

Ecological site F227XY109AK
Glaciolacustrine Uplands, Ruptic

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General information

Provisional. A provisional ecological site description has undergone quality control and quality assurance review. It contains a working state and transition model and enough information to identify the ecological site.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Picea glauca</i> (2) <i>Picea mariana</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Betula glandulosa</i>
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

This site occurs on glaciolacustrine terraces formed in clayey lacustrine deposits. This site is characterized by surface microtopography consisting of a complex sparsely vegetated ice-cored frost boils and intervening swales and troughs. In most places the frost boils are about 24 inches (61 cm) high and 9 feet (3 m) across. Bare soil material is common on the mounds while the intermound troughs between boils have moderately thick to thick organic mats. The landscape is underlain by permafrost, including ice-rich soil material, ice lenses, vein ice, and probably occasional ice wedges. Slopes generally range from 0 to 8 percent. Elevation is 2300 to 2500 feet (701 to 762 m).

Within the Gulkana River area, this site is of limited extent and found only on lacustrine terraces above the upper South Branch. The occurrence of this site elsewhere in the Copper River basin is not known.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Terrace
Flooding frequency	None
Elevation	700 – 760 m
Slope	0 – 10 %
Water table depth	0 – 60 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

The subarctic continental climate of this site is characterized by long cold winters and short warm summers. Mean January temperature is -2 °F.; mean July temperature is 54 °F. Mean annual precipitation ranges from 15 to 19 inches. Annual snowfall ranges from 54 to 102 inches. The frost-free season is about 60 to 80 days (28 °F. base temperature). The growing season varies greatly from year to year and frosts can occur during any summer month.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	80 days
Freeze-free period (average)	0 days
Precipitation total (average)	480 mm

Influencing water features

Soil features

Soils on this site are formed in clayey lacustrine deposits. On frost boils, the soil is sparsely vegetated; the organic mat ranges from 0 to 4 inches (0 to 10 cm), and bare mineral soil is exposed across much of the surface. Soils on frost boils are moderately deep to permafrost and somewhat poorly drained. In intermound swales and troughs, the soils have an organic mat 8 to 14 inches (20 to 36 cm) thick. Permafrost is shallow to moderately deep and the soils are very poorly drained. Soil horizons are mixed by cryoturbation; buried, distorted, and fractured horizons are present in most places. Redoximorphic features indicative of wetness are evident in troughs but less evident in boils.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Silty clay loam
Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Well drained
Soil depth	30 – 100 cm
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0 – 10 %
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	0.46 – 0.89 cm

Ecological dynamics

Spruce/shrub birch woodland is the correlated PNC on this site, although dramatic differences in understory composition is evident on the frost boils versus the intermound swales and troughs. On frost boils, the understory in mature stands is characterized by sparse shrubs, herbs, and patches of moss with extensive bare soil. In the swales and troughs, the understory generally has common to abundant low shrubs and a luxuriant moss layer. In many places, the vegetation is similar to the understory of Black spruce/closed sheath cottongrass woodland.

Wild fire on this site would be expected to potentially impact both the structure and composition of the vegetation and the characteristics of the site. Moderate to severe burns in which the moss-organic layer on the soil surface is blackened and partially to completely destroyed would favor a rapid and long-term warming of the soil profile. Over a relative short period of time, the permafrost level would drop and soil drainage should improve. Melting vein ice and ice wedges could lead to thermokarsting, liquifaction, and debris flows, especially on steeper slopes. Post-fire vegetative succession would probably begin with a herb-shrub sprout stage, followed by a Low shrub birch scrub stage. The rate and degree of tree regeneration would depend in part on the availability of seed sources following burning.

State and transition model

Additional community tables

Table 5. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 6. Community 2.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Animal community

Habitat is suitable for Moose, Caribou and Grizzly for certain periods of time.

Contributors

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Rangeland health reference sheet

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health is a qualitative assessment protocol used to determine ecosystem condition based on benchmark characteristics described in the Reference Sheet. A suite of 17 (or more) indicators are typically considered in an assessment. The ecological site(s) representative of an assessment location must be known prior to applying the protocol and must be verified based on soils and climate. Current plant community cannot be used to identify the ecological site.

Author(s)/participant(s)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	
Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills:

2. Presence of water flow patterns:

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:

4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):

5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:

6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:

7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):

8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):

9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):

10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:

11. Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):

12. Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground annual-production or live foliar cover using symbols: >>, >, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):

Dominant:

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

13. Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):

14. Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):

15. Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):

16. Potential invasive (including noxious) species (native and non-native). List species which BOTH characterize degraded states and have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the ecological site if their future establishment and growth is not actively controlled by management interventions. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g., short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants. Note that unlike other indicators, we are describing what is NOT expected in the reference state for the ecological site:

17. Perennial plant reproductive capability:
