

Ecological site R012XY034ID Clayey 12-16 PZ ARARL/FEID

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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.

Author(s)/participant(s)	
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Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. **Number and extent of rills:** Rills can occur on the site. If they do occur, it will normally be on slopes greater than 10%.

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:** Water flow patterns may be present on this site. When they do occur, they are short and disrupted by cool season grasses, shrubs and surface gravel. They are not extensive.

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Erosional pedestals or terracettes can occur on the site. They are most likely to occur where water flow patterns are present and surface stones are absent. Do not mistake frost heaving for pedestals.

4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Bare ground ranges from 25-35 percent but more data is needed.

5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** Gullies do not occur on this site.

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** Wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas do not occur.
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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Fine litter moves by wind or water. Fine litter can move up to 2 feet after a strong summertime convection storm. Due to the relatively flat slopes, large litter 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):**
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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 2 to 6 inches thick. Structure ranges from moderate very fine and fine granular to weak very fine and fine subangular blocky. Soil organic matter (SOM) ranges from 2 to 3 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, slow runoff and increase 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):** Compaction layer is 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>> medium shrubs>
- 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):** Very little mortality or decadence is expected on this site. Mortality of shallow rooted grasses may occur due to extended periods of drought.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** Additional data is needed but is expected to be low and at a shallow depth.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** Annual production is 650 pounds per acre (728 Kg/ha) in a year with normal precipitation and temperatures. Perennial grasses produce 45-55 percent of the total production, forbs 10-20 percent and shrubs 30-40

percent.

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: Invasive species include cheatgrass, medusahead, Vulpia species, bulbous bluegrass and annual mustards.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All functional groups have the potential to reproduce in normal and favorable years.
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