

Physiognomic Classes for Terrestrial Ecological Communities

As used in the ACIMS Ecological Community Tracking List (based on Maybury 1999)

Forest / Woodland

Stands of trees that may be:

- woodlands with a generally open physiognomy (25 to 60 % cover) or
- forests with a generally closed physiognomy (60 to 100% cover). The crowns of the trees are generally overlapping.

These two classes have been grouped in the tracking list as the data are often missing to determine in which class a treed type best fits.

Shrubland

An ecological community dominated by shrubs generally greater than 0.5m tall. Individuals or clumps may be overlapping to not touching, but usually have greater than 25% cover. If trees are present, they have less than 25% cover.

Dwarf Shrubland

An ecological community that is dominated by low-growing shrubs generally less than 0.5m tall. Individuals or clumps may be overlapping to not touching, but usually have greater than 25% cover. If trees or tall shrubs are present, they have less than 25% cover.

Shrub Herbaceous

Herbaceous plants dominate with at least 25% cover. Tall or dwarf shrubs are present and provide a significant structural component to the community, but with less than 25% cover.

Herbaceous

Herbaceous plants dominate with at least 25% cover. If trees or tall or dwarf shrubs are present, they have less than 25% cover and do not provide a significant structural component to the community.

Sparsely Vegetated

Abiotic substrate is dominant. Vegetation is scattered to nearly absent. The total vegetation typically has less than 25% cover.

Physiognomic classes for aquatic ecological communities

As used in the ACIMS Ecological Community Tracking List

Emergent Aquatic

Rooted or attached aquatic plants (vascular and non-vascular) with uppermost leaves emerging above the water surface.

Floating-leaved Aquatic

Rooted or attached aquatic plants (vascular and non-vascular) with uppermost leaves floating on the water surface. Flowers and flowering structures may be emergent above or floating on the water surface.

Submergent Aquatic

Rooted or attached aquatic plants (vascular and non-vascular) with uppermost leaves submerged below the water surface. Flowers and flowering structures may be emergent above or floating on the water surface.