

Plant Associations of Arizona and New Mexico Volume 3

Ecological Response Units of the Southwestern United States

Potential Vegetation, Ecological Linkages, and Tools for Management Planning

With the release of the *fourth edition of Plant Associations of Arizona and New Mexico*, a third volume will be added for “Ecological Response Units of the Southwestern United States”. Ecological Response Units (ERUs) are broad ecosystem types of similar site potential and disturbance regime, each ERU representing particular groupings of plant associations and Terrestrial Ecological Units. ERUs represent all major forest, woodland, shrubland, and grassland ecosystem types of the Southwest, and provide a framework for assessment, monitoring, and management. Volume 3 will be the companion guide to volumes 1 and 2 (forest and woodland associations) and will have ERU descriptions along with reference conditions, linkages to other classification systems, plant community keys, current science references, and other tools for management, project planning, and implementation.

ERUs nest within the broader Biotic Communities of the Southwest. Forest and woodland ERUs represent groups of habitat types that share reference conditions, disturbance regimes, and a similar basis for planning. ERUs are comparable to other landscape stratifications that combine site potential and historic fire regime including LANDFIRE Biophysical Settings and NatureServe Ecological Systems. The ERU framework includes over 50 upland types and subclasses and over 30 riparian types and subclasses.

Though Volume 3 will not be included with the 2023 prepublication of handbooks for volumes 1 and 2, Volume 3 will be completed the winter of 2023-2024 and included with the final publication of the three-volume set. Association descriptions in volumes 1 and 2 include the name and code of the parent ERU.



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