

EMCLA Metadata

Version 1.0

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Contents: Rare vascular plant survey data collected between 2012 – 2015 to meet the objectives of the Ecological Monitoring Committee for the Lower Athabasca (EMCLA) rare plants project. Survey data includes physical site coordinates, complete species inventory for each 0.25 ha plot, soil pH from plot center, habitat classification and physical site attributes. Further information includes the SRank for each species, following species ranks assigned by the Alberta Conservation Information Management (ACIMS).

Key survey notes: Observers worked in crews of two for safety reasons. Each individual surveyor completed a species inventory of a plot (0.25ha or 50m x 50m) during a time unlimited survey. The time of first encounter for each species was recorded as well as total survey time for the entire plot. No abundance data was recorded. Habitat information was recorded for the entire plot. Each plot was surveyed once per season by at least one individual, with the exception of X sites in 2014, which were surveyed once in spring and again in late summer by the same individuals. At 71 plots repeat observations of the same plot by different observers were completed, these are denoted within the “repeats” column.

Column headings and associated data:

Column Heading	Contents	Notes
Site	Unique site identifiers for each 0.25ha plot. Site numbers do not correspond to the order in which sites were completed or to specific individuals.	The suffix “A” or “B” denote the following: A plots were centered around the model predicted location (provided by S.Nielsen in all years). B plots were established in close proximity to A plots with the specific objective of surveying a contrasting habitat to the A plot. Sites denoted A2 or B2 (X plots) denote the second survey of the season (see key survey notes)
Year	The year in the survey was completed	
Field date	The date the survey was completed	
Easting UTM12	The Easting coordinate of the site	UTM Zone 12
Northing UTM12	The Northing coordinate of the site	UTM Zone 12
Slope	The slope of the site, taken from plot center, in degrees	Plot center refers to the physical center of the 0.25ha plot.

Aspect	The aspect of the slope in degrees	This field will be VNA when no slope was found at the site (i.e. Slope = 0). (VNA = Variable Not Applicable)
Slope position	A code which describes the slope of the site, taken from plot center	C= Crest, D= Depression, L= Level, T= Toe, S1 = 2-5 degrees, S2 = 6-10 degrees, S3 = 11-30 degrees, S4 = >30 degrees
Curr_largest_nutrient	A two letter code describing the nutrient and moisture conditions of the majority of the plot.	The first letter of the code refers to the nutrient status of the site, the second letter refers to the moisture. See EMCLA protocols for further detail. This code acts a parent variable to curr_largest_trees and curr_largest_stage.
Curr_largest_trees	A categorization of the tree composition of the site, given the nutrient/moisture code given in curr_largest_nutrient	In some cases this may not align with dom_tree_species due to the nature of the ecosite classification system used. See protocols for more detail.
Curr_largest_stage	A 2 to 4 letter code description the composition or structure of the vegetation present at the site.	See EMCLA protocols for further details.
Curr_largest_area	The percentage of the plot which is described by the three preceding columns (the habitat classification)	In cases where this value is <100, there was at least one additional ecosite within the plot which was not described. Secondary ecosites must be >10% of the plot to be considered. Value range is in increments of 10%.
Dom_tree_species_code	A forestry code denoting the tree species which had the greatest abundance across the site	See EMCLA protocols for full description of tree codes (e.g. Aw = trembling aspen)
Dom_tree_sci_name	The scientific name of the species denoted in Dom_tree_species_code	Tree species names follow ACIMS taxonomy.
Bare_ground_cover	The amount of bare ground within the entire plot	Bare ground is defined as ground which cannot or does not currently support the growth of vegetation
Water_cover	The amount of water cover within the entire plot	Water cover refers to open water
Soil_ph1	The pH of the soil (sample 1)	Soil pH was determined at plot center using a field pH kit. See protocols for specific sampling guidelines. If no mineral soil was present (i.e. lowlands), these

		samples will be recorded as VNA.
Soil_ph2	The pH of the soil (sample 2)	
Soil_ph3	The pH of the soil (sample 3)	
Soil_comments	Comments regarding the pH samples	
Comments	Comments about the entire 0.25ha plot or survey elements.	
By_partner	A field indicating if the individuals partner had already collected the information, used for repeat surveys	0= not, 1= done by partner
Repeats	A column indicating if repeat surveys were completed on the plot.	1= first survey, 2= repeat survey by second individual, 3= repeat survey by third individual
Observer	The individual who completed the survey. Each individual was assigned a unique 3 letter identifying code.	
Sci_name	The scientific name of the plant species encountered within the survey	Taken from ACIMS taxonomy. In some cases ssp. Were removed for consistency with older data (only cases where a single ssp exists in AB)
Time	The time of first encounter for each species found during the survey	In minutes
Surveytime	The total survey length	In minutes
Family	The Family which the plant species belongs to	
Sci_Name_NatureServe	The Nature Serve recognized scientific name	
Synonym	Common synonym for the scientific name used in this database.	
Common_Name_ACIMS	The common name in accordance with ACIMS (Alberta Conservation Information Management System)	
2014Rank	The S rank (provincial rarity rank) which the species had in 2014	
2015Rank	The updated S rank (provincial rarity rank) which the species was assigned during a taxonomic review by ACIMS in summer 2015.	
Origin_ACIMS	The origin of the plant species	Native = native plant, Exotic = introduced species, NA = could not find the species within the ACIMS database
GRANK	The global rarity rank for the species	
Tracked..Watched	An indication of if ACIMS is interested in collecting further information on the occurrence of the plant species	

