USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ecological site F142XB010NY
Shallow Rich Till Upland

Last updated: 5/22/2020
Accessed: 05/05/2024

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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 142X–St. Lawrence-Champlain Plain

This MLRA is a glaciated area of low relief dominated by broad expanses of nearly level, sandy deltas and shallow lacustrine basins or plains punctuated by low hills of glacial till. Rivers and streams have cut relatively deep but narrow valleys across the plain. Elevation ranges from 80 to 1,000 feet, increasing gradually from the St. Lawrence River southward and from Lake Champlain to the east and west. Local relief generally is less than 30 feet, but glacial till ridges, till plains, and some outwash terraces rise 15 to 80 feet above the adjacent plains.

This area has been glaciated, and a thin mantle of till covers most of the bedrock. Extensive areas of sandy glacial outwash and eolian deposits also occur. Some glacial lake sediments have been deposited above glacial moraines. These deposits are thickest in the valleys and thinnest on the ridges and highlands. During the later stages of the Wisconsin glacial period, seawater entered the Champlain Valley and deposited marine sediments that were later covered by freshwater sediments. The marine deposits are unique to the area.

This area supports hardwoods. The beech-birch-sugar maple forest type is the dominant climax forest type on uplands. Associated with this type are basswood, American elm, maple species, white ash, black cherry, and white pine. The aspen-birch type, earlier in succession, is economically important. Such species as eastern hemlock, red maple, American elm, and spruce are on wet soils.

Some of the major wildlife species in this area are white-tailed deer, red fox, raccoon, beaver, woodchuck, muskrat, cottontail, ruffed grouse, and woodcock.

LRU notes

Land Resource Unit (LRU): Mesic Soil Temperature Regime

The lower St. Lawrence and Champlain Valleys are characterized with soils in the mesic soil temperature regime (mean annual soil temperature between 46°F and 59°F) at 20 inches below the surface or at a densic, lithic, or paralithic contact, whichever is shallower.

The Mesic Soil Temperature Regime (STR) will have a longer growing season than the upper St. Lawrence and Champlain Valleys which are characterized with soils in the frigid STR. Species more tolerant of milder year round temperatures would also be evident in the mesic LRU.

Classification relationships

NRCS:
Land Resource Region: R - Northeastern Forage and Forest Region
MLRA: 142X–St. Lawrence-Champlain Plain
LRU: B - Mesic Mean Annual Soil Temperature

Ecological site concept

Landform/Landscape Position:
The site occurs on till plains, hills, ridges, benches, and knolls. Slopes range from 0 to 60 percent.

Soils:
The site consists of shallow to very shallow, well drained to excessively drained soils that formed in glacial till derived from limestone, shale, and/or calcareous sandstone. Subsurface rock fragments range up to 40 percent by volume. Representative soils are Benson, Galoo, and Farmington.

Vegetation
Depending on varying site properties, the reference community will coincide with NY Natural Heritage Community's Alvar Woodland, Alvar Shrubland, Dry Alvar Grassland, Calcareous Red Cedar Barrens, Calcareous Pavement Woodland, Oak Openings, Limestone Woodland and Vermont's Temperate Calcareous Cliff, Temperate Calcareous Outcrop, Limestone Bluff Cedar-Pine Forest, and Transition Hardwood Limestone Forest (a variant of Mesic Maple-Ash-Hickory-Oak Forest).

Associated sites

F142XB012VT	**Rich Till Upland**

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) *Juniperus virginiana* (2) *Quercus muehlenbergii*
Shrub	(1) *Cornus foemina* (2) *Rhus aromatica*
Herbaceous	(1) *Ranunculus fascicularis* (2) *Sporobolus vaginiflorus*

Physiographic features

The site occurs on till plains, hills, ridges, benches, and knolls. Slopes range from 0 to 60 percent.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Till plain (2) Bench (3) Knoll (4) Ridge (5) Hill
Runoff class	Medium to very high
Slope	0–60%

Climatic features

Mean annual precipitation is 39 inches. Frost free and freeze free days are 117 and 149, respectively.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	105-126 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	138-158 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	914-1,067 mm
Frost-free period (actual range)	103-132 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	133-164 days

Precipitation total (actual range)	813-1,092 mm
Frost-free period (average)	117 days
Freeze-free period (average)	149 days
Precipitation total (average)	991 mm

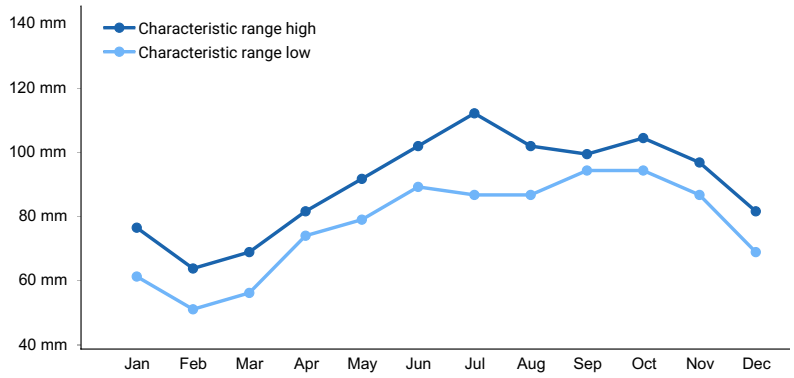


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

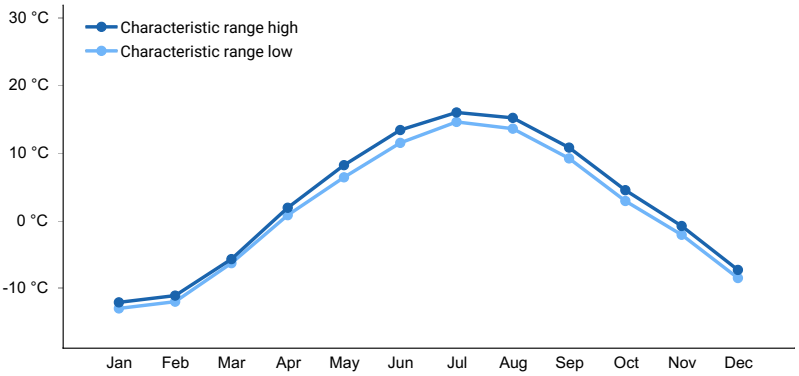


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

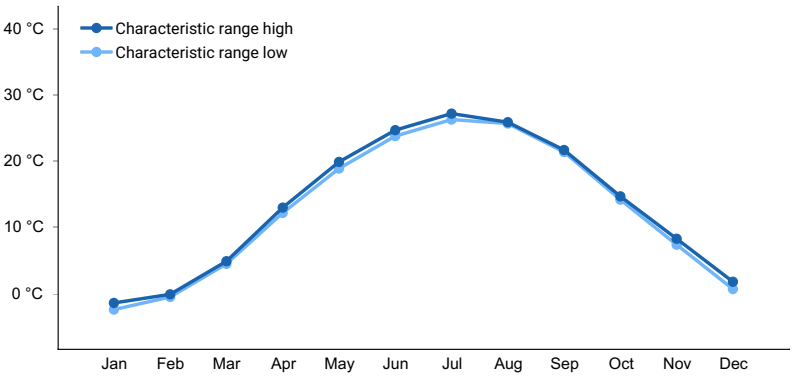


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

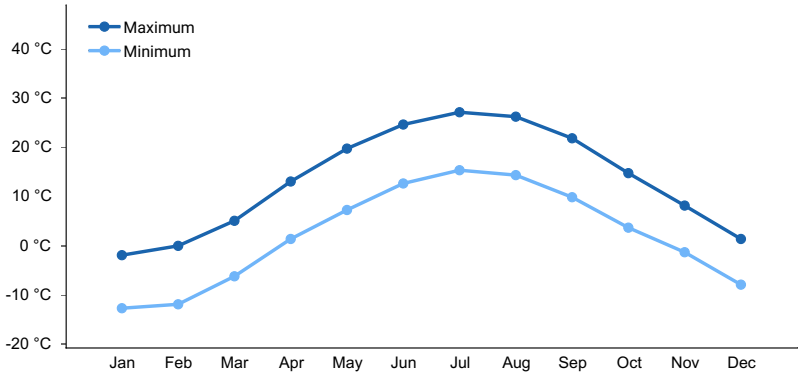


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

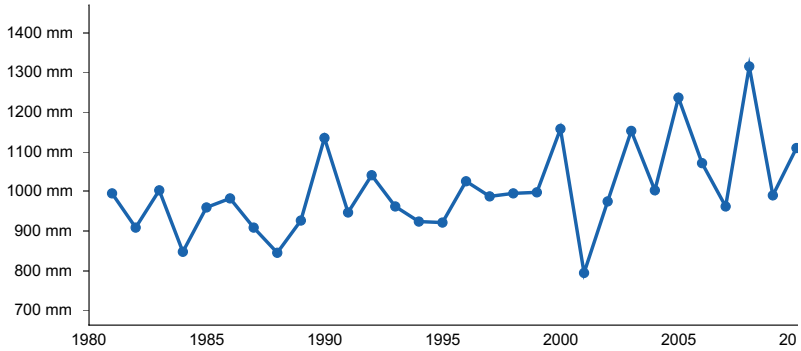


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

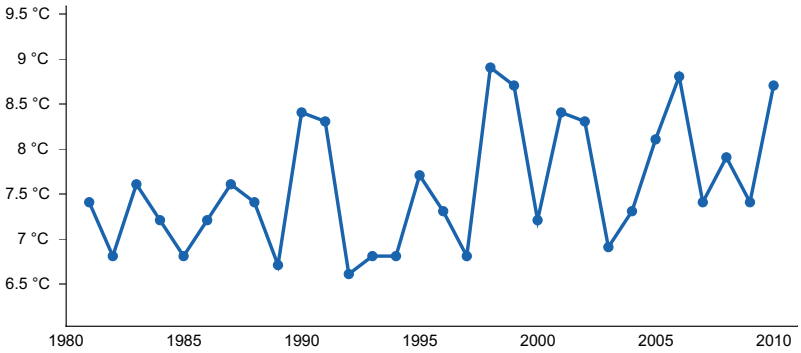


Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) WHITEHALL [USC00309389], Whitehall, NY
- (2) CORNWALL [USC00431580], Middlebury, VT
- (3) WILLSBORO 1 N [USC00309495], Willsboro, NY
- (4) WATERTOWN INTL AP [USW00094790], Dexter, NY
- (5) GOUVERNEUR 3 NW [USC00303346], Gouverneur, NY
- (6) WATERTOWN [USC00309000], Watertown, NY

Influencing water features

Soil features

The site consists of shallow to very shallow, well drained to excessively drained soils that formed in glacial till derived from limestone, shale, and/or calcareous sandstone. Subsurface rock fragments range up to 40 percent by volume. Depth to bedrock ranges from 3 to 19 inches. Representative soils are Benson, Galoo, and Farmington.

Figure 7. Galoo soil profile (soil depth is 7 inches)

Table 4. Representative soil features

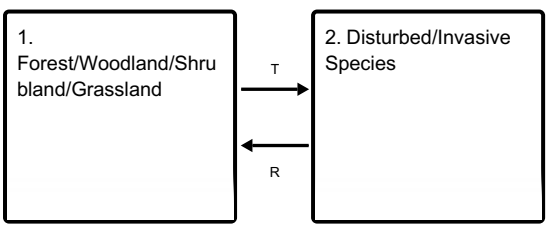
Parent material	(1) Till–limestone (2) Till–calcareous sandstone (3) Till–calcareous shale (4) Till–dolomite
Surface texture	(1) Silt loam (2) Fine sandy loam (3) Loam
Family particle size	(1) Coarse-loamy (2) Loamy-skeletal
Drainage class	Well drained to excessively drained
Depth to restrictive layer	8–48 cm
Surface fragment cover >3"	0–2%
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	3–40%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	1–30%

Ecological dynamics

Depending on varying site properties, the reference community will coincide with NY Natural Heritage Community's Alvar Woodland, Alvar Shrubland, Dry Alvar Grassland, Calcareous Red Cedar Barrens, Calcareous Pavement Woodland, Oak Openings, Limestone Woodland and Vermont's Temperate Calcareous Cliff, Temperate Calcareous Outcrop, Limestone Bluff Cedar-Pine Forest, and Transition Hardwood Limestone Forest (a variant of Mesic Maple-Ash-Hickory-Oak Forest).

State and transition model

Ecosystem states



State 1 submodel, plant communities

1.1. Forest/Woodland/Shrubland/Grassland

State 2 submodel, plant communities

2.1. Disturbed/Invasive Species

State 1
Forest/Woodland/Shrubland/Grassland

Plant communities vary based on depth to bedrock. Alvar woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands will tend to be on very thin soils (Galoo). the reference community will coincide with NY Natural Heritage Community's Alvar Woodland, Alvar Shrubland, Dry Alvar Grassland, Calcareous Red Cedar Barrens, Calcareous Pavement Woodland, Oak Openings, Limestone Woodland and Vermont's Temperate Calcareous Cliff, Temperate Calcareous Outcrop, Limestone Bluff Cedar-Pine Forest, and Transition Hardwood Limestone Forest (a variant of Mesic Maple-Ash-Hickory-Oak Forest).

Community 1.1
Forest/Woodland/Shrubland/Grassland

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State 2
Disturbed/Invasive Species

Community 2.1
Disturbed/Invasive Species

Invasive species, such as black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*), Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), and buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) (New York Natural Heritage, 2014).

Transition T
State 1 to 2

Soil disturbance, vehicle traffic, logging, over-utilization of plant resources.

Restoration pathway R
State 2 to 1

Removal of disturbance, restoration of structure and function of the site. Invasive plant species control.

Conservation practices

Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats
Restoration and Management of Natural Ecosystems
Native Plant Community Restoration and Management
Invasive Plant Species Control

Additional community tables

Inventory data references

Site Development and Testing Plan:
Future work to validate the vegetation information in this provisional ecological site description is needed. This will include field activities to collect low and medium intensity sampling and analysis of that data. Field reviews should be done by soil scientists and vegetation specialists. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD will be needed to produce the final approved level document. Reviews of the project plan are to be conducted by the Ecological Site Technical Team.

Other references

Edinger, G.J., Evans, D.J., Gebauer, S., Howard, T.G., Hunt, D.M., and A.M. Olivero, A.M. (eds.). 2014. Ecological Communities of New York State, Second Edition: A revised and expanded edition of Carol Reschke's Ecological Communities of New York State. New York Natural Heritage Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Albany, NY.
https://guides.nynhp.org/communities/

Thompson E. H., Sorenson E. R. 2000. Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont. Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy. University Press of New England, Hanover and London.

Approval

Nels Barrett, 5/22/2020

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)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	05/05/2024
Approved by	Nels Barrett
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. **Number and extent of rills:**

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:**

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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:

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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:**