

Ecological site R023XY324OR SHALLOW SWALE 10-14 PZ

Accessed: 04/14/2026

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.

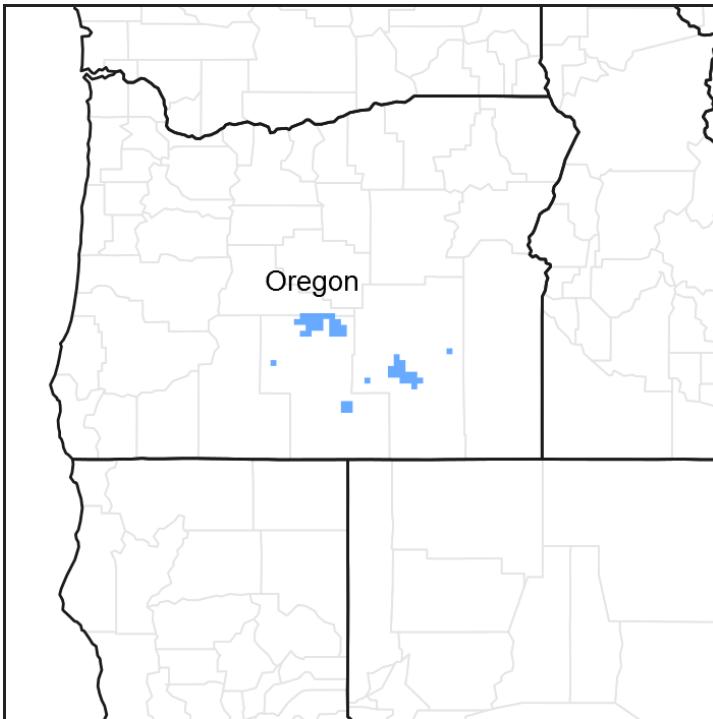


Figure 1. Mapped extent

Areas shown in blue indicate the maximum mapped extent of this ecological site. Other ecological sites likely occur within the highlighted areas. It is also possible for this ecological site to occur outside of highlighted areas if detailed soil survey has not been completed or recently updated.

Associated sites

R023XY202OR	SWALE 10-14 PZ Swale 10-14" PZ (no restrictive layer)
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Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	(1) <i>Artemisia arbuscula</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Poa nevadensis</i> (2) <i>Poa secunda</i>

Physiographic features

This site occurs in old lake beds and playas. Elevation ranges from 4400 to 5300 feet. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Lakebed (2) Playa
Elevation	4,400–5,300 ft
Slope	0–2%
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

Mean annual precipitation ranges from 10 to 14 inches. The majority of the precipitation occurs as snow during December through February. Ephemeral subsurface moisture flow augments this precipitation. The soil temperature regime is frigid. Mean annual air temperatures range from 43 to 45 degrees F. The average frost-free period ranges from 50 to 80 days. The period of primary plant growth is from April through June.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	80 days
Freeze-free period (average)	0 days
Precipitation total (average)	14 in

Influencing water features

Soil features

Soils of this site are generally very deep (greater than 60 inches) to bedrock and are somewhat poorly drained. There is a clay layer at 11 inches or less. Ponding on this site is possible between February through May. Surface thickness ranges from 2 to 11 inches. Surface soils are siltloams while subsurface soils are clays, clay loams and slit loams.

Soils on this site were formed in alluvium and lacustrine sediments. The available water holding capacity is about 11 inches. There is a slight potential for wind and water erosion. The shrink-swell potential is high.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Silt loam
Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Somewhat poorly drained
Permeability class	Moderate

Ecological dynamics

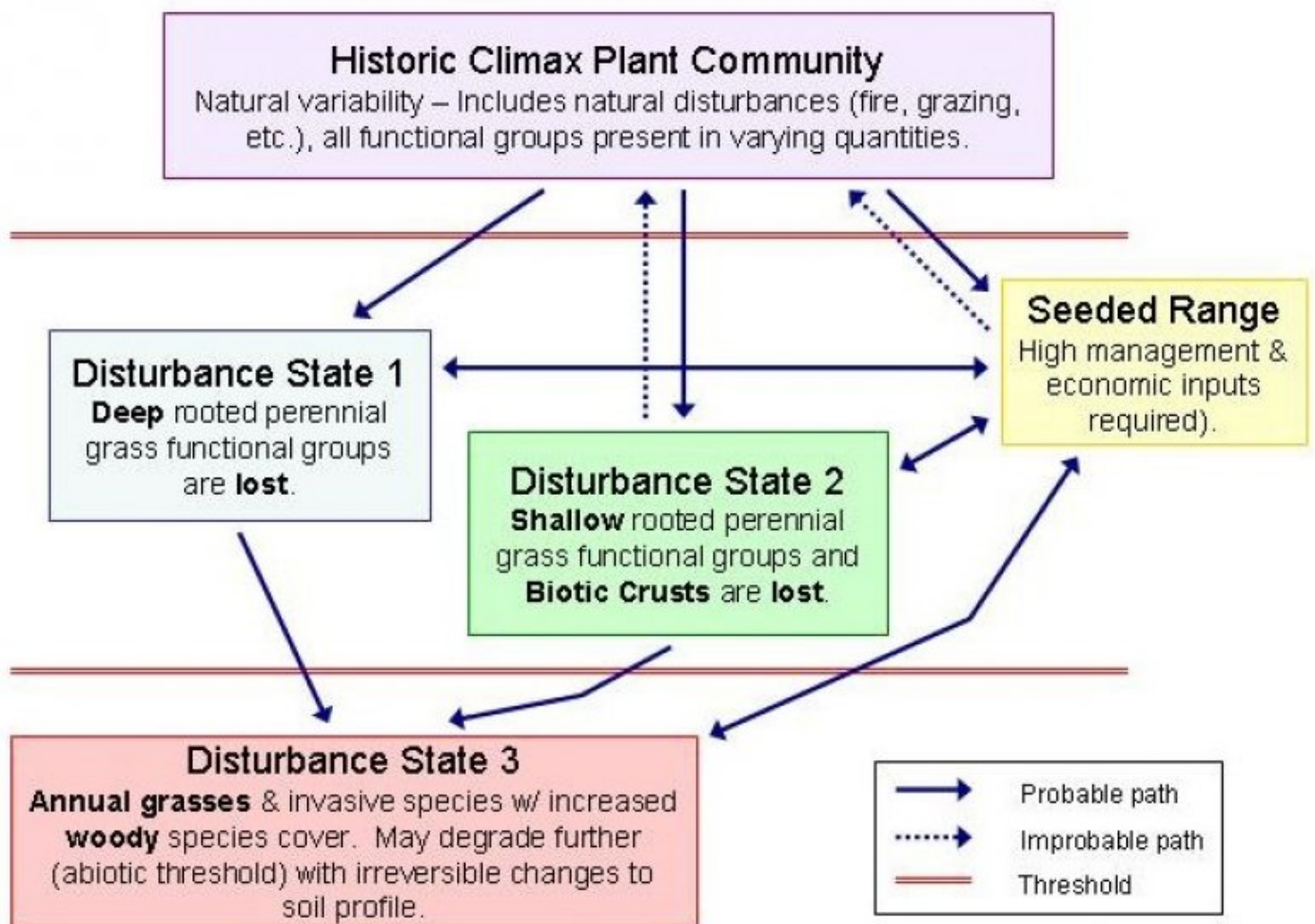
Range in Characteristics:

Nevada bluegrass decreases and Sandbergs Bluegrass increases on drier sites.

Response to Disturbance:

As the site deteriorates low sagebrush and Sandberg's bluegrass increases in plant density while Nevada bluegrass decreases. Upon further deterioration Sandberg bluegrass decreases.

State and transition model



GENERAL MODEL FOR COOL-SEASON BUNCHGRASS RANGELANDS

**State 1
Reference State**

**Community 1.1
Reference Plant Community**

The potential native plant community is dominated by low sagebrush, Nevada and Sandbergs bluegrasses. Vegetative composition is about 70 percent grasses, 10 percent forbs and 20 percent shrubs.

Table 5. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Lb/Acre)	Representative Value (Lb/Acre)	High (Lb/Acre)
Grass/Grasslike	350	490	630
Shrub/Vine	100	140	180
Forb	50	70	90
Total	500	700	900

Additional community tables

Table 6. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Lb/Acre)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	Perennial, shallow-rooted, bunchgrass			350–490	
	Sandberg bluegrass	POSE	<i>Poa secunda</i>	140–210	–
2	Perennial, moderately deep-rooted, bunchgrass			70–210	
	Thurber's needlegrass	ACTH7	<i>Achnatherum thurberianum</i>	35–105	–
	squirreltail	ELEL5	<i>Elymus elymoides</i>	35–105	–
5	Perennial, other			35–70	
	Idaho fescue	FEID	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	0–35	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	0–35	–
	basin wildrye	LECI4	<i>Leymus cinereus</i>	0–35	–
	Cusick's bluegrass	POCU3	<i>Poa cusickii</i>	0–35	–
Forb					
8	Perennial, other			14–70	
	agoseris	AGOSE	<i>Agoseris</i>	0–14	–
	onion	ALLIU	<i>Allium</i>	0–14	–
	pussytoes	ANTEN	<i>Antennaria</i>	0–14	–
	milkvetch	ASTRA	<i>Astragalus</i>	0–14	–
	hawksbeard	CREPI	<i>Crepis</i>	0–14	–
	fleabane	ERIGE2	<i>Erigeron</i>	0–14	–
	lupine	LUPIN	<i>Lupinus</i>	0–14	–
Shrub/Vine					
10	Evergreen			70–140	
	little sagebrush	ARAR8	<i>Artemisia arbuscula</i>	70–140	–
11	Deciduous			21–49	
	rubber rabbitbrush	ERNA10	<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>	14–35	–
	yellow rabbitbrush	CHVI8	<i>Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus</i>	7–14	–

Animal community

Livestock Grazing:

This site is suitable for grazing under a planned grazing system. Care should be taken not to graze when the site is wet.

Wildlife:

This site will offer food and cover to a variety of wildlife species. It is an important feeding area for non-game mammals and birds. Raptors will also use this site for feeding.

Hydrological functions

The soils of this site have low infiltration rates and low runoff potential. Soils of the site are in hydrologic group D.

Other information

Suitability for seeding this site is fair because of depth to claypan.

Contributors

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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)	Jeff Repp
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Date	08/17/2012
Approved by	Bob Gillaspy
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. **Number and extent of rills:** None

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:** None

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** None to very few pedestals

4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** 10-35%

5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** None

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** None, Slight wind erosion hazard

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

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** Moderately resistant to erosion: aggregate stability = 3-5

9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Very deep somewhat poorly drained silt loam soils (2-11 inches thick) with clay layer at 11 inches or less: Moderate OM (2-4%)

10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional**

groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff: Low to moderate ground cover (35-45%) and gentle slopes (0-2%) moderately limit rainfall impact and overland flow

11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** None
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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: Sandberg bluegrass + (Nevada bluegrass) > Low sagebrush > Bottlebrush squirreltail > Thurber needlegrass > other grasses > forbs > other shrubs

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Normal decadence and mortality expected
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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):** Favorable: 700, Normal: 500, Unfavorable: 300 lbs/acre/year at high RSI (HCPC)
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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: Perennial brush species will increase with deterioration of plant community. Cheatgrass invades sites that have lost deep rooted perennial grass functional groups.

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All species should be capable of reproducing annually
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