USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ecological site F144AY025MA
Semi-Rich Moist Outwash

Last updated: 10/04/2024
Accessed: 05/13/2025

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): 144A–New England and Eastern New York Upland, Southern Part

MLRA 144A: New England and Eastern New York Upland, Southern Part
The eastern half of the eastern part of this MLRA is in the Seaboard Lowland Section of the New England Province of the Appalachian Highlands. The western half of the eastern part and the southeastern half of the western part are in the New England Upland Section of the same province and division. The northwestern half of the western part is in the Hudson Valley Section of the Valley and Ridge Province of the Appalachian Highlands. This MLRA is a very scenic area of rolling to hilly uplands that are broken by many gently sloping to level valleys that terminate in coastal lowlands. Elevation ranges from sea level to 1,000 feet (0 to 305 meters) in much of the area, but it is 2,000 feet (610 meters) on some hills. Relief is mostly about 6 to 65 feet (2 to 20 meters) in the valleys and about 80 to 330 feet (25 to 100 meters) in the uplands.
This area has been glaciated and consists almost entirely of till hills, drumlins, and bedrock-controlled uplands with a mantle of till. It is dissected by narrow glacio-fluvial valleys. The southernmost boundary of the area marks the farthest southward extent of Wisconsinian glaciation on the eastern seaboard. The river valleys and coastal plains are filled with glacial lake sediments, marine sediments, and glacial outwash. The bedrock in the eastern half of the area consists primarily of igneous and metamorphic rocks of early Paleozoic age. Granite is the most common igneous rock, and gneiss, schist, and slate are the most common metamorphic rocks. In the parts of the MLRA in eastern and southeastern New York, Devonian- to Pennsylvanian-age sandstone, shale, and limestone are dominant. Carbonate rocks, primarily dolomite and limestone, are the dominant kinds of bedrock in the part of this MLRA in northwestern Connecticut.

Classification relationships

USDA-NRCS (USDA 2006):
Land Resource Region (LRR): N—East and Central Farming and Forest Region
Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 144A— New England and Eastern New York Upland, Southern Part.

USDA-FS (Cleland et al. 2007)
Province: 221 - Eastern Broadleaf Province
Section: 221A - Lower New England
Subsection: 221Aa – Boston Basin
221Ac – Narragansett-Bristol Lowland and Islands
221Ad – Southern New England Coastal Lowland
221Ae – Hudson Highlands
221Ag - Southeast New England Coastal Hills and Plains
221Ah - Worcester-Monadnock Plateau
221Ai – Gulf of Maine Coastal Plain
221Ak - Gulf of Maine Coastal Lowland
Section: 221B – Hudson Valley
Subsection: 221Ba – Hudson Limestone Valley

221Bb - Miami – Taconic Foothills
221Bc – Hudson Glacial Lake Plains

Ecological site concept

This site consists of very deep, moderately well drained soils formed in loamy over sandy and gravelly glacial outwash. They are nearly level and gently sloping soils on glaciofluvial landforms and are typically in slight depressions and broad drainageways. Semi-rich refers to the higher to circumneutral pH values. Representative soils are Hero.
The representative plant communities are not well described. The representative plant comminutes are similar to semi-rich dry outwash sites, except the later have a less diverse understory typified by a Sugar Maple – Oak Forest type.

Associated sites

F144AY029NY	**Semi-Rich Wet Outwash**
F144AY044VT	**Semi-Rich Well Drained Outwash**

Similar sites

F144AY022MA	**Dry Outwash**
F144AY027MA	**Moist Sandy Outwash**

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) *Acer saccharum* (2) *Fraxinus americana*
Shrub	(1) *Lindera benzoin*
Herbaceous	(1) *Arisaema triphyllum*

Physiographic features

The site occurs on nearly level and gently sloping soils on glaciofluvial landforms, and are typically in slight depressions and broad drainageways. Slope ranges from 0 to 8 percent.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Outwash plain > Outwash plain (2) Valley > Outwash terrace
Runoff class	Very low to medium
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	1–366 m
Slope	0–8%
Water table depth	61–69 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

The Koppen-Geiger climate classification of the area in which this MLRA occurs varies between Dfb (Warm-summer humid continental) in the North, and Dfa (Hot-summer humid continental) in the southern portion of the MLRA. Precipitation is usually uniformly distributed throughout the year. Near the coast, however, it is slightly lower in summer. Precipitation is slightly higher in spring and fall in inland areas. Rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective thunderstorms during the summer. During the winter, most of the precipitation occurs as moderate-

intensity storms (northeasters) that produce large amounts of rain or snow. The freeze-free period increases in length to the south.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	111-133 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	134-153 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	1,168-1,219 mm
Frost-free period (actual range)	110-133 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	132-166 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	1,143-1,219 mm
Frost-free period (average)	120 days
Freeze-free period (average)	145 days
Precipitation total (average)	1,194 mm

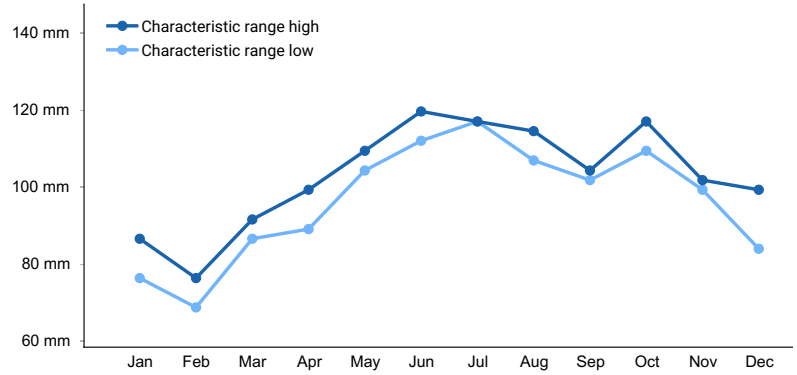


Figure 1. Monthly precipitation range

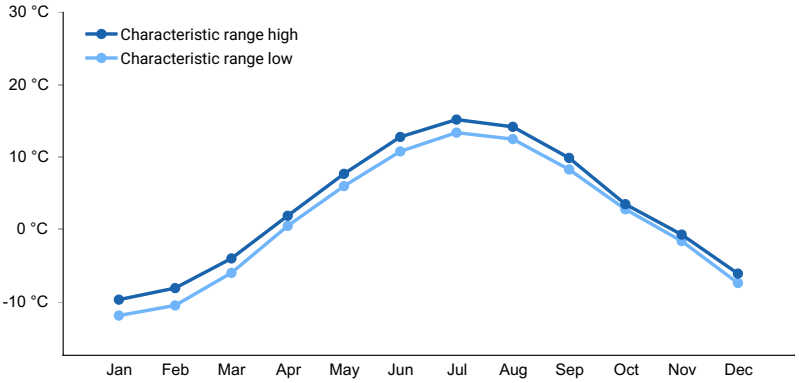


Figure 2. Monthly minimum temperature range

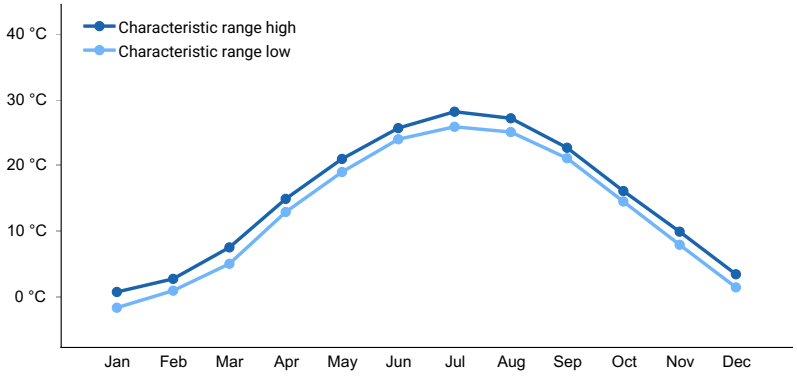


Figure 3. Monthly maximum temperature range

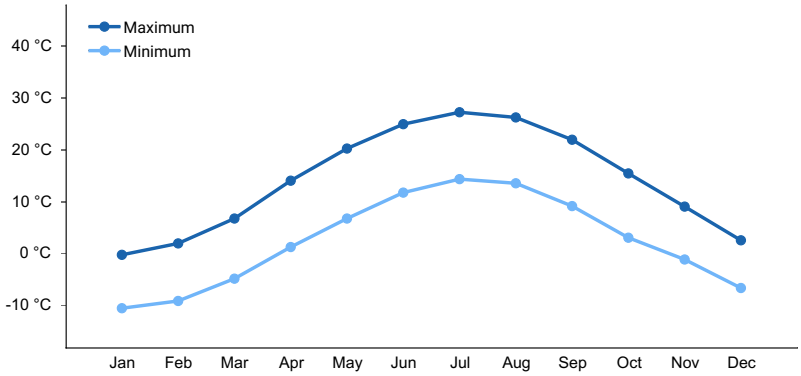


Figure 4. Monthly average minimum and maximum temperature

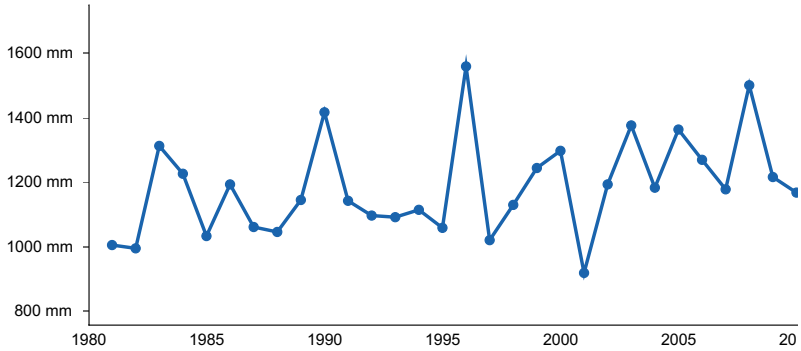


Figure 5. Annual precipitation pattern

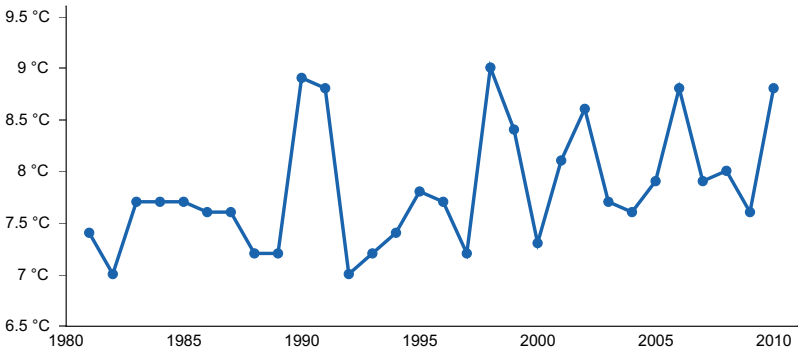


Figure 6. Annual average temperature pattern

Climate stations used

- (1) BULLS BRG DAM [USC00060961], Gaylordsville, CT
- (2) FALLS VILLAGE [USC00062658], Falls Village, CT
- (3) POWNAL 1 NE [USC00436500], Pownal, VT
- (4) SUNDERLAND 2 [USC00438160], Arlington, VT
- (5) GREAT BARRINGTON 2N [USC00193213], Great Barrington, MA

Influencing water features

NONE

Wetland description

NONE

Soil features

The Hero series consists of very deep, moderately well drained soils formed in loamy over sandy and gravelly

glacial outwash. The soils formed in loamy over stratified sandy and gravelly glacial outwash derived mainly from limestone, shale, schist, sandstone and dolomite. Soils range from moderately acid to moderately alkaline. The representative soil is Hero.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Glaciofluvial deposits–limestone and dolomite (2) Glaciolacustrine deposits–schist
Surface texture	(1) Gravelly loam
Family particle size	(1) Coarse-loamy (2) Coarse-silty over sandy or sandy-skeletal
Drainage class	Moderately well drained
Permeability class	Slow to moderately slow
Depth to restrictive layer	183 cm
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0%
Available water capacity (Depth not specified)	10.16–15.24 cm
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	5.6–8.4
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	17–45%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	3–5%

Ecological dynamics

[Caveat: The vegetation information contained in this section and is only provisional, based on concepts, not yet validated with field work.*]

The vegetation groupings described in this section are based on the terrestrial ecological system classification and vegetation associations developed by NatureServe (Comer 2003). Terrestrial ecological SYSTEMS are specifically defined as a group of plant community-types called ASSOCIATIONS that tend to [co-]occur within landscapes with similar ecological processes, substrates, and/or environmental gradients. Any given system will typically manifest itself in a landscape at intermediate geographic scales of tens-to-thousands of hectares and will persist for 50 or more years. A vegetation association is a plant community that is much more specific to a given soil, geology, landform, climate, hydrology, and disturbance history. It is the basic unit for vegetation classification and recognized by the US National Vegetation Classification (US FDGC 2008). Each association will be named by the diagnostic and often dominant species that occupy the different height strata (tree, sapling, shrub, and herb). Within the NatureServe Explorer database (NatureServe, 2015), ecological systems are numbered by a Community Ecological System Code (CES) and individual vegetation associations are assigned an identification number called a Community Element Global Code (CEGL).

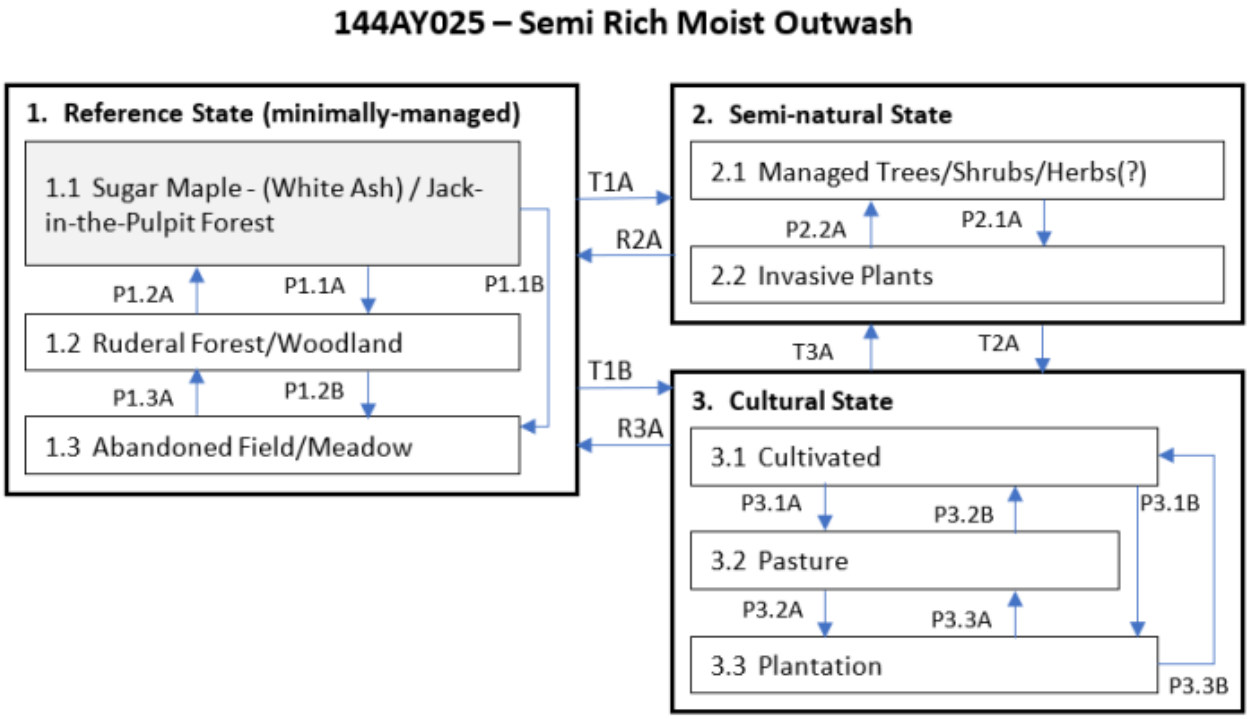
Additional and more localized vegetation information is provided by the State Natural Heritage Programs of Connecticut (Metzler and Barrett 2001), Massachusetts (Swain and Kearsley 2001), New Hampshire (Sperduto and Nichols, 2011), New York (Edinger et al., 2014), and Rhode Island (Enser and Lungren, 2006).

The Semi Rich Moist Outwash ecological site is characteristic of Appalachian (Hemlock)-Northern Hardwood Forest system (CES202.593) and the Central Appalachian Dry Oak-Pine Forest system (CES202.591). The vegetation of this ecosite is not well described. The reference community is typified by a Sugar Maple-Oak forest type but can range to more Oak-Hickory forest type. Given its semi-rich nature it has much in common with the semi-rich till sites.
This forest occurs in uneven-aged stands with canopy gaps formed by storm extremes ranging from windthrows to downbursts to ice-storms. Excessive deer browse may be an issue. Fires are typically suppressed. Other agents-of-

change include land conversions and fragmentation by agricultural, development and logging. Invasive species include European buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Canada bluegrass (*Poa compressa*), Japnese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Morrow's shrubby honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*).

[*Caveat] The information presented is representative of very complex vegetation communities. Key indicator plants and ecological processes are described to help inform land management decisions. Plant communities will differ across the MLRA because of the naturally occurring variability in weather, soils, and geography. The reference plant community is not necessarily the management goal. The drafts of species lists are merely representative and are not botanical descriptions of all species occurring, or potentially occurring, on this site. They are not intended to cover every situation or the full range of conditions, species, and responses for the site.

State and transition model



Transition	*Drivers/practices*
T1A	Forest mgmt., Disturbance
T1B, T2A	Disturbance/cutting/clearing, Brush removal
R2A, R2B	Restoration & Mgmt, Forest Stand Improvement, Early Successional Habitat Development, Upland Wildlife Mgmt, Invasive spp. Control, Plant establishment
T3A	Abandonment, Plant establishment, Forest mgmt.
P2.1A	Disturbance, Invasive species establishment
P2.2A	Invasive spp. Control, Forest mgmt..
P1.3A, P1.2A	Abandonment, succession
P3.1A, P3.2A, P3.3A, P3.1B, P3.2B, P3.3B	Changing agricultural phases
P1.1A, P1.1B, P1.2B	Disturbance, Early Successional Habitat Development

State 1
Reference State (Minimally-managed)

The reference community type is characterized by: • *Acer saccharum* - (*Fraxinus americana*) / *Arisaema triphyllum* Forest Translated Name: Sugar Maple - (White Ash) / Jack-in-the-Pulpit Forest Common Name: Semi-rich Northern Hardwood Forest (CEGL006211)

Community 1.1
Sugar Maple - (White Ash) / Jack-in-the-Pulpit Forest (CEGL006211)

Acer saccharum - (*Fraxinus americana*) / *Arisaema triphyllum* Forest Translated Name: Sugar Maple - (White Ash) / Jack-in-the-Pulpit Forest Common Name: Semi-rich Northern Hardwood Forest (CEGL006211) The canopy is dominated by sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), frequently with White asjh (*Fraxinus americana*) as an associate. Other associated hardwood species include yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) and sweet birch (*Betula lenta*). American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is often present but less abundant than in matrix northern hardwood forests. Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) may occur in more southern sites. Conifers are usually sparse. Shrubs can include alternate leved dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*), northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), red elderberry (Sambucus racemose), striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*), and hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*). Typical herbs include Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), roundleaf yellow violet (*Viola rotundifolia*), heartleaf formflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), white baneberry (*Actaea pachypoda*), New York Fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*), interrupted fern (*Osmunda claytoniana*), cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), spreading sedge (*Carex laxiculmis*), broad-leaved sedge (*Carex platyphylla*), long-stalk sedge (*Carex pedunculata*), white wood-aster (*Eurybia divaricata*), grapeferns (Botrychium spp)., and zigzag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*). (Source: NatureServe 2018 [accessed 2019], USNVC 2017 [accessed 2019]). Cross-referenced plant community concepts (typically by political state): CT: Sugar Maple – American Beech / New York Fern Forest (Metzler and Barrett, 2006) MA: Red -Sugar Maple Transition Forest (Swain and Kearsley, 2001) NY: Beech-Maple Mesic Forest (Edinger et al., 2014)

Dominant plant species

- sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), tree
- Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), grass

Community 1.2
Ruderal Forest/Woodland

Community 1.3
Abandoned Field/Meadow

Pathway P1.1A
Community 1.1 to 1.2

Disturbance, early successional habitat development

Pathway P1.1B
Community 1.1 to 1.3

Disturbance, early successional habitat development

Pathway P1.2A
Community 1.2 to 1.1

Abandonment, succession

Pathway P1.2B
Community 1.2 to 1.3

Disturbance, early successional habitat development

Pathway P1.3A

Community 1.3 to 1.2

Abandonment, succession

State 2
Semi-natural State

The Semi-natural State would expect plant communities where ecological processes are primarily operating with some land conditioning in the past or present, e.g., managed forests, or plant communities that are an artifact of land management e.g., predominately invasive plants.

Community 2.1
Managed trees/shrubs/herbs(?)

Community 2.2
Invasive Plants

Pathway P2.1A
Community 2.1 to 2.2

Disturbance, invasive species management

Pathway P2.2A
Community 2.2 to 2.1

Invasive species control, forest management

State 3
Cultural State

The Cultural State would expect the ecological site to be very strongly conditioned by land management conversion, by transformation to Cultivated/Pasture/Plantation.

Community 3.1
Cultivated

Community 3.2
Pasture

Community 3.3
Plantation

Pathway P3.1A
Community 3.1 to 3.2

Changing agricultural phases

Pathway P3.1B
Community 3.1 to 3.3

Changing agricultural phases

Pathway P3.2A
Community 3.2 to 3.1

Changing agricultural phases

Pathway P3.2B
Community 3.2 to 3.3

Changing agricultural phases

Pathway P3.3A
Community 3.3 to 3.1

Changing agricultural phases

Pathway P3.3B
Community 3.3 to 3.2

Changing agricultural phases

Transition T1A
State 1 to 2

Forest management, disturbance

Transition T1B
State 1 to 3

Disturbance/cutting/clearing, brush removal

Restoration pathway R2A
State 2 to 1

Restoration and management, forest stand improvement, early successional habitat development, upland wildlife management, invasive species control, plant establishment

Transition T2A
State 2 to 3

Disturbance/cutting/clearing, brush removal

Restoration pathway R3A
State 3 to 1

Restoration and management, forest stand improvement, early successional habitat development, upland wildlife management, invasive species control, plant establishment

Transition T3A
State 3 to 2

Abandonment, plant establishment, forest management

Additional community tables

Inventory data references

Future work is needed, as described in a future project plan, to validate the information presented in this provisional ecological site description. Future work includes field sampling, data collection and analysis by qualified vegetation ecologists and soil scientists. As warranted, annual reviews of the project plan can be conducted by the Ecological Site Technical Team. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance reviews of the ESD are necessary to approve a final document.

Other references

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Contributors

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Approval

Greg Schmidt, 10/04/2024

Acknowledgments

Michael Margo and tech team provided earlier drafts. Josh Hibit made compliance updates w/ 2021 Checklist V.2

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	05/13/2025
Approved by	Greg Schmidt
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:**