Vegetation Community Monitoring Protocol for the Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Network

Standard Operating Procedure 4: Documenting Site Disturbance

Version 1.00 (2018)

Revision History Log:

| Previous Version # | Revision Date | Author | Changes Made | Reason for Change | New Version # |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.00 |  | S.A. Leis | New SOP | Provide documentation of environmental factors that affect plant communities | 1.00 |
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Both small- and large-scale disturbances can affect species distributions and abundances at a given point in time. Examples are animal burrows, herbicide use, and trail development. Documenting these disturbances and where they occur can enhance understanding of status and trends over both short and long-time scales. Providing this record in a form that is captured in the database rather than just field notes provides a way to quantify the information, coordinate it with other datasets, and archive it for the long term. A two-page datasheet called: Site Disturbance Assessment is provided. The observations are collected during regular vegetation monitoring and maybe generated between monitoring events when observations occur. Examples of when observations might be initiated include after fire events or when staff are collecting observations for other monitoring projects.

Equipment List

See SOP 5-Monitoring Site Setup for site set up equipment

Additional items needed:

* Clip boards (2)
* Compass
* Data sheets (Figure 4.0)
* Site maps
* Pencils, extra pencil lead and erasers
* Write-In-Rain blank data sheets (to avoid confusion with regular paper, keep labeled)

Procedures

Refer to SOP 5-Monitoring Site Setup for site and plot set up. Generally, lay out the site including the two transects and 10 plots. The field team leader should survey the site to observe site level disturbances and capture them on the datasheet. As the teams conduct surveys at each site, they should note where they find disturbances on the datasheet. More specifically, choose a category of disturbance from the sheet, note where it occurred, and estimate the amount of area that it covered. Upon completion of the site, the field team leader should review the disturbances that were noted and make sure that recording is coordinated for the site before packing up.

Figure 4.0. Disturbance Assessment form, 2 pages.

Figure 4.0. A site disturbance assessment data sheet page 1.

Figure 4.0. Page 2 of the site disturbance data sheet.