

NWT Land Cover Classification

NWT Including Arctic Islands = 135Mha; land only = 114Mha

NWT Mainland: land/water = 114Mha; land only = 94Mha

NWT Mainland Below Treeline = 97Mha; land only = 80Mha

WHAT IS TREELINE?

The limit beyond which trees cannot grow, often determined by altitude in mountainous areas or high latitude in the subarctic. Permafrost in the soil can prevent trees from growing their roots deep enough for the necessary structural support and cold temperatures can result in internal freezing of the trees, killing them. The treeline is not a distinct line because unique micro-sites, such as gullies and south facing slopes, offer conditions on which trees can establish and grow beyond the normal northern limit.

WHAT IS FOREST?

Forests are complex ecosystems comprised of many land cover types including trees, shrubs and wetlands.

Forested land cover is defined as having

> 10% tree crown closure.

