



Macrogroup: Cliff and Talus

This map is a modeled distribution based on current data and is not a substitute for field based inventory. Contact your State Natural Heritage Ecologist for more information about this habitat.



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Description:

A sparsely vegetated cliff or steep talus slope formed on calcareous sandstone or shale or other moderately calcareous bedrock. The vegetation varies from sparse to patchy as the lack of soil and constant erosion restricts vegetation growth to rock crevices or soil pockets. Trees are typically present and may form woodland or even forest vegetation. Basswood, ash, and bladdernut are woody indicators of the enriched setting; northern white cedar is sometimes present. The herb layer is typically not extensive but includes at least some species that are indicators of high nutrient conditions.

State Distribution: CT, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, VA, VT, WV

Total Habitat Acreage: 56,454

Percent Conserved: 35.7%

State	State Habitat %	State Acreage	GAP 1&2 (acres)	GAP 3 (acres)	Unsecured (acres)
NY	27%	15,195	3,598	2,068	9,528
PA	17%	9,864	512	4,339	5,013
WV	15%	8,404	301	1,969	6,133
VA	13%	7,441	1,501	1,187	4,752
VT	11%	6,359	206	565	5,589
MA	7%	3,683	470	1,276	1,937
CT	3%	1,842	296	233	1,313
NJ	2%	1,389	740	129	520
NH	2%	1,010	58	263	689
ME	2%	858	246	49	563
MD	1%	409	150	6	252

Ecological Setting and Natural Processes:

Vertical or near-vertical cliffs and steep talus slopes where weathering and/or bedrock lithology produce circumneutral to calcareous pH and heightened nutrient availability. Substrates include calcareous sandstone, calcareous shale, or other sedimentary mixtures containing limestone or dolomite. This system occurs at low to mid elevations from central New England south to Virginia and West Virginia.

Similar Habitat Types:

Cliff and talus systems have also been modeled for those steep landforms on other (calcareous and acidic) lithologies.

Crosswalk to State Name Examples:

Circumneutral Cliffs (CT), Circumneutral Rock Cliff Community (MA), Basic Cliff (MD), Cliffs (NH), Traprock Glade/Rock Outcrop Community (NJ), Talus Cave Community (NY), Calcareous Opening/Cliff (PA), Northern White-Cedar Cliff Woodland (VA), Cliffs And Talus Slopes - Temperate Calcareous Cliff (VT), Rock Outcrops/Cliffs/Talus (WV)

Crosswalk to State Wildlife Action Plans:

Rocky Cliffs, Ridgetops, Talus Slopes, and Other Similar Habitats (MA), Rock Outcrops and Cliffs (MD), Cliffs (NH), Cliff and Talus (NY), Rock Habitats (PA), Forest Habitat - Mixed Forest (VA), Cliffs and Talus Slopes - Temperate Calcareous Cliff (VT), Rock Outcrops/Cliffs/Talus (WV)

Places to Visit this Habitat:

Kaaterskill Forest | NY
 Sproul State Forest | PA
 George Washington and Jefferson National Forest | VA
 Bald Mountain Natural Area | VT
 Monongahela National Forest | WV

Associated Species: *Appendix lists scientific names*

BIRDS: bank swallow, eastern phoebe, raven, turkey vulture

MAMMALS: bobcat, porcupine, red-backed vole, rock vole, short-tailed shrew

HERPTILES: black rat snake, copperhead, fence lizard, five-lined skink, timber rattlesnake

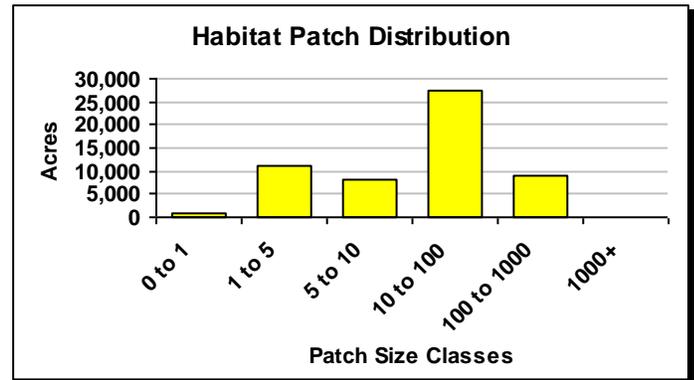
PLANTS: cliff muhly (*Muhlenbergia sobolifera*), climbing fumitory (*Adlumia fungosa*), downy arrow-wood (*Viburnum rafinesquianum*), glade fern (*Diplazium pycnocarpon*), ledge spike-moss (*Selaginella rupestris*), linear-leaved milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*), michaux's stitchwort (*Minuartia michauxii*), narrowleaf vervain (*Verbena simplex*), northern stickseed (*Hackelia deflexa*), purple clematis (*Clematis occidentalis*), rock crowfoot (*Ranunculus micranthus*), upland boneset (*Eupatorium sessilifolium*), wallrue spleenwort (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*)

Species of Concern (G1-G4): *Appendix lists scientific names*

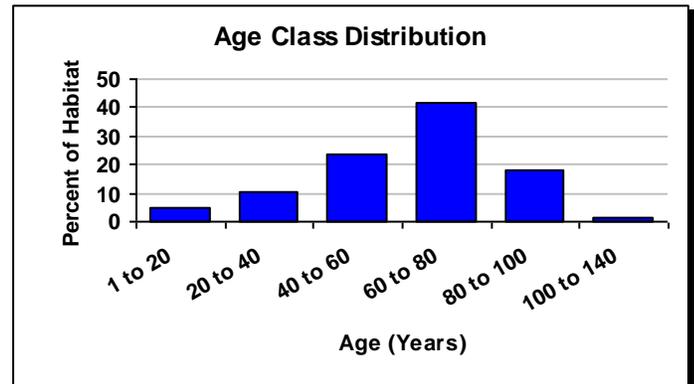
PLANTS: back's sedge (*Carex backii*), black maple (*Acer nigrum*), goldie's wood fern (*Dryopteris goldiana*)



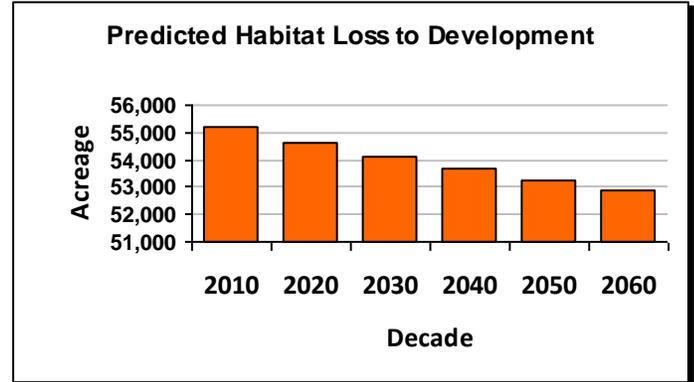
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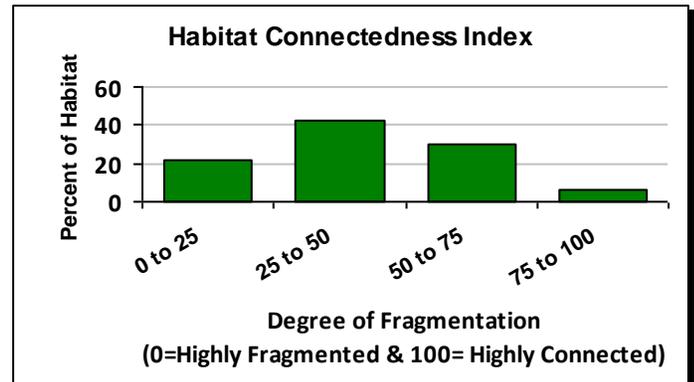
The average patch size for this habitat is 6 acres and the largest single patch is 408 acres. This chart shows the proportion of the habitat that is in each patch-size class.



This chart shows the average age of trees associated with this habitat based on forest inventory data. For non-forested systems or small habitats the average age is influenced by the surroundings.



This chart shows the predicted loss of habitat over the next five decades (2,372 acres) if loss continues at the same rate as 1990-2000. The average rate of loss is 47 acres per year.



This metric measures how connected or fragmented the land directly surrounding (18 square miles) the habitat is, this the chart shows the proportion of the habitat in each connectedness class.