Ecological site F134XY209AL
Western Moderately Wet Terrace - PROVISIONAL

Accessed: 12/08/2023

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): 134X–Southern Mississippi Valley Loess

The Southern Mississippi Valley Loess (MLRA 134) extends some 500 miles from the southern tip of Illinois to southern Louisiana. This MLRA occurs in Mississippi (39 percent), Tennessee (23 percent), Louisiana (15 percent), Arkansas (11 percent), Kentucky (9 percent), Missouri (2 percent), and Illinois (1 percent). It makes up about 26,520 square miles. Landscapes consist of highly dissected uplands, level to undulating plains, and broad terraces that are covered with a mantle of loess. Underlying the loess are Tertiary deposits of unconsolidated sand, silt, clay, gravel, and lignite. The soils, mainly Alfisols, formed in the loess mantle. Stream systems of the MLRA typically originate as low-gradient drainageways in the upper reaches that broaden rapidly downstream to wide, level floodplains with highly meandering channels. Alluvial soils, mostly Entisols and Inceptisols, are predominantly silty where loess thickness of the uplands are deepest but grade to loamy textures in watersheds covered by thin loess. Crowley’s Ridge, Macon Ridge, and Lafayette Loess Plains are discontinuous, erosional remnants that run north to south in southeastern Missouri - eastern Arkansas, northeastern Louisiana, and south-central Louisiana, respectively. Elevations range from around 100 feet on terraces in southern Louisiana to over 600 feet on uplands in western Kentucky. The steep, dissected uplands are mainly in hardwood forests while less sloping areas are used for crop, pasture, and forage production (USDA-NRCS, 2006).

This site primarily occurs on the loess-capped terraces of the Western Lowlands Pleistocene Valley Trains (EPA Level IV Ecoregion: 73g; Woods et al., 2004), although the soils of the site have been mapped on adjoining areas, such as the Grand Prairie ecoregion (EPA 73e).

Classification relationships

All or portions of the geographic range of this site falls within a number of ecological/land classifications including:
-NRCS Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 134 – Southern Mississippi Valley Loess
-NRCS Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 131A – Southern Mississippi River Alluvium
-Environmental Protection Agency’s Level IV Ecoregion: Western Lowlands Pleistocene Valley Trains: 73g (Woods et al., 2004); Pleistocene Valley Trains: 73b (Chapman et al., 2002)
-234A – Southern Mississippi Alluvial Plain section of the USDA Forest Service Ecological Subregion (McNab et al., 2005)
-LANDFIRE Biophysical Setting 4515130 and NatureServe Ecological System CES203.193 Lower Mississippi River Flatwoods, respectively (LANDFIRE, 2008; NatureServe, 2009)
-Hardwood Flats, Early Wisconsin Valley Train and Deweyville Terraces (dry phase) (Klimas et al., 2012)
-Bottomland Flatwoods (Nelson, 2005)

Ecological site concept

The Western Moderately Wet Terrace is characterized by very deep, somewhat poorly drained soils that formed in loess or water reworked loess. This site primarily occurs on broad, level to nearly level Pleistocene-age terraces of the Western Lowlands with slopes ranging from 0 to 3 percent. The principal soil of this site has a seasonally high water table from winter to mid-spring in most years that can become quite droughty by late summer. This extreme

alteration between saturated and droughty conditions is attributed to a slowly permeable fragipan. The site sometimes occurs in complex or association with seasonally ponded depressions and poorly drained flatwoods (wet phase). The slightly better drainage of this site coupled with a slightly higher position on the landscape supports a drier plant association than its wetter counterpart, the Western Wet Loess Terrace. The natural vegetation of these broad flats possess characteristics that are suggestive of hydroxeric flatwoods; that is, they have seasonally saturated soils, a relatively open understory, and support droughty woodland species on a low, flat landscape. Common to dominant species of many stands include post oak, southern red oak, and shagbark hickory whereas the shallow depressions of this site may be dominated by willow and water oak. Of note, considerable variation in the plant community may occur among and between stands.

Associated sites

F134XY201AL	**Western Loess Terrace - PROVISIONAL**
F134XY202AL	**Western Wet Loess Terrace - PROVISIONAL** This site occurs in fairly close association with the Western Moderately Wet Terrace. The latter is slightly drier than the wet terrace site.
F134XY206AL	**Western Fragipan Terrace - PROVISIONAL**

Similar sites

F134XY008AL	**Northern Moderately Wet Loess Terrace - PROVISIONAL** This site is the eastern counterpart of the Western Moderately Wet Terrace.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

The Western Moderately Wet Terrace ecological site occurs primarily within the Western Lowlands ecoregion, although there are a few instances where the soils of this site have been mapped in adjoining physiographic areas (e.g., Crowley’s Ridge). Overall, the core concepts of this site are best defined where these somewhat poorly drained soils occur on level to nearly level, loess-capped Pleistocene terraces of the Western Lowlands.

The Western Lowlands border Crowley’s Ridge to the west and extends over a north-south distance of approximately 225 miles from Cape Girardeau, Missouri to the vicinity of Helena, Arkansas (Saucier, 1994). An irregular and sometimes ill-defined boundary of two MLRAs, 134 and 131A, converge within the Lowlands. Soils that formed in loess (considered soils of MLRA 134) mainly occur along the eastern edge of the Lowlands and along the western interface with Crowley’s Ridge. However, loessal soils of the terraces often occur in intricate, complex patterns with soils that formed in alluvium and eolian loamy and sandy deposits (i.e., soils of MLRA 131A).

Much of these complexities were borne from past events, generally attributed to various glacial outwash episodes that occurred as a result from cyclical continental glaciation. Tremendous amounts of meltwater streamed through the area forming a highly dendritic network of braided stream channels. A culmination of these events helped to create one of the region’s most characteristic landscapes, a series of ancient fluvial terraces sometimes referred to as “valley train” terraces. Each terrace was established at different time periods with the oldest feature occurring along the western margin of Crowley’s Ridge. Proceeding westward, the age of each successive terrace becomes progressively younger, and each terrace is distinguished by a drop of several feet in elevation. The oldest terrace is at least 30 feet higher than the modern floodplain of active streams on the Western Lowlands (Klimas et al., 2012).

Most modern stream systems enter the Lowlands from the Ozark Plateau or arise within the basin (Klimas et al., 2009), including a few minor systems originating on Crowley’s Ridge. Some of the ancestral braided streams that had once formed from glacial outwash now supports modern tributaries and local drainageways, which have since formed narrow valleys and floodplains (Saucier, 1994). Another feature of the historic stream braids are a series of

swales or what is locally referred to as “slashes”. Such features tend to hold water for very long periods throughout the year and are essentially remnant channel braids or scours (T. Foti, personal communication). Superimposed on this backdrop of complex physiographic features are low ridges, mounds, and relict dunes that are of eolian origin – consisting of loess (e.g., loessal ridges) and sand or sandy loam (e.g., dunes).

The core concepts of this site are primarily associated with the Early Wisconsin Terraces of the Western Lowlands. Embedded within this site are occasional, shallow depressions that pond during the wetter times of the year, generally late winter to spring (typically referred to as vernal pools).

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Valley train (2) Terrace (3) Flat
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	213–295 ft
Slope	0–3%
Water table depth	12–20 in
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

This site falls under the Humid Subtropical Climate Classification (Koppen System). The mean annual precipitation for this site from 1980 through 2010 was approximately 52 inches with a range from 35 to roughly 73 inches. Maximum precipitation occurs in spring (April and May) and late fall (November and December) and typically decreases throughout the summer. Rainfall often occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms during warmer periods but moderate-intensity frontal systems can produce large amounts of rainfall during winter. Snowfall generally occurs in most years but duration is often brief (USDA-NRCS, 2006). The average annual maximum and minimum air temperature is 72 (range 48 to 91) and 51 (range 30 to 72) degrees F, respectively. The average frost free and freeze free periods are 206 and 236 days, respectively.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	206 days
Freeze-free period (average)	236 days
Precipitation total (average)	52 in

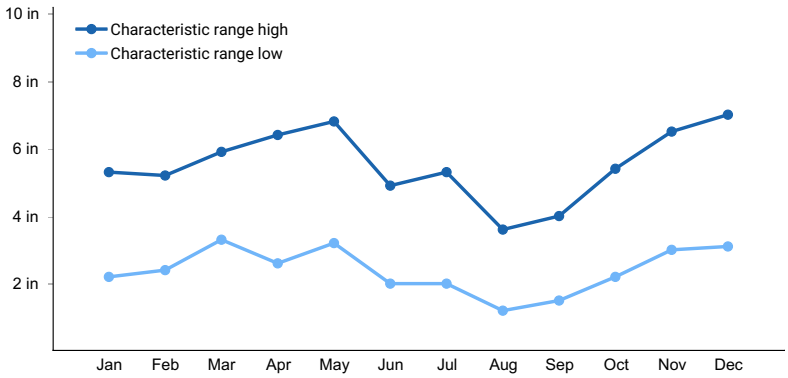

Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

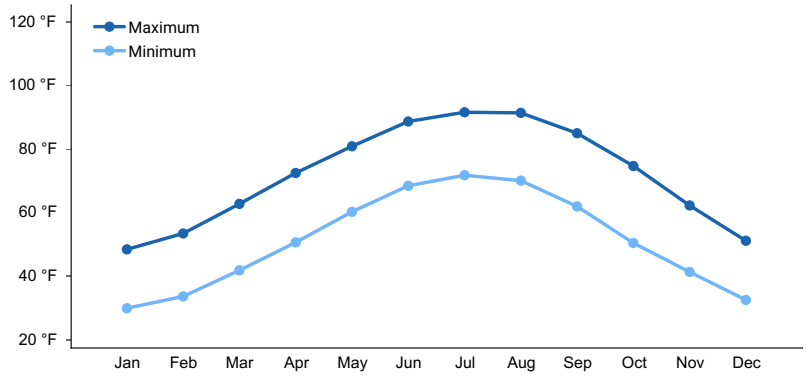

Figure 2. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

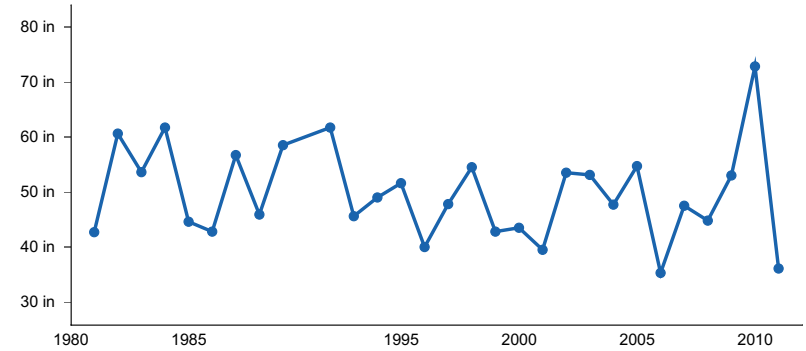

Figure 3. Annual precipitation pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) HELENA [USC00033242], Helena, AR
- (2) MARIANNA 2 S [USC00034638], Marianna, AR
- (3) BRINKLEY [USC00030936], Brinkley, AR
- (4) CLARENDON [USC00031442], Clarendon, AR
- (5) NEWPORT [USC00035186], Newport, AR
- (6) PARAGOULD 1S [USC00035563], Paragould, AR
- (7) SAINT CHARLES [USC00036376], Clarendon, AR

Influencing water features

The somewhat poorly drained soils of this site are noted for supporting a high water table (perched) during periods of high rainfall and low evapotranspiration, typically from winter to spring. Instances where water has the greatest influence are closed and open (or connected) depressions that seasonally pond and in areas where the site is positioned adjacent to small drainageways. Such instances are typically influenced by precipitation and not from overbank flooding. Wetland or hydrophytic vegetation occurs mainly in these closed depressions. Vegetation of the non-ponded flats consists predominantly of upland species, although some facultative wetland species may occur.

Soil features

Please note that the soils listed in this section of the description may not be all inclusive. There may be additional soils that fit the site's concepts. Additionally, the soils that provisionally form the concepts of this site may occur elsewhere, either within or outside of the MLRA and may or "may not" have the same geomorphic characteristics or support similar vegetation. Some soil map units and soil series included in this "provisional" ecological site were used as a "best fit" for a particular soil – landform catena during a specific era of soil mapping, regardless of the origin of parent material or the location of MLRA boundaries. Therefore, the listed soils may not be typical for MLRA 134 or a specific location, and the associated soil map units may warrant further investigation in a joint ecological site inventory – soil survey project. When utilizing this provisional description, the user is encouraged to verify that the area of interest meets the appropriate ecological site concepts by reviewing the soils, landform, vegetation, and physical location. If the site concepts do not match the attributes of the area of interest, please review the Similar or Associated Sites listed in the Supporting Information section of this description to determine if another site may be a

better fit for your area of interest.

Calloway (Fine-silty, mixed, active, thermic Aquic Fraglossudalfs) is the principal soil of this site. Calloway soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained, and formed in a mantle of loess, or “water reworked” loess, on broad, Pleistocene-age terraces. They have a seasonally high water table perched over a thick fragipan. Depth to the fragipan ranges from 14 to 38 inches. Slope gradients of this soil on the Western Lowlands ranges from 0 to 3 percent, though many areas are less than 1 percent. Reaction is very strongly acid through moderately acid in the upper part of the solum. The lower part of the solum ranges from strongly acid through slightly alkaline (USDA-NRCS, 2016).

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Silt loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Somewhat poorly drained
Permeability class	Slow to moderate
Soil depth	18–32 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	6.4–7.6 in
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	5.3–6.5
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0%

Ecological dynamics

This ecological site is distributed across broad expanses of level to nearly level flats on Early Wisconsin Terraces (Klimas et al., 2012). A key characteristic of this site is the propensity of these somewhat poorly drained soils to perch water during wetter times of the year. Low surface runoff and slow permeability through a dense fragipan contribute to saturated conditions from winter through spring in most years. This extreme wet condition through the first part of the year is reversed by mid- to late summer when evapotranspiration essentially removes moisture above the soils’ perching layer. This leads to very droughty conditions during summer and fall. The alternating wet – dry pattern of this site characteristically occurs in other “flatwoods” communities in the eastern United States (see Taft et al., 1995; Fralish et al., 1999). This moisture regime is often referred to as “hydroxeric”. It is important to note that this site occurs above the modern floodplain of larger streams and rivers of the Western Lowlands and receives very little, if any, overland flow (NatureServe, 2009). Interspersed across the broad flats of this site are surface irregularities that include occasional, subtle mounds or microhighs and distinct, shallow depressions. These microreliefs contribute to species and site diversity, overall.

Because of the moisture regime and surface complexities, plant communities of this site are highly variable. Species characteristic of uplands and lowlands are often seen co-occurring within a small area. Positions or spots that remain wetter for longer periods, such as shallow depressions, may support a greater abundance of willow oak and water oak (Klimas et al., 2012). Conversely, areas that tend to dry more quickly support a preponderance of post oak and other upland species.

An important characteristic of this site is that it often occurs in complex or close association with lower, poorly drained flatwoods. The slightly better drained soils and higher position of this site support conditions conducive for

a “drier association” of plants. Although many of the same species occur on both the poorly drained flats (wet phase) and this site (i.e., better drained flats or “dry phase”), there appears to be a greater concentration of upland species on this particular site (dry phase). Klimas et al. (2012) distinguishes this suite of associated sites as “Hardwood flats, dry phase” and “Hardwood flats, wet phase.” These sites correspond with the Western Moderately Wet Terrace and Western Wet Loess Terrace ecological sites, respectively.

Historically, fire was probably a key factor or influence on this site. Low-intensity fires would occur when adjacent systems burned, and since some of the tree species on this site are fire sensitive, fire-caused root death likely contributed to an open canopy. Stand replacement fires, although rare, would have occurred during extreme, prolonged droughts (LANDFIRE, 2008). These key disturbance factors would have contributed to varying habitats or community types. Where trees occurred, conditions probably ranged from savanna to open flatwoods. Meadows or small prairies likely occurred in a patchwork pattern that were interspersed among the woodlands and/or savannas. This mosaic likely persisted as a “physiognomic gradient” with meadows grading to savannas and savannas grading to woodland. Overall, the dominant or prevailing physiognomic characteristic of the site may have been open woodland - rather, flatwoods (T. Foti, personal communication).

The predominant land use activity on this site today is agriculture production with principal crops being soybean, corn, cotton, winter small grains, and grain sorghum (USDA-NRCS, 2006b). A minor use on this site is reportedly pasture or hayland with principal forage of bermudagrass, bahiagrass, and tall fescue. This site has some limitations for forest production, mainly due to seasonal wetness. (Forest production is a very minor use on this site as the vast majority of the site’s distribution is cropland. Therefore, forest
or timber management as a state is not represented in the accompanied State and Transition Model.)

Following this narrative, a “provisional” state and transition model is provided that includes the “perceived” reference state and several alternative (or altered) vegetation states that have been observed and/or projected for the Western Moderately Wet Terrace ecological site. This model is based on limited reconnaissance, literature, expert knowledge, and interpretations. Plant communities will differ across MLRA 134 due to natural variability in climate, soils, and physiography. Depending on objectives, the reference plant community may not necessarily be the management goal.

The environmental and biological characteristics of this site are complex and dynamic. As such, the following diagram suggests pathways that the vegetation on this site might take, given that the modal concepts of climate and soils are met within an area of interest. Specific locations with unique soils and disturbance histories may have alternate pathways that are not represented in the model. This information is intended to show the possibilities within a given set of circumstances and represents the initial steps toward developing a defensible description and model. The model and associated information are subject to change as knowledge increases and new information is garnered. This is an iterative process. Most importantly, local and/or state professional guidance should always be sought before pursuing a treatment scenario.

State and transition model

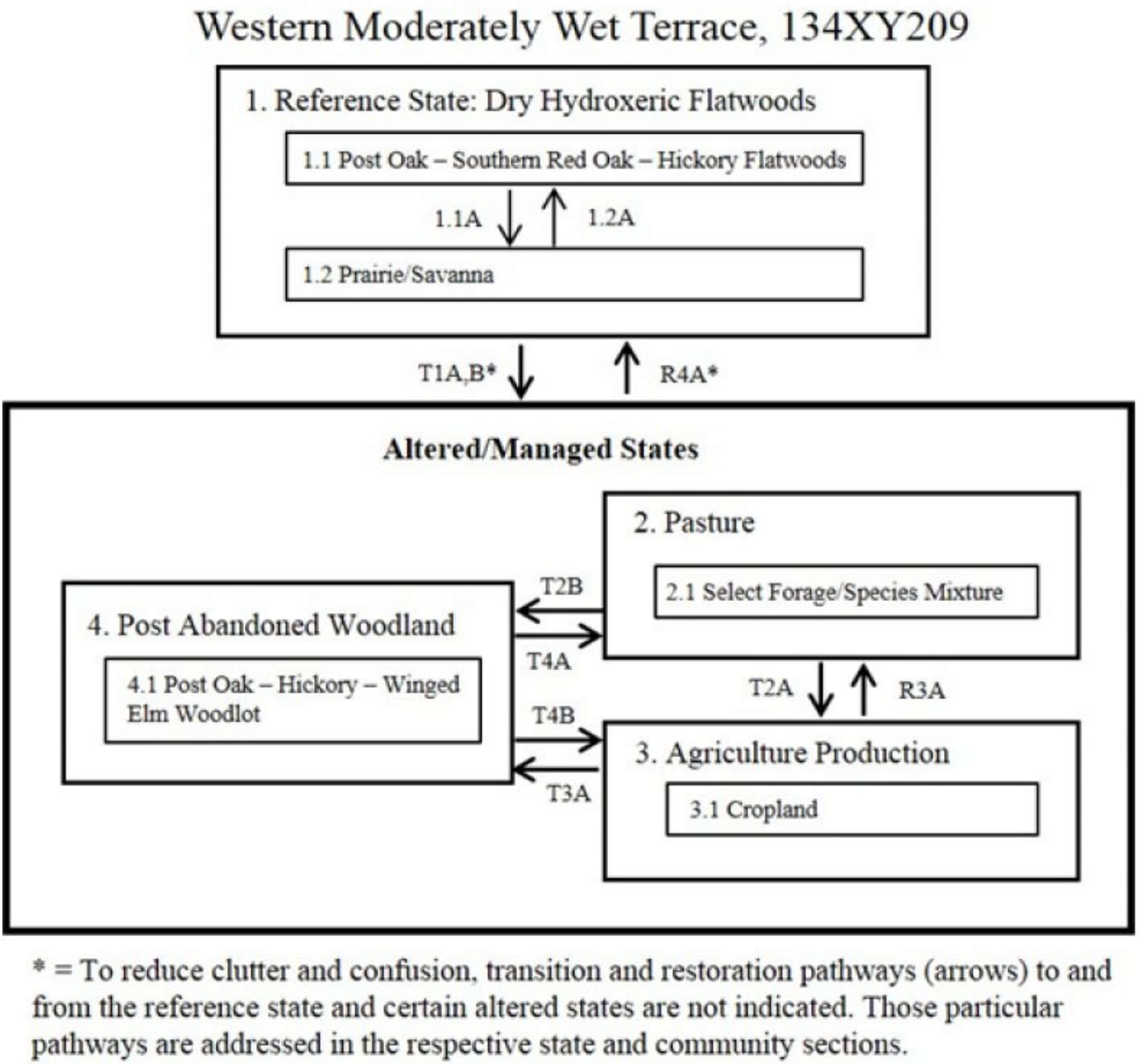

Figure 5. STM - Western Moderately Wet Terrace

Pathway	Practice
1.1A	major stand-scale disturbance (extensive, prolonged drought, wind, catastrophic ice, replacement fire) followed by periodic surface fire on a frequent return interval
1.2A	natural succession; infrequent fire (long return interval); small, gap-scale disturbance (wind, ice, mixed-severity fire)
T1A, R3A, T4A	mechanical removal of vegetation; herbicide application; seedbed preparation; planting desired species at appropriate rate (State 2)
T1B, T2A, T4B	mechanical removal of vegetation; potential construction of artificial drainage system, preparation for cultivation (State 3)
T2B, T3A	natural succession (State 4)
R4A	natural succession; return of maintenance or disturbance (e.g., fire); any former alteration to soil drainage MUST be restored before returning to true reference conditions (State 1)

Figure 6. Legend - Western Moderately Wet Terrace

State 1
Dry Hydroxeric Flatwoods

Exemplary examples of the full range of plant communities and ecological processes that were once commonplace

on this ecological site no longer exist. Vestiges of this once vast system are primarily relegated to abandoned woodlots and narrow, roadway corridors that now hold the only remaining examples of native prairie vegetation that was once part of the greater ecological system of the Western Lowlands. It is from these remnants that we draw a greater understanding of the “perceived” reference conditions for this ecological site. Klimas et al. (2012) identifies this site as “hardwood flats, dry phase.” The saturated, somewhat poorly drained soils during winter and spring supports conditions suitable for more lowland species such as willow oak and water oak – the latter two more typical of vernal pools. The drying of the soils by summer create conditions suitable for more upland species, the principal species of which is post oak. Embedded among the woodlands of this site may have been patches of small prairies and savannas. Vegetation of the open areas may have been similar to that of the Grand Prairie to the south. It is generally held that areas of prairie extended or “fingered” northward from the Grand Prairie province well into the Western Lowlands (T. Foti, personal communication). Two reference community phases are recognized for this ecological site: 1) the open structure of the dry flatwoods and 2) prairie and savanna.

Community 1.1
Post Oak – Southern Red Oak – Hickory Flatwoods

This community phase represents the successional stage (late development), compositional, and structural complexity of stands supporting perceived reference conditions. Areas that frequently burned likely supported widely spaced trees and greater herbaceous ground cover. Where fire was infrequent, canopy cover may have approached closure but the overall structure of the understory likely remained somewhat open. The latter is a structural pattern common to flatwoods communities in other areas of the U.S. (Taft et al., 1995; Fralish et al., 1999). Composition of this community was quite variable with post oak, southern red oak, and shagbark hickory dominating the nearly level flats and willow oak and water oak characterizing shallow depressions (Klimas et al., 2012). Additional associates may have included sweetgum, mockernut hickory, pignut hickory, black gum, winged elm, red maple, green ash, sassafras, persimmon, with occasional occurrences of cherrybark oak. The understory was generally open and often occupied by smaller, canopy species along with possumhaw. Vines and lianas were represented by roundleaf greenbrier, climbing dogbane, and muscadine. Ground cover may have been sparse where canopies approached closure (Heineke, 1987).

Community 1.2
Prairie/Savanna

This community phase represents another potential aspect of the historic community on this site, prairie and savanna. Prairies of the Grand Prairie province extended into and through portions of the Western Lowlands. Periodic fires on a 1 to 3 year return interval would have maintained their presence and persistence (LANDFIRE, 2008). This community type within the Western Lowlands was reported and somewhat described by early naturalists traveling through the region (see Heineke, 1987) and from naturalists as late as one century ago (e.g., Harper, 1914 and 1917). Prairies may not have occurred as extensively on this site as some adjoining ecological sites (T. Foti, personal communication). Vegetation of the prairies and savannas in the Western Lowlands are thought to have been similar to that of the Grand Prairie (T. Foti, personal communication). Harper (1917) mentioned this similarity while examining a small prairie in Craighead County, Arkansas. He mentioned the site being bordered by a scattering of pin oak. Species anticipated to occur across the prairies of this site include switchgrass, big bluestem, Indian grass, little bluestem, prairie blazing star, pinkscale blazing star, wild indigo, compass plant, meadow evening primrose, wild quinine, wooly ragwort, hoarypea, and Baldwin’s ironweed (Heineke, 1987; NatureServe, 2015).

Pathway 1.1A
Community 1.1 to 1.2

This pathway represents a major stand-scale disturbance such as extensive, prolonged drought, wind, catastrophic ice, and/or stand replacement fire. Such catastrophic events would then be followed by low-intensity surface fires on a frequent return interval, which would support transition to prairie and/or savanna conditions.

Pathway 1.2A
Community 1.2 to 1.1

This pathway represents a return to an open woodland or flatwoods structural characteristic. Processes leading to

woodland conditions is a relaxation of fire or fire occurring on a much longer return interval. Disturbance occurs at the gap-scale (i.e., less than 1 acre).

State 2
Pasture

This state is representative of sites that have been converted to and maintained in pasture and forage cropland, typically a grass – legume mixture. For pastureland, planning or prescribing the intensity, frequency, timing, and duration of grazing can help maintain desirable forage mixtures at sufficient density and vigor (USDA-NRCS, 2010; Green et al., 2006). Overgrazed pastures can lead to soil compaction and numerous bare spots, which may then become focal points of colonization by undesirable plants or weeds. Soils exhibiting the core concepts of this site have a pronounced period of wetness followed by droughty conditions. Limitations may pertain mainly to periods of extreme wetness. Planning or prescribing the intensity, frequency, timing, and duration of grazing can help maintain desirable forage mixtures at sufficient density and vigor (USDA-NRCS, 2010; Green et al., 2006). Because of wetness limitations of this site, activities may be limited to small intervals within the appropriate season(s). It is strongly advised that consultation with State Grazing Land Specialists and District Conservationists at local NRCS Service Centers be sought when assistance is needed in developing management recommendations or prescribed grazing practices on this site.

Community 2.1
Select Forage/Species Mixture

This community phase represents commonly planted forage species on pasturelands and haylands. The suite of plants established on any given site may vary considerably depending upon purpose, management goals, usage, and soils. The seasonal limitations of this site may preclude some of the commonly planted mixtures. However, there is some indication that tall fescue, common bermudagrass, bahiagrass, and annual lespedeza are well adapted to this site (USDA-NRCS, 2006b). Should active management (and grazing) of the pastureland be discontinued, this phase will transition to “old field” conditions, which is the transitional period between a predominantly open, herbaceous field and the brushy stage of a newly initiated stand of trees.

State 3
Agriculture Production

Agriculture production on this site is somewhat limited due to seasonal wetness.

Community 3.1
Cropland

Soybean, corn, rice, cotton, winter small grains, and grain sorghum are crops that are grown or suited for this site (USDA-NRCS, 2006b).

State 4
Post Abandoned Woodland

Most, if not all, of the woodlots and local patches of woodlands in existence today are represented by this state. In many situations, key components of the reference state are present in these small stands. Structurally, however, these woodlots are often denser and much more compacted than historic reference conditions. Still, restoration potential of these patch woodlands may be quite high, provided that the appropriate management regime is initiated and maintained. These actions may include controlling for and removing exotic species and initiating fire on a frequent return interval. Of note, a return to reference conditions can occur only if the natural drainage patterns and features of the soils have not been modified by tiling or through other forms of artificial drainage.

Community 4.1
Post Oak – Hickory – Winged Elm Woodlot

This community phase represents the species characteristic of the regenerating woodlots. Post oak is often a dominant species with associates consisting of southern red oak, hickory, winged elm, green ash, and an

occasional cherrybark oak, willow oak, and water oak.

Transition T1A
State 1 to 2

This pathway represents an attempt to convert the woodland community to pasture or forage production. Actions include clearing, stump removal, herbicide application, seedbed preparation, and the establishment of desired plants (State 2).

Transition T1B
State 1 to 3

Actions include mechanical removal of vegetation and stumps; herbicide treatment of residual plants; and preparation for crop establishment (State 3).

Transition T2A
State 2 to 3

Actions include removal of vegetation or pasturage; herbicide treatment of residual plants; and preparation for crop establishment.

Transition T2B
State 2 to 4

Abandonment of grassland/pastureland management and allowing natural succession to proceed beyond the old field stage to canopy development of the young woodland.

Restoration pathway R3A
State 3 to 2

Seedbed preparation and establishment of desired forage/grassland mixture.

Transition T3A
State 3 to 4

Abandonment of cropland management and allowing natural succession to proceed to canopy development of the young woodland.

Restoration pathway R4A
State 4 to 1

This pathway represents restoration back to perceived reference conditions. The period required for this transition to take place likely varies by location and is dependent upon local site conditions. In some cases, a return to the reference state may not be possible without considerable management effort. That effort may involve exotic species control, restoration of the natural drainage regime of the soils, and the reestablishment of components considered characteristic of the reference state.

Transition T4A
State 4 to 2

This pathway represents an attempt to convert the woodland community to pasture or forage production. Actions include clearing, stump removal, herbicide application, seedbed preparation, and the establishment of desired plants (State 2).

Transition T4B
State 4 to 3

Actions include mechanical removal of vegetation and stumps; herbicide treatment of residual plants; and preparation for crop establishment (State 3).

Additional community tables

Other references

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Acknowledgments

Tom Foti (Ecologist, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission) and Henry Langston (Arkansas Highway Department) provided invaluable discussion, knowledge, and experience with regards to the soils and vegetation associated with this site.

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	
Approved by	
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):**

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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:

---

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:**
