

## Ecological site R040XC314AZ Saline Swale 3"-7" p.z.

Last updated: 3/04/2025  
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.

Author(s)/participant(s)	Dave Womack, Dan Robinett, Emilio Carrillo.
Contact for lead author	NRCS Tucson Area Office.
Date	03/09/2005
Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

### Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** None.  

---
- Presence of water flow patterns:** Water flow patterns are uncommon due to low slopes.  

---
- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** No pedestals or terracettes present. Flood events leave debris dams of woody and herbaceous litter around shrubs.  

---
- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Bare ground cover ranges from 5%-50%. Expect low values in dry years.  

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

---
- Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** No evidence.  

---
- Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Herbaceous litter can move by wind

and water. Woody litter remains under shrub canopies except after very high flows.

---

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** Soil surface resistance to erosion is good under shrub canopies, and moderate in interspaces due to crust formed by evaporated salts.
- 
9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Weak thin platy to single grain; 7.5-10YR6/4 dry; 7.5-10YR3/5 moist; thickness to 6 inches.
- 
10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** Shrubs 75%-80% of canopy cover, trees 20%-25%.
- 
11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** None.
- 
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: shrubs > trees > winter annuals > summer annuals.
- Sub-dominant:
- Other:
- Additional:
- 
13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** 30%-70% canopy mortality on trees and shrubs.
- 
14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):** Herbaceous litter is not persistent on the site.
- 
15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** 860 lbs/ac unfavorable precipitation; 2250 lbs/ac normal precipitation; 3640 lbs/ac favorable precipitation.
- 
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:** Asian mustard, saltcedar.
-

---

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** Not impaired for shrubs and trees.

---