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.