USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Ecological site F122XY003KY
Deep Well Drained Loamy Uplands

Last updated: 5/14/2025
Accessed: 12/18/2025

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): 122X–Highland Rim and Pennyroyal

MLRA 122 is in Tennessee (47 percent), Kentucky (43 percent), Indiana (7 percent), and Alabama (3 percent). It makes up about 21,530 square miles (55,790 square kilometers).

SOILS:
Many of the soils in this MLRA are Udalfs. The moderately deep to very deep, well drained, clayey soils formed in limestone residuum. They are dominantly in rolling to steep areas of the “Outer Basin” (Mimosa, Braxton, Gladdice, and Hampshire series) and the undulating to hilly areas of the “Inner Basin” (Talbott and Bradyville series). The most agriculturally productive soils are the very deep, well drained, clayey or loamy soils that formed in alluvium and/or loess over alluvium or limestone residuum in nearly level to undulating areas (Armour, Cumberland, Harpeth, Lomond, and Maury series). The less extensive soils generally are moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained and formed in loamy or clayey alluvium and/or residuum (Byler, Capshaw, Colbert, and Tupelo series). This MLRA has a significant acreage of Mollisols. Shallow or moderately deep, well drained, clayey Udolls (Ashwood and Barfield series) formed in limestone residuum dominantly in rolling to steep areas. Very shallow, well drained, clayey Rendolls (Gladeville series) formed in limestone residuum dominantly in undulating to rolling areas of the “Inner Basin.” Very deep, well drained or moderately well drained Udolls (Arrington, Egam, Lynnville, and Staser series) and somewhat poorly drained or poorly drained Aquolls (Agee, Godwin, and Lanton series) formed in loamy or clayey alluvium derived from limestone on flood plains. Most of the remaining soils on flood plains are moderately well drained or well drained Udepts (Lindell and Ocana series). Udults are of small extent in this area. Most are very deep, well drained, and loamy and formed in gravelly colluvium or colluvium and the underlying residuum on steep hillsides (Dellrose soils). Rock outcrops

are common on uplands.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:
This area supports mixed oak forest vegetation. White oak, black oak, northern red oak, and some scarlet oak are the dominant tree species. Shagbark hickory, bitternut hickory, pignut hickory, and mockernut hickory also occur. Oak, blackgum, flowering dogwood, sassafras, Virginia pine, pitch pine, and shortleaf pine grow mostly on ridgetops.

(Excerpt from United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296.)

Classification relationships

Scientific Name: Southern Interior Low Plateau Dry-Mesic Oak Forest, Unique Identifier: CES202.898

Possible Association:
Quercus velutina - *Quercus alba* - Carya(glabra, ovate) Forest
Unique Identifier: CEGL002076
Classification Approach: International Vegetation Classification (IVC)

Ecological site concept

Deep Well Drained Loamy Uplands
Initial Soil Series: Allegheny, Carpenter, Frankstown, Riney, Sonora

Communities described in this provisional document reflect plant communities that are likely to be found on these soils and have not been field verified. This PES also does not encompass the entire complexity or diversity of these sites. Field studies would be required to develop a comprehensive and science-based native plant restoration plan for these sites.

State 1. (Reference)
Phase 1.1: Plant species dominants:

Only two tree species can be selected for entry into the database as dominants; however, multiple tree species may be dominant on these sites depending on aspect, soil depth, seed sources, management, and disturbance history. Trees documented on these sites include oaks, hickories, elm, ash, maple, poplar, black walnut, dogwood, persimmon and sassafras.

black oak – white oak / flowering dogwood / Virginia creeper – ticktrefoil
(*Quercus velutina – Quercus alba* / *Cornus florida* / *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* -

Desmodium spp.)

The absence of a natural fire regime and a history of disturbances (logging, grazing, etc.) are influences that will move this community from an old growth mixed-oak or oak-hickory community to a more mesic hardwood community. Long-term lack of a natural fire regime or human disturbances can create a more mesic, shady environment which enhances the reproduction of quick growing, fire intolerant, shade-tolerant species such as maples and reduces the successful regeneration of oaks and hickories.

The forested state may be impacted by the invasion of non-native honeysuckle within the understory.

See additional ecological states and phases under the Community Phase Data Section.

Associated sites

F122XY001KY	**Deep Well Drained Cherty Uplands** Deep, Well Drained Cherty Uplands

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) *Quercus alba* (2) *Quercus velutina*
Shrub	(1) *Cornus florida*
Herbaceous	(1) *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (2) *Desmodium*

Physiographic features

These sites are deep, loamy, well-drained uplands.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Hill
Runoff class	Low to very high
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	400–1,500 ft
Slope	2–35%
Water table depth	60 in
Aspect	W, NW, N, NE, E, SE, S, SW

Climatic features

Climate
The average annual precipitation in this area is 43 to 63 inches (1,090 to 1,600 millimeters), increasing to the south. The maximum precipitation occurs in winter and early in spring, and the minimum occurs in fall. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms. Snowfall may occur in winter. The average annual temperature is 52 to 60 degrees F (11 to 16 degrees C), increasing to the south. The freeze-free period averages 210 days and ranges from 185 to 235 days. The longer freeze-free periods occur in the more southerly parts of the area.

(Excerpt from United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296.)

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	157-165 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	185-196 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	50-57 in
Frost-free period (actual range)	153-168 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	180-204 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	47-59 in
Frost-free period (average)	161 days
Freeze-free period (average)	192 days
Precipitation total (average)	53 in

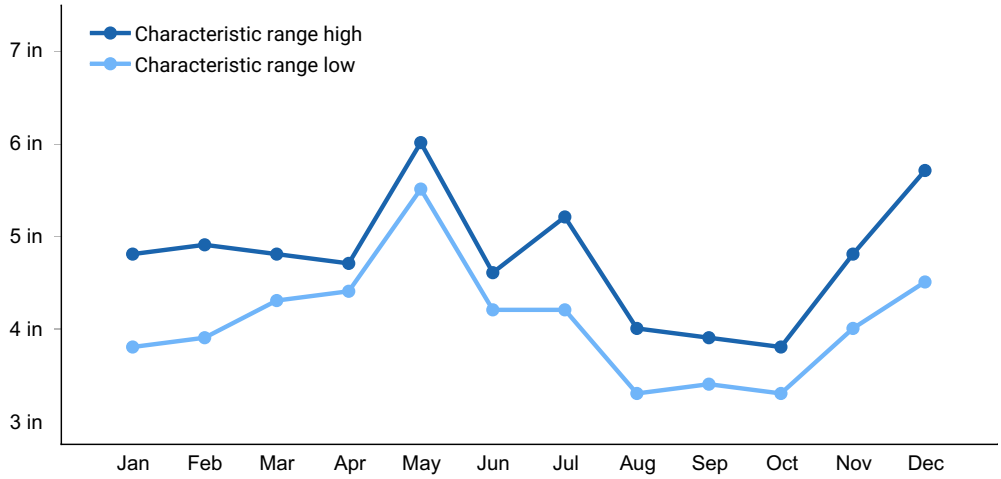

Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

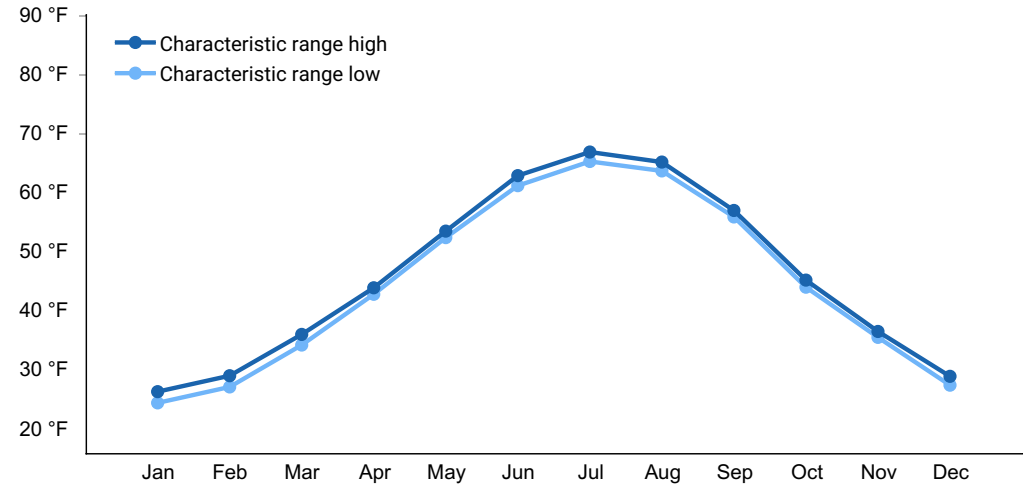

Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

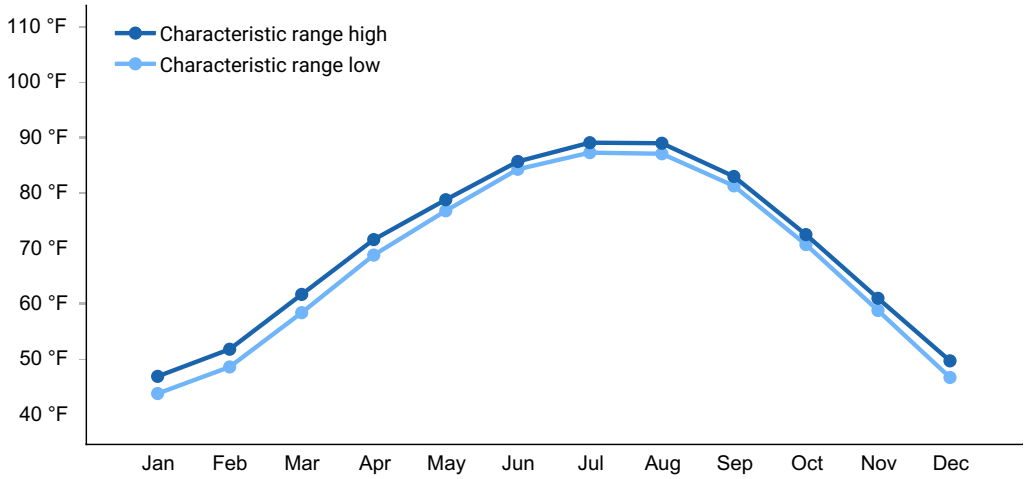

Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

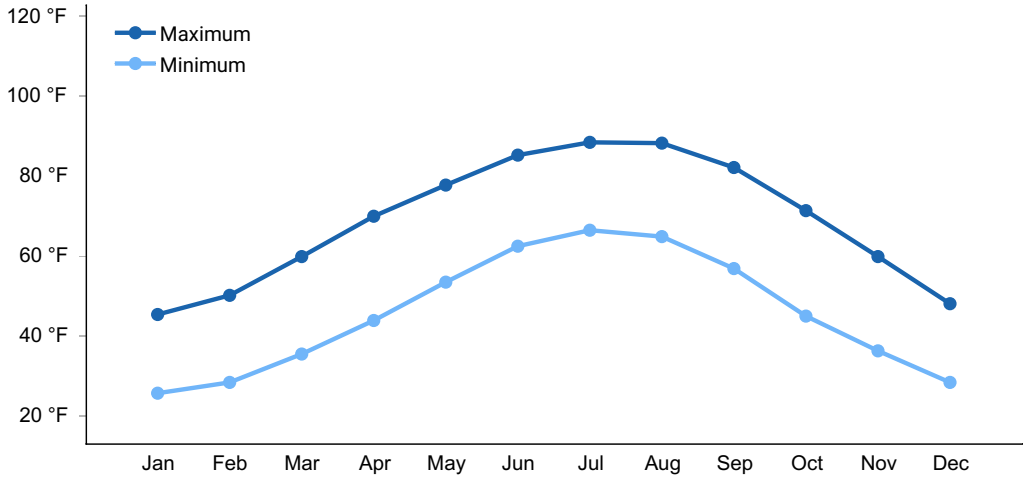

Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

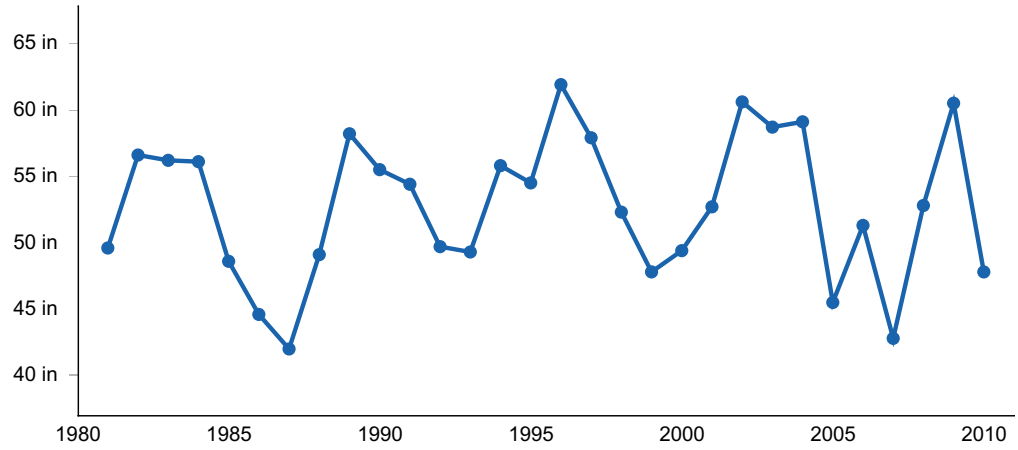

Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

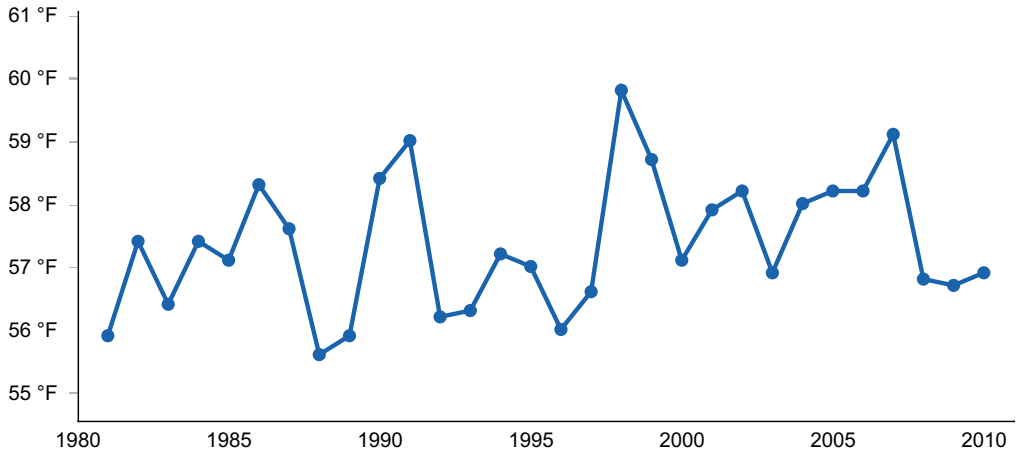

Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) CLARKSVILLE WWTP [USC00401790], Clarksville, TN
- (2) WAYNESBORO [USC00409502], Waynesboro, TN
- (3) GREENSBURG [USC00153430], Greensburg, KY
- (4) COOKEVILLE [USC00402009], Cookeville, TN
- (5) SALEM [USC00127755], Salem, IN

Influencing water features

There are no influencing water features for this group.

Soil features

These sites are deep, well drained, and loamy in texture. Located on uplands.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Residuum–limestone (2) Colluvium–cherty limestone
Surface texture	(1) Gravelly loam (2) Cobbly sandy loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Moderate to moderately rapid
Soil depth	40–60 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	6–9 in
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-40in)	0%
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	4.4–6
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0–22%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0–3%

Ecological dynamics

F122XY003KY - Deep Well Drained Loamy Uplands

Communities described in this provisional document reflect plant communities that are likely to be found on these soils and have not been extensively field verified. This PES describes hypotheses based on available data of many different scales and sources and has not been developed utilizing site-specific ecological field monitoring. This PES does not encompass the entire complexity or diversity of these sites. Additional field studies are needed to develop a comprehensive and science-based native plant restoration plan for these soils.

Forest Vegetation as listed in Official Series Descriptions (OSD):

Allegheny: Where wooded--hardwoods interspersed with conifers.

Carpenter: Most of this soil is forested. Species of trees include upland oaks, hickory, yellow-poplar, black walnut, maple and beech.

Frankstown: Native vegetation is forest consisting mainly of oaks, hickory, ash, elm, maple, black walnut and flowering dogwood.

Riney: Native forests are dominantly oak, hickory, maple, poplar, dogwood, persimmon and sassafras.

Sonora: Native forests have oak, hickory, maple, poplar, dogwood, persimmon, and sassafras as the dominant species.

Ecological Communities
State 1. Forestland
Only two tree species can be selected for entry into the database as dominants; however, multiple tree species may be dominant on these sites and it will vary depending on aspect, soil depth, seed sources, management, and disturbance history.

Phase 1.1: Plant species dominants:

black oak – white oak / flowering dogwood / Virginia creeper – ticktrefoil
(*Quercus velutina – Quercus alba* / *Cornus florida* / *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* - Desmodium spp.)

Forests on these well drained, loamy, sites are generally mixed oak or oak-hickory. In areas with more topography, the north and east slopes may show an increase in shade tolerant hardwood species such as maples. Understory communities are usually well-developed and contain herbs and forbs that thrive on limestone soils. The shrub layer is usually sparse in older, reference type communities but may be dense in successional stages.

Depending upon external influences such as fire and site management history, tree species may include white oak, black oak, hickories, sugar maple, eastern redbud, persimmon, elms, dogwood, and white ash.

Shrubs and vines on these sites may include flowering dogwood, sassafras, hophornbeam, Virginia creeper, grape, and poison ivy.

The absence of a natural fire regime and a history of disturbances (logging, grazing, etc.) are influences that will move this community from an old growth mixed-oak or oak-hickory community to a more mixed hardwood community. Long-term lack of a natural fire regime or human disturbances can create a more mesic, shady environment which enhances the reproduction of quick growing, shade-tolerant species such as maples, elms, ashes, poplars, etc. and reduces the successful regeneration of oaks and hickories.

This state may in impacted by the invasion of non-native honeysuckle within the understory. Lonicera spp. (usually L. maackii in central Kentucky) alters the native plant communities due to shade and competition. Long-term, multi-year control efforts are required to control this aggressive non-native plant and restore native woodlands.

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

Pasture plant species are dependent on seeding, weed control, concurrent land uses, on-going levels of disturbance, and landowner goals. Individual site and soil characteristics, along with management activities, will influence production levels. Many species of grass, both warm and cool season, are available and suitable for these sites. Common forage species include tall fescue, orchard grass, Kentucky bluegrass, Johnson grass, timothy, and various species of clover.

Management of pasture sites should follow conservation planning standards and protocols which include watershed protection, soil health, and adequate forage species.

Transitioning this state to a reference condition would require long-term timber stand improvement practices to control non-native vegetation and manage for desired hardwood species.

State: 3 – Transitional (Abandoned Field)
Phases 3.1: Plant species dominants: *Juniperus virginiana*/ Rubus spp. - *Rosa multiflora*/ *Vernonia gigantea* -*Schedonorus arundinaceus*
Eastern red cedar /blackberry – multiflora rose/ ironweed- tall fescue

Tree species regeneration on these sites will depend on the severity and duration of disturbance, soil characteristics, adjacent plant communities and seed sources, post-disturbance management inputs, presence or absence of continued site disturbances (grazing), slope, and aspect.

Transitioning this state to a reference condition will likely require timber stand improvement practices to control non-native vegetation and manage for desired hardwood species.

State 4: Phase 4.1. Abandoned Croplands
Plant species dominant:
henbit deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*) – mouse-eared chickweed (Cerastium L.)

Abandonment of cropland would result in many weed species taking over the site. Initially, annual weeds would be predominate followed by grasses, shrubs and finally, pioneers

trees.

It would require years of management, plantings, and weed control to establish successional communities that could transition to a reference community.

State 5: Phase 5.1. Cropland
Dependent upon seeding and management. Most common crops are corn and soybeans.

TO VALIDATE THE INFORMATION IN THIS PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTION FUTURE FIELD WORK IS NEEDED. This will include field inspection and data collection including medium to high intensity sampling, soil correlations, and analysis of that data.

A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD will be needed to produce a document to be utilized for on-site conservation planning.

State and transition model

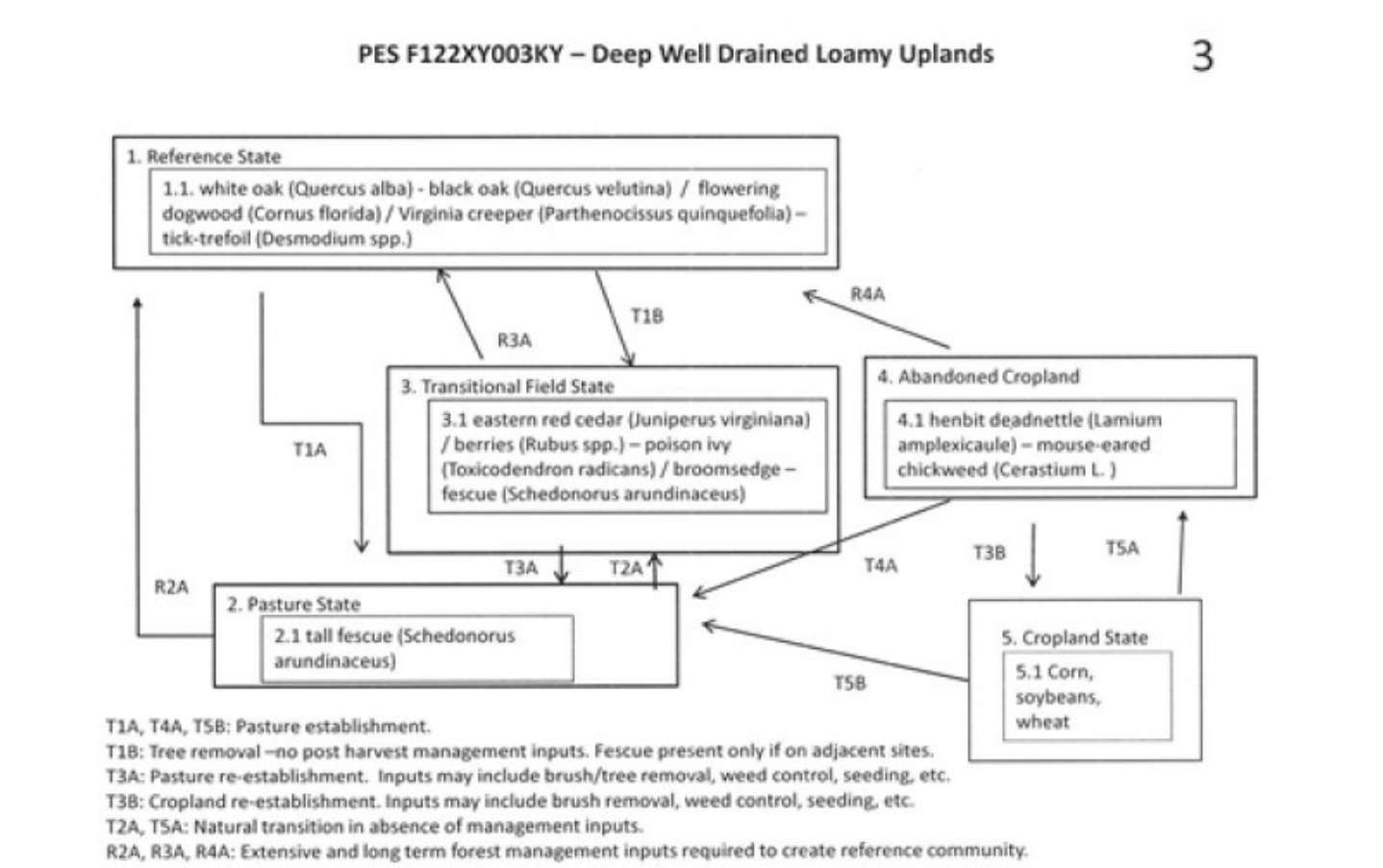

Figure 7. group3

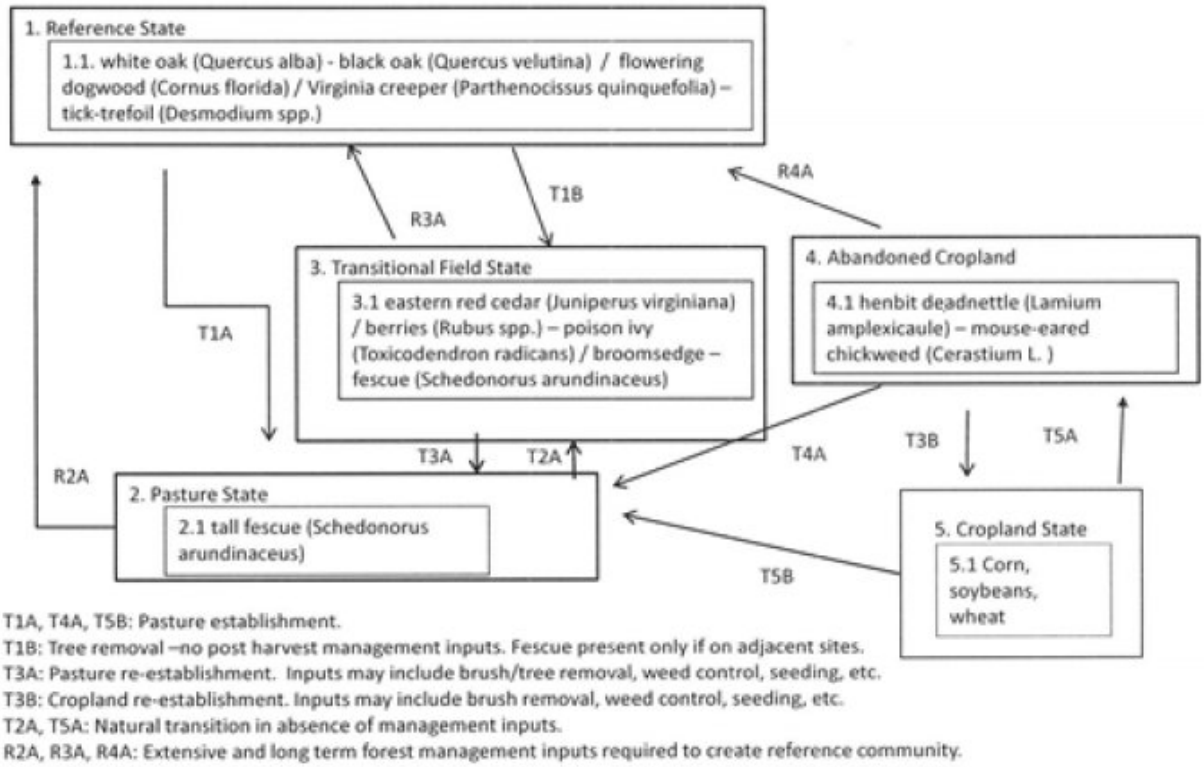

Figure 8. group3

Inventory data references

Site Development and Testing Plan
Future work is needed, as described in a future project plan, to validate the information presented in this provisional ecological site description. Future work includes field sampling, data collection and analysis by qualified vegetation ecologists and soil scientists. As warranted, annual reviews of the project plan can be conducted by the Ecological Site Technical Team. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD are necessary to approve a final document.

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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	12/18/2025
Approved by	Matthew Duvall
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:**

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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):**

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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:**
