

## **Ecological site F122XY031TN Poorly Drained Thermic Alluvium**

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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.

### **MLRA notes**

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 122X–Highland Rim and Pennyroyal

MLRA 122 is in Tennessee (47 percent), Kentucky (43 percent), Indiana (7 percent), and Alabama (3 percent). It makes up about 21,530 square miles (55,790 square kilometers).

#### **SOILS:**

Many of the soils in this MLRA are Udalfs. The moderately deep to very deep, well drained, clayey soils formed in limestone residuum. They are dominantly in rolling to steep areas of the “Outer Basin” (Mimosa, Braxton, Gladdice, and Hampshire series) and the undulating to hilly areas of the “Inner Basin” (Talbot and Bradyville series). The most agriculturally productive soils are the very deep, well drained, clayey or loamy soils that formed in alluvium and/or loess over alluvium or limestone residuum in nearly level to undulating areas (Armour, Cumberland, Harpeth, Lomond, and Maury series). The less extensive soils generally are moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained and formed in loamy or clayey alluvium and/or residuum (Byler, Capshaw, Colbert, and Tupelo series). This MLRA has a significant acreage of Mollisols. Shallow or moderately deep, well drained, clayey Udolls (Ashwood and Barfield series) formed in limestone residuum dominantly in rolling to steep areas. Very shallow, well drained, clayey Rendolls (Gladeville series) formed in limestone residuum dominantly in undulating to rolling areas of the “Inner Basin.” Very deep, well drained or moderately well drained Udolls (Arrington, Egam, Lynnvill, and Staser series) and somewhat poorly drained or poorly drained Aquolls (Agee, Godwin, and Lanton series) formed in loamy or clayey alluvium derived from limestone on flood plains. Most of the remaining soils on flood plains are moderately well drained or well drained Udepts (Lindell and Ocana series). Udupts are of small extent in this area. Most are very deep, well drained, and loamy and formed in gravelly colluvium or colluvium and the underlying residuum on steep hillsides (Dellrose soils). Rock outcrops are common on uplands.

#### **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:**

This area supports mixed oak forest vegetation. White oak, black oak, northern red oak, and some scarlet oak are the dominant tree species. Shagbark hickory, bitternut hickory, pignut hickory, and mockernut hickory also occur. Oak, blackgum, flowering dogwood, sassafras, Virginia pine, pitch pine, and shortleaf pine grow mostly on ridgetops.

(Excerpt from United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296.)

### **Classification relationships**

NatureServe Scientific Name: South-Central Interior Large Floodplain -Unique Identifier: CES202.705

NatureServe Scientific Name: South-Central Interior Small Stream and Riparian- Unique Identifier: CES202.706

### **Ecological site concept**

The communities described in this provisional document reflect plant communities that are likely to be found on these soils and have not been field verified. This PES describes hypotheses based on available data of many different scales and sources and has not been developed utilizing site-specific ecological field monitoring. This PES does not encompass the entire complexity or diversity of these sites. Field studies would be required for detailed conservation planning or to develop a comprehensive and science-based restoration plan for these sites.

Only two tree species can be selected for entry into the ESIS/EDIT database as dominants; however, multiple tree species may be co-dominant on these sites and it will vary depending on aspect, soil depth, seed sources, management, and disturbance history.

State 1. Phase 1.1. (Reference): Forestland

Plant species dominants: *Quercus* (willow, water, white, pin) – sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) / willows (*Salix* spp.) / sedges (*Carex* spp.) – elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* L. ssp. *Canadensis*)

State: 2. Pasture

State 2, Phase 2.1: Managed Pasture. Plant species dominants: *Schedonorus arundinaceus* (tall fescue)

Pasture plant species are dependent on seeding, weed control, concurrent land uses, on-going levels of disturbance, and landowner goals. Individual site and soil characteristics, along with management activities, will influence production levels.

State: 3 – Transitional (Abandoned) Field

State 3, Phases 3.1: maples (*Acer* spp.) –green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) / roses (*Rosa* spp.) – berries (*Rubus* spp.) / fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*)

Tree species regeneration on these sites will depend on the severity and duration of disturbances, seed sources, management inputs, and presence or absence of continued site disturbances (grazing).

**Table 1. Dominant plant species**

Tree	(1) <i>Quercus bicolor</i> (2) <i>Quercus palustris</i>
Shrub	(1) <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Carex</i> (2) <i>Arundinaria gigantea</i>

## Physiographic features

These sites are located in floodplains throughout MLRA 122.

**Table 2. Representative physiographic features**

Landforms	(1) Flood plain
Flooding duration	Very brief (4 to 48 hours) to long (7 to 30 days)
Flooding frequency	Very rare to frequent
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	350–900 ft
Slope	0–3%
Ponding depth	0 in
Water table depth	0–9 in

## Climatic features

Climate

The average annual precipitation in this area is 43 to 63

inches (1,090 to 1,600 millimeters), increasing to the south. The maximum precipitation occurs in winter and early in

spring, and the minimum occurs in fall. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms. Snowfall may occur in winter. The average annual temperature is 52 to 60 degrees F (11 to 16 degrees C), increasing to the south. The freeze-free period averages 210 days and ranges from 185 to 235 days. The longer freeze-free periods occur in the more southerly parts of the area.

(Excerpt from United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296.)

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	185 days
Freeze-free period (average)	206 days
Precipitation total (average)	56 in

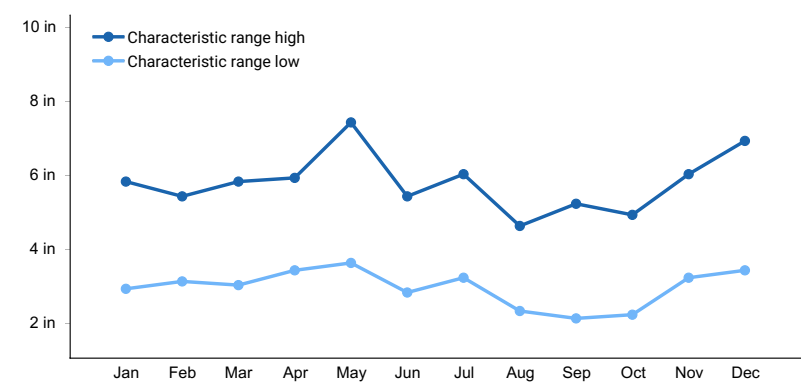


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

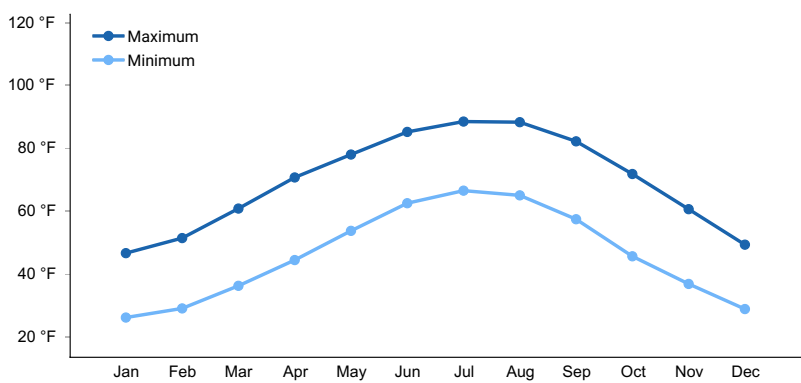


Figure 2. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

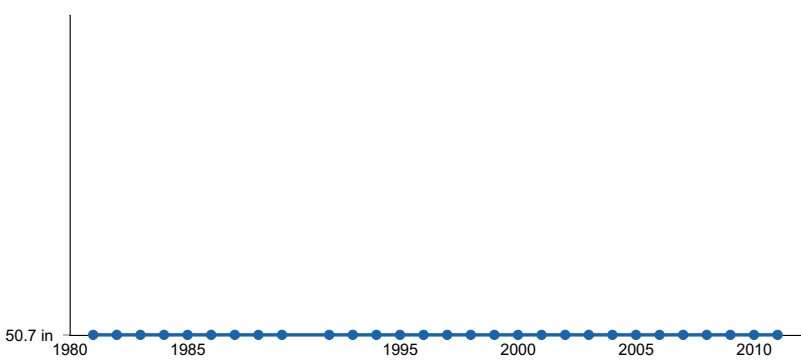


Figure 3. Annual precipitation pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) CLARKSVILLE WWTP [USC00401790], Clarksville, TN
- (2) SCOTTSVILLE [USC00157215], Scottsville, KY
- (3) COOKEVILLE [USC00402009], Cookeville, TN
- (4) WAYNESBORO [USC00409502], Waynesboro, TN

## Influencing water features

These sites are located in a floodplain and therefore may be influenced by periodic flooding.

## Soil features

Soils are alluvium, deep to very deep, and somewhat poorly to poorly drained.

**Table 4. Representative soil features**

Surface texture	(1) Gravelly silty clay loam (2) Silty clay loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained
Permeability class	Very slow to moderate
Soil depth	80 in
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (0-40in)	4.4–7.5 in
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-40in)	0%
Electrical conductivity (0-40in)	0 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-40in)	0
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-40in)	5–6
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0–35%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0–3%

## Ecological dynamics

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MLRA 122

Soil mapunits included in this preliminary grouping include: Melvin, Dunning

Future ecological site description (ESD) development may result in mapunits being added or removed from this PES group.

Individual sites deserve a detailed understanding before conservation and restoration practices are implemented; therefore, it should be noted that the communities described in this provisional document reflect plant communities that are likely to be found on these soils and have not been extensively field verified. This PES describes hypotheses based on available data of many different scales and sources and has not been developed utilizing site-specific ecological field monitoring. This PES likely does not encompass the entire complexity or diversity of these sites. Field studies would be required to develop a comprehensive and science-based native plant restoration plan.

The PES reference community was determined primarily by information found in NASIS, county soil surveys (trees on site, common trees) and Glendon Smalley's U.S. Forest Service technical report SO-43 entitled, "Classification and Evaluation of Forest Sites on the Eastern Highland Rim and Pennyroyal."

NRCS county soil surveys listed trees on site as predominately swamp white oak, willow oak, water oak, pin oak, sweetgum, cottonwood, sycamore, willow, yellow poplar, and green ash.

NASIS data for these mapunit listed willow oak, swamp white oak, sweetgum, tulip poplar, pines, and American sycamore.

Vegetation as listed in Official Soil Series Description (OSD):

Dunning: Most areas are cleared and, where drained, produce hay, pasture, grain sorghum, corn, and soybeans.

Native forest is water-tolerant hardwoods such as red maple, sycamore, gums, boxelder, willow, pin oak, water oak, swamp white oak, and cottonwood, interspersed with glades of cane, grass, and sedge.

Melvin: Most areas are in pasture and woodland. These soils, where previously drained, are used for corn, sorghum, soybeans, and hay. Many areas are used for wetland wildlife habitat. Native vegetation consists of water-tolerant hardwoods, chiefly water oak, pin oak, and swamp white oak, American sycamore, black willow, alder, sweetgum, blackgum, red maple, box elder, and cottonwood. Some areas were in canebrakes.

The following information is from Glendon Smalley's U.S. Forest Service technical report SO-43 entitled, "Classification and Evaluation of Forest Sites on the Eastern Highland Rim and Pennyroyal."

Description of Landtype 19: Upland Flats, Depressions, and Sinkholes with Poor Drainage

Dominant soils include Dunning, Melvin.

Vegetation-Willow oak, water oak, blackgum, sweetgum, red maple, pin oak, and elms. Occasional - hickories, American sycamore, northern red oak, Shumard oak, swamp white oak, southern red oak, white oak, boxelder, green ash, black willow, cottonwood, yellow-poplar, and loblolly pine. Dogwoods, alder, willows, euonymuses, and cane are common in the understory,

Description of Landtype 39: Upland Flats, Sinkholes, Terraces, and Stream bottoms with Poor Drainage

Dominant soils include Dunning, Melvin

Vegetation-Willow oak, sweetgum, red maple, blackgum, green ash, and American sycamore; Occasional - boxelder, elms, white ash, swamp white oak, cottonwood, pin oak, shingle oak, black willow, yellow-poplar, silver maple, American beech, and shagbark hickory. Cane, alder, dogwoods, grasses, and sedges are common in the understory.

Description of Landtype 45: Terraces and Floodplains with Poor Drainage

Dominant soils include Dunning.

Vegetation-Willow oak, water oak, sweetgum, green ash, elms, blackgum, and water tupelo; occasional American beech, red maple, white oak, southern red oak, silver maple, black willow, boxelder, yellow-poplar, American sycamore, loblolly pine, hickories, cottonwood, sugarberry, and hackberry. Willows, elderberry, dogwoods, cane, grasses, and sedges are common in the understory.

Description of Landtype 49: Terraces and Floodplains with Poor Drainage

Dominant soils include Dunning, Melvin

Vegetation - Willow oak, sweetgum, pin oak, green ash, elms, and blackgum; occasional silver maple, red maple, American beech, swamp white oak, black willow, boxelder, yellow-poplar, white oak, southern red oak, American sycamore, hickories, cottonwood, and hackberry. Dogwoods, alder, American hornbeam, possumhaw, elderberry, cane, grasses, willows, and sedges are common in the understory

Ecological Dynamics:

Only two tree species can be selected for entry into the ESIS/EDIT database as dominants; however, multiple tree species may be co-dominant on these sites and it will vary depending on aspect, soil depth, seed sources, management, and disturbance history.

This PES grouping includes soils generally found along streams and in low lying areas adjacent to water bodies. Soils are classified as very poorly and poorly drained soils. The natural vegetation of these sites will vary in

relationship to the setting, patterns of drainage, flooding frequency, other disturbances (grazing, farming, logging, etc), and previous vegetation communities. Most of these sites within MLRA 122 are now being utilized for agricultural purposes and many have been ditched or tiled.

#### State 1. Phase 1.1. (Reference): Forestland

Plant species dominants:

*Quercus* (willow, water, white, pin) – sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) / willows (*Salix* spp.) / sedges (*Carex* spp.) – elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* L. ssp. *Canadensis*)

Wetland oaks were likely part of the historic reference community for these sites but existing communities today are often dominated by a stand of mixed hardwoods such as sycamore, cottonwood, boxelder, silver maple, elms, and green ash. Most of these sites are absent of oaks, due to historic logging. Maples, ashes, elm, boxelder, and other shade-tolerant, fast-growing hardwoods will dominant post-disturbance without forest stand management.

Understory species include paw paw, spicebush, and dogwood. The herbaceous layers are variable depending on substrate, flooding frequency, flooding duration, drainage, and topography.

The flooding/ponding regime characteristic of individual soil mapunits will greatly influence the forest community as well and soil mapunits currently in this group may be further split based on future field evaluations.

#### State: 2. Pasture

State 2, Phase 2.1: Managed Pasture. Plant species dominants: *Schedonorus arundinaceus* (tall fescue)

Pasture plant species are dependent on seeding, weed control, concurrent land uses, on-going levels of disturbance, and landowner goals. Individual site and soil characteristics, along with management activities, will influence production levels.

Many species of grass, both warm and cool season, are available and suitable for these sites. Common forage species include tall fescue, orchard grass, Kentucky bluegrass, Johnson grass, timothy, and various species of clover. Depending on levels of management, dozens of weed species may be present.

Management of pasture sites should follow conservation planning standards and protocols which include watershed protection, soil health, and adequate forage species.

Transitioning this state to a reference condition would require long-term timber stand improvement practices to control non-native vegetation and manage for desired hardwood species. If tiled or ditched, hydrologic restoration would be needed.

#### State: 3 – Transitional (Abandoned) Field

State 3, Phases 3.1: maples (*Acer* spp.) –green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) / roses (*Rosa* spp.) – berries (*Rubus* spp.) / fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*)

Tree species regeneration on these sites will depend on the severity and duration of disturbance, soil characteristics, available water, adjacent plant communities, seed sources, post-disturbance management inputs, and presence or absence of continued site disturbances (grazing). Pioneer tree species that are common in MLRA 122 on wet sites include sycamore, cottonwood, green ash, silver maple, boxelder, red maple, and willows.

Restoration to the reference site (State 1) would require substantial and long-term inputs including planting, timber stand improvement practices, and weed control. Hydrological changes to the site would have to be assessed and restored.

#### State 4: Phase 4.1. Abandoned Croplands

Plant species dominant: henbit deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*) – mouse-eared chickweed (*Cerastium* L.)

Abandonment of cropland would result in many weed species taking over the site. Initially, annual weeds would be predominate followed by grasses, shrubs and finally, pioneers trees.

It would require years of management, plantings, and weed control to establish successional communities that could transition to a reference community. Due to the drainage issues on these soils, many have been tilled or ditched extensively to facilitate crop production, so hydrological restoration would also be required.

State: 5. Cropland

Phase 5.1: Plant species dominants: *Zea* spp. – *Glycine* spp.

Plants on these sites will be dependent upon seeding and management. Most common crops are corn and soybeans. Due to the drainage issues of these soils, most sites have been tilled or ditched to facilitate crop production.

Restoration of these sites would require a return to the natural hydrologic state and extensive, long-term restoration efforts.

TO VALIDATE THE INFORMATION IN THIS PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTION FUTURE FIELD WORK IS NEEDED. This will include detail field inspections and monitoring and multi-site data collection including medium to high intensity vegetation sampling, soil correlations, and an in-depth analysis of gathered data. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD will be needed to produce a document to be utilized for accurate on-site conservation planning.

## State and transition model

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### PES F122XY031KY – Poorly Drained Thermic Alluvium

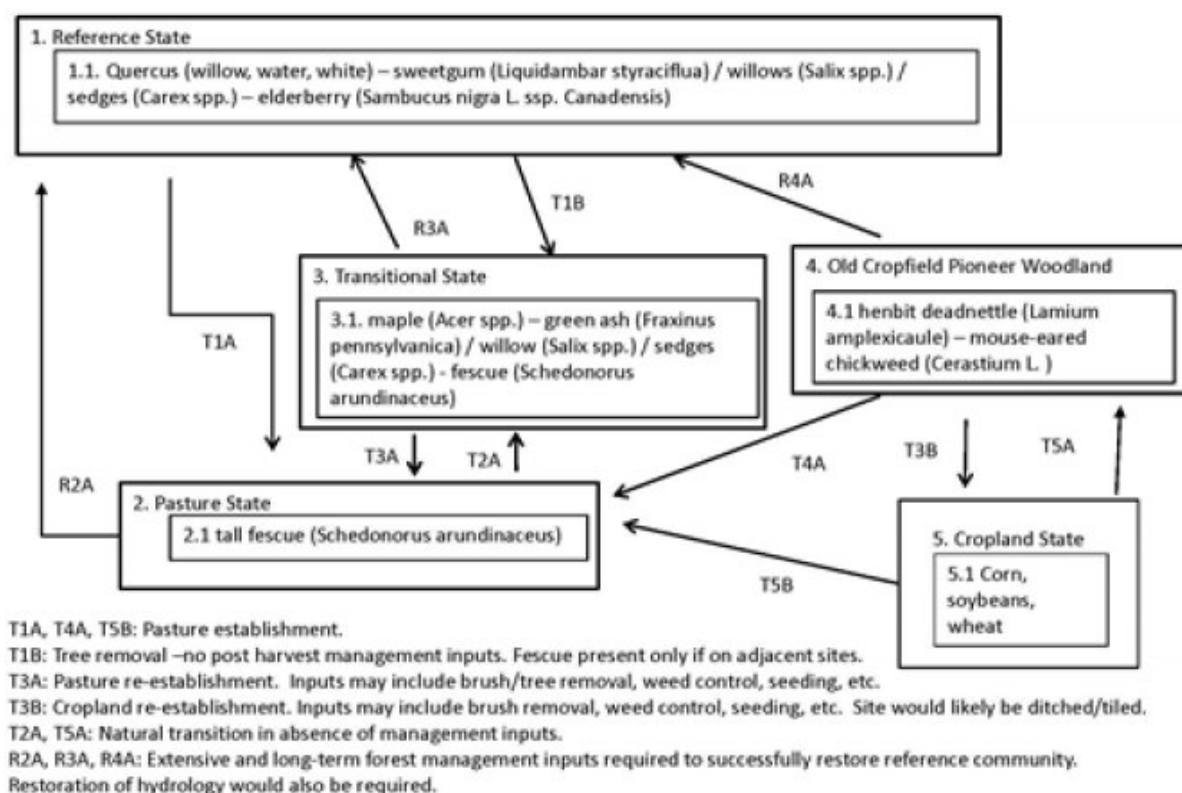


Figure 5. poorly drained allvium

## 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:**

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2. **Presence of water flow patterns:**

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3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:**

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4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):**

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5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:**

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6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:**

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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):**

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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):**

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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):**

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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial**



distribution on infiltration and runoff:

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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):**
- 

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:

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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):**
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):**
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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:**
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:**
-