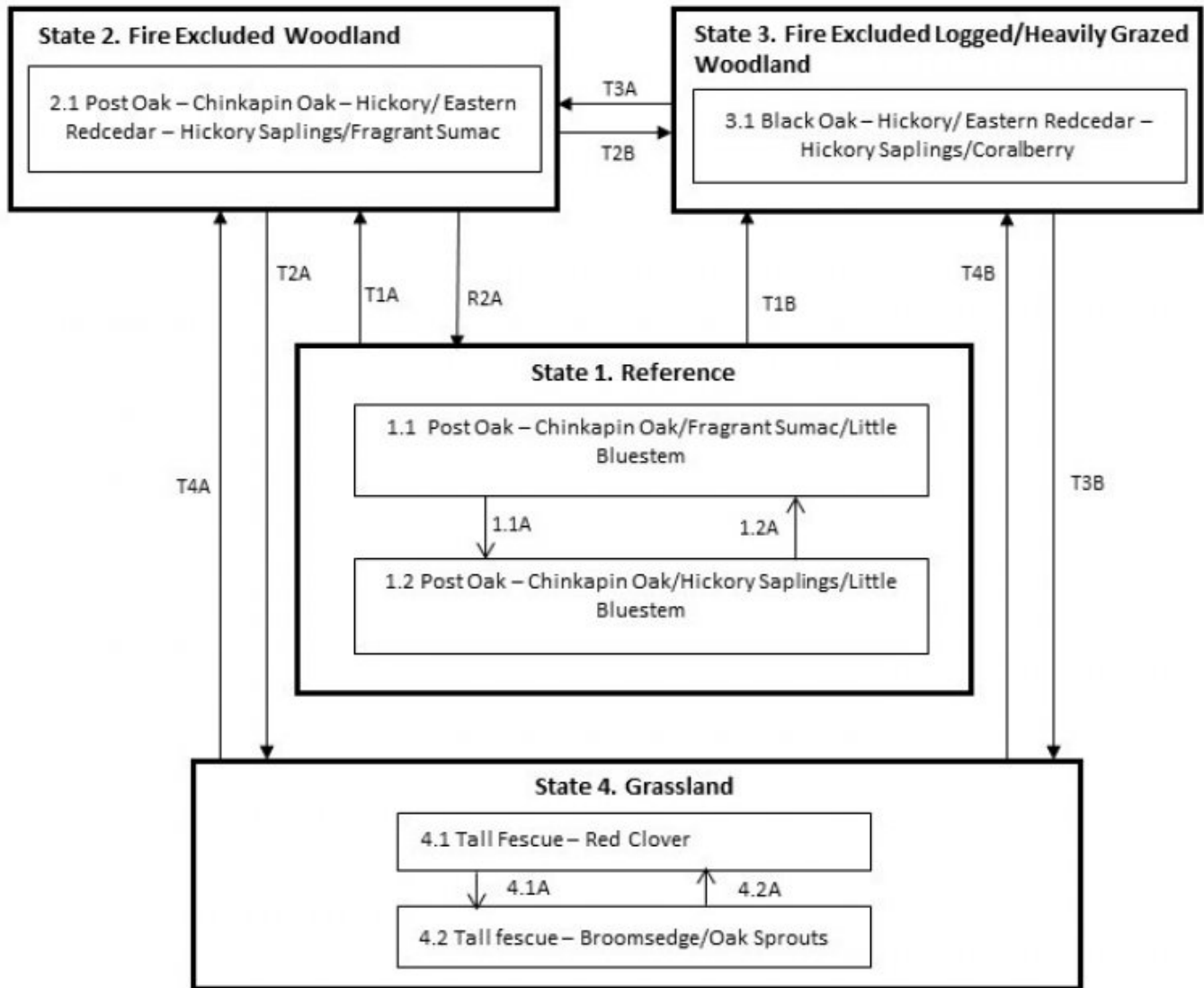
Uncontrolled domestic grazing has also impacted these communities, further diminishing the diversity of native plants and introducing species that are tolerant of grazing, such as eastern redcedar, coralberry, gooseberry, and Virginia creeper. Heavily grazed sites also have a more open understory. In addition, soil compaction and soil erosion due related to uncontrolled grazing can be a problem and lower site productivity.

Most occurrences today are dense and shady with a greatly diminished ground flora. Timber harvest is limited on these sites because of short tree stature and lower tree quality. Removal of the younger understory and the application of prescribed fire have proven to be effective restoration management practices.

A State and Transition Diagram follows. Detailed descriptions of each state, transition, plant community, and pathway follow the model. This model is based on available experimental research, field observations, professional consensus, and interpretations. It is likely to change as knowledge increases.

## **State and transition model**

# Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodland, F116BY034MO



Code	Event/Activity
T1A	Fire-free interval (20+ years)
T1B	Fire suppression; heavy grazing by livestock; logging
T3A	Livestock removal
T2B	Heavy grazing by livestock; logging
T2A, T3B	Clearing; grassland seeding; grassland management
T4A	Tree planting; long term succession (50+ years); no grazing
T4B	Long term succession (50+ years); light periodic grazing
R2A	Understory removal; prescribed fire
1.1A	Fire-free interval 10-20 years
1.2A	Fire 3-10 year cycle
4.1A	Over grazing; no fertilization
4.2A	Brush management; grassland seeding; grassland management

Figure 9. Ecological site state and transition diagram

## State 1

## Reference

Historically, these woodlands occurred occur on steep backslopes with southern and western aspects along the Sac River system. The restricted soil depth, droughty conditions, and native grasses made them susceptible to frequent fires, once every 3 to 5 years. Consequently, fire-tolerant post oak and chinkapin oak dominated the open-canopy overstory, and the understory consisted of a dense cover of native grasses and forbs (community phase 1.1). Tree height was 40 to 50 feet, and canopy closure 40 to 80 percent. During fire-free intervals, eastern redcedar, along with hickory and oak sprouts, increased in abundance and competed with the herbaceous ground flora, creating brushy woodland (community phase 1.2). However, the return of fire would re-open the woodland and promote the ground flora.

### Community 1.1

#### Post Oak – Chinkapin Oak/Fragrant Sumac/Little Bluestem

**Forest overstory.** The Overstory Species list is based on field reconnaissance as well as commonly occurring species listed in Nelson 2010; names and symbols are from USDA PLANTS database.

**Forest understory.** The Understory Species list is based on field reconnaissance as well as commonly occurring species listed in Nelson 2010; names and symbols are from USDA PLANTS database.

### Community 1.2

#### Post Oak – Chinkapin Oak/Hickory Saplings/Little Bluestem

#### Pathway P1.1A

##### Community 1.1 to 1.2

Fire-free interval 10-20 years

#### Pathway P1.2A

##### Community 1.2 to 1.1

Fire 3-10 year cycle

## State 2

### Fire Excluded Woodland

Fire suppression has allowed these previously open woodlands to become dense with less fire-tolerant trees and saplings such as eastern redcedar, black oak, and hickory. The dense, shaded conditions and lack of fire has caused the ground flora to decrease in cover and diversity. Fragrant sumac often forms a dense shrub understory under these conditions. However, many of the original herbaceous species persist as small plants or in the seed bank. Consequently, thinning of the woody species and the re-introduction of fire has shown these communities to be exceptionally resilient, and a return, after a period of many years, to the reference condition is possible.

#### Dominant resource concerns

- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

### Community 2.1

#### Post Oak – Chinkapin Oak – Hickory/ Eastern Redcedar – Hickory Saplings/Fragrant Sumac

## State 3

### Fire Excluded Logged/Heavily Grazed Woodland

In addition to fire exclusion, many of these sites have been subjected to heavy grazing by domestic livestock and periodic selective logging. Like State 2, these areas are dense and shady with a diminished ground flora. In



addition, grazed areas exhibit a lower diversity of native ground flora species and an increased abundance of eastern redcedar and other invasive natives such as coralberry. Like State 2, restoration using thinning and prescribed fire is possible, but will take longer and require more effort. Restricting livestock access and eliminating logging will be necessary for successful restoration.

#### **Dominant resource concerns**

- Ephemeral gully erosion
- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Plant pest pressure
- Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

### **Community 3.1**

#### **Black Oak – Hickory/ Eastern Redcedar – Hickory Saplings/Coralberry**

### **State 4**

#### **Grassland**

Conversion of other states to non-native cool season species such as tall fescue, orchard grass, and red clover has been common. Occasionally, these pastures will have scattered oaks. Long term uncontrolled grazing can cause significant soil erosion and compaction. A return to the reference state may be impossible, requiring a very long term series of management options. If oak sprouting is left unchecked this state will transition to an fire excluded woodland.

### **Community 4.1**

#### **Tall Fescue - Red Clover**

#### **Dominant resource concerns**

- Plant structure and composition
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

### **Community 4.2**

#### **Tall Fescue - Broomsedge/Oak Sprouts**

#### **Dominant resource concerns**

- Ephemeral gully erosion
- Nutrients transported to surface water
- Plant productivity and health
- Plant structure and composition
- Plant pest pressure
- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- Feed and forage imbalance

### **Pathway P4.1A**

#### **Community 4.1 to 4.2**

Over grazing; no fertilization

### **Pathway P4.2A**

#### **Community 4.2 to 4.1**

Brush management; grassland seeding; grassland management

### **Transition T1A**

## **State 1 to 2**

Fire-free interval (20+ years)

## **Transition T1B**

### **State 1 to 3**

Fire suppression; heavy grazing by livestock; logging

## **Restoration pathway R2A**

### **State 2 to 1**

Understory removal; prescribed fire ; forest stand improvement

## **Transition T2B**

### **State 2 to 3**

Heavy grazing by livestock; logging

## **Transition T2A**

### **State 2 to 4**

Clearing; grassland seeding; grassland management

## **Restoration pathway T3A**

### **State 3 to 2**

Livestock removal; forest stand improvement

## **Transition T3B**

### **State 3 to 4**

Clearing; grassland seeding; grassland management

## **Transition T4A**

### **State 4 to 2**

Woody invasion; tree planting; long term succession (50+ years); no grazing

## **Transition T4B**

### **State 4 to 3**

Woody invasion; long term succession (50+ years); light periodic grazing

## **Additional community tables**

Table 5. Community 1.1 forest overstory composition

Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Nativity	Height (M)	Canopy Cover (%)	Diameter (Cm)	Basal Area (Square M/Hectare)
<b>Tree</b>							
blackjack oak	QUMA3	<i>Quercus marilandica</i>	Native	–	20–40	–	–
post oak	QUST	<i>Quercus stellata</i>	Native	–	20–40	–	–
chinquapin oak	QUMU	<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
black hickory	CATE9	<i>Carya texana</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
black oak	QUVE	<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Native	–	10–20	–	–
common serviceberry	AMAR3	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Native	–	5–10	–	–
eastern redcedar	JUVI	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Native	–	0–10	–	–

Table 6. Community 1.1 forest understory composition

Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Nativity	Height (M)	Canopy Cover (%)
<b>Grass/grass-like (Graminoids)</b>					
black edge sedge	CANI3	<i>Carex nigromarginata</i>	Native	–	–
reflexed sedge	CARE9	<i>Carex retroflexa</i>	Native	–	–
whitetinge sedge	CAALA	<i>Carex albicans var. albicans</i>	Native	–	–
fuzzy wuzzy sedge	CAHI6	<i>Carex hirsutella</i>	Native	–	–
Muhlenberg's sedge	CAMU4	<i>Carex muehlenbergii</i>	Native	–	–
blue sedge	CAGL6	<i>Carex glaucoidea</i>	Native	–	–
bashful bulrush	TRPL6	<i>Trichophorum planifolium</i>	Native	–	–
roundseed panicgrass	DISPI	<i>Dichanthelium sphaerocarpon var. isophyllum</i>	Native	–	–
slimleaf panicgrass	DILI2	<i>Dichanthelium linearifolium</i>	Native	–	–
little bluestem	SCSC	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Native	–	–
poverty oatgrass	DASP2	<i>Danthonia spicata</i>	Native	–	–
western panicgrass	DIACF	<i>Dichanthelium acuminatum var. fasciculatum</i>	Native	–	–
big bluestem	ANGE	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Native	–	–
<b>Forb/Herb</b>					
wild quinine	PAIN3	<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>	Native	–	–
purple prairie clover	DAPU5	<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Native	–	–
white prairie clover	DACA7	<i>Dalea candida</i>	Native	–	–
late purple aster	SYAP2	<i>Symphotrichum patens var. patens</i>	Native	–	–
stiff tickseed	COPA10	<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	Native	–	–
hairy sunflower	HEHI2	<i>Helianthus hirsutus</i>	Native	–	–
smooth small-leaf ticktrefoil	DEMA2	<i>Desmodium marilandicum</i>	Native	–	–
prostrate ticktrefoil	DERO3	<i>Desmodium rotundifolium</i>	Native	–	–
stiff ticktrefoil	DEOB5	<i>Desmodium obtusum</i>	Native	–	–
hairy lespedeza	LEHI2	<i>Lespedeza hirta</i>	Native	–	–
violet lespedeza	LEVI6	<i>Lespedeza violacea</i>	Native	–	–
trailing lespedeza	LEPR	<i>Lespedeza procumbens</i>	Native	–	–
smooth violet prairie aster	SYTU2	<i>Symphotrichum turbinellum</i>	Native	–	–
Parlin's pussytoes	ANPA9	<i>Antennaria parlinii</i>	Native	–	–

gray goldenrod	SONE	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	Native	–	–
elmleaf goldenrod	SOUL2	<i>Solidago ulmifolia</i>	Native	–	–
hairy goldenrod	SOHI	<i>Solidago hispida</i>	Native	–	–
downy ragged goldenrod	SOPE	<i>Solidago petiolaris</i>	Native	–	–
manyray aster	SYAN2	<i>Symphotrichum anomalum</i>	Native	–	–
flaxleaf whitetop aster	IOLI2	<i>Ionactis linariifolius</i>	Native	–	–
Nuttall's sensitive-briar	MINU6	<i>Mimosa nuttallii</i>	Native	–	–
tall blazing star	LIAS	<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Native	–	–
scaly blazing star	LISQ	<i>Liatris squarrosa</i>	Native	–	–
longbract wild indigo	BABR2	<i>Baptisia bracteata</i>	Native	–	–
Virginia tephrosia	TEVI	<i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>	Native	–	–
<b>Shrub/Subshrub</b>					
Carolina buckthorn	FRCA13	<i>Frangula caroliniana</i>	Native	–	5–20
dwarf hackberry	CETE	<i>Celtis tenuifolia</i>	Native	–	5–20
fragrant sumac	RHAR4	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Native	–	10–20
leadplant	AMCA6	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Native	–	5–20

## Animal community

Wildlife (MDC 2006):

Oaks provide hard mast; scattered shrubs provide soft mast.

Sedges and native cool-season grasses provide green browse; native warm-season grasses provide cover and nesting habitat; and forbs provide a diversity and abundance of insects.

Birds associated with Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodlands are Indigo Bunting, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Bobwhite, Summer Tanager, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Whip-poor-will, Chuck-will's widow, and Red-eyed Vireo.

Reptiles and amphibians associated with this ecological type include: ornate box turtle, northern fence lizard, five-lined skink, coal skink, broad-headed skink, six-lined racerunner, western slender glass lizard, prairie ring-necked snake, flat-headed snake, rough earth snake, red milk snake, western pygmy rattlesnake, and timber rattlesnake.

## Other information

Forestry (NRCS 2002; 2014)

Management: Estimated site index values range from 45 to 50 for oak. Timber management opportunities are fair to poor. Create group openings of at least 2 acres. Large clearcuts should be minimized if possible to reduce impacts on wildlife and aesthetics. Uneven-aged management using single tree selection or small group selection cuttings of ½ to 1 acre are other options that can be used if clear cutting is not desired or warranted. This site responds well to prescribed fire as a management tool.

Limitations: Large amounts of coarse fragments throughout profile; bedrock within 40 inches. Surface stones and rocks are problems for efficient and safe equipment operation and will make equipment use somewhat difficult. Disturbing the surface excessively in harvesting operations and building roads increases soil losses, which leaves a greater amount of coarse fragments on the surface. Hand planting or direct seeding may be necessary. Seedling mortality due to low available water capacity may be high. Mulching or providing shade can improve seedling survival. Mechanical tree planting will be limited. Erosion is a hazard when slopes exceed 15 percent. On steep slopes greater than 35 percent, traction problems increase and equipment use is not recommended.

## Inventory data references

## Potential Reference Sites: Chert Limestone Exposed Backslope Woodland

Plot STLACE07 – Sonsac soil

Located in Stockton Lake COE/CA, Cedar County, MO

Latitude: 37.576655

Longitude: -93.673001

### Other references

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### Approval

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## 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	09/30/2020
Approved by	Nels Barrett
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):**

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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:**
-