

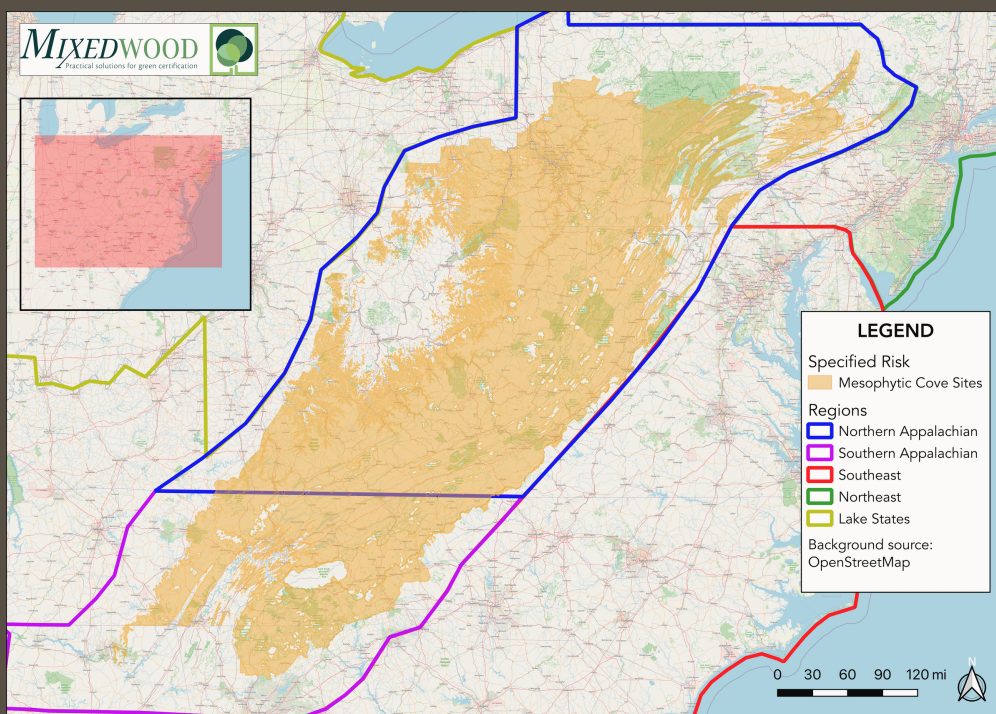
Description

Mesophytic cove sites are highly diverse, closed- canopy hardwood forest occurring on sheltered sites at low- to moderate-elevation (1000-3600 ft), and sometimes higher. They tend to occur in large patches on concave slopes that accumulate nutrients and moisture. They are characterized by high species diversity and a complex forest structure. The ground level flora in particular has high species richness, often with abundant spring ephemerals. Rich cove forests have very fertile soils with a diverse herb layer containing few shrubs. Acidic cove forests are less fertile than rich coves, but otherwise similar.

While the sheltered, mesic sites that support Cove Forests are not particularly rare, examples that retain structural components like the dense canopy and high species diversity (both in the overstory and understory) are very rare. These characteristics may take 200 years to develop. These sites will not have evidence of having been previously clear-cut or farmed (followed by regrowth of the forest). Typically, they will include basswood, buckeye, cucumber, walnut, and magnolias in the mid-story and yellow- poplar, beech, sugar maple, northern red oak, white oak, ash, and hickories in the overstory.¹

MESOPHYTIC COVE SITES

FSC Controlled Wood
Specified Risk Fact Sheet



FSC US Region:
Appalachian

Type: rare
habitat

NRA Category:
HCV 3.3

Scope: region-
wide

¹Forest Stewardship Council. (2018). FSC US Controlled Wood Regional Meeting Report Appalachian Region: Asheville, NC. Retrieved from <https://us.fsc.org/download.controlled-wood-regional-meeting-report-appalachian-region.a-702.pdf>





High Conservation Value (HCV)

Mesophytic cove sites are considered an HCV because they are a rare ecosystem that is at risk at a national or regional scale. These types of HCVs were identified using guidance associated with the FSC US Forest Management Standard and are supported by other information sources and through expert consultation.¹

Recommended Mitigation

- **Education & Outreach:** information sharing with landowners, loggers, wood suppliers.

Mitigation Resources

- **Management Guide for Invasive Plants in Southern Forests** – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. Additional references & resources cited.
- **USDA US Forest Service Southern Research Station** - A Field Guide for ID of invasive plants in southern forests. PDF.
- **Eco Foresters** - Forestry Resources for Landowners: Website with links and resources.

Information Sources

- **Rich Mesophytic Forest Guide**: A detailed description & guide by New York Natural Heritage Program. Additional resources cited.
- **NatureServe Ecological System Comprehensive Report**: Southern and Central Appalachian Cove Forest (CES202.373). Additional references cited.
- **The Nature Conservancy** - Southern & Central Appalachian Forest Cover. Fact Sheet PDF.
- **USDA US Forest Service** - Herbaceous species composition and richness of mesophytic cove forests in southern Appalachians; synthesis and knowledge gaps: PDF.

Social Value

- **National Park Service/New River Gorge National Park** - Mixed Mesophytic Forest: website with recreation opportunities within these forests.
- **Library of Congress** - Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia: Article.

