

Level III and IV Ecoregions of New England

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Ecoregions denote areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources. They are designed to serve as a spatial framework for the research, assessment, management, and monitoring of ecosystems and ecosystem components. These general purpose regions are critical for structuring and implementing ecosystem management strategies across federal agencies, state agencies, and nongovernment organizations that are responsible for different types of resources within the same geographical areas. The approach used to compile this map is based on the premise that ecological regions can be identified through the analysis of patterns of biotic and abiotic phenomena, including geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife, and hydrology. The relative importance of each characteristic varies from one ecological region to another regardless of the hierarchical level. The Ecoregions of New England map was compiled at a scale of 1:250,000. Compilation of this map was part of a collaborative project primarily between US EPA Region 1, US EPA National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (Corvallis, Oregon), USGS, USDA-NRCS, New England state environment and natural resource agencies, as well as with other collaborators and contributors.

The project is associated with interagency efforts to develop a common framework of ecological regions. Reaching that objective requires recognition of the differences in the conceptual approaches and mapping methodologies applied to develop the most common ecoregion-type frameworks, including those developed by the USDA-Forest Service, the US EPA, and the USDA-NRCS. As each of these frameworks is further refined, their differences are becoming less discernible. Collaborative ecoregion projects, such as this one in New England, are a step toward attaining consensus and consistency in ecoregion frameworks for the entire nation.

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Electronic versions of ecoregion maps and posters as well as other ecoregion resources are available at: <http://www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions.htm>.

