

Ecological site R040XA119AZ Schist Hills 10"-13" p.z.

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General information

Provisional. A provisional ecological site description has undergone quality control and quality assurance review. It contains a working state and transition model and enough information to identify the ecological site.

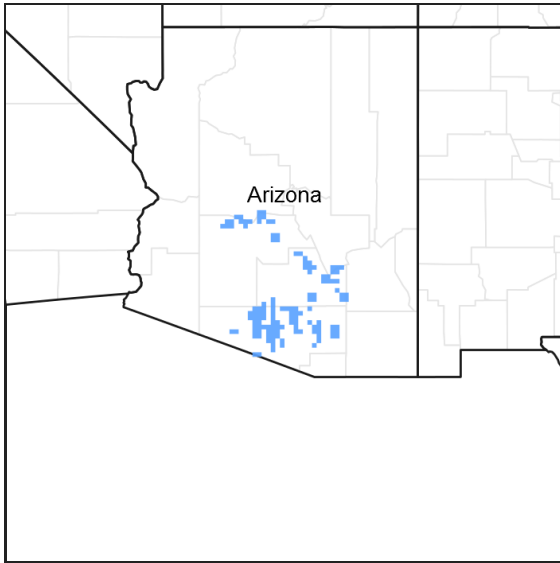


Figure 1. Mapped extent

Areas shown in blue indicate the maximum mapped extent of this ecological site. Other ecological sites likely occur within the highlighted areas. It is also possible for this ecological site to occur outside of highlighted areas if detailed soil survey has not been completed or recently updated.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 040X–Sonoran Basin and Range

AZ 40.1 – Upper Sonoran Desert

Elevations range from 2000 to 3200 feet and precipitation averages 10 to 13 inches per year. Vegetation includes saguaro, palo verde, mesquite, creosotebush, triangle bursage, prickly pear, cholla, limberbush, wolfberry, bush muhly, threeawns, ocotillo, and globe mallow. The soil temperature regime is thermic and the soil moisture regime is typic aridic. This unit occurs within the Basin and Range Physiographic Province and is characterized by numerous mountain ranges that rise abruptly from broad, plain-like valleys and basins. Igneous and metamorphic rock classes dominate the mountain ranges and sediments filling the basins represent combinations of fluvial, lacustrine, colluvial and alluvial deposits.

Associated sites

R040XA110AZ	Limy Slopes 10"-13" p.z.
R040XA111AZ	Limy Upland 10"-13" p.z.
R040XA123AZ	Volcanic Hills 10"-13" P.Z.

Similar sites

R040XB219AZ	Schist Hills 7"-10" p.z.
R038XA118AZ	Basalt / Sandstone Hills 12-16" p.z.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Parkinsonia microphylla</i> (2) <i>Carnegiea gigantea</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Encelia farinosa</i> (2) <i>erigonum fasciculatum</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Aristida purpurea</i>

Physiographic features

This site occurs in the upper elevations of the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona. Slope aspect is site differentiating at elevations near common resource area boundaries. It occurs on steep hill-slopes and ridge-tops.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Hill (2) Ridge
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	2,200–4,000 ft
Slope	15–60%
Aspect	N, E, S

Climatic features

Precipitation in the sub resource area ranges from 10 to 13 inches in the southern part, along the Mexican border with elevations from about 1900 to 3200 feet. Precipitation in the northern part of the resource area ranges from 11 to 14 inches with elevations from about 1700 to 3500 feet. Winter-summer rainfall ratios range from 40%-60% in the southern portions of the land resource unit, to 50%-50% in the central portions, to 60%-40% in the northern part of the land resource unit. As one moves from east to west in this resource area rains become slightly more unpredictable and variable with Coefficients of Variation of annual rainfall equal to 29% at Tucson and 36% at Carefree. Summer rains fall July through Sept., originate in the Gulf of Mexico, and are convective, usually brief, intense thunderstorms. Cool season moisture tends to be frontal, originating in the Pacific and Gulf of California. This winter precipitation falls in widespread storms with long duration and low intensity. Snow is rare and seldom lasts more than an hour or two. May and June are the driest months of the year. Humidity is generally very low.

Winter temperatures are mild, with very few days recording freezing temperatures in the morning. Summer temperatures are warm to hot, with several days in June and July exceeding 105 degrees F.

Both the spring and the summer growing seasons are equally important for perennial grass, forb and shrub growth. Cool and warm season annual forbs and grasses can be common in their respective seasons with above average rainfall. Perennial forage species can remain green throughout the year with available moisture.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	265 days
Freeze-free period (average)	0 days
Precipitation total (average)	13 in

Influencing water features

There are no water features associated with this site.

Soil features

These are shallow soils formed on schist and related metamorphic rock. Bedrock is cracked and weathered offering good opportunity for root growth. Soils can be slightly calcareous and have lime accumulations in the fractures of the bedrock material. Soil surfaces have very well developed covers of gravels and channers, but lack cobble cover. Areas of rock outcrop range from 1 to 10%. Talus areas or rock slides can make up 5 to 10% of the area. Plant-soil moisture relationships are fair.

Soils mapped on this site include:

SSA-645 Aguila-Carefree area MU Dixaleta-31; SSA-661 Eastern Pinal-Southern Gila Counties MU's Akela-465 & Ripsey-475;

SSA-669 Eastern Pima County MU's Delthorny-38 & 41, Lajitas-38 & 41, Pantano-59;

SSA-703 Tohono O'odham area MU's Delthorny-17& Dixaleta-21.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Gravelly sandy loam (2) Very gravelly sandy loam (3) Channery sandy loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Excessively drained to well drained
Permeability class	Rapid to moderately rapid
Soil depth	5–20 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	40–80%
Surface fragment cover >3"	5–20%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	0.4–1.5 in
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-40in)	5–15%
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0–2 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0–2
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	7.8–8.4
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	35–60%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0–10%

Ecological dynamics

The plant communities found on an ecological site are naturally variable. Composition and production will vary with yearly conditions, location, aspect, and the natural variability of the soils. The Historical Climax Plant Community represents the natural potential plant communities found on relict or relatively undisturbed sites. Other plant communities described here represent plant communities that are known to occur when the site is disturbed by factors such as fire, grazing, or drought.

Production data provided in this site description is standardized to air dry weight at the end of the summer growing season. The plant communities described in this site description are based on near normal rainfall years.

NRCS uses a Similarity Index to compare existing plant communities to the plant communities described here. Similarity Index is determined by comparing the production and composition of a plant community to the production and composition of a plant community described in this site description. To determine Similarity Index, compare the production (air dry weight) of each species to that shown in the plant community description. For each species, count no more than the maximum amount shown for the species, and for each group, count no more than the maximum amount shown for the group. Divide the resulting total by the total normal year production shown in the plant community description. If the rainfall has been significantly above or below normal, use the total production shown for above or below normal years. If field data is not collected at the end of the summer growing season, then the field data must be corrected to the end of the year production before comparing it to the site description. The growth curve can be used as a guide for estimating production at the end of the summer growing season.

State and transition model

MLRA 40-1 (10-13"), Schist Hills

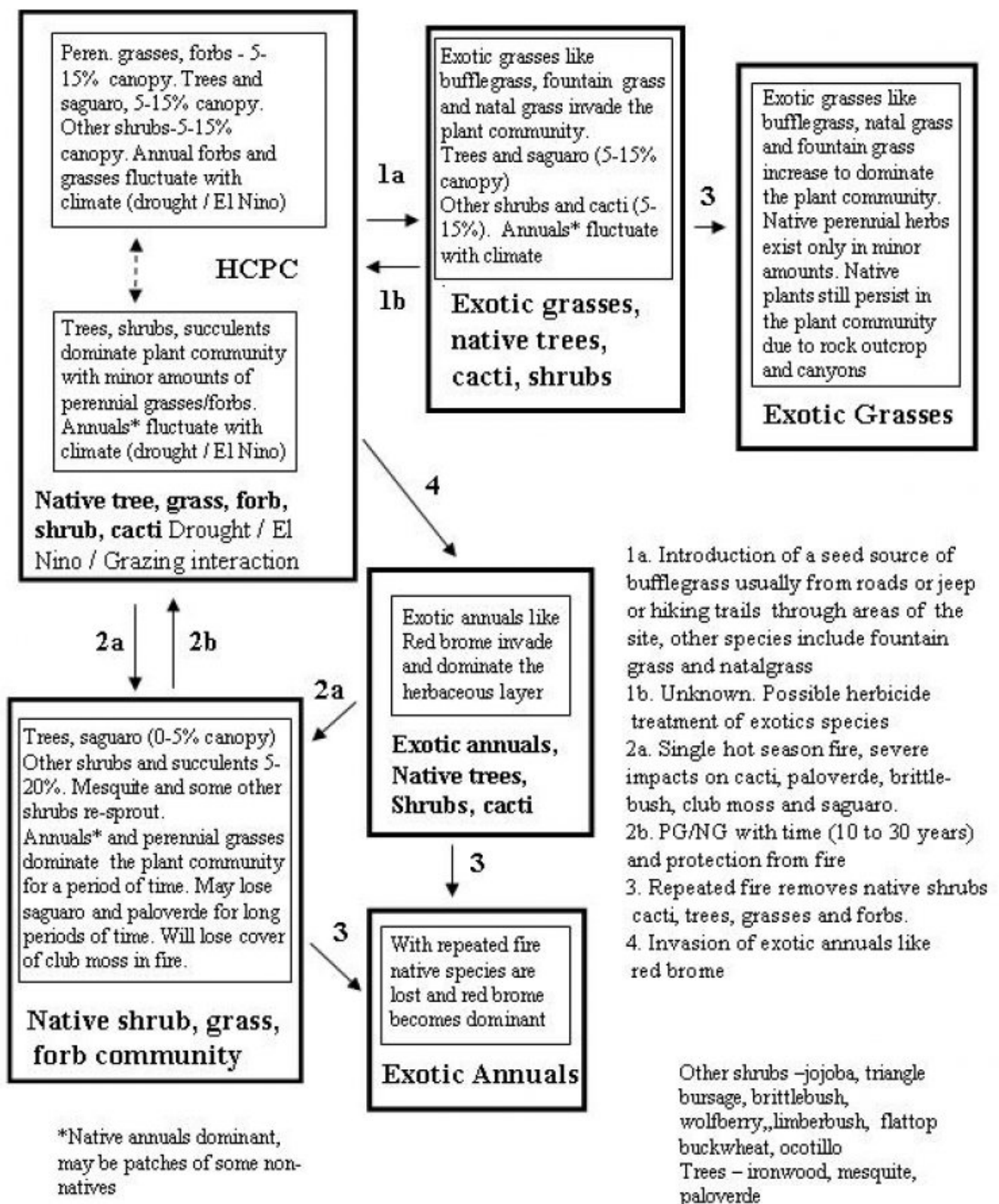


Figure 4. State and Transition model, Schist Hills 10-13" pz

State 1
Historical Climax Plant Community

Community 1.1
Historical Climax Plant Community

The potential plant community is a diverse mixture of desert shrubs, trees, cacti, and perennial grasses and forbs. The aspect is shrubland. With continuous, heavy grazing, herbaceous forage species and palatable half shrubs are removed from the plant community and replaced by increases in shrubby species like littleleaf paloverde, white brittlebush, ocotillo, triangle bursage, and cholla. Gravel and channer covers are continuous but lack the size necessary to prevent erosion on steep slopes if the plant cover has been depleted. This site lacks stone or cobble covers to protect forage species from heavy utilization. Cover of club moss (SEAR2) ranges from 10 to 50%, being heaviest on the cooler aspects and provides a great deal of stability on very steep slopes. Plant populations of major shrubs range from 75 to 150 per acre for littleleaf paloverde, 10 to 100 for ocotillo, 50 to 150 for creosotebush, 75 to 150 for wolfberry, 50 to 100 for mormon tea, and 450 to 1000 plants per acre for the flatop buckwheat, brittlebush and bursage group. North exposures have a higher percentage cover of perennial grasses and forbs than warm exposures. Grass canopy cover ranges from 0-5% on north slopes and 0-1% on south slopes. Forb cover ranges from 1-15% on north slopes and 0-2% on south slopes. Warm exposures have a higher percentage of trees and succulents than north slopes. The half shrub community on north slopes is dominated by species like calliandra, goldeneye, flatop buckwheat and mormon tea while on south slopes brittlebush, ratany and bursage are dominant. Jojoba will have its higher cover on north aspects while southern aspects will have more ocotillo, creosotebush, whitethorn and wolfberry. The percent of annual forbs and grasses in the plant community can range from 5% in dry years to nearly 70% in very wet winters or summers. The yearly production of annuals ranges from 10 lbs per acre to over 1200 lbs. per acre (from dry year to wet year). Severe drought can reduce the cover of perennial grasses and suffrutescent forbs to less than 1%. Drought can also reduce the cover of sub-shrubs like brittlebush and bursage. The dynamics of Saguaro on this site is unlike the 200-300 year cycle found on deep upland sites in the Upper Sonoran desert. Saguaro recruitment can occur in any favorable year due to numerous rocky habitats favorable for establishment. Saguaro populations tend to be multi-aged and persistent on this site although very favorable years for establishment may result in very heavy stands on some slopes many years later.

Table 5. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Lb/Acre)	Representative Value (Lb/Acre)	High (Lb/Acre)
Grass/Grasslike	7	75	500
Shrub/Vine	120	300	420
Forb	28	100	355
Tree	50	100	150
Total	205	575	1425

Table 6. Soil surface cover

Tree basal cover	0-1%
Shrub/vine/liana basal cover	1-4%
Grass/grasslike basal cover	0-1%
Forb basal cover	0-1%
Non-vascular plants	0%
Biological crusts	0-5%
Litter	5-45%
Surface fragments >0.25" and <=3"	40-60%
Surface fragments >3"	5-20%
Bedrock	1-10%
Water	0%
Bare ground	5-20%

Table 7. Canopy structure (% cover)

Height Above Ground (Ft)	Tree	Shrub/Vine	Grass/ Grasslike	Forb
<0.5	—	0-1%	0-10%	1-15%
>0.5 <= 1	—	1-5%	1-10%	1-10%
>1 <= 2	—	5-10%	0-2%	0-5%
>2 <= 4.5	0-1%	1-5%	0-1%	0-1%
>4.5 <= 13	5-10%	—	—	—
>13 <= 40	0-1%	—	—	—
>40 <= 80	—	—	—	—
>80 <= 120	—	—	—	—
>120	—	—	—	—

Figure 6. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month). AZ4011, 40.1 10-13" p.z. hill sites. Growth begins in the late winter, goes semi-dormant in the drought period of late May through early July, growth continues in the summer through early fall..

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	5	15	20	5	5	10	15	15	5	5	0

State 2

Native trees, cacti, shrubs and fire

Community 2.1

Native trees, cacti, shrubs and fire

This plant community occurs as a result of a single hot season fire. Paloverde, ironwood and saguaro can be severely impacted and may take long periods of time (30-50 years) to recover to pre-fire levels. Perennial and annual grasses and forbs dominate the community for some time until shrubs like ocotillo, wolfberry and whitethorn can recover. This plant community can produce enough herbaceous fuel from native species of grasses and / or forbs to carry fire in El Nino years or after unusually wet summers. The natural incidence of fire in this MLRA is very low and fires are much more common from man-made ignitions. Areas of the site close to urban zones or along heavily travelled roads and highways will experience a higher rate of fires.

State 3

Exotic perennial grasses with natives

Community 3.1

Exotic perennial grasses with natives

This community occurs where buffleggrass and / or fountain grass invade the native plant community. These species occupy the niches of low shrubs like desert zinnia, brittlebush, paperflower and grasses like red grama, purple threeawn and slim tridens.

State 4

Exotic perennial grasses and fire

Community 4.1

Exotic perennial grasses and fire

This community occurs where a native plant community that has been invaded by buffleggrass or fountain grass has burned one or more times. Increasing amounts of buffleggrass leads to more uniform fine fuels. In areas adjacent to roads and urban areas the risk of repeated fires will increase. As fire frequency increases the dominance of the exotic grasses increase.

State 5

Native plant community with exotic annuals

Community 5.1

Native plant community with exotic annuals

This plant community occurs where the native community has been invaded by red brome and / or schismus. Red brome occupies the niche of the native winter annual forbs and grasses. This exotic annual grass will fluctuate from nearly nothing in a dry winter to dominance of the understory plant community in a El Nino winter.

State 6

Exotic annuals, brittlebush and fire

Community 6.1

Exotic annuals, brittlebush and fire

This plant community occurs where a native plant community which has been invaded by red brome and / or schismus, and has burned repeatedly. As fires become more frequent the native trees, shrubs and succulents are removed from the plant community and red brome becomes dominant with stands of brittlebush. In areas of the site near urban areas and along heavily travelled roads this will be a more common occurrence due to an increased source of ignitions.

Additional community tables

Table 8. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Lb/Acre)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	Dominant perennial grasses			5–70	
	bush muhly	MUPO2	<i>Muhlenbergia porteri</i>	5–30	–
	slim tridens	TRMU	<i>Tridens muticus</i>	5–20	–
	purple threeawn	ARPU9	<i>Aristida purpurea</i>	1–20	–
	Parish's threeawn	ARPUP5	<i>Aristida purpurea</i> var. <i>parishii</i>	0–20	–
	low woollygrass	DAPU7	<i>Dasyochloa pulchella</i>	1–15	–
	blue threeawn	ARPUN	<i>Aristida purpurea</i> var. <i>nealleyi</i>	0–10	–
	desert needlegrass	ACSP12	<i>Achnatherum speciosum</i>	0–10	–
	nineawn pappusgrass	ENDE	<i>Enneapogon desvauxii</i>	0–5	–
2	Miscellaneous perennial grasses			0–30	
	spidergrass	ARTE3	<i>Aristida ternipes</i>	0–10	–
	black grama	BOER4	<i>Bouteloua eriopoda</i>	0–10	–
	slender grama	BORE2	<i>Bouteloua repens</i>	0–5	–
	red grama	BOTR2	<i>Bouteloua trifida</i>	0–5	–
	tanglehead	HECO10	<i>Heteropogon contortus</i>	0–5	–
	curly-mesquite	HIBE	<i>Hilaria belangeri</i>	0–5	–
	Hall's panicgrass	PAHA	<i>Panicum hallii</i>	0–5	–
	Wright's threeawn	ARPUW	<i>Aristida purpurea</i> var. <i>wrightii</i>	0–2	–
	sideoats grama	BOCU	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	0–2	–
	big galleta	PLRI3	<i>Pleuraphis rigida</i>	0–2	–
	plains bristlegrass	SEVU2	<i>Setaria vulpiseta</i>	0–2	–

	sand dropseed	SPCR	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	0–2	–
	cane bluestem	BOBA3	<i>Bothriochloa barbinodis</i>	0–1	–
	tobosagrass	PLMU3	<i>Pleuraphis mutica</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona cottontop	DICA8	<i>Digitaria californica</i>	0–1	–
	fall witchgrass	DICO6	<i>Digitaria cognata</i>	0–1	–
	squirreltail	ELELE	<i>Elymus elymoides</i> ssp. <i>elymoides</i>	0–1	–
3	Annual grasses			2–400	
	sixweeks threeawn	ARAD	<i>Aristida adscensionis</i>	1–100	–
	mucronate sprangeltop	LEPAB	<i>Leptochloa panicea</i> ssp. <i>brachiata</i>	1–100	–
	Mexican panicgrass	PAHI5	<i>Panicum hirticaule</i>	0–50	–
	prairie threeawn	AROL	<i>Aristida oligantha</i>	0–50	–
	sixweeks fescue	VUOC	<i>Vulpia octoflora</i>	1–50	–
	Eastwood fescue	VUMIC	<i>Vulpia microstachys</i> var. <i>ciliata</i>	0–25	–
	Pacific fescue	VUMIP	<i>Vulpia microstachys</i> var. <i>pauciflora</i>	0–25	–
	sixweeks grama	BOBA2	<i>Bouteloua barbata</i>	0–20	–
	Bigelow's bluegrass	POBI	<i>Poa bigelovii</i>	0–10	–
	Mexican sprangletop	LEFUU	<i>Leptochloa fusca</i> ssp. <i>uninervia</i>	0–10	–
	Rothrock's grama	BORO2	<i>Bouteloua rothrockii</i>	0–5	–
	needle grama	BOAR	<i>Bouteloua aristidoides</i>	0–2	–
	delicate muhly	MUFR	<i>Muhlenbergia fragilis</i>	0–2	–
	littleseed muhly	MUMI	<i>Muhlenbergia microsperma</i>	0–2	–
	witchgrass	PACA6	<i>Panicum capillare</i>	0–2	–
	Madagascar dropseed	SPPY2	<i>Sporobolus pyramidatus</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona brome	BRAR4	<i>Bromus arizonicus</i>	0–1	–
	canyon cupgrass	ERLE7	<i>Eriochloa lemmonii</i>	0–1	–
	desert lovegrass	ERPEM	<i>Eragrostis pectinacea</i> var. <i>miserrima</i>	0–1	–
	tufted lovegrass	ERPEP2	<i>Eragrostis pectinacea</i> var. <i>pectinacea</i>	0–1	–
Forb					
4	Ferns and fern allies			10–100	
	Arizona spikemoss	SEAR2	<i>Selaginella arizonica</i>	8–80	–
	lipfern	CHEIL	<i>Cheilanthes</i>	1–5	–
	cliffbrake	PELLA	<i>Pellaea</i>	1–5	–
	cloak fern	NOTHO	<i>Notholaena</i>	0–1	–
5	Perennial forbs			15–75	
	slender janusia	JAGR	<i>Janusia gracilis</i>	5–10	–
	lacy tansyaster	MAPIP4	<i>Machaeranthera pinnatifida</i> ssp. <i>pinnatifida</i> var. <i>pinnatifida</i>	5–10	–
	rough menodora	MESC	<i>Menodora scabra</i>	0–10	–
	Coues' cassia	SECO10	<i>Senna covesii</i>	1–10	–
	desert globemallow	SPAM2	<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	1–10	–
	brownplume wirelettuce	STPA4	<i>Stephanomeria pauciflora</i>	0–5	–
	slender poreleaf	POGR5	<i>Porophyllum gracile</i>	0–5	–
	Parry's false prairie-clover	MAPA7	<i>Marina parryi</i>	1–5	–
	San Feline dogweed	ADPO	<i>Adenophyllum adenophylloides</i>	0–5	–

	weakleaf bur ragweed	AMCO3	<i>Ambrosia confertiflora</i>	0–5	–
	narrowleaf silverbush	ARLA12	<i>Argythamnia lanceolata</i>	0–5	–
	wishbone-bush	MILAV	<i>Mirabilis laevis</i> var. <i>villosa</i>	0–2	–
6	Annual forbs and minor perennials			3–180	
	California poppy	ESCAM	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i> ssp. <i>mexicana</i>	0–40	–
	Coulter's lupine	LUSP2	<i>Lupinus sparsiflorus</i>	0–40	–
	phacelia	PHACE	<i>Phacelia</i>	0–30	–
	desert Indianwheat	PLOV	<i>Plantago ovata</i>	0–25	–
	bristly fiddleneck	AMTE3	<i>Amsinckia tessellata</i>	0–25	–
	exserted Indian paintbrush	CAEXE	<i>Castilleja exserta</i> ssp. <i>exserta</i>	0–20	–
	western tansymustard	DEPI	<i>Descurainia pinnata</i>	0–15	–
	shaggyfruit pepperweed	LELA	<i>Lepidium lasiocarpum</i>	0–10	–
	coastal bird's-foot trefoil	LOSAB	<i>Lotus salsuginosus</i> var. <i>brevivexillus</i>	0–10	–
	thelypody	THELY	<i>Thelypodium</i>	0–10	–
	woolly tidentromia	TILA2	<i>Tidentromia lanuginosa</i>	0–10	–
	Coulter's spiderling	BOCO2	<i>Boerhavia coulteri</i>	0–10	–
	sleepy silene	SIAN2	<i>Silene antirrhina</i>	0–5	–
	lyreleaf jewelflower	STCA5	<i>Streptanthus carinatus</i>	0–5	–
	combseed	PECTO	<i>Pectocarya</i>	0–5	–
	plains blackfoot	MELE2	<i>Melampodium leucanthum</i>	0–5	–
	cryptantha	CRYPT	<i>Cryptantha</i>	0–5	–
	flatcrown buckwheat	ERDE6	<i>Eriogonum deflexum</i>	1–2	–
	trailing windmills	ALIN	<i>Allionia incarnata</i>	1–2	–
	largeflower onion	ALMA4	<i>Allium macropetalum</i>	0–1	–
	weakleaf bur ragweed	AMCO3	<i>Ambrosia confertiflora</i>	0–1	–
	carelessweed	AMPA	<i>Amaranthus palmeri</i>	0–1	–
	white sagebrush	ARLU	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	0–1	–
	New Mexico silverbush	ARNE2	<i>Argythamnia neomexicana</i>	0–1	–
	perennial rockcress	ARPE2	<i>Arabis perennans</i>	0–1	–
	aster	ASTER	<i>Aster</i>	0–1	–
	desert marigold	BAMU	<i>Baileya multiradiata</i>	0–1	–
	scarlet spiderling	BOCO	<i>Boerhavia coccinea</i>	0–1	–
	hoary bowlesia	BOIN3	<i>Bowlesia incana</i>	0–1	–
	Tucson Mountain spiderling	BOME	<i>Boerhavia megaptera</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona wrightwort	CAAR7	<i>Carlownrightia arizonica</i>	0–1	–
	fringed redmaids	CACI2	<i>Calandrinia ciliata</i>	0–1	–
	whitemargin sandmat	CHAL11	<i>Chamaesyce albomarginata</i>	0–1	–
	brittle spineflower	CHBR	<i>Chorizanthe brevicornu</i>	0–1	–
	lipfern	CHEIL	<i>Cheilanthes</i>	0–1	–
	goosefoot	CHENO	<i>Chenopodium</i>	0–1	–
	New Mexico thistle	CINE	<i>Cirsium neomexicanum</i>	0–1	–
	brownfoot	ACWR5	<i>Acourtia wrightii</i>	0–1	–

	miniature woollystar	ERDI2	<i>Eriastrum diffusum</i>	0–1	–
	spreading fleabane	ERDI4	<i>Erigeron divergens</i>	0–1	–
	desert trumpet	ERIN4	<i>Eriogonum inflatum</i>	0–1	–
	buckwheat	ERIOG	<i>Eriogonum</i>	0–1	–
	bigseed alfalfa dodder	CUIN	<i>Cuscuta indecora</i>	0–1	–
	American wild carrot	DAPU3	<i>Daucus pusillus</i>	0–1	–
	desert larkspur	DEPA	<i>Delphinium parishii</i>	0–1	–
	green carpetweed	MOVE	<i>Mollugo verticillata</i>	0–1	–
	bristly nama	NAHI	<i>Nama hispidum</i>	0–1	–
	glandular threadplant	NEGL	<i>Nemacladus glanduliferus</i>	0–1	–
	evening primrose	OENOT	<i>Oenothera</i>	0–1	–
	Florida pellitory	PAFL3	<i>Parietaria floridana</i>	0–1	–
	shrubby deervetch	LORI3	<i>Lotus rigidus</i>	0–1	–
	tall mountain larkspur	DESC	<i>Delphinium scaposum</i>	0–1	–
	Coulter's lyrepod	LYCO4	<i>Lyrocarpa coulteri</i>	0–1	–
	whitestem blazingstar	MEAL6	<i>Mentzelia albicaulis</i>	0–1	–
	glandleaf milkwort	POMA7	<i>Polygala macradenia</i>	0–1	–
	chia	SACO6	<i>Salvia columbariae</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona popcornflower	PLAR	<i>Plagiobothrys arizonicus</i>	0–1	–
	woollyhead neststraw	STMI2	<i>Stylocline micropoides</i>	0–1	–
	sand fringe pod	THCU	<i>Thysanocarpus curvipes</i>	0–1	–
	Coulter's globemallow	SPCO2	<i>Sphaeralcea coulteri</i>	0–1	–
	noseburn	TRAGI	<i>Tragia</i>	0–1	–
	vervain	VERBE	<i>Verbena</i>	0–1	–

Shrub/Vine

7	Dominant half shrubs			60–250	
	Eastern Mojave buckwheat	ERFA2	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	20–150	–
	triangle bur ragweed	AMDE4	<i>Ambrosia deltoidea</i>	20–80	–
	brittlebush	ENFA	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	20–80	–
8	Dominant large shrubs			15–160	
	jojoba	SICH	<i>Simmondsia chinensis</i>	5–65	–
	ocotillo	FOSP2	<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>	5–40	–
	whitethorn acacia	ACCO2	<i>Acacia constricta</i>	1–20	–
	Nevada jointfir	EPNE	<i>Ephedra nevadensis</i>	0–10	–
	creosote bush	LATRT	<i>Larrea tridentata</i> var. <i>tridentata</i>	1–10	–
	Berlandier's wolfberry	LYBE	<i>Lycium berlandieri</i>	1–10	–
	water jacket	LYAN	<i>Lycium andersonii</i>	0–5	–
9	Miscellaneous shrubs			10–60	
	fairyduster	CAER	<i>Calliandra eriophylla</i>	1–10	–
	littleleaf ratany	KRER	<i>Krameria erecta</i>	1–10	–
	white ratany	KRGR	<i>Krameria grayi</i>	0–10	–
	broom snakeweed	GUSA2	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	0–5	–
	sangre de cristo	JACA2	<i>Jatropha cardiophylla</i>	0–5	–

	whitestem paperflower	PSCO2	<i>Psilostrophe cooperi</i>	0–5	–
	desert zinnia	ZIAC	<i>Zinnia acerosa</i>	0–5	–
	Warnock's snakewood	COWA	<i>Condalia warnockii</i>	0–2	–
	catclaw acacia	ACGR	<i>Acacia greggii</i>	1–2	–
	rayless goldenhead	ACSP	<i>Acamptopappus sphaerocephalus</i>	0–1	–
	Wright's beebrush	ALWR	<i>Aloysia wrightii</i>	0–1	–
	pelotazo	ABIN	<i>Abutilon incanum</i>	0–1	–
	California copperleaf	ACCA3	<i>Acalypha californica</i>	0–1	–
	Sonoran croton	CRSO	<i>Croton sonorae</i>	0–1	–
	bastardsage	ERWR	<i>Eriogonum wrightii</i>	0–1	–
	starry bedstraw	GAST	<i>Galium stellatum</i>	0–1	–
	spiny hackberry	CEEH	<i>Celtis ehrenbergiana</i>	0–1	–
	rosary babybonnets	COGL8	<i>Coursetia glandulosa</i>	0–1	–
	knifeleaf condalia	COSP3	<i>Condalia spathulata</i>	0–1	–
	crown of thorns	KOSP	<i>Koeberlinia spinosa</i>	0–1	–
	desert lavender	HYEM	<i>Hyptis emoryi</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona desert-thorn	LYEX	<i>Lycium exsertum</i>	0–1	–
	Arizona mimosa	MIDIL	<i>Mimosa distachya</i> var. <i>laxiflora</i>	0–1	–
	mariola	PAIN2	<i>Parthenium incanum</i>	0–1	–
	lotebush	ZIOB	<i>Ziziphus obtusifolia</i>	0–1	–
	arrow poison plant	SEBI9	<i>Sebastiania bilocularis</i>	0–1	–
	woody crinklemat	TICAC	<i>Tiquilia canescens</i> var. <i>canescens</i>	0–1	–
	American threefold	TRCA8	<i>Trixis californica</i>	0–1	–
	Parish's goldeneye	VIPA14	<i>Viguiera parishii</i>	0–1	–
10	Succulents			25–100	
	saguaro	CAGI10	<i>Carnegiea gigantea</i>	5–40	–
	cactus apple	OPEN3	<i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>	10–30	–
	buck-horn cholla	CYAC8	<i>Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa</i>	1–20	–
	teddybear cholla	CYBI9	<i>Cylindropuntia bigelovii</i>	1–10	–
	jumping cholla	CYFU10	<i>Cylindropuntia fulgida</i>	1–10	–
	tulip pricklypear	OPPH	<i>Opuntia phaeacantha</i>	1–10	–
	organpipe cactus	STTH3	<i>Stenocereus thurberi</i>	0–10	–
	banana yucca	YUBA	<i>Yucca baccata</i>	0–5	–
	purple pricklypear	OPMA8	<i>Opuntia macrocentra</i>	0–5	–
	Christmas cactus	CYLE8	<i>Cylindropuntia leptocaulis</i>	1–5	–
	staghorn cholla	CYVE3	<i>Cylindropuntia versicolor</i>	0–5	–
	common sotol	DAWH2	<i>Dasylirion wheeleri</i>	0–2	–
	redspine fishhook cactus	ECER2	<i>Echinomastus erectocentrus</i>	0–2	–
	candy barrelcactus	FEWI	<i>Ferocactus wislizeni</i>	1–2	–
	dollarjoint pricklypear	OPCH	<i>Opuntia chlorotica</i>	0–2	–
	Graham's nipple cactus	MAGR9	<i>Mammillaria grahamii</i>	0–1	–
	Thornber's nipple cactus	MATH	<i>Mammillaria thornberi</i>	0–1	–

	pinkflower neogenog cactus	ECPE	<i>Echinocereus tenebris</i>	0–1	–
	rainbow cactus	ECPE	<i>Echinocereus pectinatus</i>	0–1	–
	spiny star	ESVIV	<i>Escobaria vivipara</i> var. <i>vivipara</i>	0–1	–
	California barrel cactus	FECY	<i>Ferocactus cylindraceus</i>	0–1	–
	Emory's barrel cactus	FEEM	<i>Ferocactus emoryi</i>	0–1	–
	Engelmann's hedgehog cactus	ECEN	<i>Echinocereus engelmannii</i>	0–1	–
	Scheer's beehive cactus	COROS	<i>Coryphantha robustispina</i> ssp. <i>scheeri</i>	0–1	–
	desert agave	AGDE	<i>Agave deserti</i>	0–1	–
Tree					
11	Trees			50–150	
	yellow paloverde	PAMI5	<i>Parkinsonia microphylla</i>	40–140	–
	desert ironwood	OLTE	<i>Olneya tesota</i>	10–20	–
	velvet mesquite	PRVE	<i>Prosopis velutina</i>	0–15	–
	crucifixion thorn	CAHO3	<i>Canotia holacantha</i>	0–15	–

Animal community

Steep slopes and gravelly surfaces somewhat hinder livestock distribution, but this is the easiest of the hillsites for cattle to traverse and the hillslopes trail easily. The site is not well suited to grazing by cows in the hot season but in areas where ridges trend north-south, distribution will be good even in summer as the west aspects are shady in the morning and the eastern exposures shady in the afternoon. Stocker cattle are best suited to use areas of this site. South aspects are used more in the winter due to warm temperatures and early greenup. North exposures, being shady and cooler, are used more in the fall due to longer green season. The plant community has a good variety of evergreen browse species making it especially good for winter-spring grazing. This site tends to be very dry, even in winter-spring when other hillsites have canyon and seep water.

Water developments are very important to wildlife species on this site. Cover, forage diversity, and topography are good enough for a variety of desert wildlife including the large mammals.

Hydrological functions

This site is a fair producer of runoff due to steep slopes and shallow soils. Very gravelly and cobbly soil surfaces tend to hold water on the site.

Recreational uses

Hunting, hiking, bird watching, photography, horseback riding, rock hounding.

Wood products

Some paloverde, ironwood and mesquite for camp-fires and branding fires.

Other products

Cobbles and decomposed gravels. Saguaro ribs, cholla skeletons and ocotillo canes. Traditional foods like saguaro fruits, prickly pear tunas, cactus flower buds and jojoba nuts. Traditional herbs like coyote tobacco, mint bush, limberbush and creosotebush.

Inventory data references

Range 417s include 3 in excellent condition and 1 in good condition.

Type locality

Location 1: Pima County, AZ	
Township/Range/Section	T10S R5E S18
General legal description	Sells Field Office - Slate Mountains
Location 2: Gila County, AZ	
Township/Range/Section	T5S R16E S13
General legal description	San Carlos Field Office - Mineral Strip
Location 3: Pima County, AZ	
General legal description	Sells Field Office - GuAchi Peak - Santa Rosa Mountains 32 21' X 111 52'
Location 4: Maricopa County, AZ	
Township/Range/Section	T8S R2W S1
General legal description	Sand Tank Mountains, Sonoran Desert National Monument - Javalina Mountain
Location 5: Maricopa County, AZ	
Township/Range/Section	T8N R2E S22
General legal description	Phoenix Field Office - Tee Ranch in median of I-17

Contributors

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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)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	
Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills:

2. Presence of water flow patterns:

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:

-
4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):**
-
5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:**
-
6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:**
-
7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):**
-
8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):**
-
9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):**
-
10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:**
-
11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):**
-
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:
- Sub-dominant:
- Other:
- Additional:
-
13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):**
-
14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):**
-
15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-**

production):

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:
-

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:**
-