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FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee Update

Marianne Burke, Ph.D.
Chair, FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee
US Forest Service (lead agency)
June 7, 2016

Progress report for the FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee

- Topics in report
  - Purpose and mission of Vegetation Subcommittee
  - Launch of Hierarchy Explorer
  - Accomplishments
  - NVC adoption update
  - Crosswalk training
  - Current focus

Mission of the FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee

The coordination of terrestrial vegetative data-related activities among Federal agencies and the establishment of mechanisms for the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of terrestrial vegetation data.

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The National Vegetation Classification (NVC)

The **National Vegetation Classification (NVC)** is the central organizing framework for how all vegetation in the United States is inventoried and studied, from broad scale formations (biomes) to fine-scale plant communities.

The purpose of the **NVC** is to produce uniform statistics about vegetation resources across the nation, based on vegetation data gathered at local, regional, or national levels.

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Subcommittee Accomplishment – Launch of the USNVC

Adaptable, Ecology-Based U.S. National Vegetation Classification For Monitoring Multi-Scale Change Debuts Today

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 Analyses Of Landscape Change.

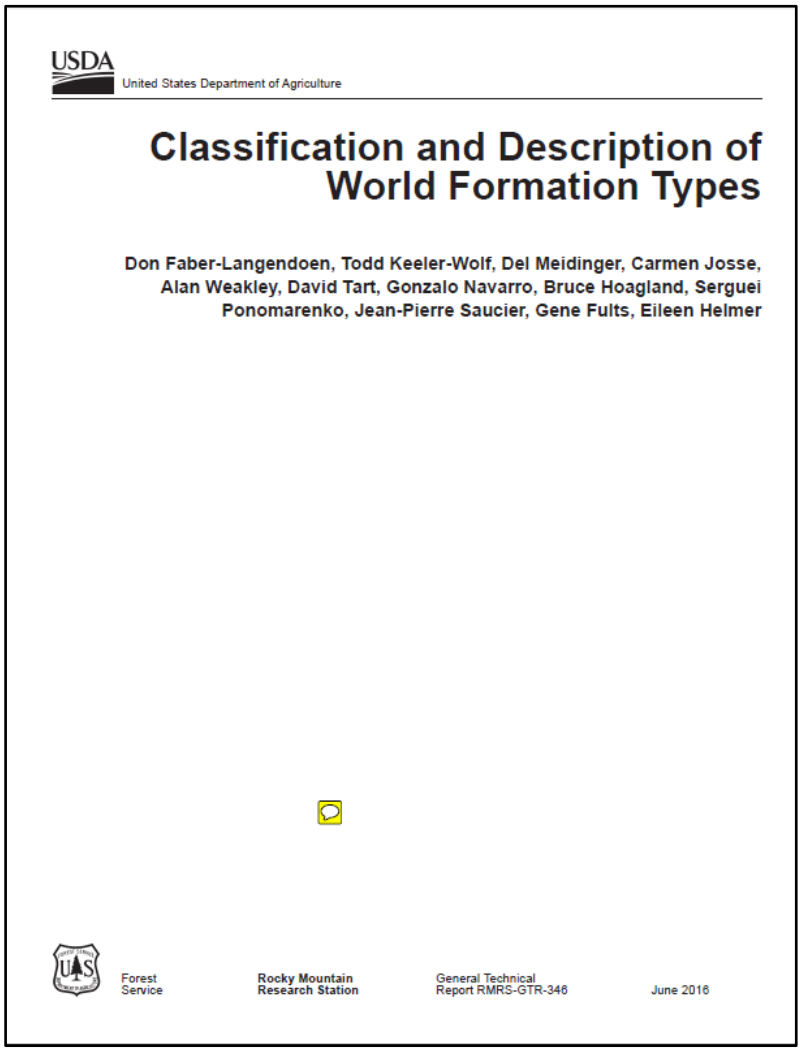
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, 23 February 2016

Contact: Liza Lester, 202-833-8773 ext. 211, LLester@esa.org

- Launch of new Hierarchy Explorer www.usnvc.org
- News Release on February 23, 2016 www.esa.org

Subcommittee Accomplishment - Publication of top 3 levels of the NVC hierarchy

- Publication (In press)
- Online version available by June 30, 2016


USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Classification and Description of World Formation Types

Don Faber-Langendoen, Todd Keeler-Wolf, Del Meidinger, Carmen Josse, Alan Weakley, David Tart, Gonzalo Navarro, Bruce Hoagland, Serguei Ponomarenko, Jean-Pierre Saucier, Gene Fults, Eileen Helmer

Forest Service | Rocky Mountain Research Station | General Technical Report RMRS-GTR-346 | June 2016

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Other Subcommittee Accomplishments –

- Database Content
  - Developed the peer review process
  - Board added 10 editors to help with peer review process.
- Hierarchy refinement
  - Completed the concept for Division descriptions
  - Revised nomenclature for the associations and alliances

Other Recent Accomplishments – (cont.)

- Tool maintenance
  - Maintained VegBank
  - Debugged problems with aging VegBank tool
- Federal Agencies approved another year of funding FS FIA and USGS
- Documented large amount of public activity on NVC websites

Subcommittee Accomplishment – Federal agencies are using the NVC

Agency	Level of Classification
USGS-GAP	Macrogroup and Group
FS-FIA	Group
BLM	Macrogroup
LANDFIRE (Multiple Agency)	Macrogroup and Group
NPS	Alliance and Association
F&WS	Alliance and Association

- Some use very fine levels of classification
- Minimum level used is the macrogroup.

Current foci of Vegetation Subcommittee

- Create policy for adoption for Forest Service
  - Develop crosswalk training
  - Train field units on how to crosswalk
- Improve sustainability of NVC
  - Identify needs for each tool
  - Outline all options and advantages and disadvantages
  - Incorporate into proposal to encourage other agencies to contribute financially.

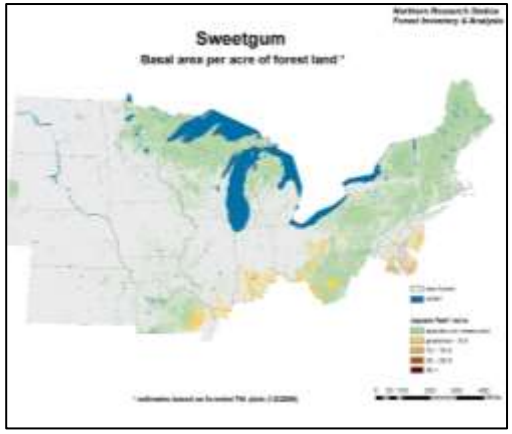
Accomplishment – Forest Service has agreed to use the NVC

Results of survey of willingness to crosswalk to the NVC

Specialist	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R8	R9	R10
Ecologist	Macro-group		Group	Macro-group		Group	Macro-group	Macro-group	Macro-group
Silviculturist	Macro-group		Group	Macro-group	Macro-group	Group	Macro-group	Macro-group	Macro-group

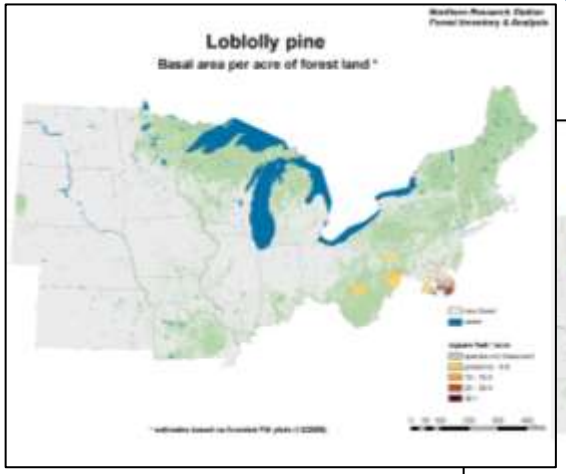
- Existing Vegetation Classification Interagency Working Group laid groundwork.
- Regional Ecologists and Silviculturists were part of decision making body
- FS leadership agreed to the crosswalk.
- Planning to offer training on how to crosswalk.

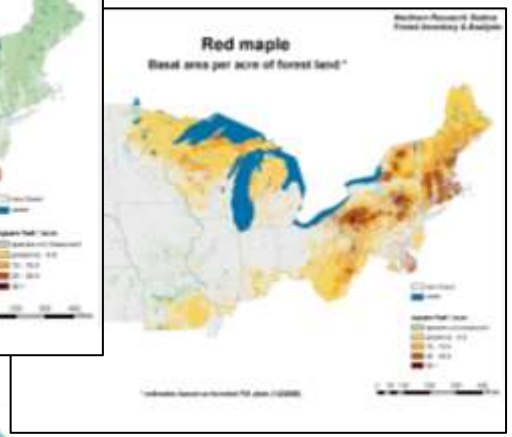
Forest Service Crosswalks Forest Types to NVC using Forest Inventory and Analysis data and Forest Types



United States National Vegetation Classification

USNVC





- 1 Mesomorphic Tree Vegetation Class
  - 1.B Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland Subclass
    - 1.B.1 Warm Temperate Forest & Woodland Formation
      - 1.B.1.Na *Pinus palustris - Quercus hemisphaerica - Magnolia grandiflora* Forest & Woodland Division
        - M305 *Liquidambar styraciflua - Pinus taeda - Triadica sebifera* Ruderal Forest Macrogroup
          - G031 *Pinus taeda - Liquidambar styraciflua - Triadica sebifera* Ruderal Forest Group
    - 1.B.2 Cool Temperate Forest & Woodland Formation
      - 1.B.2.Na *Acer saccharum - Fagus grandifolia - Quercus rubra* Forest & Woodland Division
        - M502 Appalachian-Northeastern Oak - Hardwood - Pine Forest & Woodland Macrogroup
          - G495 *Pinus rigida - Quercus* spp. / *Morella pensylvanica* Forest Group
    - 1.B.3 Temperate Flooded & Swamp Forest Formation
      - 1.B.3.Nb *Taxodium distichum - Nyssa biflora - Quercus lyrata* Flooded & Swamp Forest Division
        - M033 *Nyssa biflora - Quercus michauxii - Taxodium distichum* Basin Swamp & Flatwoods Macrogroup
          - G038 *Nyssa biflora - Nyssa ogeche - Taxodium distichum* Basin Swamp Group

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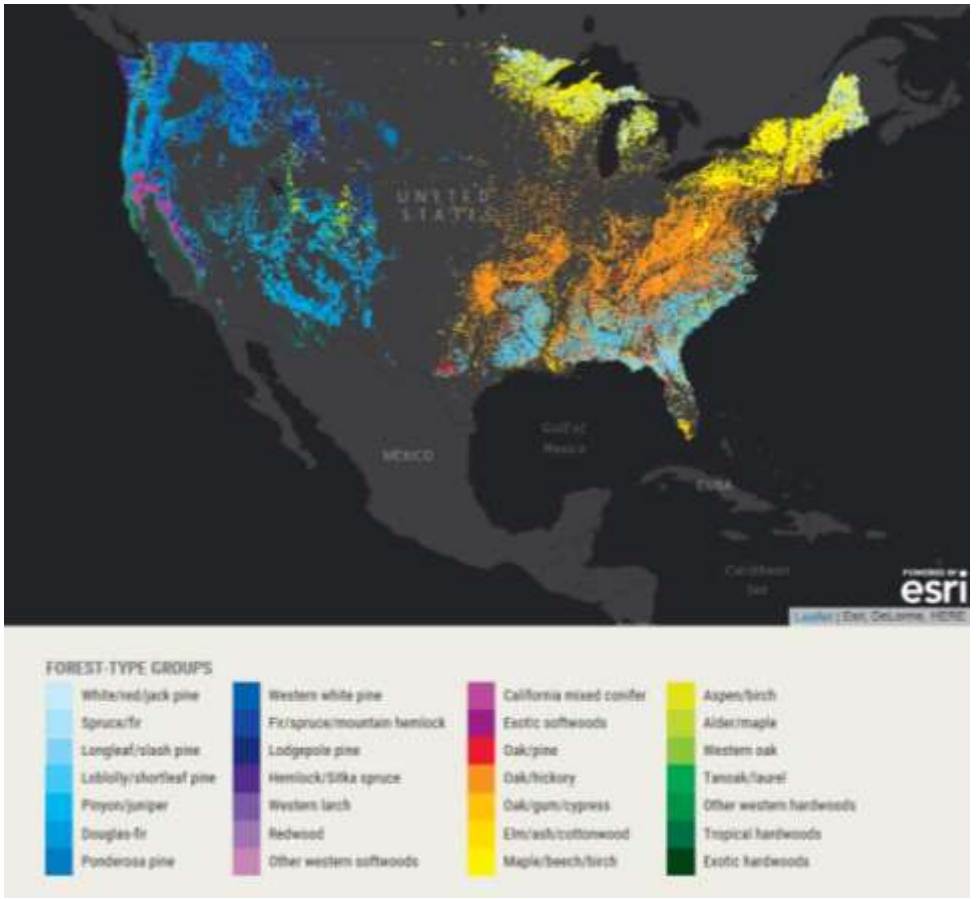
Planned work – Training the field How to Crosswalk to the NVC

Training sessions are In development to help Regional Staff cross-walk their FIA data to the NVC.



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Subcommittee is Addressing Current Needs of NVC – - Content Database

Needed:

- Upgrade to software and programming time

  or

- Negotiation of how NatureServe can keep content current for public use

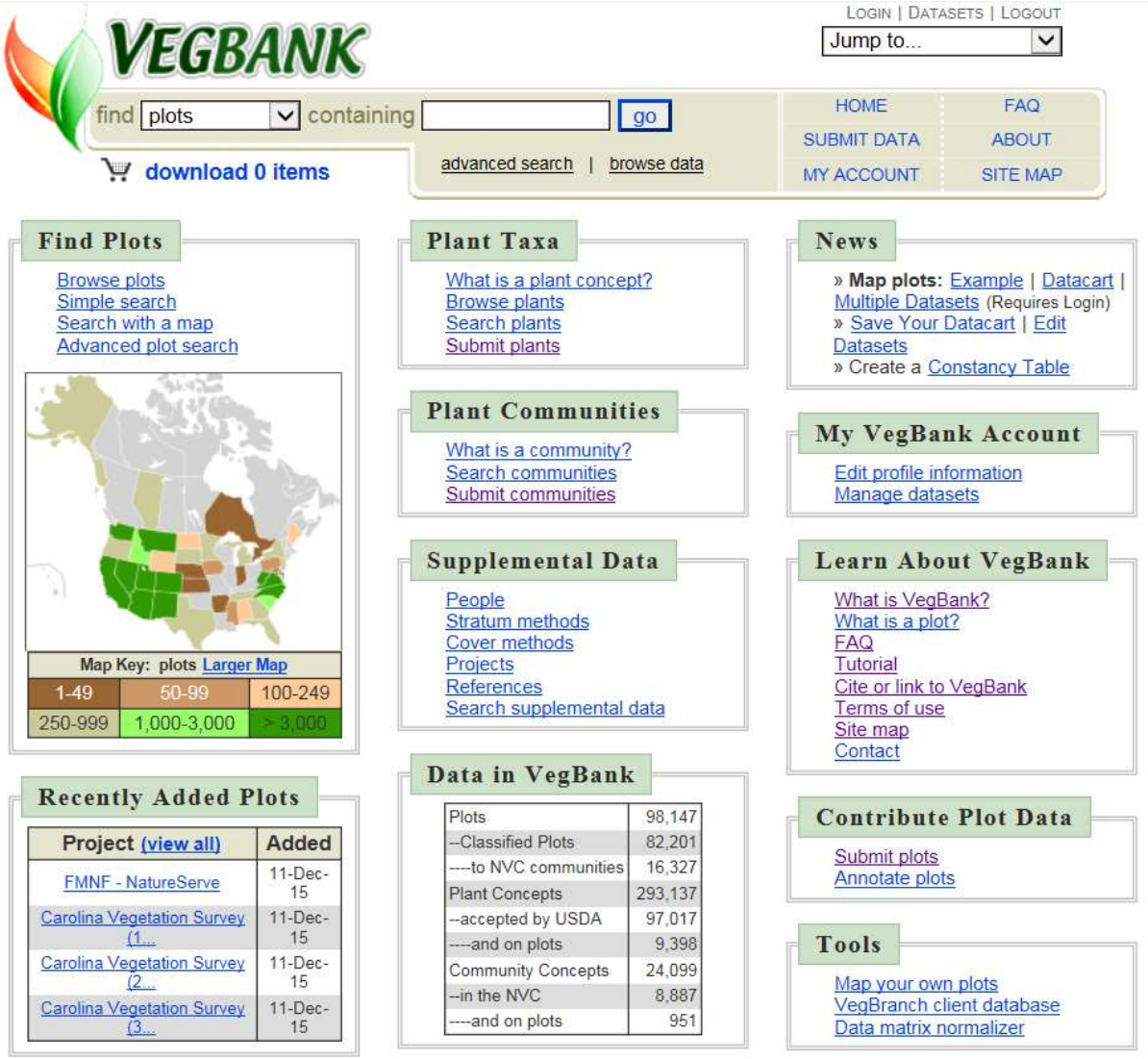
  with

- dynamic links to and from plot tool databases.
- Estimated cost: **$24,000/yr**

Subcommittee is Addressing Current Needs of NVC – –VegBank reference plots

Needed

- Upgrade to server, which is about to fail.
- Replacement of software, so old it cannot be upgraded
- Improvement of advanced user interface functions for searching and filtering plot data.
- Estimated cost is **$341,000 over 3 years.**



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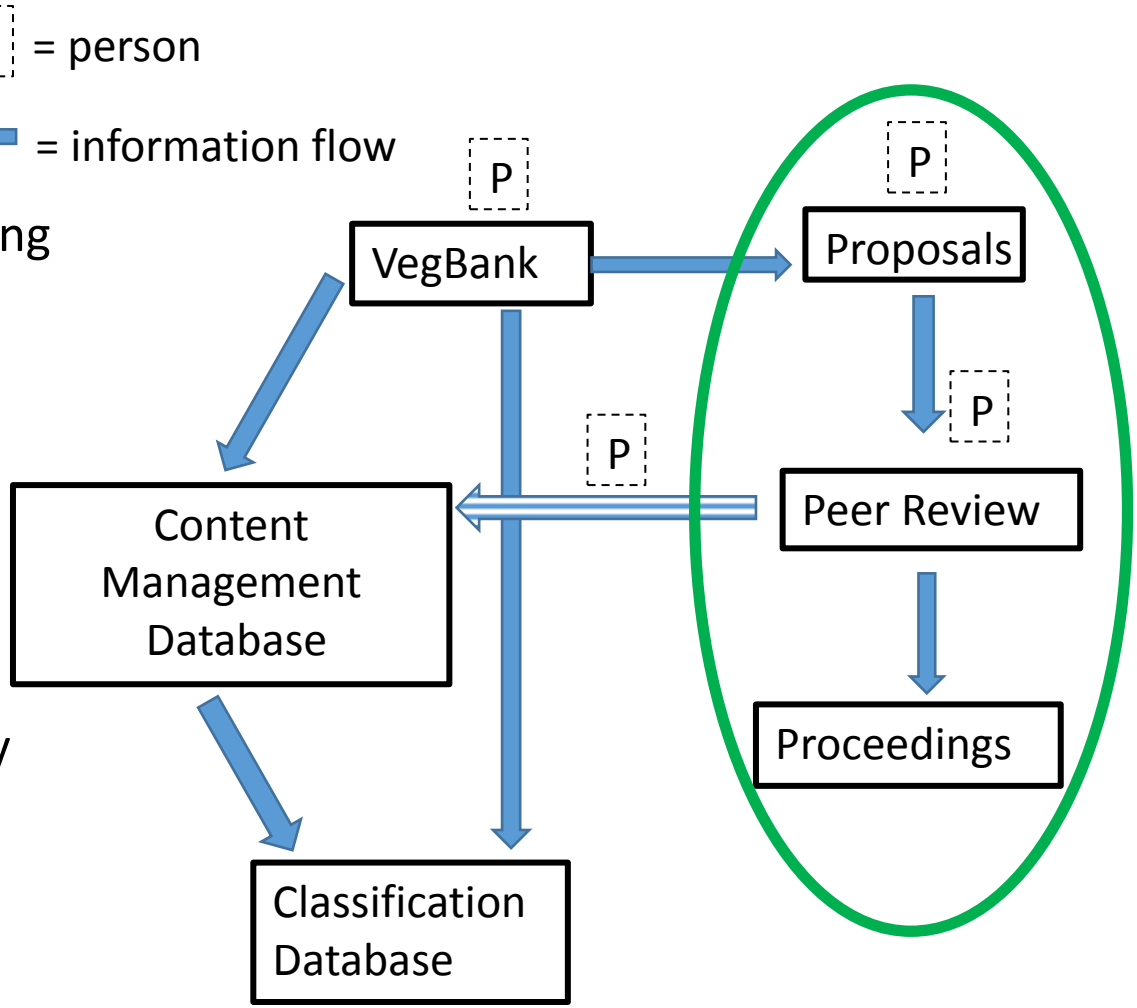
Subcommittee is Addressing Current Needs – NVC Content Database Peer review platform

Needed:

- Support for Editor in Chief
- Automated process for uploading and sharing proposals.
- Until automated:
  - Plan is to manually process proposals and database.
- Estimated cost: Approximately **$100,000 1st year, $30,000 subsequent years.**



On the horizon for the FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee

- Develop a sustainable and high functioning NVC

- Shop proposal for needed funding with other agencies.