Wetland Assessment Procedure Test

October 2004 - Results

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

May 2004 Test Conclusions

- We're not ready to adopt the new method yet
- The process needs to be simplified
- Training is critical, including plant identification training and training on the methodology
- Zonation scoring needs work to deal with variation situations, including recovering systems
- We need to work closely to keep things consistent (central databases, training, networking, increased quality control)

October 2004 Test Goals:

- Assess consistency of zonation and stress scores
- Attain overall opinions on methods
- Refine field sheet

- All wetlands assessed within the period October 4 to November 12 period (most during first two weeks of October)
- 10 participants
- Brief training, but participants were more experienced and involved in the development

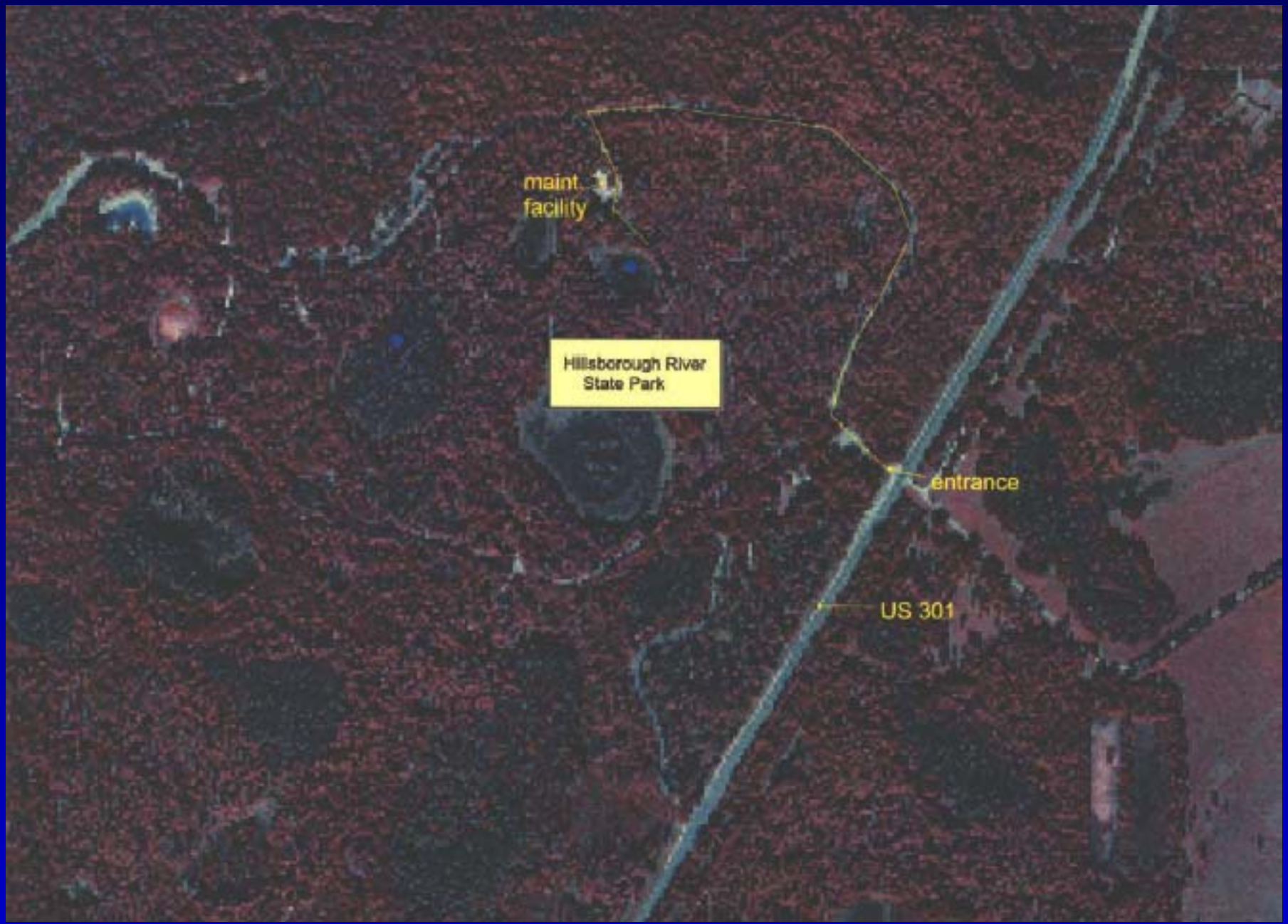
Morris Bridge Wellfield Vicinity (10 sites)

- Well Marsh (MBR-42)
- X-4 Cypress (MBR-89)
- Clay Gully Cypress (MBR-88)
- Trout Creek Marsh
- South Cypress Marsh (MBR-29)

Morris Bridge Wellfield Vicinity (10 sites)

- MBR–30
- West Cypress
- X-1 Cypress
- MBR-11
- Hills. River State Park Marsh


X-4
MBR-11
Well Marsh
Clay Gully Cypress
X-1
Morris Bridge Wellfield
West Cypress
Park entrance
Trout Creek Marsh
South Cypress Marsh
MBR-30
Morris Bridge Road


maint.
facility
Hillsborough River
State Park
entrance
US 301

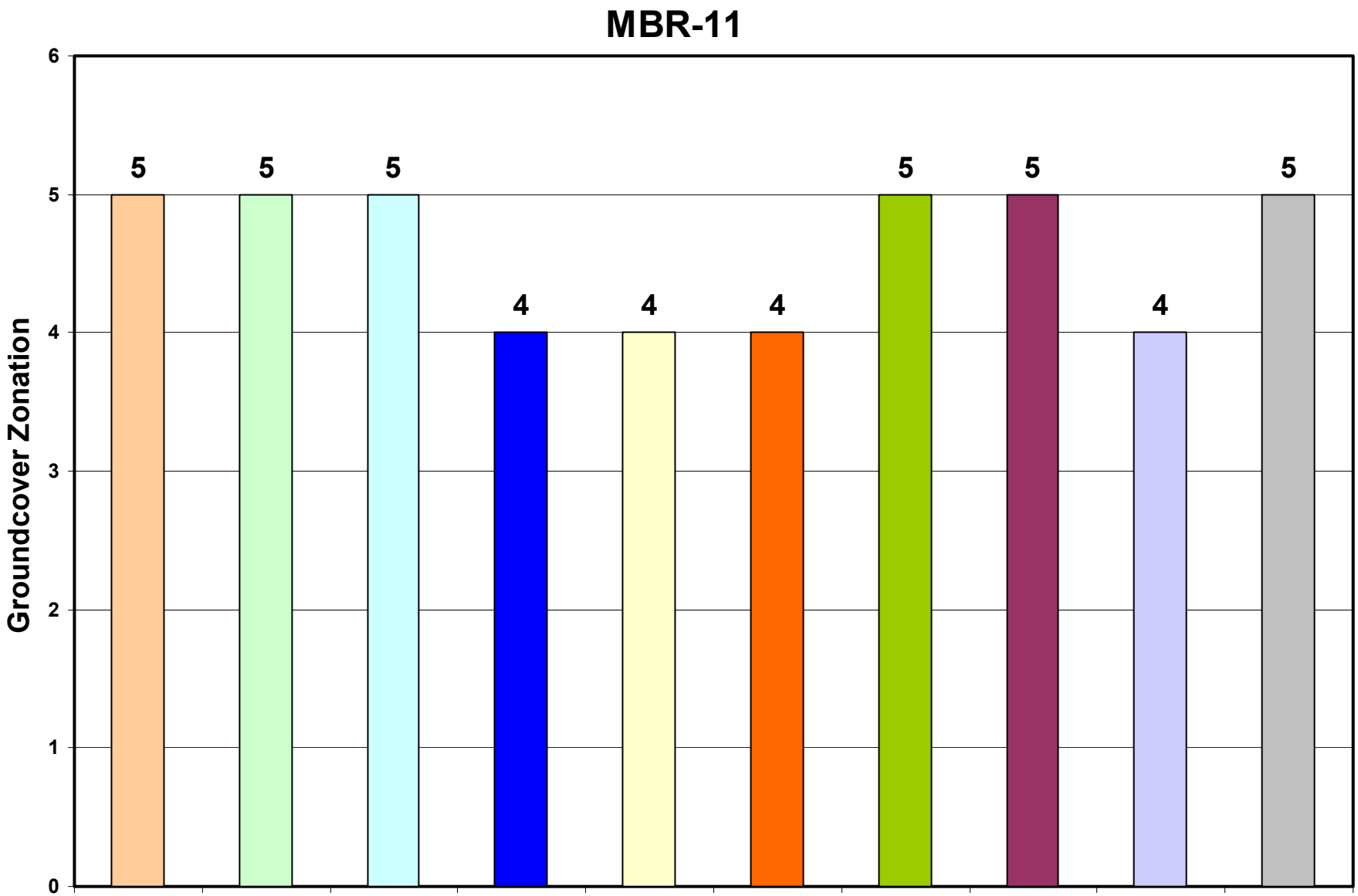
General Conclusions

- The group did a great job – thanks!
- We still have variability, but the method seems much more promising and logical than May version (we've learned from the "mistakes" in both tests)
- Most discrepancies appear to be more readily identifiable and more manageable
- We need to work on further simplification
- No matter what method is used, we will need to monitor it closely
- We still need to work on the details

Wetlands Subcommittee

- Have met regularly to discuss the details of the May test, and develop the new method
- Last meeting held November 29

Example Results - Zonation


MBR-11
Groundcover Zonation
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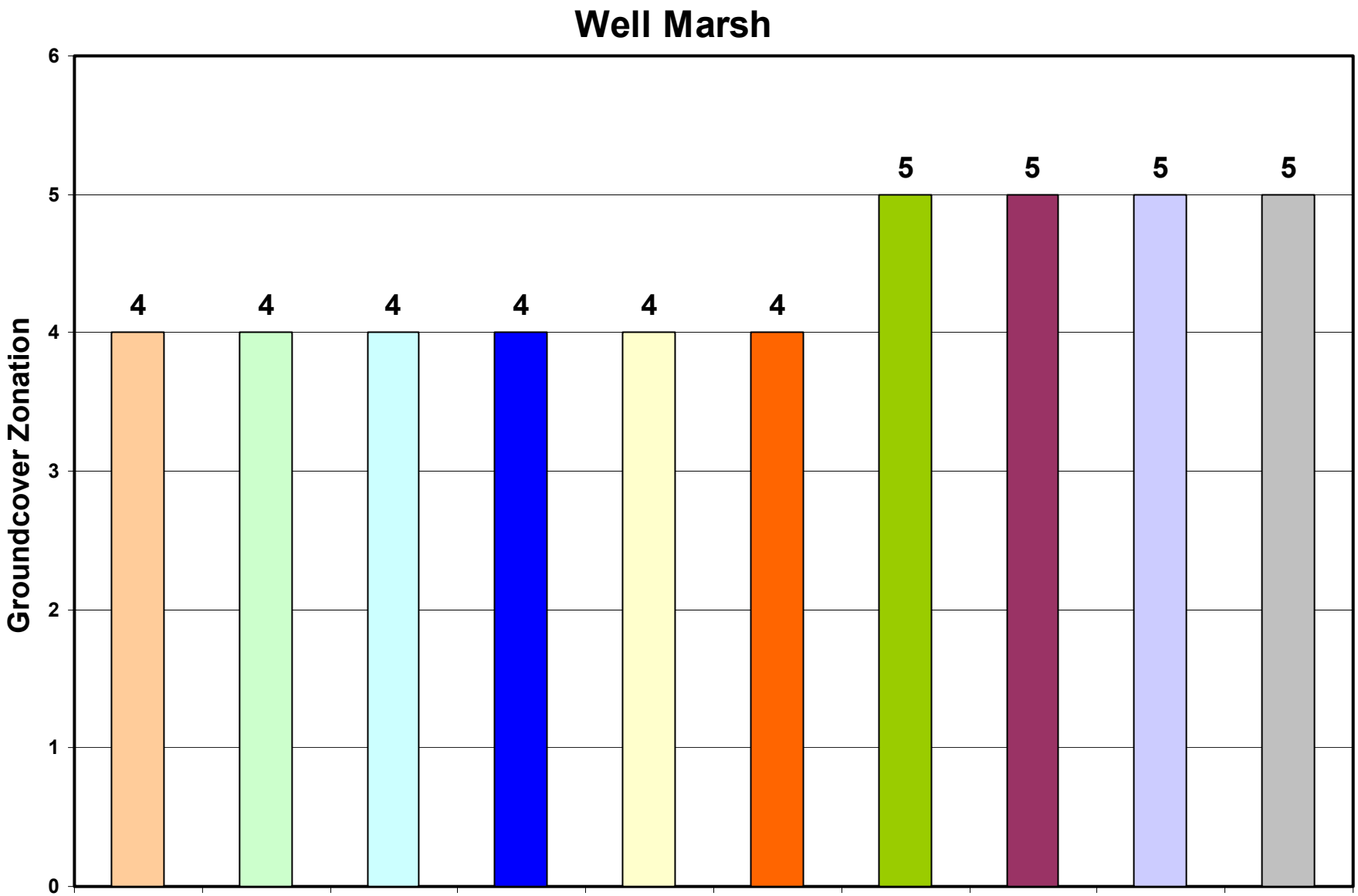
Well Marsh
Groundcover Zonation
6
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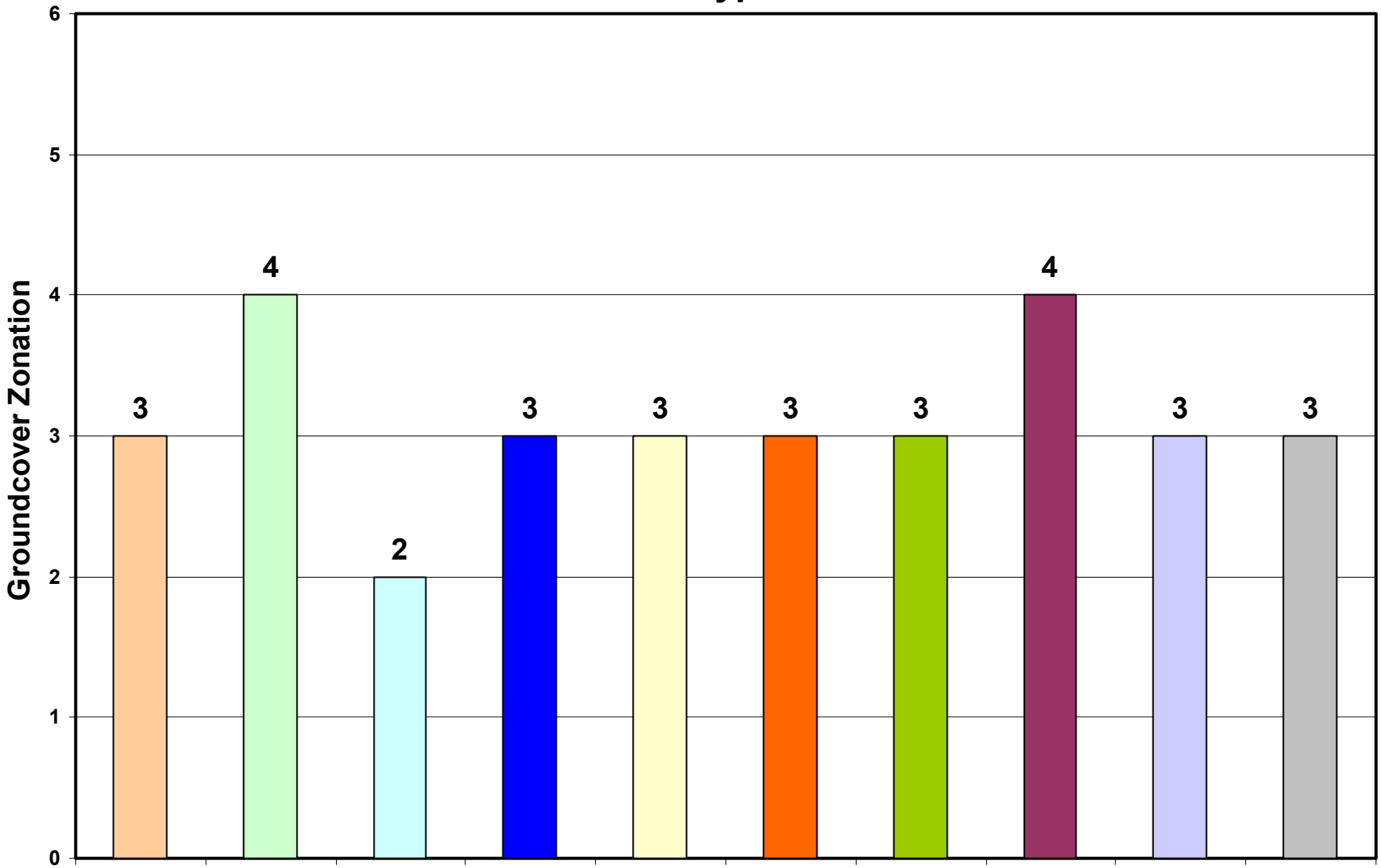
MBR-30 Cypress
Groundcover Zonation
6
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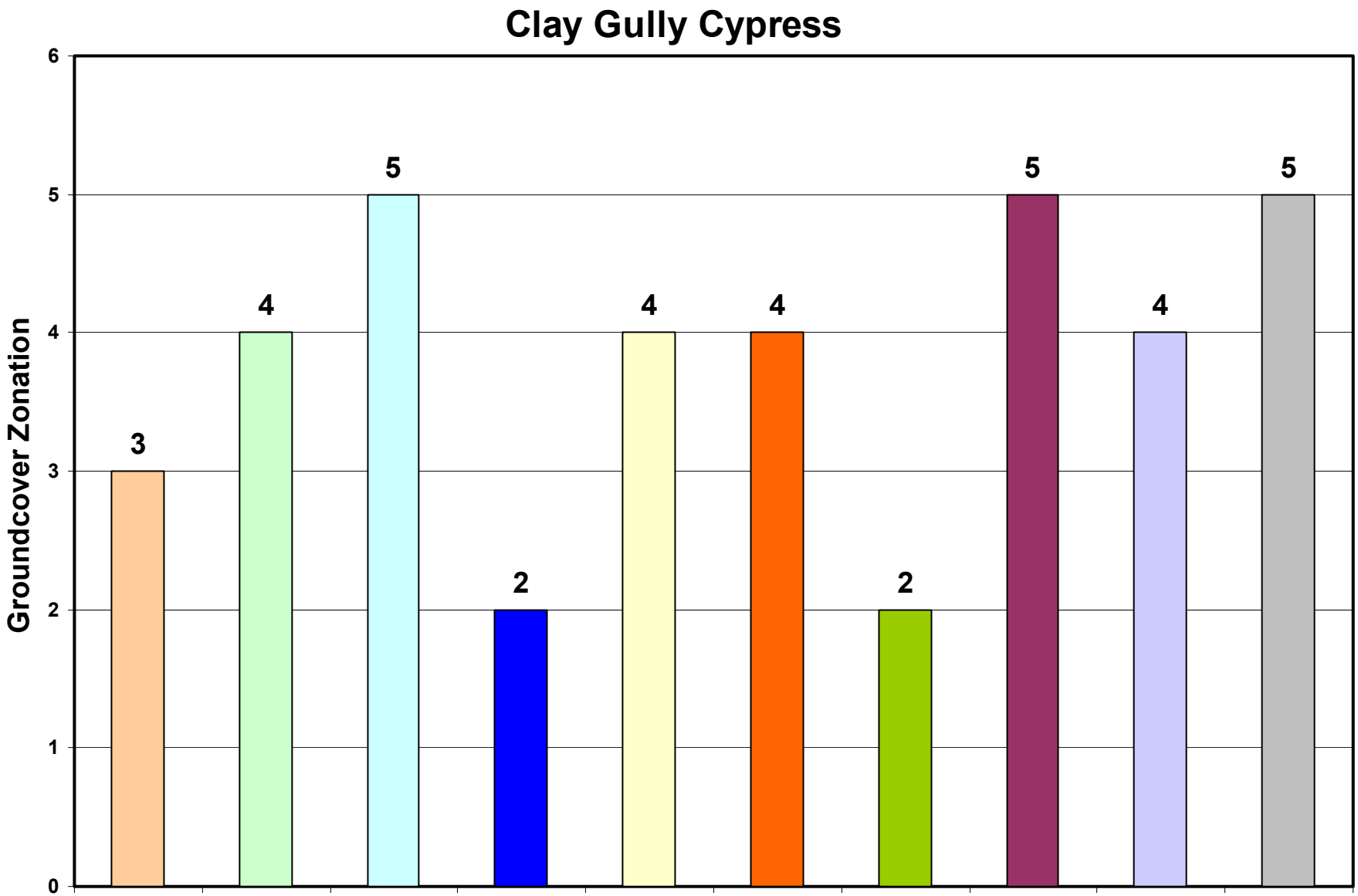
3


Clay Gully Cypress
Groundcover Zonation
0
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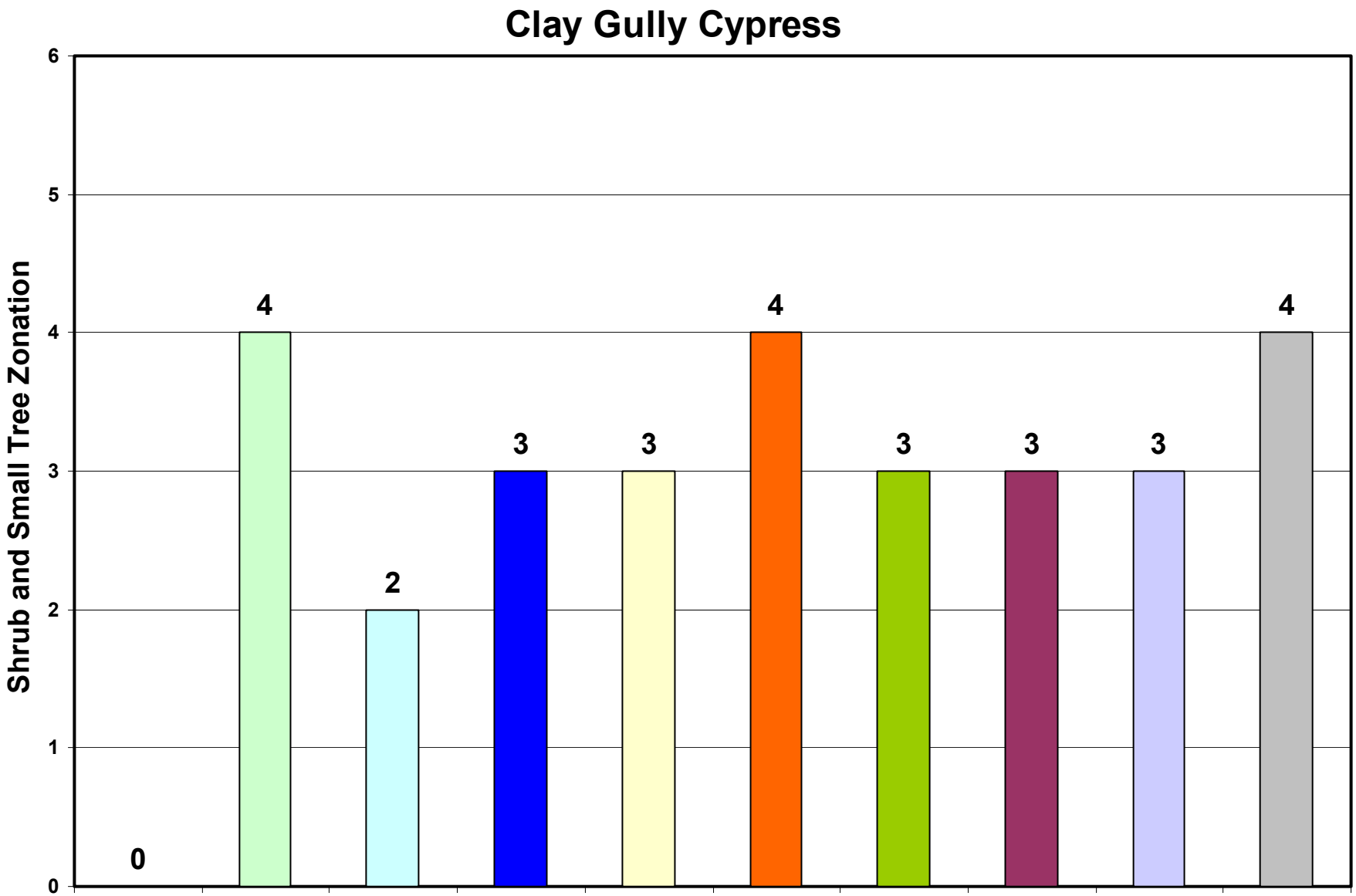
Clay Gully Cypress
Shrub and Small Tree Zonation
6
5
4
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1
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0
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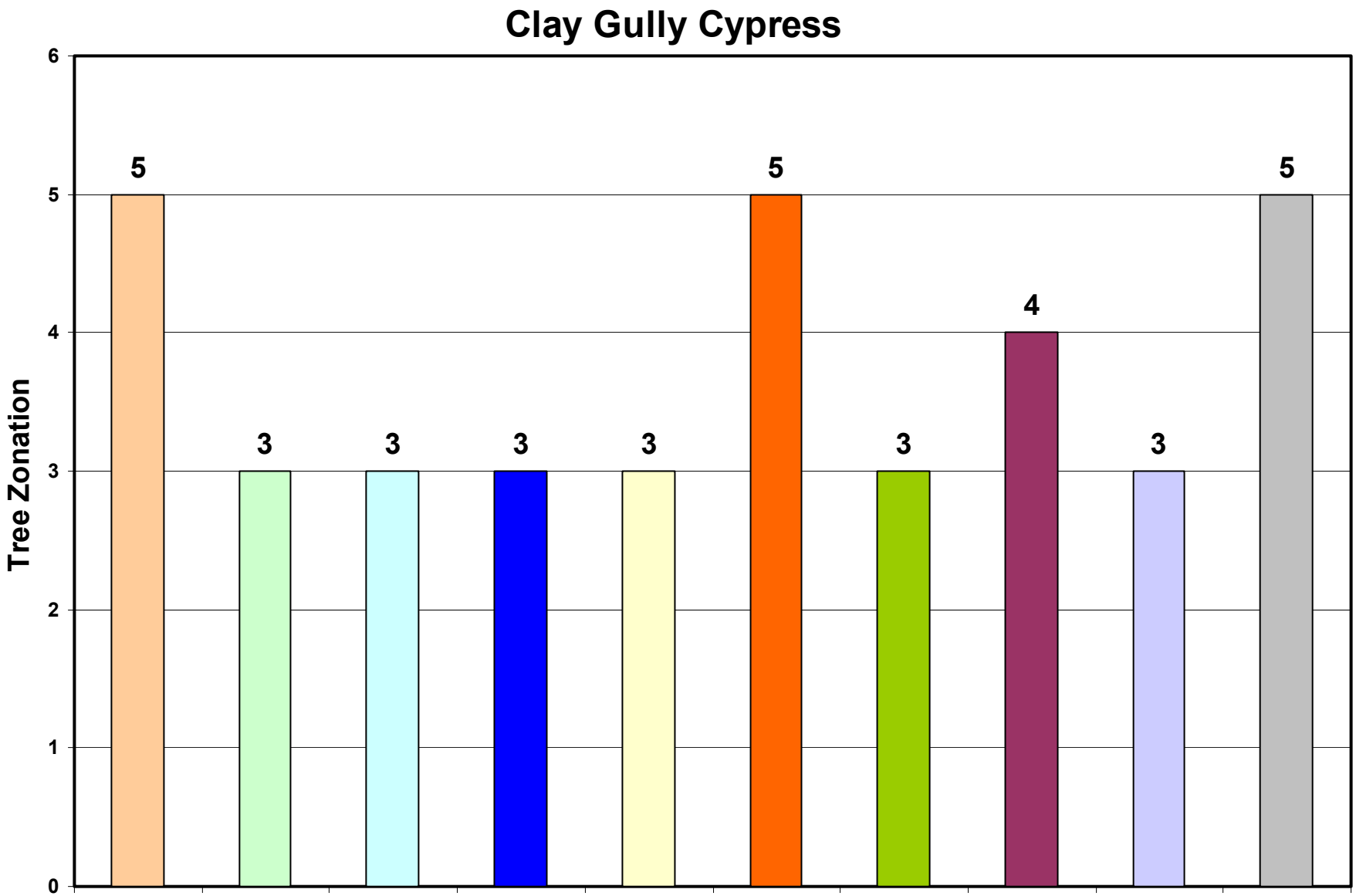
4


Clay Gully Cypress
Tree Zonation
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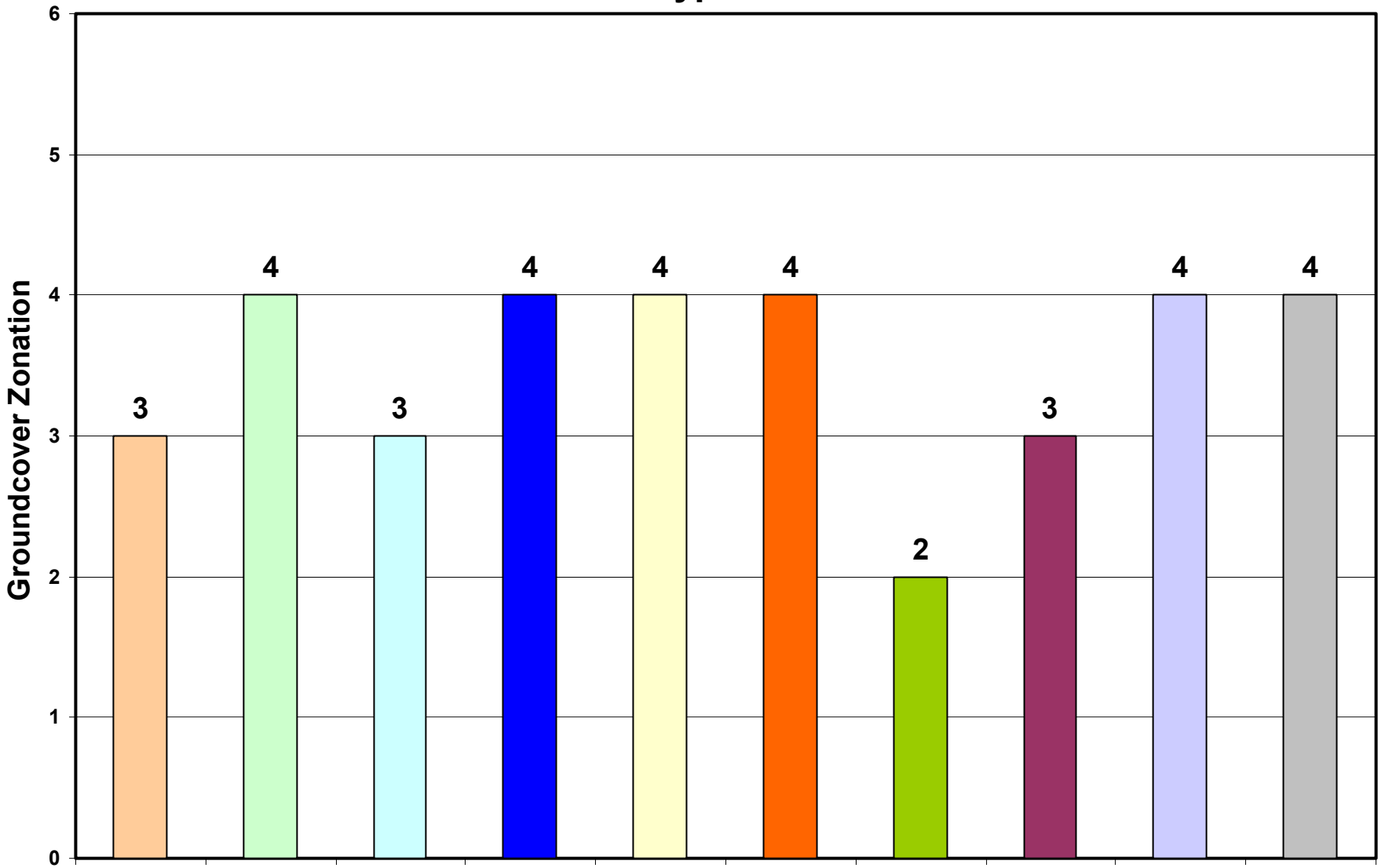
X-4 Cypress
Groundcover Zonation
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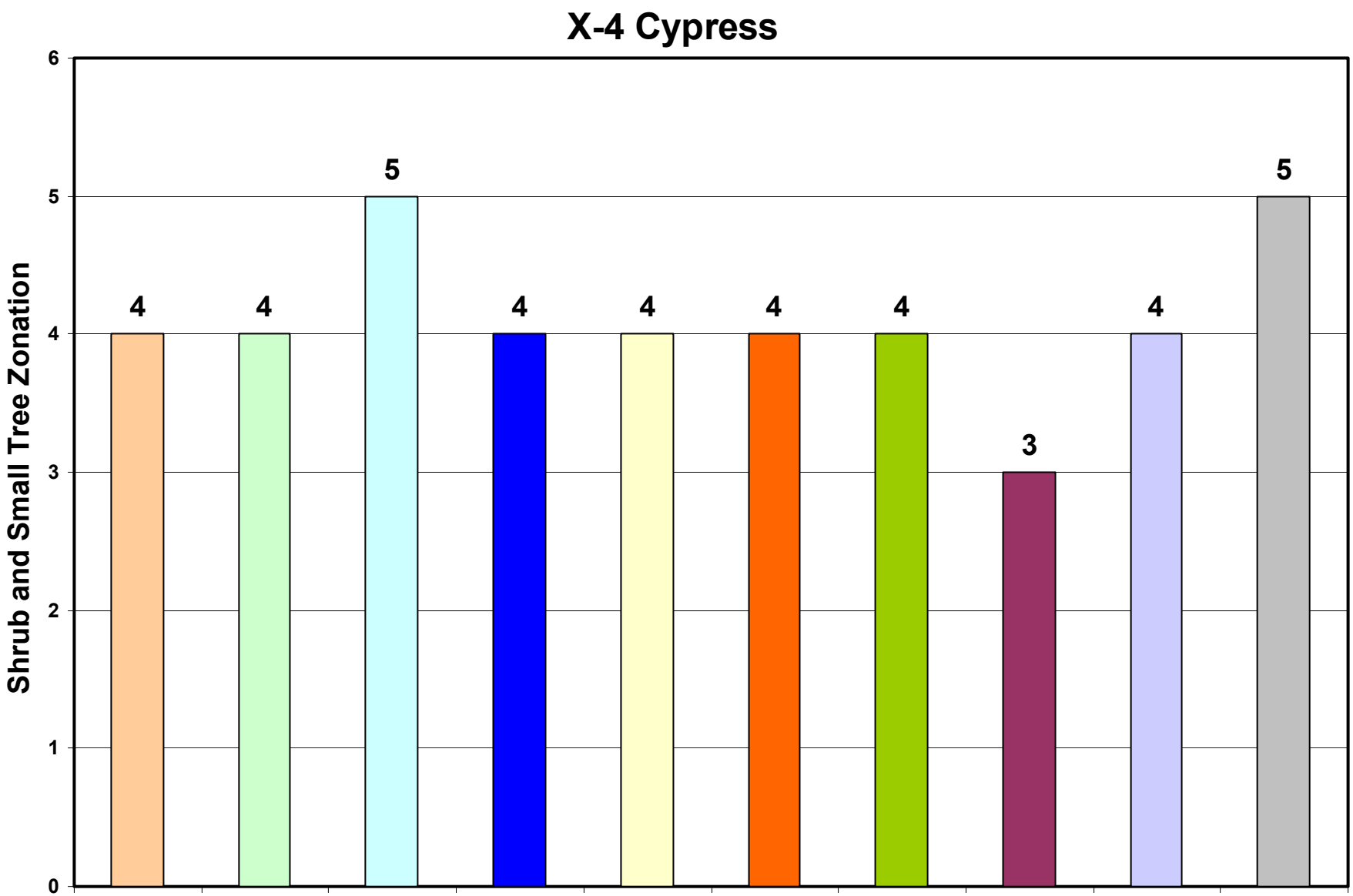
X-4 Cypress
Shrub and Small Tree Zonation
0
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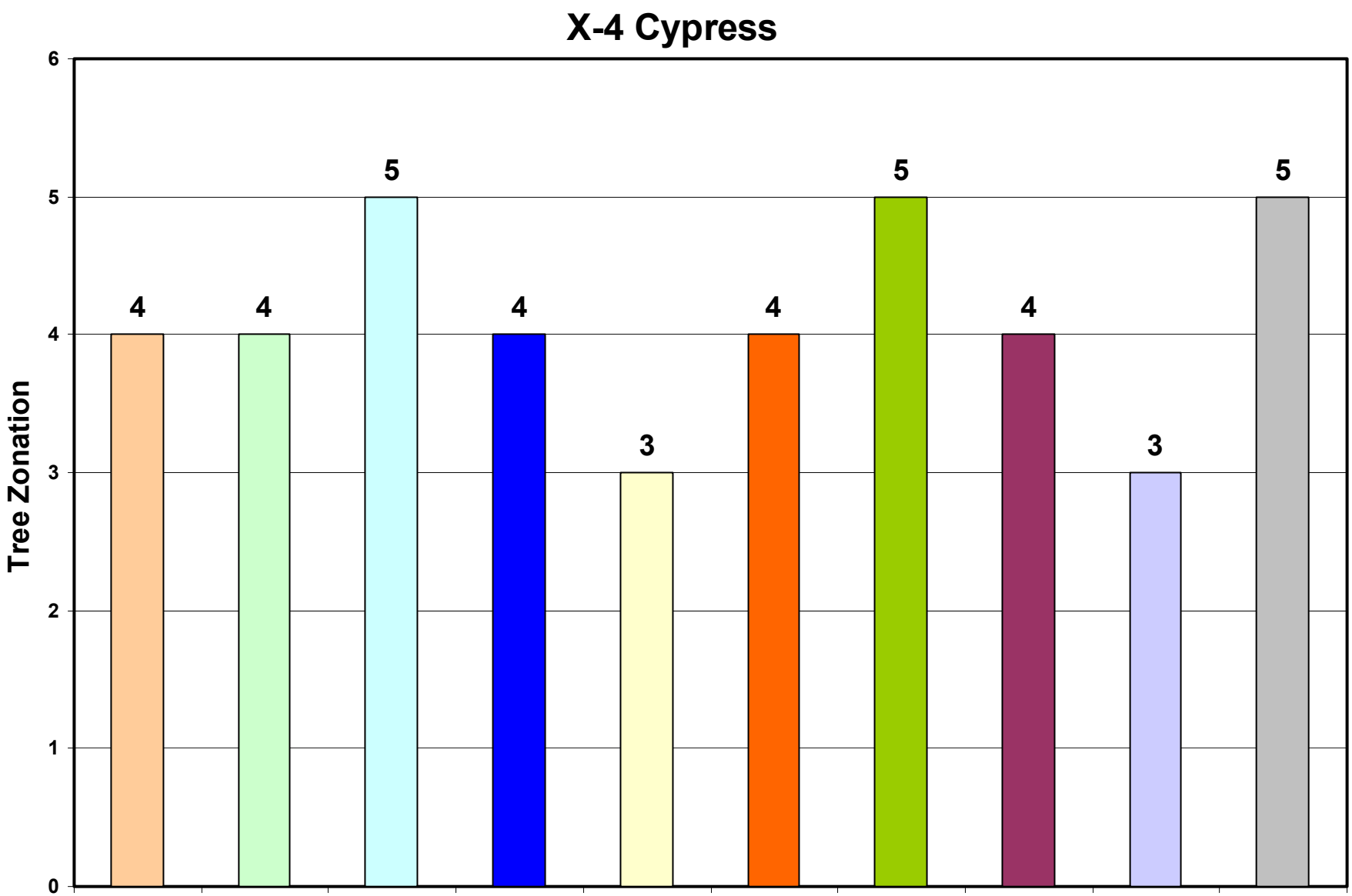
X-4 Cypress
Tree Zonation
6
5
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5

Observed Problems - Zonation

- General lack of explanations
- Species identification
- Not seeing species
- Difficulties in estimating percentages
- Hummocks and shallow areas

Observed Problems - Zonation

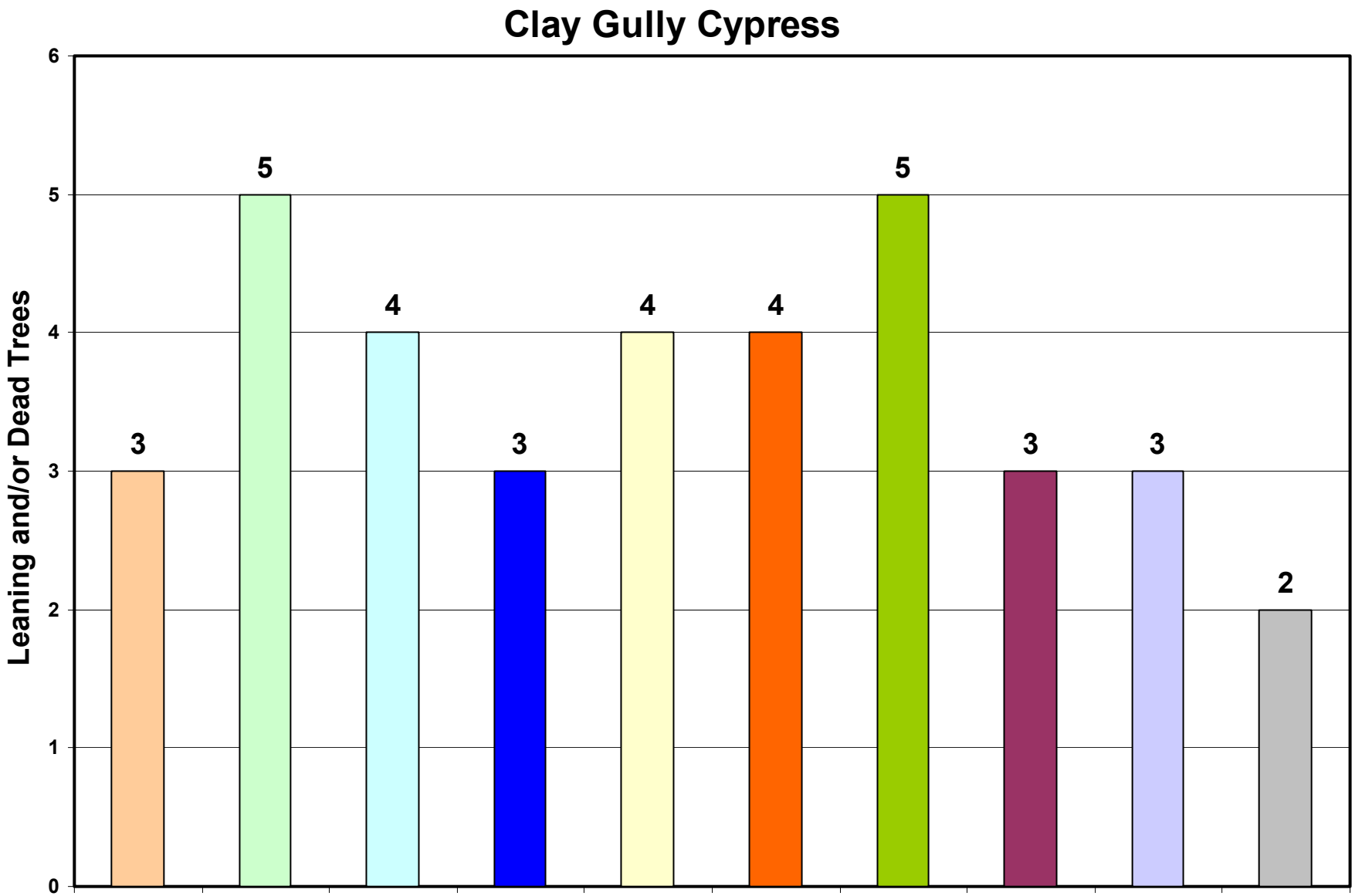
- How much is a lot?
- Apparent weighting of species
- Mistakes in zone assignments
- Miscellaneous QA/QC issues

Observed Problems - Zonation

Possible Solution(s)

- QA/QC
- Training
- Helpful “tools” on field sheets
- Possible “rules of thumb” offered for guidance
- Further simplifications

Example Results - Stress


Clay Gully Cypress
Leaning and/or Dead Trees
0
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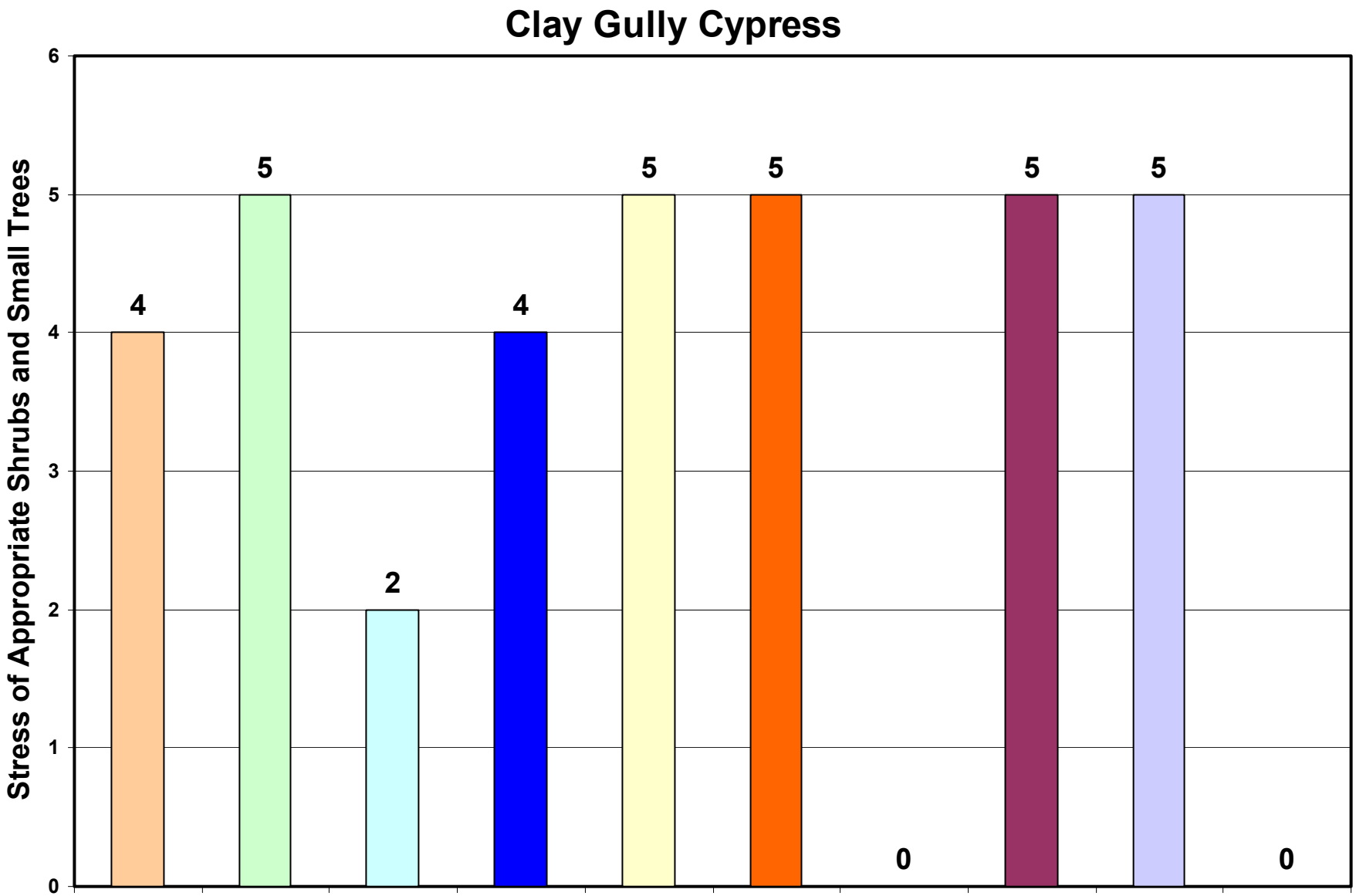
Clay Gully Cypress
Stress of Appropriate Shrubs and Small Trees
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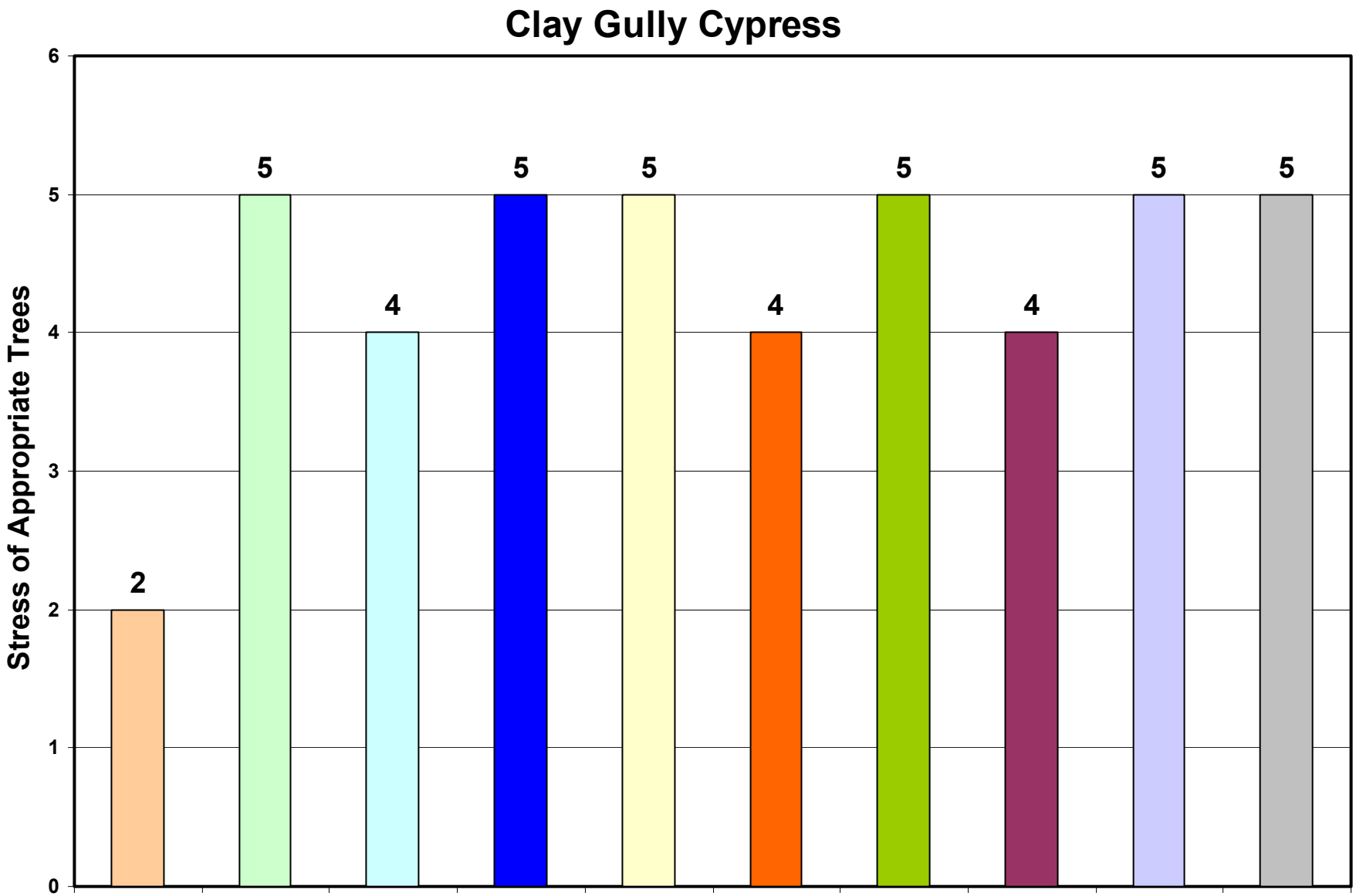
Clay Gully Cypress
Stress of Appropriate Trees
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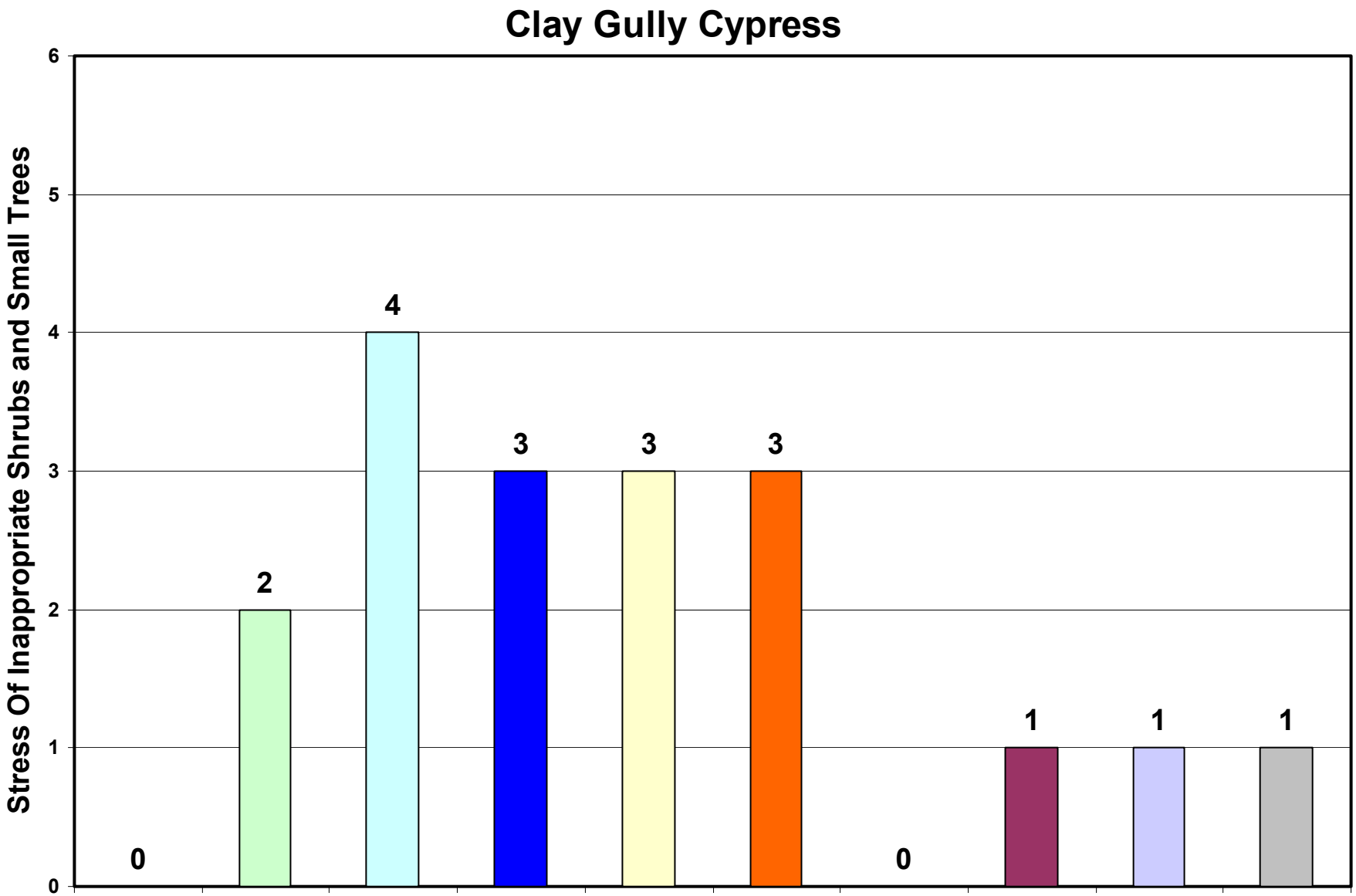
Clay Gully Cypress
Stress Of Inappropriate Shrubs and Small Trees
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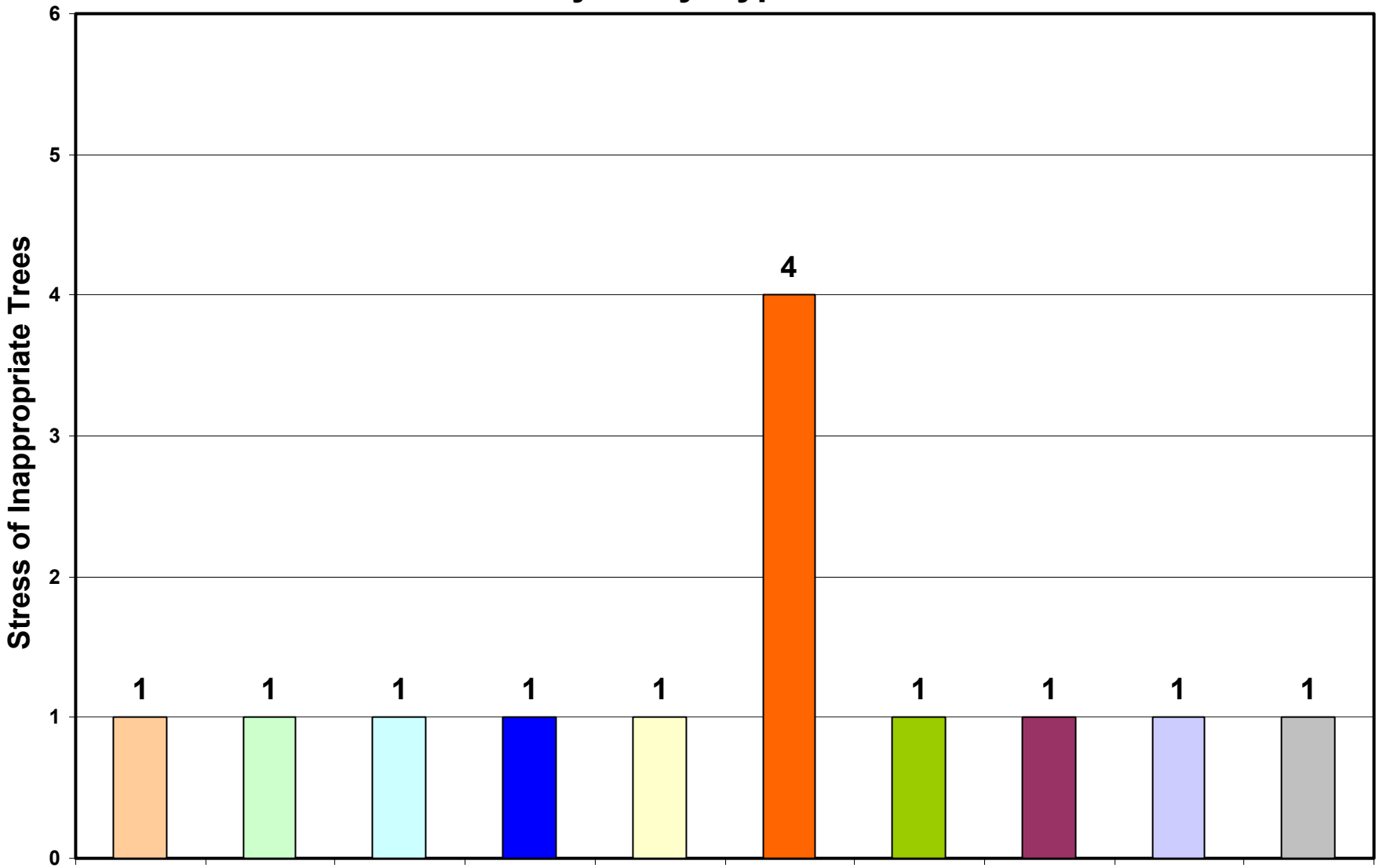
Clay Gully Cypress
Stress of Inappropriate Trees
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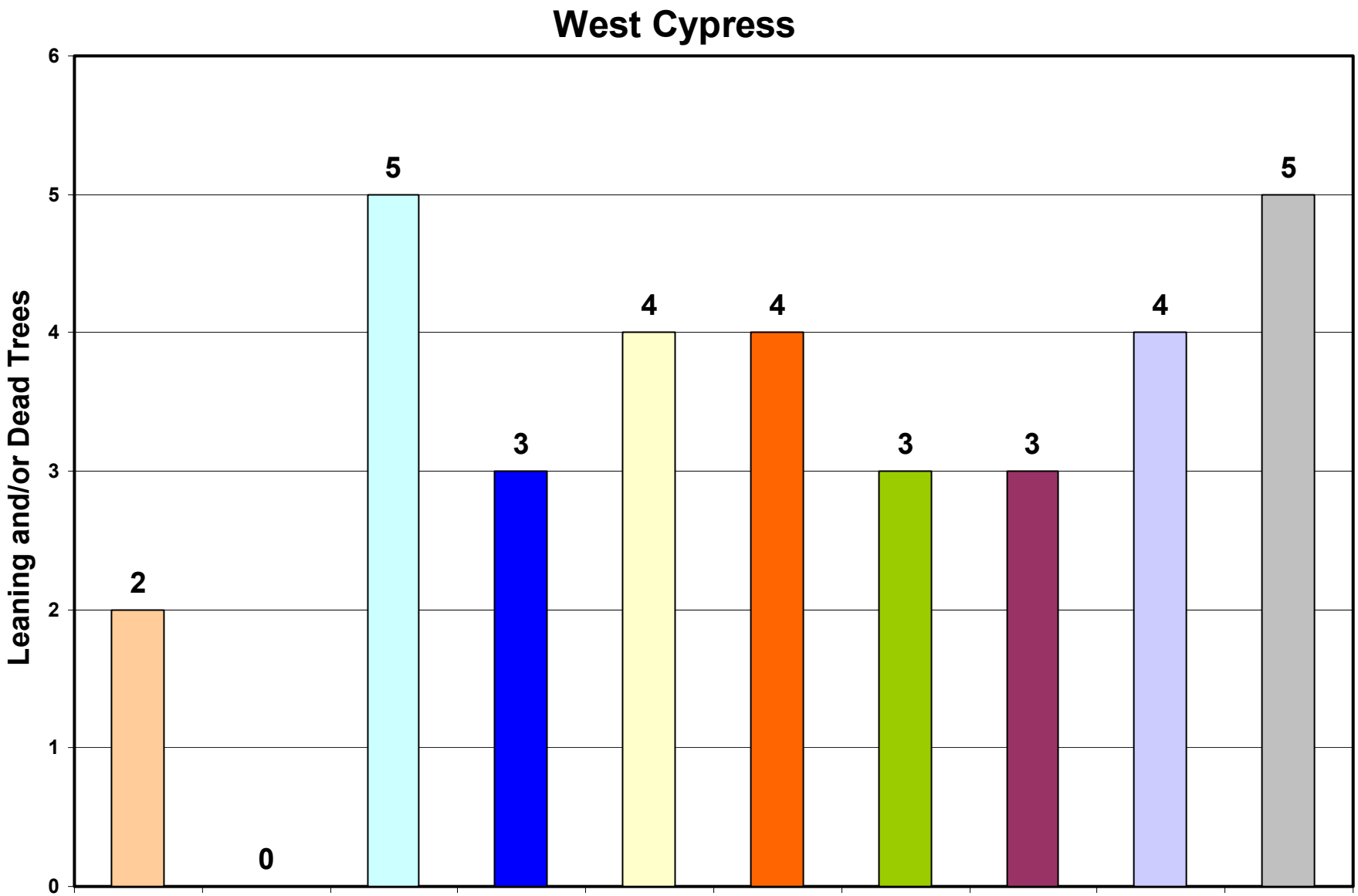
West Cypress
Leaning and/or Dead Trees
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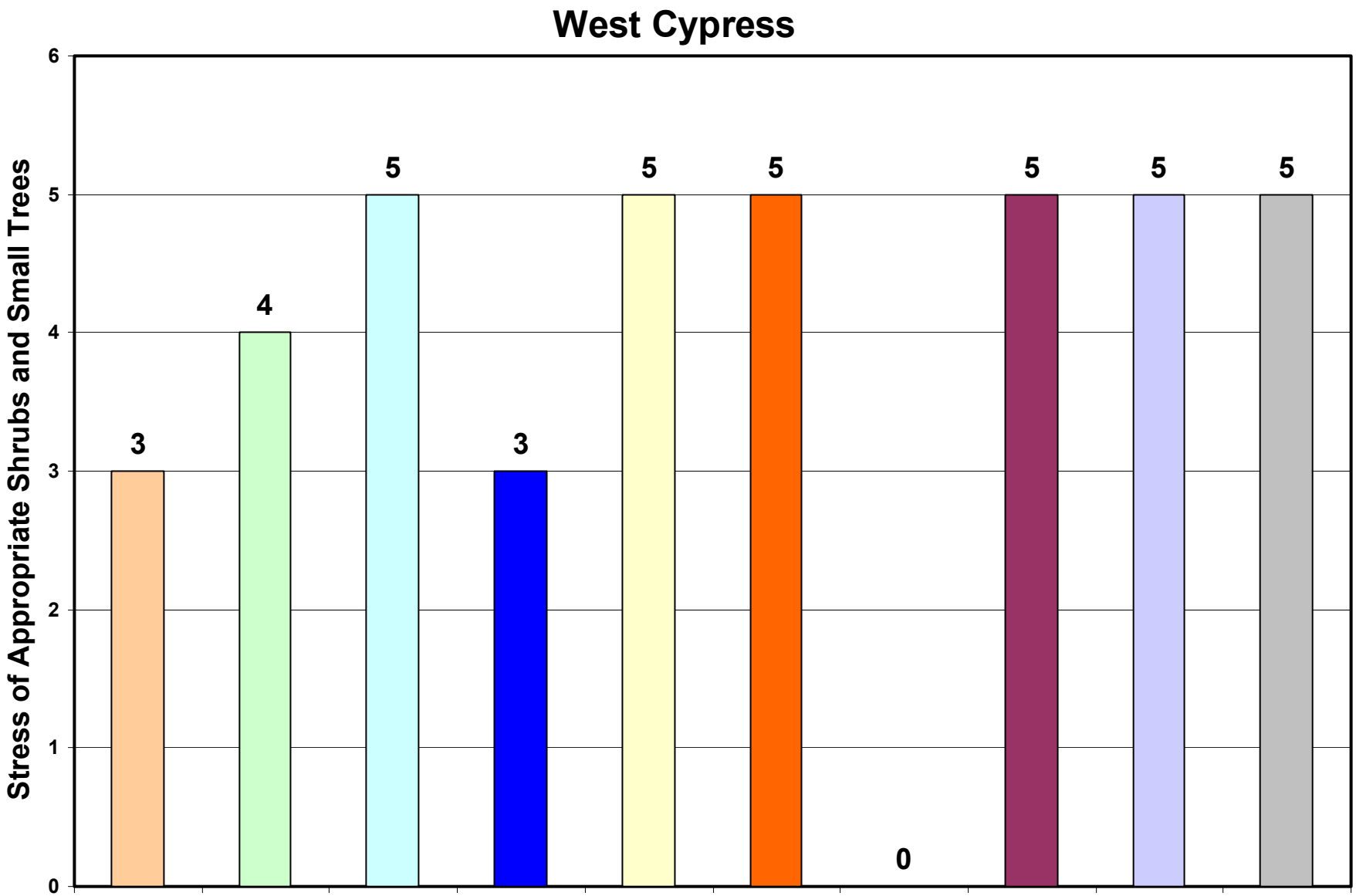
West Cypress
Stress of Appropriate Shrubs and Small Trees
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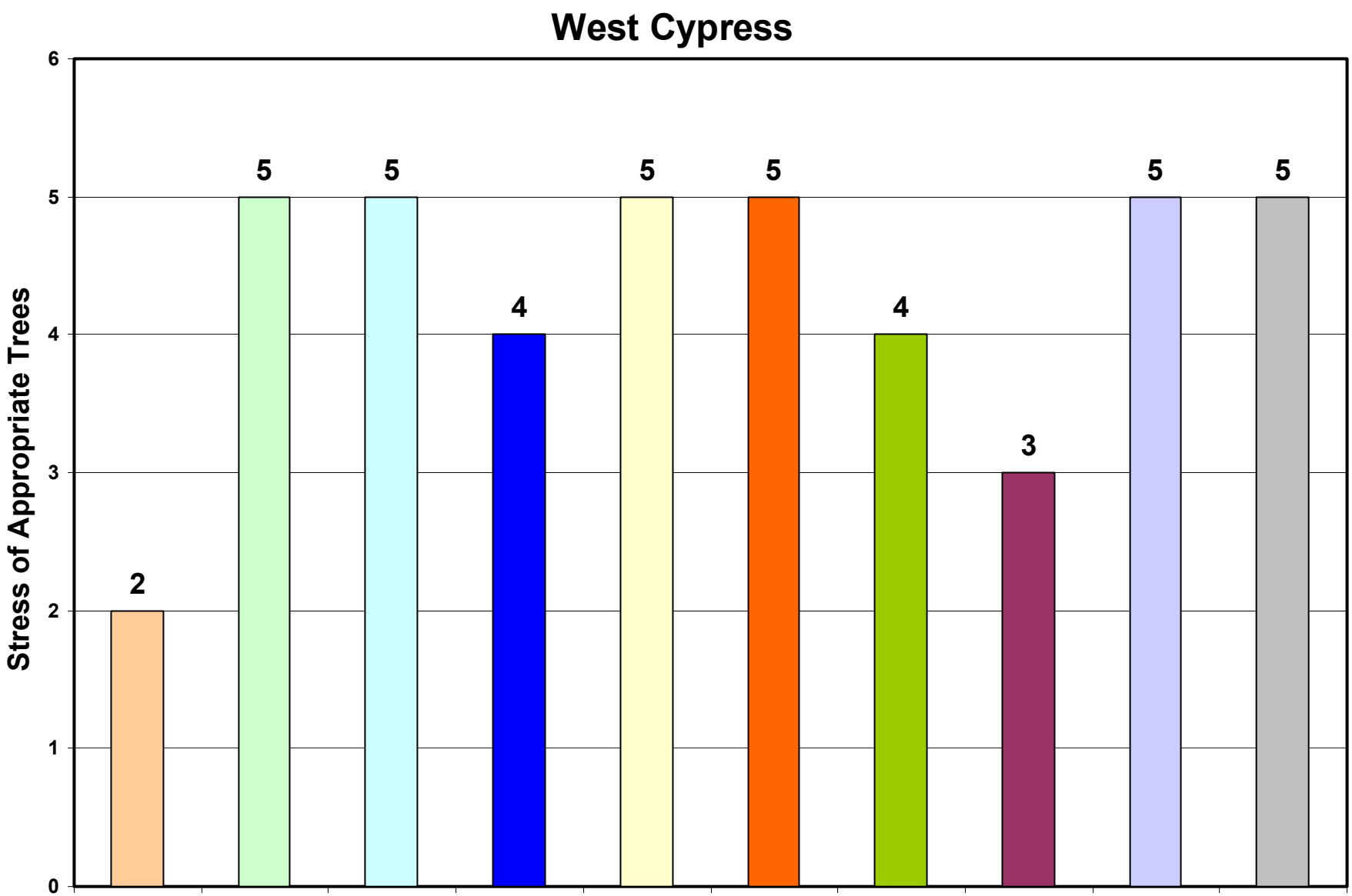
West Cypress
Stress of Appropriate Trees
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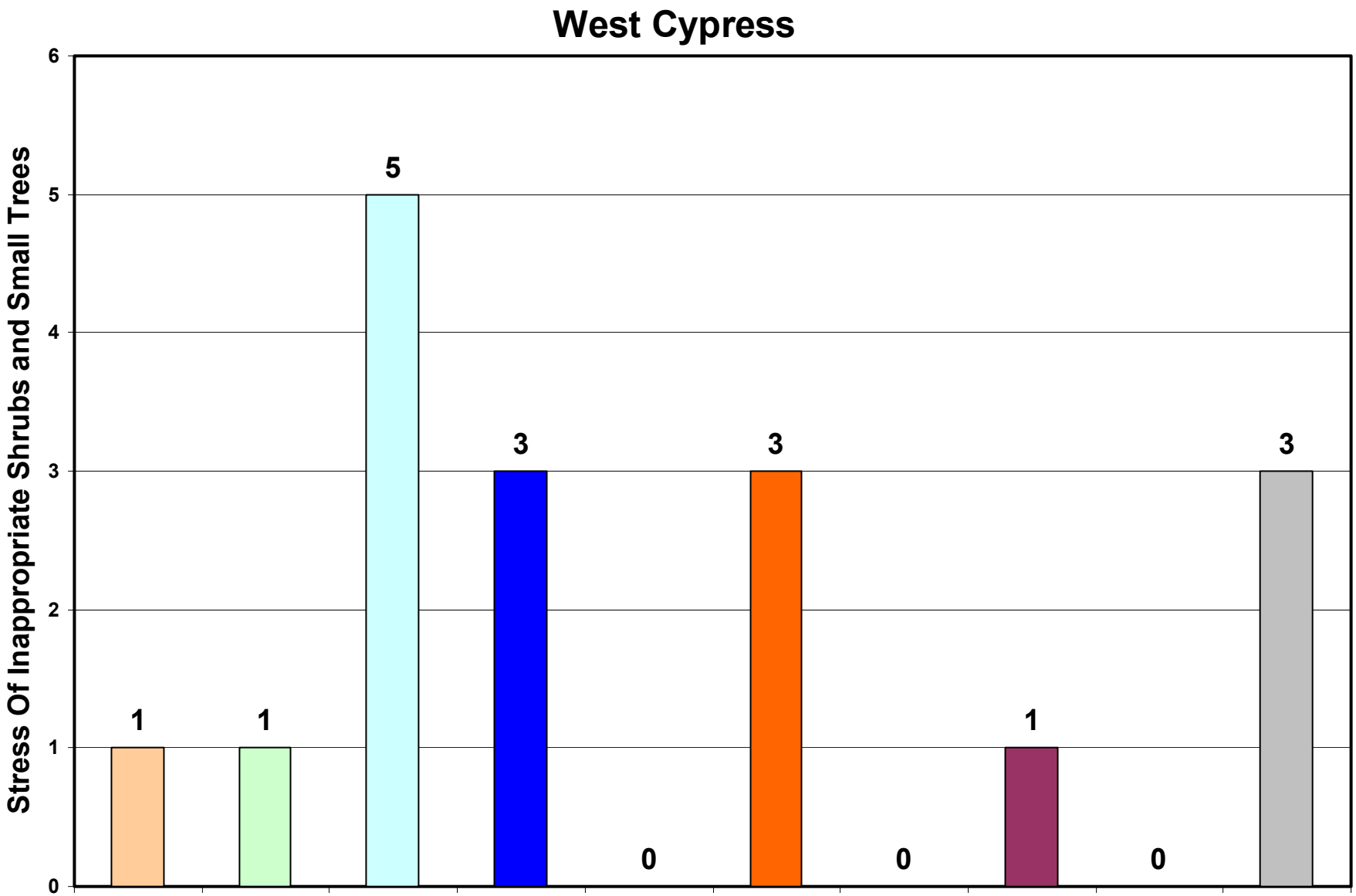
West Cypress
Stress Of Inappropriate Shrubs and Small Trees
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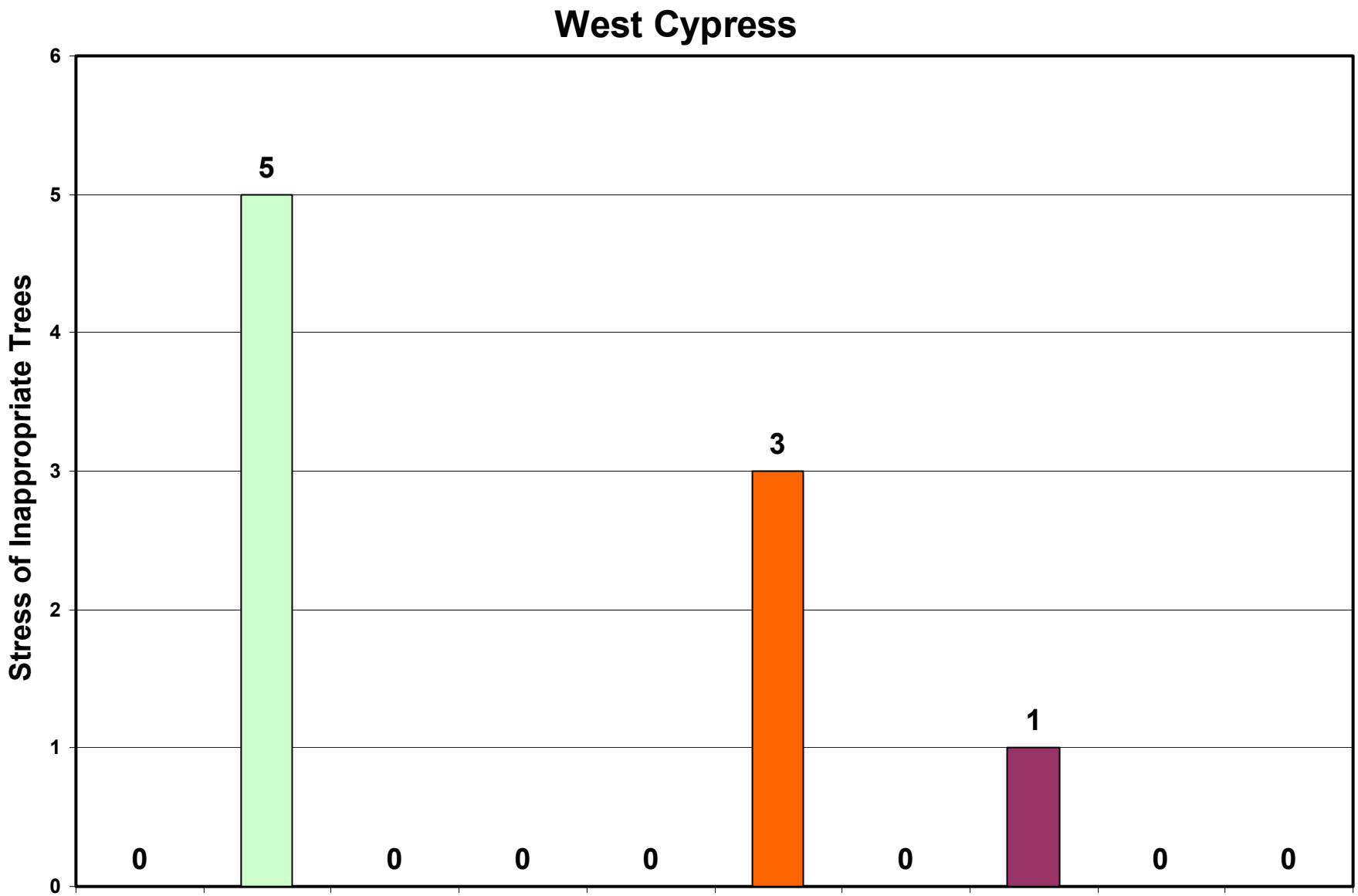
West Cypress
Stress of Inappropriate Trees
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Observed Problems - Stress

- All the problems with the zonation score are carried over to the stress score, and then increased
- General lack of explanation
- The 1-5 scale may be too refined
- Zonation and Stress scores must be consistent

Observed Problems - Stress

- There are many different opinions on what stress means
- All inappropriate species must be considered in the score

Stress

Possible Solution(s) – three choices

- Continue with method (doesn't seem to have much hope)
- Condense the scoring system and continue to work on it
- Convert the stress to a more narrative or check box system

General Suggestions

- Move forward with the zonation method
- Convert the stress method to a more qualitative method
- Continue on with the remaining work
  - Including a strong training and QA/QC plan

Other Issues

- Normal Pool
- Surveys
- Number of Wetlands