

Ecological site R025XY023ID NORTH SLOPE LOAMY 16-22

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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.

Author(s)/participant(s)	
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Date	06/26/2007
Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** Rills rarely occur on this site. If rills are present, they are likely to occur on slopes greater than 30 percent and immediately following wildfire. Rills are most likely to occur on soils with surface textures of silt loam and clay loam.

- Presence of water flow patterns:** Water-flow patterns occur on the site. They occur as short and disrupted flows. They are disrupted by cool season grasses and tall shrubs and are not extensive.

- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Pedestals and/or terracettes are rare on this site. Where flow patterns and/or rills are present, few pedestals may be expected. Terracettes can occur as deposits behind large bunchgrasses and shrubs. They are not extensive.

- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** On sites in mid-seral status, bare ground may range from 15-25 percent.

- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** None.

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6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** Wind-scoured, blowouts, and/or deposition areas are usually not present. Immediately following wildfire, some soil movement may occur on lighter textured soils.
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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Fine litter in the interspaces may move up to 3 feet following a significant run-off event. Coarse litter generally does not move.
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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 4-6.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** The surface horizon is typically 3 to 10 inches thick. Structure typically includes weak fine granular. Soil organic matter (SOM) ranges from 2 to 4 percent.
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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. Tall shrubs intercept raindrops and increase infiltration. Tall shrubs accumulate snow in the interspaces.
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11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** Compaction layer is not present.
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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: Tall shrubs> cool season deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses >perennial forbs>shallow rooted bunchgrasses
- Sub-dominant:
- Other:
- Additional:
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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Mountain big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush will become decadent in the absence of fire and ungulate grazing. Grass and forb mortality will occur as tall shrubs increase.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** Additional litter cover data is needed but is expected to be 25-35 percent to a depth of 0.2 inches. Under mature shrubs, litter is >0.5 inches deep and is 90-100 percent ground cover.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-**

production): Annual production is 1850 pounds per acre (2072 kilograms per hectare) in a year with normal temperatures and precipitation. Perennial grasses produce 25-35 percent of the total production, forbs 15-25 percent and shrubs 45-55 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: Invasive Plants include cheatgrass, bulbous bluegrass, whitetop, rush skeletonweed, leafy spurge, musk, Canadian and scotch thistle and diffuse and spotted knapweed.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All functional groups have the potential to reproduce in most years.
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