

## Ecological site R010XY018ID Shallow South Stony 14-18 PZ PSSPS-POSE

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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.

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Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

### Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** can occur on this site due to steep slopes, limited water-holding capacity and percent bare ground. Gravel and stones on the surface reduces erosion
- Presence of water flow patterns:** water flow patterns are common on this site. When they occur they may be long, continuous and extensive
- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** both are common on this site. Terracettes develop uphill from the large bunchgrasses and surface stones
- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** ranges from 15-25 percent
- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** do not occur on this site.

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** usually does not occur.

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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** fine litter in the interspaces may move up to 5 feet or further following a significant run-off event. Terracettes and rocks can trap fine litter. Coarse litter generally does not move

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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):** Values should range from 4 to 6 but needs to be tested

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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** the A or A1 horizon is typically 5 inches thick.  
Structure ranges from weak very fine granular to strong coarse granular. Soil organic matter (SOM) ranges from 0.5 to 5 percent.

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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** bunchgrasses, especially deep-rooted perennials, slow run-off and increase infiltration. Terracettes provide a favorable micro-site for vegetation establishment which further increases infiltration

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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):** not present.

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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: cool season deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses

Sub-dominant: perennial forbs>shallow rooted bunchgrasses

Other:

Additional:

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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** bitterbrush may become decadent in the absence of ungulate browsing. Bluebunch wheatgrass may become decadent in the absence of fire and large ungulate grazing

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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):** annual litter cover in the interspaces will be 5-10 percent to a depth of <0.1. Fine litter can accumulate on the terracettes and behind surface stones

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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** is 600 lbs. per acre in a year with normal precipitation and temperatures. Production is normally low due to

low infiltration, steep south aspect and moderate water holding capacity. Perennial grasses produce 75-85percent of the total, forbs 10-15 percent, and shrubs T-3 percent

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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: Cheatgrass, medusahead, bulbous bluegrass, rush skeletonweed, scotch thistle, spotted and diffuse knapweed
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** all functional groups have the potential to reproduce in favorable years
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