



## Ecodistrict Profile

### Ecological Landscape Analysis Summary Ecodistrict 920: **North Mountain**

An objective of ecosystem-based management is to manage landscapes in as close to a natural state as possible. The intent of this approach is to promote biodiversity, sustain ecological processes, and support the long-term production of goods and services. Each of the province's 38 ecodistricts is an ecological landscape with distinctive patterns of physical features. (Definitions of underlined terms are included in the print and electronic glossary.)

This Ecological Landscape Analysis (ELA) provides detailed information on the forest and timber resources of the various landscape components of North Mountain Ecodistrict 920. The ELA also provides brief summaries of other land values, such as minerals, energy and geology, water resources, parks and protected areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The North Mountain Ecodistrict is a narrow ridge parallel to the southern shoreline of the Bay of Fundy – known for the highest tides in the world – stretching 200 kilometres from Cape Split to Brier Island. The maximum elevation of North Mountain, made of volcanic rock, is 240 metres.

At the southwestern end, the ecodistrict gradually narrows from Digby Neck to Long Island and finally Brier Island.

North Mountain is the northern boundary of the Annapolis Valley Ecodistrict 610 and serves to shelter the valley from the cooler climate along the Bay of Fundy. The south-facing slope of the North Mountain can be steep in places, with escarpment-like features at several locations. Small steep-sided valleys, locally known as vaults, dissect the slope.

On the Bay of Fundy side, the slopes are longer and more gradual, but usually end with vertical cliffs at the coastline, such as in Cape Split, Margaretsville, and Keatings Sand Beach.

The North Mountain provides stunning panoramic views of the Annapolis Valley at look offs along its southern escarpment. Cape Split and the more than 800-hectare Blomidon Provincial Park have striking landscapes with hiking trails and beautiful scenery.



A mix of forest, fields and abandoned farmland blanket the North Mountain, which gently slopes towards the Bay of Fundy. Small steep-sided valleys, locally known as vaults, dissect the slope.

North Mountain is a ridge of basalt. The majority of the soils have developed from dark brown or dark yellowish brown sandy loam till derived almost entirely from the underlying volcanic rock. Although the soil is stony, extensive areas on the north slopes are suitable for agriculture and can be used for growing vegetables and forage.

Approximately 81% of the ecodistrict is forested. On well-drained sites along the Fundy Shore, white spruce is the dominant tree species with black spruce on the wetter sites. Inland, red spruce will begin to occur on the lower and middle slopes of the North Mountain while sugar maple and yellow birch are found on the upper slopes and crests.

The total area of North Mountain Ecodistrict is nearly 99,000 hectares, including water. Private land ownership accounts for 96% of the area.



The North Mountain is almost entirely underlain by 200 million year old basalt from the Jurassic period and is easily visible in the cliffs along the Bay of Fundy near Morden.

Landscapes are large areas that function as ecological systems and respond to a variety of influences. Landscapes are composed of smaller ecosystems, known as elements. These elements are described by their physical features – such as soil and landform – and ecological features – such as climax forest type. These characteristics help determine vegetation development.

Element descriptions promote an understanding of historical vegetation patterns and the effects of current disturbances. This landscape analysis identified and mapped six key landscape elements – one dominant matrix element, four smaller patch elements, and a combination patch and corridor element – in North Mountain.

**Tolerant Hardwood Hills** is the matrix element, representing nearly 73% of the ecodistrict. This element naturally supports a hardwood forest of shade-tolerant species, such as sugar maple, yellow birch, and beech.

**Tolerant Mixedwood Hummocks**, representing nearly 8% of the ecodistrict, is the largest patch element. Shade loving mixedwoods of red spruce, hemlock, yellow birch, and sugar maple are the climax forest. The remaining three patch elements, in order of size, are, **Red and Black Spruce Flats**, **Red Spruce Hummocks**, and **Wetlands**.

**Tolerant Mixedwood Slopes** is a combination patch and corridor element found on steep slopes and on the escarpment overlooking the Annapolis Valley.