

Ecological Classification System--January '99 Update

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Missouri Land Type Associations Complete

The first approximation of Missouri Land Type Associations (LTAs) has been completed for the entire state. LTAs are landscape scale ecological units, 10-100's of square miles in size, with characteristic patterns in topography, geology, soils, and natural vegetation. The LTAs are subdivisions of larger ecological subsections. They were mapped by visually integrating multiple physical and biological layers in an Arc/INFO environment. Lines were located with a backdrop of the USGS 1:100,000 contours. Examples of LTAs include the Oak Savanna Plains or Oak Forest Breaks of the Ozark Highlands;; and the Upland Prairie Plains or Missouri River Loess Woodland/Forest Breaks of the Central Dissected Till Plains of North Missouri. Because they integrate physical and biological patterns at a landscape scale, LTAs are effective land units for identifying natural resource management priorities at a scale relevant to many resource planners and managers. Several reports describing the LTAs in Missouri's ecological subsections will be completed and released by July, 1999.

Upland and Riparian Ecological Land Type Sampling Complete

Field sampling of over 600 plots throughout the Current River Hills subsection was completed this summer--the third and final field season. The 20X20 meter plots were located randomly within GIS modeled "Geo-landform" units. Vegetation, soils, and other environmental attributes were collected within each plot. Analysis is well under way to identify interrelationships between these factors. These relationships will be used to define Ecological Land Types (ELTs) in the region. ELTs are site scale units, 10-100 of acres in size, which identify local land units with particular vegetation communities and their associated topographic and edaphic attributes. Examples of ELTs in the Current River Hills include Exposed Roubidoux Backslopes with Pine-Oak/Huckleberry Woodlands or Protected Eminence Backslopes with Mixed Hardwood/Rich Herbaceous Forest. These site scale ecological units are effective in identifying and planning local resource management objectives based on an understanding of the ecological potential of a site. A report describing the ELTs of the Current River Hills will be out in July 1999.