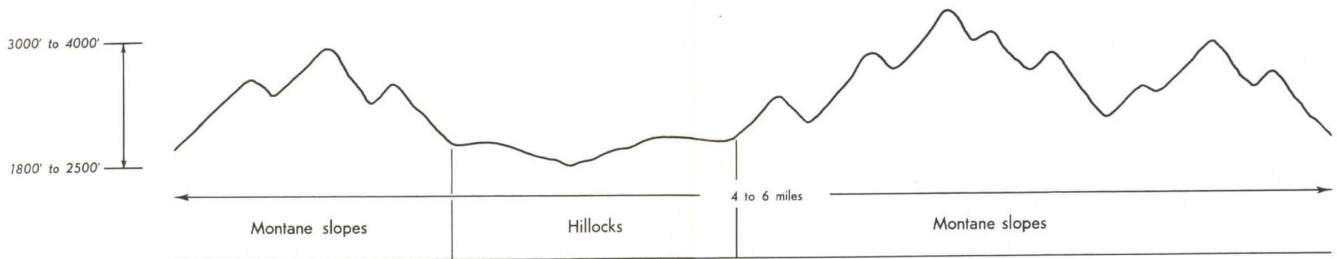


STALEYVILLE LAND SYSTEM

STALEYVILLE LAND SYSTEM

Area: 67 square miles 1.7% of catchment

(a) Distribution of land forms



(b) Land system diagram

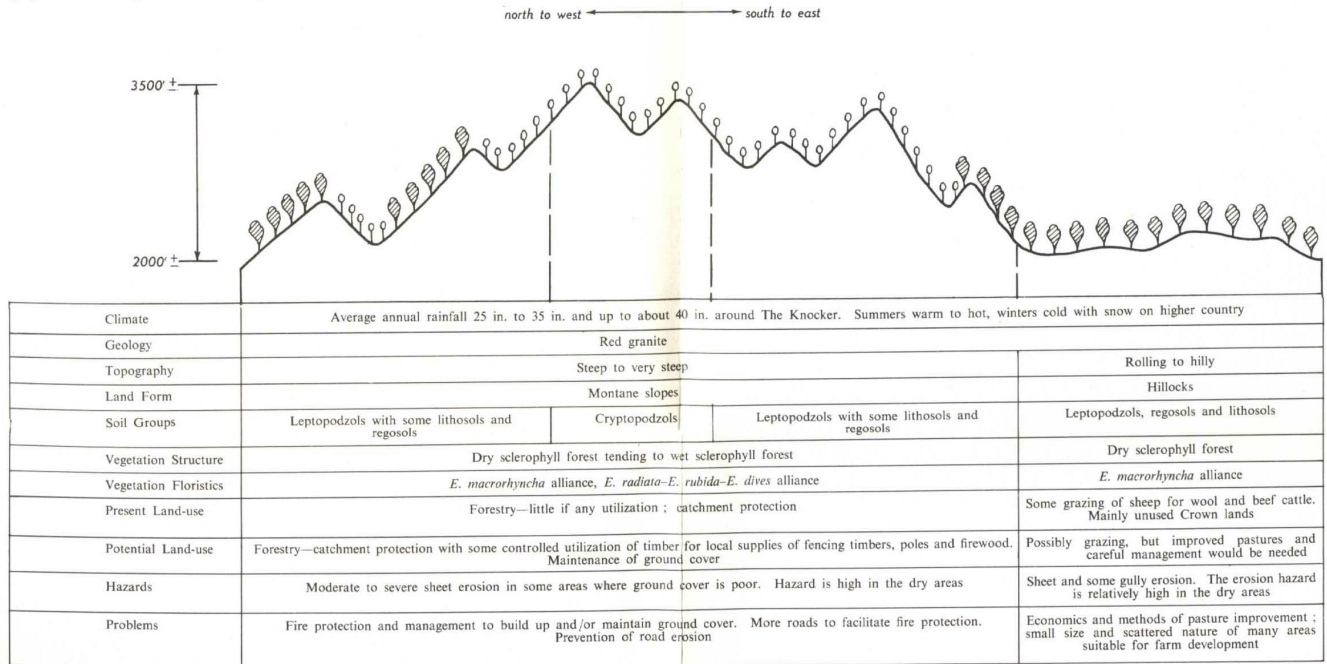


Fig. 36 – Staleyville Land System

The Staleyville land system is centrally situated in the south of the catchment. Its area is about 67 square miles, which is a little less than 2 per cent of the total catchment. Most of the area is Crown land with some Timber Reserve in the north-west. There are small areas of freehold land along the Mitta Mitta River on the north-eastern edge of the land system. At the abandoned settlement of Staleyville on the Nine Mile Creek, more or less in the centre of the land system, there is a small freehold block, but no residence.

About 80 per cent of the land system is composed of steep montane slopes and the rest is the hillocks land form in the valleys of major streams (Figure 36). Valley elevations are from about 1,800 feet to 2,500 feet and the ridge-top elevations are up to about 4,000 feet in the vicinity of the Knocker, though most are about 3,000 feet.

The land system has been separated because of its geology which consists of an extensive block of red granite, apparently of similar age to the Mt. Mittamatite and Pine Mountain granites.

There are no rainfall stations nearby, however the position of the area in relation to higher land masses to the west suggests that it may be in a rain shadow, and this is also indicated by the vegetation. Average annual rainfall of less than 40 inches and possibly down to 25 inches in places seems likely. The monthly distribution pattern is probably similar to that for Omeo, where rainfall in the winter is about the same as in summer. Also as at Omeo, rainfall intensity would be higher, and the reliability of the rainfall would be lower in summer than in winter. Summers are warm to hot and winters are cold with occasional snowfalls on higher ridges and peaks.

The nature of the parent material has resulted in the soils of the Staleyville land system being mostly coarse sandy leptopodzols or regosols, and lithosols are fairly common. In the more permanently moist situations, such as southern slopes at higher elevations, the soils are cryptopodzols.

Over most of the land system, the vegetation is a short dry sclerophyll forest of the *E. macrorhyncha* alliance, tending to wet sclerophyll forest of the *E. radiata*-*E. rubida*-*E. dives* alliance where the soil-moisture availability is higher.

The timber growing on this land system is of low commercial value, and is generally only suitable for firewood or fencing timbers. Its distance from potential markets places it at a disadvantage even for these products. It may be possible for some of the less-steep country to be improved for agriculture, mainly for grazing of sheep for wool with some beef cattle breeding. The great distance from the rail-head makes any improvement of agricultural land an expensive proposition, because of high transport costs. However, big improvements should be possible with suitable treatments.

The hazard for sheet erosion is high in this area. The soils are coarse textured and have poor structure. The ground cover is easily destroyed by fire and the vegetation is slow to recover, leaving the soil unprotected until such time as litter can accumulate. The apparently low average annual rainfall, and dry summer with high intensity rainfall, are additional hazards. All of this land requires careful use, and particularly any to be used for agriculture. The high erosion hazard, the difficult climate and the isolation of the area, would justify the maintenance of the present Crown tenure over most of the area. Fire protection is important in the land system where the ground cover is so essential, and is slow to re-develop after damage.