

## FNAI 2009 NATURAL COMMUNITY SHORT DESCRIPTIONS

**HARDWOOD FORESTED UPLANDS** – mesic or xeric forest dominated mainly by hardwood trees.

**Slope Forest** – steep slope on bluff or in sheltered ravine within the Apalachicola drainage; sand/clay substrate; mesic-hydric; central Panhandle; rare or no fire; closed canopy of mainly deciduous species; American beech, Florida maple, white oak, Ashe's magnolia, southern magnolia, spruce pine, Shumard's oak.

**Upland Hardwood Forest** – upland with sand/clay and/or calcareous substrate; mesic; Panhandle to central peninsula; rare or no fire; closed deciduous or mixed deciduous/evergreen canopy; American beech, southern magnolia, hackberry, swamp chestnut oak, white oak, horse sugar, flowering dogwood, and mixed hardwoods.

**DRY UPLAND HARDWOOD FOREST** – on dry slopes or along upper slopes with sand/clay substrate; mesic; temperate; rare fire; closed canopy; laurel oak and/or live oak and/or pignut hickory, southern magnolia, shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, and/or mixed hardwoods.

**Mesic Hammock** – flatland with sand/organic soil; mesic; primarily central peninsula; occasional or rare fire; live oak, cabbage palm, southern magnolia, pignut hickory, saw palmetto.

**EVERGREEN LEVEE HAMMOCK** – on high levees within floodplains; eastern Panhandle and northern peninsula, particularly on the Suwannee River; rare fire; live oak and/or water oak dominant.

**PRAIRIE MESIC HAMMOCK** – Isolated stands within a matrix of pyrogenic vegetation; occasional fire; live oak, cabbage palm, saw palmetto.

**Rockland Hammock** – flatland with limestone substrate; mesic; southern peninsula and Keys; rare or no fire; closed canopy of evergreen mixed tropical hardwoods; gumbo limbo, pigeon plum, stoppers.

**THORN SCRUB** – along ecotones or within openings in rockland hammock; low-statured; dominated by spiny species; saffron plum, blackbead, hog plum, buttonwood, plus other common rockland hammock species.

**Xeric Hammock** – upland with deep sand substrate; xeric; primarily eastern Panhandle to central peninsula; rare or no fire; closed canopy of evergreen hardwoods; sand live oak, saw palmetto.

**HIGH PINE AND SCRUB** – hills with mesic or xeric woodlands or shrublands; canopy, if present, open and consisting of pine or a mixture of pine and deciduous hardwoods.

**Upland Mixed Woodland** – upland with loamy soils; mesic-xeric; central Panhandle to extreme northern central peninsula; occasional fire (variable but as little as two up to 20 year interval); open to partially closed canopy over an open understory of mixed herbs and scattered shrubs; mixture of southern red oak, mockernut hickory, and longleaf or shortleaf pine with other mixed hardwoods; wiregrass infrequent.

**Upland Pine** – upland with sand/clay substrate; mesic-xeric; Panhandle to extreme northern central peninsula; frequent fire (1-3 years); widely spaced canopy of pine over primarily herbaceous understory; longleaf pine and/or loblolly pine and/or shortleaf pine, southern red oak, wiregrass.

**Sandhill** – upland with deep sand substrate; xeric; Panhandle to central peninsula; frequent fire (1-3 years); open canopy of longleaf pine and/or turkey oak with wiregrass understory.

**Scrub** – upland with deep sand substrate; xeric; statewide except extreme southern peninsula and Keys, mainly coastal in Panhandle; occasional or rare fire; open or dense shrubs with or without pine canopy; sand pine and/or scrub oaks and/or Florida rosemary.

**OAK SCRUB** – on dry sandy ridges throughout the state; occasional fire (5-20 years) dominated by shrubby oaks; myrtle oak, Chapman's oak, sand live oak.

**ROSEMARY SCRUB** – on the driest ridge crests, particularly at the southern end of the Lake Wales Ridge and on Panhandle barrier islands; occasional or rare fire (10-40 years); dominated by Florida rosemary with large areas of bare sand visible between the shrubs.

**SAND PINE SCRUB** – on ridges throughout the state; rare fire (20-80 years); canopy of sand pine and an understory of the three shrubby oaks, or less commonly, Florida rosemary.

**PINE FLATWOODS AND DRY PRAIRIE** – mesic or hydric pine woodland or mesic shrubland on flat sandy or limestone substrates, often with a hard pan that impedes drainage.

**Wet Flatwoods** – flatland with sand substrate; seasonally inundated; statewide except extreme southern peninsula and Keys; frequent fire (2-4 years for grassy wet flatwoods, 5-10 years for shrubby wet flatwoods); closed to open pine canopy with grassy or shrubby understory; slash pine, pond pine, large gallberry, fetterbush, sweetbay, cabbage palm, wiregrass, toothache grass.

**CUTTHROAT GRASS FLATWOODS** – on and near the Lake Wales Ridge; frequent fire (2-4 years); widely scattered pines over cutthroat grass and/or other hydrophytic herbs.

**CABBAGE PALM FLATWOODS** – on shelly sand or where limestone is near the surface; pine canopy over cabbage palm understory.

**Mesic Flatwoods** – flatland with sand substrate; mesic; statewide except extreme southern peninsula and Keys; frequent fire (2-4 years); open pine canopy with a layer of low shrubs and herbs; longleaf pine and/or slash pine, saw palmetto, gallberry, dwarf live oak, wiregrass.

**Scrubby Flatwoods** – flatland with sand substrate; xeric-mesic; statewide except extreme southern peninsula and Keys; occasional fire (5-15 years); widely scattered pine canopy over saw palmetto and scrub oaks; longleaf pine, sand live oak, myrtle oak, Chapman's oak, saw palmetto, wiregrass.

**Pine Rockland** – flatland with exposed limestone substrate; mesic-xeric; southern peninsula and Keys; frequent to occasional fire (3-7 years); open pine canopy with mixed shrubs and herbs in understory; South Florida slash pine, palms, mixed tropical and temperate shrubs, grasses, and herbs.

**Dry Prairie** – flatland with sand soils over an organic or clay hardpan; mesic-xeric; central peninsula; annual or frequent fire (1-2 years); treeless with a low cover of shrubs and herbs; wiregrass, dwarf live oak, stunted saw palmetto, bottlebrush threeawn, broomsedge bluestem.

**COASTAL UPLANDS** – mesic or xeric communities restricted to barrier islands and near shore; woody or herbaceous vegetation; other communities may also occur in coastal environments.

**Beach Dune** – active coastal dune with sand substrate; xeric; statewide; rare or no fire; marine influence; open herbaceous vegetation with no canopy; sea oats, railroad vine, bitter panicum, and/or mixed salt-spray tolerant grasses and herbs.

**Coastal Berm** – old bar or storm debris with sand/shell substrate; xeric-mesic; southern peninsula and Keys; rare or no fire; marine influence; variable vegetation structure; mixed tropical herbs, shrubs, and trees.

**Coastal Grassland** – coastal flatland behind dunes with stable sand substrate; mesic-hydric; statewide excluding Keys; occasional fire; marine influence; herbaceous vegetation with no canopy; salt-tolerant grasses and herbs; sea oats, bitter panicum, camphorweed, hairawn muhly, Gulf bluestem.

**Coastal Strand** – stabilized coastal dune with sand substrate; xeric; peninsula; rare fire; marine influence; primarily dense shrubs; saw palmetto in temperate coastal strand or seagrape and/or saw palmetto in tropical coastal strand.

**Maritime Hammock** – stabilized coastal dune with sand substrate; xeric-mesic; statewide but rare in Panhandle and Keys; rare or no fire; marine influence; evergreen closed canopy; live oak, cabbage palm, red bay, red cedar in temperate maritime hammock; gumbo limbo, seagrape, and white or Spanish stopper in tropical maritime hammock.

**Shell Mound** – small hill of shells deposited by native Americans; mesic-xeric; statewide; rare or no fire; marine influence; closed canopy of mixed hardwoods; soapberry, snowberry, white stopper.

**SINKHOLES AND OUTCROP COMMUNITIES** – small extent communities in karst features or on exposed limestone.

**Upland Glade** – upland with thin clay soils over limestone outcrops; hydric-xeric; central Panhandle only; sparse mixed grasses and herbs with occasional stunted trees and shrubs that are concentrated around the edge; black bogrush, poverty dropseed, diamondflowers, hairawn muhly, Boykin's polygala, red cedar.

**Sinkhole** – karst feature with steep walls; mesic-hydric; statewide; variable vegetation structure.

**Limestone Outcrop** – exposed limestone; mesic-hydric; statewide; often with mosses, liverworts, and a diversity of rare ferns.

**Keys Cactus Barren** – small openings on flatland with exposed limestone; xeric; restricted to Keys; marine influence; open, herbaceous vegetation with some cacti, agave, and stunted trees; three-spined pricklypear, erect pricklypear, barbed wire cactus, Yucatan fly mallow, Florida Keys indigo, skyblue clustervine, dwarf bindweed.

**FRESHWATER NON-FORESTED WETLANDS** – herbaceous or shrubby palustrine communities in floodplains or depressions; canopy trees, if present, very sparse and often stunted.

**PRAIRIES AND BOGS** – short hydroperiod; dominated by grasses, sedges, and/or titi.

**Wet Prairie/ Seepage Slope** – flatland or slope with sand or clayey sand substrate; usually saturated but only occasionally inundated; statewide excluding extreme southern peninsula; frequent fire (2-3 years); treeless, dense herbaceous community with few shrubs; wiregrass, blue maidencane, cutthroat grass, wiry beaksedges, flattened pipewort, toothache grass, pitcherplants, coastalplain yellow-eyed grass.

**WIREGRASS SAVANNA** – drier form of wet prairie; often dominated mainly by dense wiregrass with hydrophytic herbs common.

**CUTTHROAT SEEP** – eastern and western edges of the Lake Wales Ridge in central Florida; dominated by the endemic cutthroat grass.

**CALCAREOUS WET PRAIRIE** – in central and south-central peninsula on calcareous soils; Gulf hairawn muhly typically dominant with other calcium-loving species.

**Marl Prairie** – flatland with marl over limestone substrate; seasonally inundated (<4 months); southern peninsula; frequent to occasional fire (2-10 years depending on density of herbs); purple muhly, sawgrass (stunted), spreading beaksedge, black bogrush, Florida little bluestem, and/or mixed grasses, sometimes with dwarf cypress.

**Shrub Bog** – wetland on peat soil over sand; soil usually saturated, occasionally shallowly inundated; Panhandle to north peninsula; occasional fire (10-20 years); dense stand of shrubs, trees absent or sparse, sphagnum moss common; titi, black titi, fetterbush, large gallberry, laurel greenbrier, pond pine or slash pine.

**MARSHES** – long hydroperiod; dominated by grasses, sedges, broadleaf emergents, floating aquatics, or shrubs.

**Depression Marsh** – small, isolated, often rounded depression in sand substrate with peat accumulating toward center; surrounded by fire-maintained community; seasonally inundated; still water; statewide excluding Keys; frequent or occasional fire; largely herbaceous; maidencane, sawgrass, pickerelweed, longleaf threeawn, sand cordgrass, peelbark St. John's wort.

**Basin Marsh** – basin with peat or sand substrate; seasonally inundated; statewide; occasional fire; largely herbaceous; maidencane, sawgrass, bulltongue arrowhead, pickerelweed, Baker's cordgrass, white water lily.

**DISAPPEARING LAKE** – marshes on former lake bottoms of "disappearing" lakes in northern Florida, areas that alternate between lake and marsh when the sinkholes draining them are plugged or re-opened; well-known examples are Lake Miccosukee and Paynes Prairie.

**Coastal Interdunal Swale** – linear wetlands between dunes on sandy barrier islands; inundated by local rainfall events; Panhandle to central peninsula; herbaceous or shrubby; sawgrass, hairawn muhly, broomsedge, seashore paspalum, Baker's cordgrass, saltmeadow cordgrass, wax myrtle, coastalplain willow.

**Floodplain Marsh** – floodplain with organic/sand/alluvial substrate; seasonally inundated; Panhandle to central peninsula; frequent or occasional fire (ca. 3 years, much less frequent in freshwater tidal marshes); treeless herbaceous community with few shrubs; sawgrass, maidencane, sand cordgrass, and/or mixed emergents.

**FRESHWATER TIDAL MARSH** – river mouth wetland on organic/alluvial substrates; receives pulses of freshwater in response to tides; sawgrass, giant cutgrass.

**Slough Marsh** – broad, shallow channel with sand/peat substrate; seasonally inundated; intermittently flowing water; central to southern peninsula (3-10 years); frequent or occasional fire; sawgrass, maidencane, pickerelweed, and/or mixed emergents.

**Glades Marsh** – broad, shallow channel with peat/marl substrate directly overlying limestone; seasonally inundated; slow flowing water; south of Lake Okeechobee in central and southern peninsula; frequent to occasional fire (3-10 years); sawgrass, spikerush, maidencane, beaksedges, mixed emergents.

**Slough** – broad, shallow channel with peat; inundated except during droughts; flowing water; statewide excluding Keys; rare fire; sparsely canopied or with emergent or floating plants; alligator flag, American white waterlily.

**POND APPLE SLOUGH** – canopied sloughs dominated by pond apple, often with abundant epiphytes.

**FRESHWATER FORESTED WETLANDS** – floodplains or depressions dominated by hydrophytic trees

CYPRESS/TUPELO – dominated entirely by cypress or tupelo, or these species important in the canopy; long hydroperiod.

**Dome Swamp** – small or large and shallow isolated depression in sand/marl/limestone substrate with peat accumulating toward center; occurring within a fire-maintained community; seasonally inundated; still water; statewide excluding Keys; occasional or rare fire; forested, canopy often tallest in center; pond cypress, swamp tupelo.

GUM POND – underlain by a clay lens; generally occurs in upland pine; mainly Panhandle; longer hydroperiod and lower fire frequency than cypress-dominated dome swamps; dominated by swamp tupelo.

STRINGER SWAMP – narrow linear swamps; occur within a pyrogenic community along intermittent streams that only flow during heavy rainfall; Panhandle; dominated by pond cypress.

**Basin Swamp** – typically large basin wetland with peat substrate; seasonally inundated; still water or with water output; Panhandle to central peninsula; occasional or rare fire; forest of cypress/tupelo/mixed hardwoods; pond cypress, swamp tupelo.

**Strand Swamp** – broad, shallow channel with peat over mineral substrate; situated in limestone troughs; seasonally inundated; slow flowing water; vicinity of Lake Okeechobee southward in the central and southern peninsula; occasional or rare fire; closed canopy of cypress and mixed hardwoods; cypress, pond apple, strangler fig, willow, abundant epiphytes.

**Floodplain Swamp** – along or near rivers and streams with organic/alluvial substrate; usually inundated; Panhandle to central peninsula; rare or no fire; closed canopy dominated by cypress, tupelo, and/or black gum.

FRESHWATER TIDAL SWAMP – floodplain swamp at a river mouth where occasional saltwater intrusion significantly affects vegetation composition; receives pulses of freshwater in response to tides; cypress absent or infrequent; closed/open canopy of swamp tupelo, pumpkin ash, sweetbay.

HARDWOOD – dominated by a mix of hydrophytic hardwood trees; cypress or tupelo may be occasional or infrequent in the canopy; short hydroperiod.

**Baygall** – slope or depression wetland with peat substrate; usually saturated and occasionally inundated; statewide excluding Keys; rare or no fire; closed canopy of evergreen trees; loblolly bay, sweetbay, swamp bay, titi, fetterbush.

BAY SWAMP – large or small peat filled depression; mainly eastern Panhandle to central peninsula; forested; dominated by bay species.

SOUTH FLORIDA BAYHEAD – on tree islands in glades marsh on peat substrate; south of Lake Okeechobee in central and southern peninsula; open or closed canopy; swamp bay, sweetbay, dahoon, coastalplain willow, and/or coco plum.

**Hydric Hammock** – lowland with sand/clay/organic soil over limestone or with high shell content; mesic-hydric; primarily eastern Panhandle and central peninsula; occasional to rare fire; diamond-leaved oak, live oak, cabbage palm, red cedar, and mixed hardwoods.

COASTAL HYDRIC HAMMOCK – occurring adjacent to coastal marshes; central Panhandle to central peninsula; species composition limited by occasional salt water intrusion; cabbage palm, red cedar, and live oak.

PRAIRIE HYDRIC HAMMOCK – isolated stands of hydric hammock within a pyrogenic community, usually floodplain marsh; shelly sand soils; central and southern peninsula; occasional fire; cabbage palm, live oak, red cedar.

**Bottomland Forest** – flatland with sand/clay/organic substrate; usually connected or adjacent to a riverine community; occasionally inundated; Panhandle to central peninsula; rare or no fire; closed canopy of mixed hardwoods; tuliptree, sweetbay, water oak, sweetgum, diamond-leaved oak, red maple, loblolly pine, spruce pine, Atlantic white cedar.

**Alluvial Forest** – floodplain with alluvial substrate of sand, silt, clay or organic soil; inundated yearly during growing season; influenced by disturbance from ongoing floodplain processes (deposition of point bars, creation of “ridge and swale” topography); Panhandle to central peninsula; rare or no fire; closed canopy of mainly deciduous trees; water hickory, overcup oak, diamond-leaved oak, green ash, American elm, water locust, river birch.

**MARINE and ESTUARINE VEGETATED WETLANDS** – intertidal or supratidal zone dominated by herbaceous or woody halophytic vascular plants; salinity greater than 0.5 ppt.

**Tidal Marsh** – estuarine wetland on muck/sand/or limestone substrate; inundated with saltwater by daily tides; statewide; occasional or rare fire; treeless, dense herb layer with few shrubs; saltmarsh cordgrass, needle rush, saltgrass, saltwort, perennial glasswort, seaside oxeye.

**TIDAL MARSH BARREN** – tidal marsh with much exposed bare soil on slightly higher areas within marsh; high salinity and dry conditions; sparse and stunted cover of succulents and/or shoregrass.

**Tidal Swamp** – estuarine wetland on muck/sand/or limestone substrate; inundated with saltwater by daily tides; central peninsula and Keys; no fire; dominated by mangrove and mangrove associate species; red mangrove, black mangrove, white mangrove, buttonwood.

**Keys Tidal Rock Barren** – flatland with exposed limestone in supratidal zone; restricted to Keys; no fire; open, mainly herbaceous vegetation of upper tidal marsh species and stunted shrubs and trees; buttonwood, christmasberry, perennial glasswort, saltwort, seashore dropseed, shoregrass.