

Ecological site R013XY003ID Steep South 16-22 PZ ARTRV/PSSPS

Last updated: 2/13/2025
Accessed: 05/11/2025

Rangeland health reference sheet

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health is a qualitative assessment protocol used to determine ecosystem condition based on benchmark characteristics described in the Reference Sheet. A suite of 17 (or more) indicators are typically considered in an assessment. The ecological site(s) representative of an assessment location must be known prior to applying the protocol and must be verified based on soils and climate. Current plant community cannot be used to identify the ecological site.

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Date	05/13/2008
Approved by	Kirt Walstad
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** rills rarely occur on this site. They are most likely to occur immediately following a wildfire. Gravels and stones on the surface reduce erosion.
- Presence of water flow patterns:** water-flow patterns are rare on this site. When they do occur, they are short, disrupted by cool season perennial grasses, shrubs, surface stones and gravels and are not extensive.
- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** both are rare on this site.
- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** do not occur on this site.
- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** usually not present.
- Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** fine litter in the interspaces may move up to 2-3 feet or

further following a significant run-off event. Coarse litter generally does not move.

7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** fine litter in the interspaces may move up to 2-3 feet or further following a significant run-off event. Coarse litter generally does not move.

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** values should range from 4 to 6 but needs to be tested.

9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** structure ranges from weak very fine and fine granular to moderate very fine, fine, medium and coarse granular to strong very fine and fine granular to weak very thin, thin, and medium platy to weak fine and medium subangular blocky. Soil organic matter (SOM) ranges from 1 to 10 percent. Surface color ranges from black to very dark brown to dark yellowish brown. The A or A1 horizon is typically 2 to 26 inches thick.

10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** bunchgrasses, especially deep-rooted perennials, slow run-off and increase infiltration.

11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** not present.

12. **Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground annual-production or live foliar cover using symbols: >>, >, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):**

Dominant: cool season perennial bunchgrasses

Sub-dominant: medium and tall shrubs

Other: perennial forbs

Additional:

13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** very little decadence is expected to occur on this site.

14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** annual litter cover in the interspaces will be 5-10 percent to a depth of <0.1ft. Under the mature shrubs litter is greater than 0.5 inches.

15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** is 1500 lbs. per acre in a year with normal precipitation and temperatures. Perennial grasses produce 50-

60 percent of the total, forbs 10-20 percent, and shrubs 25-35 percent.

16. **Potential invasive (including noxious) species (native and non-native).** List species which BOTH characterize degraded states and have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the ecological site if their future establishment and growth is not actively controlled by management interventions. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g., short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants. Note that unlike other indicators, we are describing what is NOT expected in the reference state for the ecological site: includes Kentucky bluegrass, cheatgrass, annual kochia, annual mustards, Russian thistle, and halogeton.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** all functional groups have the potential to reproduce in normal years.
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