The U.S. National Vegetation Classification

The USNVC Partnership is pleased to announce the Full Release of the USNVC

The newly inducted content of the U.S. National Vegetation Classification has been made available through the **USNVC.org** website. This public release of a 20-year collaborative effort to devise a unified and consistent national reporting system for plant communities opens new avenues for broad-scale and long-term analysis of landscape change, and contains information on vegetation types for all levels of the new USNVC Hierarchy.

USNVC partners: U.S. Forest Service (Subcommittee Chair), USGS Core Science Systems, NatureServe, Ecological Society of America (ESA), and the Vegetation Subcommittee of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC)**.**

Key Features

- A focus on vegetation structure and composition that provides context for local to global scales
- A comprehensive classification that includes both natural and cultural vegetation types
- A dynamic content standard supported by a rigorous peer review process
- A hierarchical structure that provides ecological context at all levels of the classification.
- A diverse group of partners (federal, state, and non-governmental) with a range of expertise and experiences.

Try out the NVC Hierarchy Explorer
Interactively view the vegetation classification online at

www.usnvc.org

Vision for the NVC

The National Vegetation Classification enables federal agencies to produce uniform statistics about vegetation resources across the nation, facilitates interagency cooperation on vegetation inventory, mapping, and management issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries, and encourages non-Federal partners to utilize and contribute to a common system when working with their Federal partners.

Uses of the NVC

- Cross-boundary Natural Resource Assessments
- Conservation Planning at Multiple Scales
- Inventory and Mapping Programs
- Long-term Research Plots and Networks

Full membership on the FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee has included both governmental and non-governmental organizations as listed below:

U.S. Government
Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Forest Service (FS) - Chair
National Agriculture Statistical Service (NASS)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Department of Commerce (DOC)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Department of Defense (DOD)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
U.S. Navy
Department of the Interior (USDI)
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
National Park Service (NPS)
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Non U.S. Government
NatureServe (NS)
Ecological Society of America (ESA)

Further Reading
1: The FGDC Vegetation Classification Standard, Version 2
2: NRCS Natural Resource Inventory
3: NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program

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Jennings, M.D., D. Faber-Langendoen, O.L. Loucks, R. K. Peet, and D. Roberts. 2009. **Standards for associations and alliances of the U.S. National Vegetation Classification**. Ecological Monographs 79(2) pp. 173-199.

Faber-Langendoen, D., D.L Tart, and R.H. Crawford. 2009. Contours of the revised U.S. National Vegetation Classification standard. Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America 90:87-93.

*How can you **Get Involved**?*

- Encourage your agency to participate in the FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee
- Join the ESA Panel on Vegetation Classification
- Propose new types for inclusion in the NVC Standard
- Become a peer reviewer of proposed types
- Contribute plot data to VegBank
- Get involved with your state partners to improve the classification or data within your state.

http://esa.org/vegpanel/

The mission of the ESA Panel on Vegetation Classification is to develop the standards for the NVC, including standards for plot-based survey methods and databases, and a dynamic approach to revising the classification based on peer-review.

www.vegbank.org

VegBank is the vegetation plot database of ESA's Panel on Vegetation Classification. VegBank consists of three linked databases that contain (1) the actual plot records, (2) vegetation types recognized in the USNVC and other vegetation types submitted by users, and (3) all plant taxa recognized by ITIS/USDA as well as all other plant taxa recorded in plot records.

www.natureserve.org/explorer/

The NatureServe Explorer is an authoritative source for information on more than 70,000 plants, animals, and ecosystems of the United States and Canada. For ecosystems, it is also the source for the descriptions for the International Vegetation Classification (IVC) and Ecological Systems.

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