3. Ben More Foothills Unit

Rolling terrain on weathered sedimentary rock occurs both around the flanks of the hills, and on the lower crests in the study area. A feature of the unit is the severe gully erosion in the waterways.

Geology: Ordovician sandstone and shale.

Slope: 10-20%

Landforms: 90% slopes
10% crests

Soils:
Dominant: Dy3.41, Dy3.42, Dy2.42, Dy2.41, Db2.41. Mottled or whole-coloured yellow-brown duplex soils, often with red subsoils; a pale bleached A_2, may be present and may contain quartz and buckshot.

Minor: Gn3.74, Gn3.14. The upper slopes have shallower soils usually a faintly mottled yellow-brown or red-brown gradational soil with a thin pale A_2 horizon containing quartz and buckshot Dr2.22. Red duplex soils also occur; stone fragments more common in the A horizon as the result of soil creep from the adjacent slopes; a pale A_2 horizon is usually present below the grey-brown loamy A_1; the red clayey subsoils are weakly to moderately structured and usually neutral.

See appendix 4 for a typical soil profile descriptions from this unit.

Stone rock outcrop: Nil

Pans: Weakly cemented hardpans occur in some drainage depressions, but the agent of cementation has not been identified.

Land use: Predominantly grazing, with state forests in the west of the study area.

Observed land deterioration: Severe gully erosion in watercourses and moderate to severe tunnel erosion around gullies.

Susceptibility to land deterioration:
Gully erosion (high)
Tunnel erosion (high)
Slope failure (low to moderate)
Salting (very low)
Sheet erosion (moderate)
Compaction (low to moderate)

Land capability classification:
Generally, land capability class 3 – although a substantial part is land capability class 2 – with aspect, soil type and soil depth as the determinant factors (see Table 1). The steeper rocky ridges with shallow soils that are included in this Unit (N.B. They should properly have been included in the Ben More Hills Unit but they were too small in area to map independently) are of land capability class of 4 or 5 dependent upon soil depth and slope.