**NATURAL COMMUNITY SURVEY FORM**

**Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory (VNHI)**

**Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department**

**Revised: December 11, 2023**

Contact Bob Zaino with questions about natural communities or this form: 802-476-0128 or [Robert.Zaino@vermont.gov](mailto:Robert.Zaino@vermont.gov?subject=Natural%20Community%20information)

**Natural Community Type**: Click here to enter text.

**Natural Community Variant Name** (if applicable): Click here to enter text.

**Association Name** (NHI office only): Click here to enter text.

**Is this an update of an existing NHI record?** (NHI office only) Yes  No

**Site Name**: Click here to enter text.

**Site Location** Road Address: Click here to enter text.

Town: Click here to enter text.

**Surveyor(s)**: Click here to enter text.

Mailing Address: Click here to enter text.

Phone: Click here to enter text.

E-mail: Click here to enter text.

**Survey Date(s)**: Click here to enter text.

**Owner(s) of Natural Community**: Name(s): Click here to enter text.

Address: Click here to enter text.

Phone: Click here to enter text.

E-mail: Click here to enter text.

**General Description of the Site**

Briefly describe the natural and man-made features of the site and setting in which the natural community occurs, including topography, size of the contiguous forested area, other natural community types present, surface waters and drainage patterns, and land use history and land management.

Click here to enter text.

**Natural Community Information**

Concisely describe the natural community, including canopy cover, dominant species, the physical setting, evidence of human and natural disturbance, forest community age, woody debris abundance, and presence of invasive species.

Click here to enter text.

**Elevation (feet): minimum**: Click here to enter text. **maximum**: Click here to enter text.

**Slope (degrees)**: Click here to enter text.

**Aspect (degrees or cardinal direction)**: Click here to enter text.

**Bedrock geologic type (2012 VT bedrock geology map)**: Click here to enter text.

**Soil type (Natural Resources Conservation Service) or description**: Click here to enter text.

**Vegetation Description:**  To be applied to a representative area of the community large enough to capture most species.

Total Canopy Cover: Click here to enter text.% Total Shrub Cover: Click here to enter text.%

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Trees | | | Shrubs | |  | | |
|  | T1Emergent | T2 Canopy | T3 Subcanopy | S1 Tall (> 4 ft.) | S2 Short (<4 ft.) | H Herbaceous | N Nonvascular | V Vine |
| Height (ft.) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Cover |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Dominant Species and their cover for each stratum (T1- emergent, T2-main canopy, T3-subcanopy, S1-tall shrub, S2-short

shrub, H-herb, N-nonvascular, V-vine). Give average DBH (inches) for trees. For each species estimate actual percent

cover or use one of the cover class categories below. Use the species list table below or attach a separate sheet.

**Stratum Species DBH Cover Stratum Species Cover**

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| **Cover Classes** | |
| **r** | **< 1% rare** |
| **+** | **< 1% occs** |
| **1** | **1-5 %** |
| **2** | **6-25 %** |
| **3** | **26-50 %** |
| **4** | **51-75 %** |
| **5** | **76-100 %** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cover Classes** | |
| **D** | **Dominant; cover > 50%** |
| **C** | **Common; 6 to 50 % or numerous individuals** |
| **O** | **Occasional; 1 to 5% or scattered individuals** |
| **R** | **Rare; < 1% or one to a few individuals** |

OR

Provide ages for representative trees in the community (optional).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tree Species** | **DBH** | **Age** |
|  |  |  |
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**Comments about the natural community that do not fit in another field**:

Click here to enter text.

**Natural Community Mapping**

**Attach GIS shapefiles (preferred) or digital or paper map of the natural community boundaries with labeled polygons.**

## Estimate percent of mapped polygon occupied by the natural community: >95%; 80-95%; 20-80%; 0-20%

Explain if <95%, explain what other communities are present: Click here to enter text.

**Indicate type and scale of Base Map used to map the natural community**: Click here to enter text.

**Confidence in the Extent of the Natural Community as Mapped** (check one)

Confident that the full extent is known and mapped:

Full extent is not known:

Uncertain if full extent is known:

Comments: (If the natural community extends off the subject property, explain, and estimate total area of community.)

Click here to enter text.

**COMMUNITY OCCURRENCE RANKING:** a range of ranks may be used (such as AB)

Using **VT NHI ranking specifications** (if available)\*: OR Using **Generic ranking specifications** (provided below):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Rank (A-D)** | **Comments** |
| **Current Condition** |  | Click here to enter text. |
| **Landscape Context** |  | Click here to enter text. |
| **Size (acres)** |  | Community size and how determined: Click here to enter text. |
| **Overall Rank** |  | Click here to enter text. |

\* Available for some natural communities from Bob Zaino ([robert.zaino@vermont.gov](mailto:robert.zaino@vermont.gov)) or 802-476-0128.

**Generic ranking specifications**

Use the following guidelines to fill in the grid above if VT NHI ranking specifications are not yet available for the community type.

**Current Condition**

A: mature example of the community type (forests with trees generally >150 years old); natural processes intact; no exotics

B: some minor alteration of vegetation structure and composition, such as by selective logging; minor alterations in ecological processes; exotics species present in low abundance

**C:** significant alteration of vegetation structure and composition, such as by heavy logging; alteration of ecological processes are significant, but community recovery/restoration is likely; exotic species are abundant and control will take significant effort

D: ecological processes significantly altered to the point where vegetation composition and structure are very different from A-ranked condition and restoration/recovery is unlikely; exotic species are abundant or control will be difficult

**Landscape Context**

A: highly connected; area around EO (>1,000acres) is largely intact natural vegetation, with species interactions and natural processes occurring across communities; surrounding matrix forest meets at least B specifications for Condition.

**B:** moderately connected; area around EO (>1,000acres) is moderately intact natural vegetation, with species interactions and some natural processes occurring across many communities, although temporary disturbances such as logging have reduced condition of the landscape; surrounding matrix forest meets at least C specifications for Condition

**C:** moderately fragmented; area around EO is largely a combination of cultural and natural vegetation with barriers to species interactions and natural processes across communities; surrounding land is a mix of fragmented forest, agriculture, and rural development

D: highly fragmented; area around EO is entirely, or almost entirely, surrounded by agriculture or urban development

**Size**

No Generic ranking applicable. Please provide size of community in grid above.

**Overall Rank** (based on best judgment)

**A:** excellent estimated viability

**B:** good estimated viability

**C:** fair estimated viability

**D:** poor estimated viability

**NATURAL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT**

**Discuss management needs and plans for this natural community, including need for invasive species monitoring and control. If the natural community requires a buffer with specific management, describe and map the buffer width and specifically explain the ecological need for the buffer**:

Click here to enter text.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION;** (none required) (check those that are attached):

Additional plant species list attached

Plot form(s) attached

Animal list attached

**Please send completed form and GIS shapefiles to Bob Zaino:**

[robert.zaino@vermont.gov](mailto:robert.zaino@vermont.gov)

or

Bob Zaino

Natural Heritage Inventory

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

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