

Ecological site R013XY015ID Steep Stony Mahogany 16-22 PZ CELE3-ARTRV/PSSPS

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

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** rills are rare on this site due to the coarse surface fragments. If they are present they are likely to occur immediately following a wildfire and in areas with less surface stones.
- Presence of water flow patterns:** water-flow patterns are rare on this site due to short slope lengths between rocks. When they occur they are short and disrupted by cool season grasses, tall shrubs and surface stones. They are not extensive.
- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** both are rare on this site. In areas where rills and flow patterns are present, a few pedestals may be expected.
- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** ranges from 20-40% but more data is needed.
- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** none.

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6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** does not occur on this site.
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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 3 feet following a significant run-off event. Coarse litter generally does not move. Litter can be trapped by surface stones.
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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 2 to 4 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):** structure ranges from weak and moderate very fine and fine granular to moderate coarse platy to weak fine and medium and moderate very fine and fine subangular blocky. Soil organic matter (SOM) ranges from 0.5 to 4 percent. Surface color is very dark brown to very dark grayish brown to grayish brown. The A or A1 horizon is typically 2 to 8 inches thick.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** the tree-like canopy of curleaf mountain mahogany intercepts raindrops and therefore reduces that impact on the soil surface. Bunchgrasses, especially deep-rooted perennials and surface stones slow run-off and increase infiltration. Tall shrubs accumulate snow in the interspaces.
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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: tree-like shrubs
- Sub-dominant: cool season deep-rooted bunchgrasses
- Other: tall shrubs
- Additional: perennial forbs-shallow rooted bunchgrasses
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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** mortality of curleaf mountain mahogany is usually the result of insect infestations or fire. Outbreaks of a curleaf mountain mahogany defoliating moth *Stamnodes animata*, occur at infrequent intervals. Two consecutive years of severe defoliation can cause curleaf mountain mahogany mortality.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** it ranges from 10-20% but additional data is needed.

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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** is 1950 pounds per acre (2184 kg/ha) in a year with normal precipitation and temperatures.
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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:** includes shade intolerant species such as cheatgrass (at lower elevations), bulbous bluegrass, whitetop, musk and scotch thistle, and diffuse and spotted knapweed when the canopy has been altered or removed.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** all functional groups have the potential to reproduce most years.
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