**Description:**

An oak-dominated, mostly closed canopy forest that occurs as a matrix (dominant) type through the central part of our region. Oak species characteristic of dry to mesic conditions (e.g., red, white, black, and scarlet oak) and hickories are dominant in mature stands. Chestnut oak may be present but is generally less important than other oak species. Red maple, black birch, and yellow birch may be common associates. Heath shrubs are often present but not well developed. Local areas of limy bedrock, or colluvial pockets, may support forests that reflect the richer soils. With a long history of human habitation, many of the forests are mid-successional, in which pines (typically Virginia or white) or tuliptree may be codominant or dominant.

**Ecological Setting and Natural Processes:**

Moderate moisture and heat loading are characteristic for this oaky system. It occurs at low to mid elevations, where the topography is flat to gently rolling, occasionally steep. Substrate bedrock and soils are commonly but not always acidic. Chestnut was formerly a prominent tree in these forests.

**Similar Habitat Types:**

Drier oak-pine systems (Central Appalachian Dry Oak-Pine Forest, CA Pine-Oak Rocky Woodland) are often upslope; mesic covey or wetland systems may be embedded in low landscape positions. A split along purely geographic lines separates this system from similar Southern Appalachian Oak Forests in southern WV, in lieu of more natural ecological or floristic distinctions.

**Crosswalk to State Name Examples:**

Dry Subacidic Forest (CT), Central Appalachian Dry-Mesic Chestnut Oak-Northern Red Oak Forest (DE), Dry, Rich Acidic Oak Forest (MA), Acidic Oak - Hickory Forest (MD), Dry-Mesic Inland Mixed Oak Forest (NJ), Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest (NY), Dry Oak-Heath Forest (PA), Black Oak-Scarlet Oak/Heath Forest (RI), Central Appalachian Dry-Mesic Chestnut Oak - Northern Red Oak Forest (VA), Oak/Hickory And Dry/Mesic Oak Forest (WV)

**Crosswalk to State Wildlife Action Plans:**

Hardwood Forest - Mixed oak-beech forests (DC), Mesic Deciduous Forests (MD), Upland forests - deciduous forest (NJ), Oak Forest (NY), Deciduous/Mixed Forest (upland) (PA), Forest Habitat - Deciduous Forest (VA), Oak/Hickory and Dry/Mesic Oak Forest (WV)
**Places to Visit this Habitat:**

Green Ridge State Forest | MD  
Delaware Water Gap | NJ  
Sprout State Forest | PA  
George Washington and Jefferson National Forest | VA  
Monongahela National Forest | WV

**Associated Species:**

*BIRDS:* black-and-white warbler, broad-winged hawk, cerulean warbler, eastern wood-pewee, great crested flycatcher, louisiana waterthrush, ovenbird, red-bellied woodpecker, scarlet tanager, summer tanager (south), eastern whip-poor-will, wood thrush, veery, worm-eating warbler

*MAMMALS:* black bear, red-backed vole, short-tailed shrew, white footed mouse

*HERPTILES:* northern redback salamander, ringneck snake, redbelly snake, spotted salamander

*PLANTS:* American wintergreen (Pyrola americana), basil beebalm (Monarda clinopodia), blunt-lobe woodsia (Woodsia obtusa), bottlebrush grass (Elymus hystrix), common alexanders (Zizia aurea), early buttercup (Ranunculus fascicularis), shinleaf (Pyrola elliptica), sicklepod (Arabis canadensis)

**Species of Concern (G1-G4):**

*BIRDS:* golden-winged warbler

*MAMMALS:* eastern small-footed myotis, kättatiny red-backed vole, virginia big-eared bat

*HERPTILES:* big levels salamander, milk snake, peaks of otter salamander

*INSECTS:* American snout, Appalachian grizzled skipper, underwing moth (Catocala reecta), clouded underwing, dark stoneroor borer moth, flypoison borer moth, habilis underwing, northern metalmark, mournful underwing, yellow stoneroor borer moth

*PLANTS:* climbing fern (Lygodium palmatum), goldenseal (Hydrastis canadensis), small whorled pogonia (Isotria medeoloides)

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**Predicted Habitat Loss to Development**

This chart shows the predicted loss of habitat over the next five decades (783,733 acres) if loss continues at the same rate as 1990-2000. The average rate of loss is 15,675 acres per year.

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**Habitat Connectedness Index**

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.