BCN HABITAT CATEGORIES
Adapted from Chicago Wilderness Terrestrial Community Classification System
October 2010

A. Forest
   A1. oak woodland
      A1a. oak woodland with shrubs
      A1b. oak woodland without shrubs
   A2. upland non-oak (mesic) forest
   A3. floodplain forest
      A3a. mesic floodplain forest
      A3b. wet floodplain forest
   A4. conifers
   A5. unassociated woody growth

B. Shrubland
   B1. shrubland with grass/sedge ground cover
      B1a. dry shrubland
      B1b. moist shrubland
   B2. shrub areas without grassy openings
   B3. streamside thicket

C. Grassland
   C1. savanna
      C1a. savanna with shrubs
      C1b. savanna without shrubs
   C2. prairie
      C2a. dry prairie
      C2b. moist prairie
   C3. meadow
      C3a. dry meadow
      C3b. moist meadow

D. Aquatic
   D1. lake or pond
   D2. marsh
      D2a. marsh with shrubs
      D2b. marsh without shrubs
   D3. bog

E. Shoreline

F. Agricultural

G. Residential
   G1. Urban (dense buildings, small lots)
   G2. Suburban
   G3. Park or cemetery

H. Commercial
   H1. Dense development
   H2. Landscaped Campus
   H3. Brownfields/abandoned
A. FOREST

A1. oak woodland
Multi-layered with canopy dominated by oaks of 10-inch or greater DBH. Oak woodlands developed under 50-80% canopy cover, but overgrown woodlands may have even more. White oak dominated woodlands developed on well-drained soil; bur, red and white oak woodlands in mesic environments; and swamp white or pin oak woodlands in wetter conditions. Flatwoods, on level ground with a clay pan, were also dominated by swamp white oak, except for sand flatwoods, where pin oaks were dominant.

A1a. oak woodland with shrubs (native or non-native)
Indicator species: blue-winged warbler, eastern towhee, black-billed cuckoo, Cooper’s hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, eastern wood-pewee, cedar waxwing, yellow-throated vireo, blue-gray gnatcatcher, rose-breasted grosbeak, Baltimore oriole

A1b. oak woodland without shrubs
Indicator species: Cooper’s hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, red-headed woodpecker, great crested flycatcher, eastern wood-pewee, cedar waxwing, indigo bunting, yellow-throated vireo, blue-gray gnatcatcher, rose-breasted grosbeak, Baltimore oriole

A2. upland non-oak (dry or mesic) forest
Multi-layered with no oaks but with other trees of 10-inch or greater DBH, often dominated by sugar maples, basswood and ash. Upland non-oak forests developed under 80-100% canopy cover. Indicator species: broad-winged hawk, hairy woodpecker, veery, wood thrush, rose-breasted grosbeak, scarlet tanager, ovenbird, red-eyed vireo

A3. floodplain forest
Along rivers and streams; 80-100% canopy cover. Indicator species: barred owl, red-shouldered hawk, Acadian flycatcher, yellow-throated vireo, prothonotary warbler

A3a. mesic floodplain forest
Has less frequent flooding than wet floodplain forest, more well-developed understory. Typical trees include ash and elm.

A3b. wet floodplain forest
Frequently flooded, more open understory. Dominant trees are silver maple, eastern cottonwood, black willow.

A4. conifers
With a few possible exceptions, conifer stands are imported to our area. Indicator species: chipping sparrow, black-throated green warbler

A5. UWG: unassociated woody growth
Covered with trees but with few or no oaks and no distinctive herbaceous species.

B. SHRUBLAND

B1. shrubland with grass/sedge ground cover

B1a. dry or mesic shrubland
Dominant plants: little bluestem, American hazelnut, poverty oat grass, wild plum, Iowa crab, scarlet oak, bur oak, prairie willow
Indicator species: loggerhead shrike, vesper sparrow, lark sparrow

B1b. moist shrubland
Dominant plants: blue joint grass, red-osier dogwood, Virginia wild rye, bur oak, blue-leaved and meadow willow, meadowsweet
Indicator species: American woodcock, willow flycatcher, brown thrasher, field sparrow, yellow warbler, common yellowthroat, yellow-breasted chat, Bell’s vireo

B2. shrub areas without grassy openings
Shrubs with little grass and few trees. Indicator species: black-billed cuckoo, eastern towhee, blue-winged warbler, yellow-breasted chat, American goldfinch, northern flicker, eastern kingbird, Baltimore oriole

B3. streamside thicket
Dense shrubs (often with scattered trees) along watercourses, typically dominated by willows and dogwoods.
Indicator species: black-crowned night-heron, willow flycatcher, warbling vireo, yellow warbler
C. GRASSLAND
C1. savanna
Multi-layered, dominated by oaks with grass/sedge ground cover. True oak savannas have 10-50% canopy but are now rare in our area. Dominant trees were bur oak, black oak, swamp white oak.

C1a. savanna with shrubs
Indicator species: black-billed cuckoo, eastern towhee, blue-winged warbler, yellow-breasted chat, American goldfinch, red-tailed hawk, barn owl, red-headed woodpecker, northern flicker, eastern kingbird, eastern bluebird, Baltimore oriole, orchard oriole

C1b. savanna without shrubs
Indicator species: red-tailed hawk, barn owl, red-headed woodpecker, northern flicker, eastern kingbird, Baltimore oriole

C2. prairie
Abundant native, non-aggressive grasses and wildflowers with no trees or shrubs.

C2a. dry prairie
Includes mesic prairie.
Dominant plants: little bluestem, big bluestem, Indian grass, prairie dropseed, Bicknell’s sedge, porcupine grass
Indicator species: upland sandpiper, horned lark, grasshopper sparrow, western meadowlark

C2b. moist prairie
Includes sedge meadows, seeps and fens.
Dominant plants: blue joint grass, sedges, prairie cordgrass
Indicator species: American bittern, northern harrier, king rail, short-eared owl, sedge wren, savannah sparrow, Henslow’s sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, dickcissel, eastern meadowlark, bobolink

C3. meadow
Eurasian grasses with few or no trees or shrubs, including hay meadows and old fields (abandoned cropland).

C3a. dry meadow
Indicator species: upland sandpiper, horned lark, grasshopper sparrow, western meadowlark

C3b. moist meadow
Indicator species: American bittern, northern harrier, king rail, short-eared owl, sedge wren, savannah sparrow, Henslow’s sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, dickcissel, eastern meadowlark, bobolink

D. AQUATIC
D1. lake or pond
Permanent standing water with little or no emergent vegetation.

D2. marsh
Permanent or long-standing water with vegetation such as reeds, cattails, buttonbush and arrowhead.

D2a. marsh with shrubs
Indicator species: green heron, black-crowned night-heron, willow flycatcher

D2b. marsh without shrubs
Indicator species: pied-billed grebe, American bittern, least bittern, blue-winged teal, ruddy duck, Virginia rail, sora, common moorhen, American coot, black tern, Forster’s tern, marsh wren, yellow-headed blackbird

D3. bog
Glacial relict wetlands in kettles.
Dominant plants: sedges, leatherleaf, marsh shield fern, sphagnum moss
Indicator species: willow flycatcher, yellow warbler

E. SHORELINE
Shores of Lake Michigan.
Dominant plants: marram grass, sand reed
Indicator species: piping plover, spotted sandpiper, common tern

F. AGRICULTURAL
G. RESIDENTIAL
   G1. urban (dense buildings, small lots)
   G2. suburban
   G3. park or cemetery

H. COMMERCIAL
   H1. dense development
   H2. landscaped campus
   H3. brownfields/abandoned