

Ecological site R085AY185TX Shallow 30-38" PZ

Last updated: 9/21/2023
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	08/25/2005
Approved by	Bryan Christensen
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** None. Current or past formation of rills are not present.
- Presence of water flow patterns:** None. This site rarely has flow patterns. Some are to be expected around surface obstacles.
- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** None. Some very minor pedestalling may occur in the shallower, lower production portions of the site. Rarely should they be over 1/4 inch height.
- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** 5 to 10 percent bare ground. Small and non-connected areas.
- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** This site does not develop gullies due to shallow soils.
- Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** None.

7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Minimal and short. Less than 6 inches. Only associated with water flow patterns following extremely high intensity rainfall.
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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):** Stability class 4-6 for both canopy and interspaces.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Very dark grayish brown clay surface 8 to 20 inches thick with strong very fine subangular blocky and granular structure. Fragments of gravels, cobbles, and stones range from 10 to 80 percent in the soil profile. Soil organic matter is 1 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:** High canopy, basal cover, and density with small interspaces make rainfall impact negligible. The site has well drained soils, slowly permeable with 1 to 16 percent slopes which allows negligible runoff and erosion.
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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):** None to minimal. Not restrictive to water movement and root penetration.
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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: Warm-season tallgrasses >>
- Sub-dominant: Warm-season midgrasses >
- Other: forbs = cool-season grasses > shrubs/vines
- Additional:
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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Grasses due to their growth habit will exhibit some mortality and decadence though very slight.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** Litter is dominantly herbaceous which covers most all plant and rock interspaces.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** 2500 to 5000 pounds per acre. 2500 pounds in below average moisture years, 3700 pounds in "normal" years and 5000 pounds in above average years.
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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: Ashe juniper, Prickly pear and mesquite are the primary invaders.

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** Perennial plants are capable of reproducing except during periods of prolonged drought conditions, heavy natural herbivory and intense wildfires.
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