

Ecological site R025XY010ID CLAYPAN 12-16

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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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Date	07/03/2007
Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** Rills can occur on this site. If rills are present, they are likely to occur on slopes greater than 10 percent and immediately following a wildfire or high intensity storm. Rills are most likely to occur on soils with silt loam or clay loam surface texture.

- Presence of water flow patterns:** Water-flow patterns occur on this site. They are not extensive except on slopes greater than 15 percent. When they do occur, they are short and disrupted by cool season grasses, shrubs and surface stones.

- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Pedestals and/or terracettes are common on the site especially where flow patterns are present and the surface soils have a high clay content.

- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Ranges from 40-50 percent.

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

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6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** Wind-scoured, blowouts and/or deposition areas are usually not present in the HCPC.
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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.
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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 3 to 5.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):**
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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 perennial species, slow runoff and increase infiltration. Medium height shrubs accumulate some 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):** Compaction layer is not present. Do not mistake an increase in clay for a compaction layer. The site can develop a compaction layer due to the clay in the subsoil as a result of severe livestock use when the soils are wet.
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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 40-60 percent of the total production, forbs 15-25 percent and shrubs 25-35 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 plants include cheatgrass, medusahead, Vulpia species, bulbous bluegrass, annual mustards and rush skeletonweed.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All functional groups have the potential to reproduce in most years.
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