

Nova Scotia's Ecological Land Classification Revised Edition 2015

Since the release of the first approximation of the provincial ELC in 2000, revisions have been made based on field work, staff input, and editing of the original data. In 2005 these changes were incorporated into a revised edition of the ELC that was revised again in 2007, as a result of the ELA process. Now, 15 years after the original release, new knowledge and technology have required a third revision. The following describes the most recent changes incorporated into the 2015 revised edition of the ELC.

Structural Changes

There has been no change to the database structure of the classification.

Noteworthy Changes

Ecoregions/Ecodistricts

There are only a few changes to the ecoregion/ecodistrict boundaries that have been incorporated into the current edition.

Northern Plateau (100)

Ecological work recently conducted in the Northern Plateau has led to a better understanding of the region. While more research is required this was an important first step and based on this work some important changes have been made to the unit.

The area known as Jim Campbells Barren, a disjunct parcel, south west of the primary area has been moved into the Cape Breton Highlands (210).

Also the removal of the broad, gentle valley that forms the headwaters of the MacKenzie River has been moved into the Cape Breton Highlands (210). This action divides the unit into two distinct parts.

In addition, some barrens north and east of the Cheticamp flowage as well as some other barren areas in the Mica Hill / Paquets Lake Area have been added to the Northern Plateau.

Cape Breton Highlands (210)

Twenty-five kilometres to the north east of Cape North lies St. Paul Island. With a maximum elevation of just over 125 m and its exposed location in the Cabot Strait the island has been removed from the Cape Breton Highlands (210) and added as a disjunct part of the Cape Breton Coastal Ecodistrict (810).

Removal of some barrens north and east of the Cheticamp flowage as well as some other barren areas in the Mica Hill / Paquets Lake Area. (see 100 above).

Addition of Jim Campbells Barren from the Northern Plateau (see 100 above).

Addition of the valley that forms the headwaters of the MacKenzie River from the Northern Plateau (see 100 above).

Cape Breton Hills (310)

The removal of several small, low lying areas at Pleasant Bay, Red River and Polletts Cove. These are small disjunct areas that fit well with the other lowland valleys of the Inverness Lowlands (320).

320 Inverness Lowlands

Addition of Polletts Cove and Pleasant Bay from the Cape Breton Hills (see 310 above).

Cape Breton Coastal (810)

The addition of St. Paul Island from the Cape Breton Highlands (see 210 above).

Ecosections

Creation of new Floodplain topographic pattern

For the most part the topographic pattern '**smooth**' (**SM**) has been used to define level topography, a great deal of which is associated with floodplains, e.g. IMSM, WMSM, etc. Large smooth areas not associated with floodplains and mapped as smooth include areas in the Annapolis Valley and lower level slopes.

Floodplains support a distinct vegetation (refer to Forest Ecosystem Classification for Nova Scotia 2010) and need to be identified separately. This change attempts to extract smooth (SM) ecosections that are recognized as floodplains and create a new topographic pattern identified by **FP**.

These new ecosections will be found throughout the province but will be a significant occurrence in the Ecodistricts 220,320, 520 and Ecoregion 600.

As a result of this change the following six new ecosections have been created: ICFP, IFFP, IMFP, WCFP, WFFP, WMFP.

Coastal Beaches

Wave washed sorted material and homogenous, unstratified wind laid sandy materials occurring along coastal areas have to this point not been well defined in the ELC. With the use of digital orthorectified aerial photography mosaics it has been easier to consistently identify and delineate this unique ecosystem (XXCB).

Salt Marshes

These hydric landforms are composed of marine sediments that receive daily inundation of salt water. Such areas are usually covered with grasses and sedges. With the use of digital ortho-photography it has been easier to consistently identify and delineate this unique ecosystem (XXMS). There are some very large salt marshes in estuaries that remain unmapped. A better defined shoreline for the entire province will soon be available digitally which will make it easier to identify these coastal wetlands in the ELC.

Dykeland

As with Coastal Beaches and Salt Marshes digital ortho-photography has made it easier to consistently identify and delineate this unique ecosystem (XXDK).

Ecosite - Nothing new to report.