

Broadening the ecosite classification of Alberta

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Background

Understanding how ecosystems are structured is a key to good management practices in boreal forest and more broadly to biodiversity studies. In Canada, a number of advancements have been made through ecosite classification. In Alberta a series of field guides have been written to increase the understanding of research carried out in forested landscape. These guide have been, and still are, extensively used for field surveys. The heart of these field guides is the edatope, a grid that enable ecosites to be classified by soil moisture and nutrient regimes. Edatope have been generated and validated for these field guides by numerous forest field workers and the data they gathered.

Objectives

We want to reconstruct edatopes using mathematical methods and statistical modelling. This would enable us to enhance these field guides by including multiple trophic level of biodiversity (such as beetle, butterflies, moths, mites, spiders, slugs, snails, and fungi) at low cost. It will also be an opportunity to build a framework that could be used across the boreal ecosystem. Data gathered through the Ecosystem Management Emulating Natural Disturbances project, new drainage maps made by the Alberta ministry of sustainable

resource development, and the Field Guide to Ecosites of West-central Alberta will help us build and validate our procedure.

Key Results