11380

North Pacific Montane Grassland

BpS Model/Description Version: Aug. 2020

Vegetation Type

Herbaceous

Map Zones

3, 5

Geographic Range

This system includes open dry meadows and grasslands on the west side of the Cascades Mountains and northern Sierra Nevada.

Biophysical Site Description

They occur in montane elevations up to 2,800m (8,500ft). Soils tend to be deeper and more well drained than the surrounding forest soils. Soils can resemble prairie soils in that the A-horizon is dark brown, relatively high in organic matter, slightly acid, and usually well drained.

Vegetation Description

Dominant species include *Elymus* spp., *Festuca idahoensis*, and *Nassella cernua*. These large-patch grasslands are intermixed with matrix stands of red fir, lodgepole pine, and dry-mesic mixed conifer forests and woodlands. In the Klamath, *Abies lasiocarpa* is invading some of these meadows (Schoenherr 1992).

Franklin and Dyrness (1973) described meadows within the red fir forests as dominated by *Lupinus latifolius*, *Carex pennsylvanica*, *Sitanion hystrix*, *Stipa occidentalis* with occassional *Bromus carinatus* and *Haplopappus bloomeri*, while Barbour and Major (1988) included *Haplopappus greenei* among the red fir. Mountain hemlock stands support a different set of graminoids: *Carex* spp., *Scirpus microcarpus*, and *Juncus mertensianus* and a few shrubs.

BpS Dominant and Indicator Species

Species names are from the NRCS PLANTS database. Check species codes at http://plants.usda.gov.

Disturbance Description

These meadows are dominated by the surrounding forests, so their fires are frequently carried in. However, lightning strikes on the ridges could be an ignition source. Some nearby fires skip over these meadows due to lack of continuous fuels.

Fire Frequency

Fire interval is expressed in years for each fire severity class and for all types of fire combined (All Fires). Average FI is the central tendency modeled. Percent of all fires is the percent of all fires modeled in that severity class. Minimum and Maximum FIs show the relative range of fire intervals as estimated by model contributors, if known.

Scale Description

10s to 100s of acres, perhaps constrained by the extent of the patch.

Adjacency or Identification Concerns

This Biophysical Setting (BpS) can be surrounded by montane subalpine forests.

There might be many exotics in this type (Creasy, personal communication).

Issues or Problems

This modeler is not familiar with these types.

Native Uncharacteristic Conditions

Comments

Map zones 03 and 05 were combined during 2015 BpS Review.

During LANDFIRE National, Hugh Safford commented that this type probably burns at least once in a century, considering that the surrounding forests are burning at least every 25-60yrs. Foster lowered the upper elevation on this type and remodeled the system to reflect more ignitions from neighboring types.

Succession Classes

**Mapping Rules**

Succession class letters A-E are described in the Succession Class Description section. Some classes use a leafform distinction where a qualifier is added to the class letter: Brdl (broadleaf), Con (conifer), or Mix (mixed conifer and broadleaf). UN refers to uncharacteristic native or a combination of height and cover that would not be expected under the reference condition. NP refers to not possible or a combination of height and cover which is not physiologically possible for the species in the BpS.

**Description**

Class A 21 Early Development 1 - All Structures

Indicator Species

Description

Early seral communities show great variation in composition. Dominant species frequently can resprout.

*Maximum Tree Size Class*  
None

Class B 79 Late Development 1 - Closed

Indicator Species

Description

Thick presence of graminoids and herbs. Gopher activity might be visible. Canopy rarely achieves 100% closure due to patches of rock, etc.

*Maximum Tree Size Class*  
None

Model Parameters

Deterministic Transitions

Probabilistic Transitions

References

Barbour, M.G. and J. Major. 1988. Terrestrial vegetation of California. California Native Plant Society. Special publication No. 9. 708-715.

Franklin, Jerry F. and C.T. Dyrness. 1988. Natural Vegetation of Oregon and Washington. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press.

NatureServe. 2007. International Ecological Classification Standard: Terrestrial Ecological Classifications. NatureServe Central Databases. Arlington, VA. Data current as of 10 February 2007.

Schoenherr, A.A. 1995. A Natural history of California. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 200-207.