

## Figure 2. Key to the forested vegetation types of Nova Scotia

In this key, **tree cover** refers to the relative percent cover. (i.e. the percentage of total overstory cover)

**Ground vegetation cover** refers to the absolute percent cover. (i.e. the total area covered on the ground)

**Cover Classes:**    **Sparse** < 10%    **Scattered** 10-25 %    **Abundant** 26-50%    **Dominant** >50%

### CEDAR FOREST (CE)

- 1a. Stands on poorly and very poorly drained soils  
     ..... **CE1** Eastern white cedar / Speckled alder / Cinnamon fern / Sphagnum
- 1b. Stands on rapid to imperfectly drained soils. . . . . **CE2** Eastern white cedar – Balsam fir / Stair-step moss

### COASTAL FOREST (CO)

- 1a. Softwoods  $\geq$ 75% . . . . . 2
- 1b. Softwoods <75% . . . . . 6
- 2a. Black spruce abundant to dominant . . . . . **CO1** Black spruce – Balsam fir / Foxberry / Plume moss
- 2b. Black spruce absent to scattered . . . . . 3
- 3a. White spruce abundant to dominant . . . . . 4
- 3b. White spruce absent to scattered . . . . . 5
- 4a. Stands on marine sands and dunes . . . . . **CO7** White spruce / Bayberry
- 4b. Stands not on marine sands and dunes . . . . . **CO2** White spruce – Balsam fir / Foxberry / Twinflower
- 5a. Red spruce scattered to dominant . . . . . **CO3** Red spruce / Mountain-ash / Foxberry
- 5b. Balsam fir dominant . . . . . **CO4** Balsam fir / Foxberry – Twinflower
- 6a. Softwood  $\geq$ 25% . . . . . **CO5** White birch – Balsam fir / Foxberry – Wood aster
- 6b. Softwood <25% . . . . . **CO6** Red maple – Birch / Bunchberry – Sarsaparilla

### FLOODPLAIN FOREST (FP)

- 1a. Hardwoods dominant . . . . . 2
- 1b. Hardwoods not dominant . . . . . 6
- 2a. Sugar maple, yellow birch and/or ash dominant  
     ..... **FP1** Sugar maple – White ash / Ostrich fern – Wood goldenrod
- 2b. Sugar maple, yellow birch and/or ash not dominant . . . . . 3
- 3a. Red oak and/or maples dominant . . . . . 4

- 3b. Red oak and maples not dominant . . . . . 5
- 4a. Red oak scattered to dominant . . . . . **FP2** Red maple – Red oak / Bellwort – Nodding trillium
- 4b. Red oak absent or sparse . . . . . **FP3** Red maple / Sensitive fern – Rough goldenrod
- 5a. Balsam poplar scattered to dominant . . . **FP4** Balsam poplar – White spruce / Ostrich fern – Cow-parsnip
- 5b. Black cherry scattered to dominant. . . **FP5** Black cherry – Red maple / Rough goldenrod – Jack-in-the-pulpit
- 6a. Red spruce and/or hemlock dominant. . . . . Refer to SPRUCE – HEMLOCK FOREST (SH)
- 6b. White spruce abundant to dominant. . . . . **FP6** White spruce / Wood goldenrod / Shaggy moss

**HIGHLAND FOREST (HL)**

- 1a. Hardwoods  $\geq 75\%$ . . . . . **HL4** Birch / Wood fern / Wood sorrel
- 1b. Hardwoods  $< 75\%$ . . . . . 2
- 2a. Softwoods  $\geq 75\%$  . . . . . 3
- 2b. Softwoods  $< 75\%$  . . . . . **HL3** Yellow birch – Balsam fir / Eastern spreading wood fern – Wood sorrel
- 3a. Balsam fir the most common softwood. . . . . **HL1** Balsam fir / Mountain-ash / Large-leaved goldenrod
- 3b. White spruce the most common softwood . . . . . **HL2** White spruce / Wood aster

**INTOLERANT HARDWOOD FOREST (IH)**

- 1a. Aspen abundant to dominant (often with red oak or white ash). . . . 2
- 1b. Aspen absent to scattered. . . . . 5
- 2a. Large-tooth aspen abundant to dominant. . . . . 3
- 2b. Trembling aspen abundant to dominant . . . . . 4
- 3a. Bracken, lambkill and other ericaceous plants abundant. . . . **IH1** Large-tooth aspen / Lambkill / Bracken
- 3b. Bracken, lambkill and other ericaceous plants absent to sparse  
. . . . . **IH3** Large-tooth aspen / Christmas fern – New York fern



*Vernal pool,  
Silver Mine,  
Cape Breton County*

- 4a. White ash absent . . . . . **IH4** Trembling aspen / Wild raisin / Bunchberry
- 4b. White ash sparse to abundant . . . . **IH5** Trembling aspen – White ash / Beaked hazelnut / Christmas fern
- 5a. Red oak absent to scattered . . . . . 6
- 5b. Red oak abundant to dominant . . . . . **IH2** Red oak – Red maple / Witch-hazel
- 6a. Red maple and white birch dominant . . . . . **IH6** White birch – Red maple / Sarsaparilla – Bracken
- 6b. Red maple dominant . . . . . 7
- 7a. Yellow birch scattered . . . . . **TH8** Red maple – Yellow birch / Striped maple
- 7b. Yellow birch absent to sparse . . . . . **IH7** Red maple / Hay-scented fern – Wood sorrel

**KARST FOREST (KA)**

- 1a. Stands with  $\geq$  25% softwood in the overstory  
 . . . . . **KA1** Hemlock / Christmas fern – White lettuce – Wood goldenrod
- 1b. Stands with  $<$  25% softwood in the overstory  
 . . . . . **KA2** Sugar maple / Christmas fern – Rattlesnake fern – Bulbet bladder fern

**MIXEDWOOD FOREST (MW)**

- 1a. Spruces are the most common softwood species . . . . . 2
- 1b. Spruces are not the most common softwood species . . . . . 5
- 2a. Black spruce is the most common softwood species . . . . . 3
- 2b. Black spruce is not the most common softwood species . . . . . 4
- 3a. Red maple scattered to abundant . . . . . **SP6** Black spruce – Red maple / Bracken – Sarsaparilla
- 3b. Aspen scattered to abundant . . . . . **SP8** Black spruce – Aspen / Bracken – Sarsaparilla
- 4a. Yellow birch and/or sugar maple are the most common hardwoods  
 . . . . . **MW1** Red spruce – Yellow birch / Evergreen wood fern
- 4b. Red maple, white birch and/or aspen are the most common hardwoods  
 . . . . . **MW2** Red spruce – Red maple – White birch / Goldthread
- 5a. Hemlock is the most common softwood . . . . . **MW3** Hemlock – Yellow birch / Evergreen wood fern
- 5b. Hemlock is not the most common softwood . . . . . 6
- 6a. Red oak and white pine are dominant . . . . . **SP9** Red oak – White pine / Teaberry
- 6b. Red oak and white pine are not dominant . . . . . 7
- 7a. Red maple is the most common hardwood . . . **MW4** Balsam fir – Red maple / Wood sorrel – Goldthread
- 7b. White birch is the most common hardwood . . . . . **MW5** White birch – Balsam fir / Starflower

## OLD FIELD FOREST (OF)

- 1a. White spruce and/or tamarack dominant . . . . . 2
- 1b. White spruce and/or tamarack not dominant . . . . . 3
- 2a. Tamarack absent to scattered . . . . . **OF1** White spruce / Aster – Goldenrod / Shaggy moss
- 2b. Tamarack abundant to dominant. . . . . **OF2** Tamarack / Speckled alder / Rough goldenrod / Shaggy moss
- 3a. White pine dominant. . . . . **OF3** White pine – Balsam fir / Shinleaf – Pine-sap
- 3b. White pine not dominant . . . . . 4
- 4a. Balsam fir dominant. . . . . **OF4** Balsam fir – White spruce / Evergreen wood fern – Wood aster
- 4b. Aspen dominant . . . . . **OF5** Trembling aspen – Grey birch / Rough goldenrod – Strawberry

## OPEN WOODLAND (OW)

- 1a. Stands on talus . . . . . 2
- 1b. Stands not on talus . . . . . 3
- 2a. Softwoods dominant. . . . . **OW3** Red spruce / Red-berried elder / Rock polypody
- 2b. Hardwoods dominant . . . . . **OW6** White birch – Red oak – White ash / Marginal wood fern – Herb-Robert
- 3a. Softwoods dominant. . . . . 4
- 3b. Hardwoods dominant . . . . . **OW5** Red oak / Huckleberry / Cow-wheat – Rice grass / Reindeer lichen
- 4a. Jack pine present . . . . . **OW1** Jack pine / Huckleberry – Black crowberry / Reindeer lichen
- 4b. Jack pine absent . . . . . 5
- 5a. Black spruce abundant to dominant . . . . . **OW2** Black spruce / Lambkill / Reindeer lichen
- 5b. Red pine abundant to dominant . . . . . **OW4** Red pine – White pine / Broom crowberry / Grey reindeer lichen

## SPRUCE – HEMLOCK FOREST (SH)

- 1a. Hemlock and/or white pine dominant. . . . . 2
- 1b. Hemlock and/or white pine not dominant . . . . . 3
- 2a. White pine absent or sparse . . . . . **SH1** Hemlock / Pin cushion moss / Needle carpet
- 2b. White pine scattered to dominant . . . . . **SH2** Hemlock – White pine / Sarsaparilla
- 3a. Red spruce and hemlock dominant . . . . . **SH3** Red spruce – Hemlock / Wild lily-of-the-valley
- 3b. Red spruce and/or other softwoods dominant . . . . . 4
- 4a. White pine scattered to abundant, hemlock absent . . . **SH4** Red spruce – White pine / Lambkill / Bracken
- 4b. White pine absent or sparse . . . . . 5

- 5a. White spruce scattered to dominant . . . . . 6
- 5b. White spruce absent or sparse. . . . . 7
- 6a. White spruce and red spruce dominant . . . **SH7** White spruce – Red spruce / Blueberry / Schreber’s moss
- 6b. White spruce and balsam fir dominant . . . . . **SH10** White spruce – Balsam fir / Broom moss
- 7a. Red spruce and balsam fir dominant . . . . . 8
- 7b. Red spruce and balsam fir not dominant . . . . . 9
- 8a. Sphagnum moss  $\leq 1\%$  . . . . . **SH5** Red spruce – Balsam fir / Schreber’s moss
- 8b. Sphagnum moss  $> 1\%$  . . . . . **SH6** Red spruce – Balsam fir / Stair-step moss – Sphagnum
- 9a. Balsam fir abundant to dominant . . . . . 10
- 9b. Tamarack abundant to dominant. . . . . **SP10** Tamarack / Wild raisin / Schreber’s moss
- 10a. Black spruce absent or sparse . . . . . **SH8** Balsam fir / Wood fern / Schreber’s moss
- 10b. Black spruce scattered to abundant. . . . . **SH9** Balsam fir – Black spruce / Blueberry

**SPRUCE – PINE FOREST (SP)**

- 1a. Pines scattered to dominant 2
- 1b. Pines absent or sparse . . . . . 6
- 2a. Jack pine and black spruce dominant . . . . . **SP1** Jack pine / Bracken – Teaberry
- 2b. Jack pine and black spruce not dominant . . . . . 3
- 3a. Red pine and black spruce dominant. . . . . **SP2** Red pine / Blueberry / Bracken
- 3b. Red pine and black spruce not dominant. . . . . 4
- 4a. Red oak scattered to abundant . . . . . **SP9** Red oak – White pine / Teaberry
- 4b. Red oak absent to sparse. . . . . 5



*Winterberry*

- 5a. White pine and black spruce dominant . . . . . **SP4** White pine / Blueberry / Bracken
- 5b. Red pine and white pine dominant . . . . . **SP3** Red pine – White pine / Bracken – Mayflower
- 6a. Black spruce dominant . . . . . 7
- 6b. Black spruce not dominant . . . . . 8
- 7a. Sphagnum absent or sparse, shrubs primarily ericaceous species. . . **SP5** Black spruce / Lambkill / Bracken
- 7b. Sphagnum scattered to abundant, shrubs primarily non-ericaceous species  
 . . . . . **SP7** Black spruce / False holly / Ladies' tresses sphagnum
- 8a. Black spruce scattered to abundant. . . . . 9
- 8b. Black spruce absent or sparse . . . . . 10
- 9a. Red maple is the most common hardwood . . . . **SP6** Black spruce – Red maple / Bracken – Sarsaparilla
- 9b. Aspen are the most common hardwood . . . . . **SP8** Black spruce – Aspen / Bracken – Sarsaparilla
- 10a. White spruce abundant to dominant . . . . . **SH10** White spruce – Balsam fir / Broom moss
- 10b. Tamarack abundant to dominant. . . . . **SP10** Tamarack / Wild raisin / Schreber's moss

**TOLERANT HARDWOOD FOREST (TH)**

- 1a. Northern Hardwoods (sugar maple, beech, yellow birch, white ash, ironwood) >60%  
 of overstory with other hardwoods, if present, in low abundance . . . 2
- 1b. Stands not as above with scattered to abundant red oak and/or, white birch, aspen  
 and/or red maple. . . . . 7
- 2a. White ash, ironwood, silvery spleenwort and hairy sweet cicely absent or nearly so.  
 Stands usually on upper and mid slopes (dry to fresh/moist sites) . . . 3
- 2b. At least one of the above species present. Stands usually associated with seepage sites  
 except when on richer parent material such as basalt enriched till . . . 6
- 3a. Beech dominant . . . . . **TH5** Beech / Sarsaparilla / Leaf litter
- 3b. Beech absent to abundant. . . . . 4
- 4a. Yellow birch the most common northern hardwood with sugar maple and beech  
 absent or nearly so . . . . . 8
- 4b. Not as above . . . . . 5
- 5a. Dry to fresh soils where the fern layer is usually dominated by a combination of Hay-scented  
 fern and wood ferns with little or no New York fern and northern beech fern  
 . . . . . **TH1** Sugar maple / Hay-scented fern

- 5b. Fresh to fresh/moist soils where the fern layer suggests increased soil moisture and species like New York, northern beech fern, oak fern are more common  
..... **TH2** Sugar maple / New York fern – Northern beech fern
- 6a. Silvery spleenwort, ostrich fern and hairy sweet cicely absent  
..... **TH3** Sugar maple – White ash / Christmas fern
- 6b. At least one of the above species is present  
..... **TH4** Sugar maple – White ash / Silvery spleenwort – Baneberry
- 7a. Red oak scattered to abundant ..... **TH6** Red oak – Yellow birch / Striped maple
- 7b. Red oak absent or sparse ..... 7
- 8a. White birch scattered to abundant. Yellow birch the most common northern hardwood with sugar maple and beech absent or scattered ..... **TH7** Yellow birch – White birch / Evergreen wood fern
- 8b. Red maple scattered to abundant. Yellow birch the most common northern hardwood with sugar maple and beech absent or scattered ..... **TH8** Red maple – Yellow birch / Striped maple

**WET CONIFEROUS FOREST (WC)**

- 1a. Tamarack abundant to dominant. .... **WC7** Tamarack – Black spruce / Lambkill / Sphagnum
- 1b. Tamarack absent to scattered ..... 2
- 2a. Black spruce and/or pines abundant to dominant ..... 3
- 2b. Black spruce and/or pines absent to scattered ..... 7
- 3a. Pines absent or sparse ..... 4
- 3b. Pines scattered to dominant ..... 6
- 4a. Shrub layer cover exceeds herb layer cover ..... 5
- 4b. Herb layer cover exceeds shrub layer cover ..... **WC1** Black spruce / Cinnamon fern / Sphagnum
- 5a. Shrubs primarily ericaceous species ..... **WC2** Black spruce / Lambkill – Labrador tea / Sphagnum
- 5b. Shrubs primarily non-ericaceous species ..... **SP7** Black spruce / False holly / Ladies’ tresses sphagnum
- 6a. Jack pine and black spruce dominant ..... **WC3** Jack pine – Black spruce / Rhodora / Sphagnum
- 6b. Red pine and black spruce dominant . . **WC4** Red pine – Black spruce / Huckleberry – Rhodora / Sphagnum
- 7a. Red spruce abundant to dominant ..... **WC5** Red spruce – Balsam fir / Cinnamon fern / Sphagnum
- 7b. Red spruce absent to scattered ..... 8
- 8a. Balsam fir abundant to dominant . . . **WC6** Balsam fir / Cinnamon fern – Three seeded sedge / Sphagnum
- 8b. Hemlock abundant to dominant ..... **WC8** Hemlock / Cinnamon fern – Sensitive fern / Sphagnum

## WET DECIDUOUS FOREST (WD)

- 1a. Stands with < 25% softwood in the overstory . . . . . 2
- 1b. Stands with  $\geq$  25% softwood in the overstory . . . . . 6
- 2a. White ash abundant to dominant . . . . . **WD1** White ash / Sensitive fern – Christmas fern
- 2b. White ash absent to scattered . . . . . 3
- 3a. Red maple abundant to dominant . . . . . 4
- 3b. Trembling aspen abundant to dominant  
. . . . . **WD5** Trembling aspen / Beaked hazelnut / Interrupted fern / Sphagnum
- 4a. Atlantic Coastal Plain flora present. . . . . **WD4** Red maple / Poison ivy / Sphagnum
- 4b. Atlantic Coastal Plain flora absent . . . . . 5
- 5a. Stands with understory plants indicating enriched conditions (sensitive fern, lady fern, dwarf raspberry, violets, jewelweed) . . . . . **WD3** Red maple / Sensitive fern – Lady fern / Sphagnum
- 5b. Stands with the above species absent or nearly so, indicating a poorer condition, cinnamon fern usually >10% cover with the following upland species (bunchberry, bracken, teaberry) often present . . . . . **WD2** Red maple / Cinnamon fern / Sphagnum
- 6a. White ash absent. . . . . 7
- 6b. White ash sparse to scattered  
. . . . . **WD7** Balsam fir – White ash / Cinnamon fern – New York fern / Sphagnum
- 7a. Balsam fir is the most common softwood . . . . . **WD6** Red maple – Balsam fir / Wood aster / Sphagnum
- 7b. Spruce are the most common softwood  
. . . . . **WD8** Red spruce – Red maple / Wood sorrel – Sensitive fern / Sphagnum



*Blue cohosh*