

Ecological site R026XF059CA Ashy Mountain Shoulders 16+ P.Z.

Last updated: 4/10/2024
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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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 026X–Carson Basin and Mountains

The area lies within western Nevada and eastern California, with about 69 percent being within Nevada, and 31 percent being within California. Almost all this area is in the Great Basin Section of the Basin and Range Province of the Intermontane Plateaus. Isolated north-south trending mountain ranges are separated by aggraded desert plains. The mountains are uplifted fault blocks with steep side slopes. Most of the valleys are drained by three major rivers flowing east across this MLRA. A narrow strip along the western border of the area is in the Sierra Nevada Section of the Cascade-Sierra Mountains Province of the Pacific Mountain System. The Sierra Nevada Mountains are primarily a large fault block that has been uplifted with a dominant tilt to the west. This structure leaves an impressive wall of mountains directly west of this area. This helps create a rain shadow affect to MLRA 26. Parts of this eastern face, but mostly just the foothills, mark the western boundary of this area. Elevations range from about 3,806 feet (1,160 meters) on the west shore of Pyramid Lake to 11,653 feet (3,552 meters) on the summit of Mount Patterson in the Sweetwater Mountains.

Valley areas are dominantly composed of Quaternary alluvial deposits with Quaternary playa or alluvial flat deposits often occupying the lowest valley bottoms in the internally drained valleys, and river deposited alluvium being dominant in externally drained valleys. Hills and mountains are dominantly Tertiary andesitic flows, breccias, ash flow tuffs, rhyolite tuffs or granodioritic rocks. Quaternary basalt flows are present in lesser amounts, and Jurassic and Triassic limestone and shale, and Precambrian limestone and dolomite are also present in very limited amounts. Also of limited extent are glacial till deposits along the east flank of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the result of alpine glaciation.

The average annual precipitation in this area is 5 to 36 inches (125 to 915 millimeters), increasing with elevation. Most of the rainfall occurs as high-intensity, convective storms in spring and autumn. Precipitation is mostly snow in winter. Summers are dry. The average annual temperature is 37 to 54 degrees F (3 to 12 degrees C). The freeze-free period averages 115 days and ranges from 40 to 195 days, decreasing in length with elevation.

The dominant soil orders in this MLRA are Aridisols and Mollisols. The soils in the area dominantly have a mesic soil temperature regime, an aridic or xeric soil moisture regime, and mixed or smectitic mineralogy. They generally are well drained, are clayey or loamy and commonly skeletal, and are very shallow to moderately deep.

This area supports shrub-grass vegetation characterized by big sagebrush. Low sagebrush and Lahontan sagebrush occur on some soils. Antelope bitterbrush, squirreltail, desert needlegrass, Thurber needlegrass, and Indian ricegrass are important associated plants. Green ephedra, Sandberg bluegrass, Anderson peachbrush, and several forb species also are common. Juniper-pinyon woodland is typical on mountain slopes. Jeffrey pine, lodgepole pine, white fir, and manzanita grow on the highest mountain slopes. Shadscale is the typical plant in the drier parts of the area. Sedges, rushes, and moisture-loving grasses grow on the wettest parts of the wet flood plains and terraces. Basin wildrye, alkali sacaton, saltgrass, buffaloberry, black greasewood, and rubber rabbitbrush grow on the drier sites that have a high concentration of salts.

Some of the major wildlife species in this area are mule deer, coyote, beaver, muskrat, jackrabbit, cottontail, raptors, pheasant, chukar, blue grouse, mountain quail, and mourning dove. The species of fish in the area include trout and catfish. The Lahontan cutthroat trout in the Truckee River is a threatened and endangered species.

LRU notes

The Bodie Hills LRU straddles the California-Nevada state boundary, just north of Mono Lake. The area is underlain by late Miocene age volcanic fields with upper Miocene and Pliocene sedimentary deposits over top. The youngest faults in the area are north and north-east striking. Extensive zones of hydrothermally altered rocks and large mineral deposits, including gold and silver rich veins, formed during hydrothermally active periods of the Miocene (John et al. 2015). A primary distinguishing factor between the Bodie Hills and other hills in MLRA 26 is the dominance of volcanic parent material. Elevations range from 2170 to 2650 meters and slopes typically range from 5 to 35 percent. FFD range from 75-105.

Ecological site concept

The Ashy Shallow Loam 14-16 P.Z. site occurs on mountain shoulders having smooth to slightly concave shape. The slopes are typically between 4 and 50 percent at elevations between 6,600 to 9,500 feet. The soil is shallow with over 60 percent gravels in the subsurface. The dominant vegetation is mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vasyana*), needlegrass (*Achnatherum*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Associated sites

R026XF058CA	Ashy Loamy Slope 16+ P.Z.
R026XY028NV	MOUNTAIN RIDGE
R026XY108NV	ASHY SLOPE 14-16 P.Z.

Similar sites

R026XY052NV	SHALLOW LOAM 16+ P.Z. Mountain Pocket [HEKI2 dominant grass; different landscape position; CAREX major species]
R026XY038NV	LOAMY SLOPE 14+ P.Z. Loamy Slope 14+
R026XY075NV	GRAVELLY MOUNTAIN SHOULDERS 16+ P.Z. Mountain Loam [HEKI2 dominant grass; different landscape position; CAREX minor species]

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	(1) <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>vaseyana</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Achnatherum</i> (2) <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>

Physiographic features

This site occurs on mountain shoulders having smooth to slightly concave shape. Slopes range from 4 to 30 percent, but slopes gradients of 4 to 8 percent are common. Elevations are 8,200 to 10,200 feet.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Mountain
Elevation	8,200–10,200 ft
Slope	4–30%

Climatic features

The climate on this site is subhumid-continental, characterized by cold, moist winters, and cool dry summers. Average annual precipitation is 16 to 20 inches. Mean annual air temperature is 42 to 45 degrees F. The average growing season is about 30 to 60 days.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	60 days
Freeze-free period (average)	
Precipitation total (average)	20 in

Influencing water features

There are no influencing water features associated with this site.

Soil features

The soils are typically very deep and well drained formed from colluvium and residuum derived from andesite or tuff breccia. The soil profile typically has significant amounts of volcanic glass in the soil profile. A mollic epipedon occurs from the soil surface to more than 18 inches.

Soils series correlated to this ecological site include Hardshoulder.

Ecological dynamics

As ecological condition declines, big sagebrush, snowberry and other woody plants increase in prevalence as needlegrasses and other perennial grasses decline in the understory.

Fire Ecology:

Presettlement fire return intervals in mountain big sagebrush communities varied from 15 to 25 years. Plants are readily killed in all seasons, even light severity fires.

Mountain big sagebrush is highly susceptible to injury from fire. It is often top-killed by fire and will not resprout. Western needlegrass is moderately damaged by fire. The recovery time is between 3 and 5 years. Little specific information is available on adaptations of Letterman's needlegrass to fire. It is morphologically similar to Columbia needlegrass, which is only slightly to moderately damaged by fire. Season of burn affects the plant's ability to survive a fire. Post-fire regeneration is through seeding and tillering. Prairie Junegrass is reported as showing little or no damage to moderate damage from fire. The small stature of prairie Junegrass and coarse textured foliage aid in protection of these meristematic tissue areas. Possessing coarsely textured foliage and a small clump size also limits the potential for fire damage.

State and Transition Model Narrative Group 13

This is a text description of the states, phases, transitions, and community pathways possible in the State and Transition model for the MLRA 26 Disturbance Response Group 13. Sites included in this DRG are:

R026XY038NV, R026XY108NV, R026XY075NV, R026XY056NV, R026XY052NV, R026XY112NV, R026XY110NV, R026XF059CA.

Reference State 1.0:

The Reference State 1.0 represents the natural range of variability under pristine conditions. The reference state has three general community phases: a shrub-grass dominant phase, a perennial grass dominant phase and a shrub dominant phase. State dynamics are maintained by interactions between climatic patterns and disturbance regimes. Negative feedbacks enhance ecosystem resilience and contribute to the stability of the state. These include the presence of all structural and functional groups, fine fuel loads, and retention of organic matter and nutrients. Plant community phase changes are primarily driven by fire, periodic drought and/or insect or disease attack.

Community Phase 1.1:

Mountain big sagebrush and perennial bunchgrasses co-dominate. Western needlegrass is the dominant grass species, however there may be several grass species present. Grass, shrub, and forb diversity is high.

Community Phase Pathway 1.1a, from phase 1.1 to 1.2:

Fire would decrease or eliminate the overstory of sagebrush and allow perennial bunchgrasses and forbs to dominate the site. Fires are small, high-severity, stand replacement fires that typically occur from April through October. Patchy fires create a sagebrush/grass mosaic. High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover and leads to an early- to mid-seral community, dominated by grasses and forbs.

Community Phase Pathway 1.1b, from phase 1.1 to 1.3:

Time and lack of disturbance such as fire or drought allow for an increase in mountain big sagebrush. Excessive herbivory and/or long-term drought may also reduce perennial understory.

Community Phase 1.2:

This community phase is characteristic of a post-disturbance, early- to mid-seral community. Western needlegrass, bluegrass and other perennial grasses dominate. Sprouting shrubs such as green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*), green ephedra (*Ephedra viridis*), spineless horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*) may be a significant component. Mountain big sagebrush is a minor component. Forbs may be a significant component.

Community Phase Pathway 1.2a, from phase 1.2 to 1.1:

Time and lack of disturbance allows sagebrush to reestablish.

Community Phase 1.3:

Mountain big sagebrush becomes dominant in the absence of disturbance. Western needlegrass and other perennial grasses are reduced. Bluegrass may increase. Singleleaf pinyon and/or Utah juniper may be present.

Community Phase Pathway 1.3a, from phase 1.3 to 1.1:

Low severity fire kills some sagebrush and results in a patchwork of shrubs and grasses.

Community Phase Pathway 1.3b, from phase 1.3 to 1.2:

High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover, leading to early- to mid-seral community.

T1A: Transition from Reference State 1.0 to Current Potential State 2.0:

Trigger: This transition is caused by the introduction of non-native annual weeds, such as cheatgrass, mustard and Russian thistle (*Salsola* spp.).

Slow variables: Over time, the annual non-native plants will increase within the community decreasing organic matter inputs from deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses resulting in reductions in soil water availability for perennial bunchgrasses.

Threshold: Any amount of introduced non-native species causes an immediate decrease in the resilience of the site. Annual non-native species cannot be easily removed from the system and have the potential to significantly alter disturbance regimes from their historic range of variation.

T2A: Transition from Reference State 1.0 to Shrub State 3.0:

Trigger: Inappropriately managed, long-term grazing of perennial bunchgrasses during the growing season would favor shrubs and initiate transition to Community Phase 3.1. Fire would cause a transition to Community Phase 3.2.

Slow variables: Long-term decrease in deep-rooted perennial grass density resulting in a decrease in organic matter inputs and subsequent soil water decline.

Threshold: Loss of deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses changes spatial and temporal nutrient cycling and nutrient redistribution and reduces soil organic matter.

Current Potential State 2.0:

This state is similar to the Reference State 1.0. Ecological function has not changed, however the resiliency of the state has been reduced by the presence of invasive weeds. This state has the same three general community phases. Negative feedbacks enhance ecosystem resilience and contribute to the stability of the state. These include the presence of all structural and functional groups, fine fuel loads and retention of organic matter and nutrients. Positive feedbacks decrease ecosystem resilience and stability of the state. These include the non-natives high seed output, persistent seed bank, rapid growth rate, ability to cross pollinate and adaptations for seed dispersal. Additionally, the presence of highly flammable, non-native species reduces State resilience because these species can promote fire where historically fire has been infrequent leading to positive feedbacks that further the degradation of the system.

Community Phase 2.1:

Mountain big sagebrush and perennial bunchgrasses co-dominate. Western needlegrass is the dominant grass species; however, there may be several grass species present. Grass, shrub, and forb diversity is high. Annual non-native species present.

Community Phase Pathway 2.1a, from phase 2.1 to 2.2:

Fire would decrease or eliminate the overstory of sagebrush and allow perennial bunchgrasses and forbs to dominate the site. Fires would typically be small, high-severity, stand replacing, and patchy due to fine fuel loads. Patchy fires create a sagebrush/grass mosaic. High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover and leads to an early- to mid-seral community, dominated by grasses and forbs.

Community Phase Pathway 2.1b, from phase 2.1 to 2.3:

Time, long-term drought, grazing management that favors shrubs or combinations of these allows the sagebrush overstory to increase and dominate the site, causing a reduction in perennial bunchgrasses.

Community Phase 2.2:

This community phase is characteristic of a post-disturbance, early- to mid-seral community. Western needlegrass, bluegrass and other perennial grasses dominate. Sprouting shrubs such as green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*), green ephedra (*Ephedra viridis*), spineless horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*) may be a significant component. Mountain big sagebrush is a minor component. Forbs may be a significant component. Annual non-native species are present.

Community Phase Pathway 2.2a, from phase 2.2 to 2.1:

Absence of disturbance over time allows the sagebrush to recover. This may be combined with grazing management that favors shrubs.

Community Phase 2.3:

Mountain big sagebrush increases and the perennial understory is reduced. Squirreltail and bluegrasses may increase. Annual non-native species are present.

Community Phase Pathway 2.3a, from phase 2.3 to 2.1:

Low severity fire kills some sagebrush and results in a patchwork of shrubs and grasses. Other disturbances/practices include brush management with minimal soil disturbance to reduce sagebrush cover.

Community Phase Pathway 2.3b, from phase 2.3 to 2.2

High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover leading to early/mid-seral community.

T2A: Transition from Current Potential State 2.0 to Shrub State 3.0:

Trigger: Inappropriately managed, long-term grazing of perennial bunchgrasses during the growing season would favor shrubs and initiate transition to Community Phase 3.1. Fire would cause a transition to Community Phase 3.2.

Slow variables: Long-term decrease in deep-rooted perennial grass density resulting in a decrease in organic matter inputs and subsequent soil water decline.

Threshold: Loss of deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses changes spatial and temporal nutrient cycling and nutrient redistribution, and reduces soil organic matter.

Shrub State 3.0:

This state has two community phases: a mountain big sagebrush dominated phase and a rabbitbrush dominated phase. This state is a product of many years of heavy grazing during time periods harmful to perennial bunchgrasses. Squirreltail and bluegrasses will increase with a reduction in deep-rooted perennial bunchgrass competition and become the dominant grass. Sagebrush dominates the overstory and rabbitbrush may be a significant component. Sagebrush canopy cover is high and sagebrush may be decadent, reflecting stand maturity and lack of seedling establishment due to competition with mature plants. The shrub overstory and shallow-rooted understory dominate site resources such that soil water, nutrient capture, nutrient cycling and soil organic matter are temporally and spatially redistributed.

Community Phase 3.1:

Mountain big sagebrush dominates the overstory. Western needlegrass and other deep-rooted perennial grasses are reduced or missing. Bluegrasses may dominate the understory. Bare ground may be significant. Annual non-native species are present.

Community Phase Pathway 3.1a, from phase 3.1 to 3.2:

Fire reduces or eliminates the overstory of sagebrush.

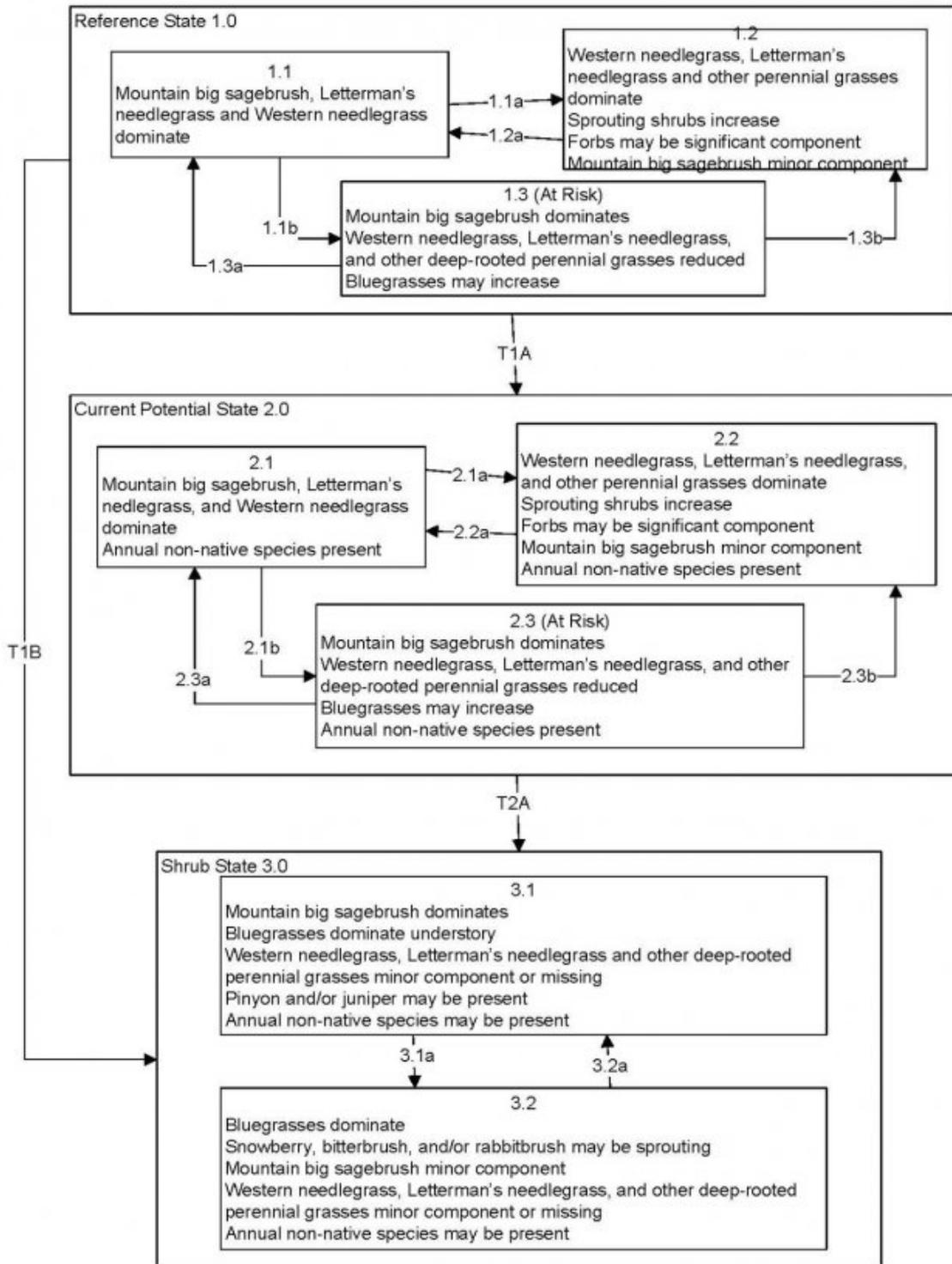
Community Phase 3.2:

Bluegrasses dominate the site. Rabbitbrush, bitterbrush, horsebrush, ephedra, and/or snowberry may be sprouting. Mountain big sagebrush is a minor component. Annual non-native species increasing and may be co-dominant in the understory.

Community Phase Pathway 3.2a, from phase 3.2 to 3.1:

Absence of disturbance over time allows sagebrush and other shrubs to recover.

State and transition model



MLRA 26
Group 13
Ashy Mountain Shoulders 16-20"
R026XF059CA
KEY

Reference State 1.0 Community Phase Pathways

1.1a: Low severity fire creates sagebrush/grass mosaic; high severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover and leads to early/mid-seral community, dominated by grasses and forbs.

1.1b: Time and lack of disturbance such as fire or drought. Excessive herbivory and/or long-term drought may also reduce perennial understory.

1.2a: Time and lack of disturbance allows for shrub regeneration.

1.3a: Low severity fire creates sagebrush/grass mosaic.

1.3b: High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover leading to early/mid-seral community.

Transition T1A: Introduction of non-native annual species.

Transition T2B: Inappropriate grazing management (from 1.3 to 3.1).

Current Potential State 2.0 Community Phase Pathways

2.1a: Low severity fire creates sagebrush/grass mosaic; high severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover and leads to early/mid-seral community dominated by grasses and forbs; non-native annual species present.

2.1b: Time and lack of disturbance. Inappropriate grazing management and/or long-term drought may also reduce perennial understory.

2.2a: Time and lack of disturbance allows for regeneration of sagebrush.

2.3a: Low severity fire creates sagebrush/grass mosaic.

2.3b: High severity fire significantly reduces sagebrush cover leading to early/mid-seral community.

Transition T2A: Inappropriate grazing management (to 3.1), or high severity fire (from 2.3 to 3.2).

Shrub State 3.0 Community Phase Pathways

3.1a: Fire.

3.2a: Time and lack of disturbance.

State 1
Reference Plant Community

Community 1.1

Reference Plant Community

The reference plant community is dominated by a stunted form of mountain big sagebrush and needlegrasses. Potential vegetative composition is about 60% grasses, 10% forbs and 30% shrubs. Approximate ground cover (basal and crown) is 35 to 50 percent.

Table 4. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Lb/Acre)	Representative Value (Lb/Acre)	High (Lb/Acre)
Grass/Grasslike	300	450	600
Shrub/Vine	60	90	120
Forb	40	60	80
Total	400	600	800

Additional community tables

Table 5. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Lb/Acre)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	Primary Perennial Grasses/Grasslikes			300–420	
	Letterman's needlegrass	ACLE9	<i>Achnatherum lettermanii</i>	135–180	–
	western needlegrass	ACOCO	<i>Achnatherum occidentale</i> ssp. <i>occidentale</i>	135–180	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	30–60	–
2	Secondary Perennial Grasses/Grasslikes			30–60	
	Indian ricegrass	ACHY	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	3–18	–
	pine needlegrass	ACPI2	<i>Achnatherum pinetorum</i>	3–18	–
	Douglas' sedge	CADO2	<i>Carex douglasii</i>	3–18	–
	squirreltail	ELEL5	<i>Elymus elymoides</i>	3–18	–
	needle and thread	HECO26	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>	3–18	–
	basin wildrye	LECI4	<i>Leymus cinereus</i>	3–18	–
	mat muhly	MURI	<i>Muhlenbergia richardsonis</i>	3–18	–
	bluegrass	POA	<i>Poa</i>	3–18	–
Forb					
3	Perennial Forbs			12–60	
	milkvetch	ASTRA	<i>Astragalus</i>	3–12	–
	castilla	CASTI	<i>Castilla</i>	3–12	–
	rosy pussypaws	CIRO2	<i>Cistanthe rosea</i>	3–12	–
	tapertip hawksbeard	CRAC2	<i>Crepis acuminata</i>	3–12	–
	James' cryptantha	CRCIA	<i>Cryptantha cinerea</i> var. <i>abortiva</i>	3–12	–
	buckwheat	ERIOG	<i>Eriogonum</i>	3–12	–
	snow buckwheat	ERNI2	<i>Eriogonum niveum</i>	3–12	–
	bastardsage	ERWRS	<i>Eriogonum wrightii</i> var. <i>subscaposum</i>	3–12	–
	silvery lupine	LUAR3	<i>Lupinus argenteus</i>	3–12	–
	phlox	PHLOX	<i>Phlox</i>	3–12	–
Shrub/Vine					
4	Primary Shrubs			60–120	
	mountain big sagebrush	ARTRV	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>vaseyana</i>	60–120	–
5	Secondary Shrubs			12–48	
	little sagebrush	ARAR8	<i>Artemisia arbuscula</i>	3–12	–
	yellow rabbitbrush	CHVI8	<i>Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus</i>	3–12	–
	slender buckwheat	ERMI4	<i>Eriogonum microthecum</i>	3–12	–
	currant	RIBES	<i>Ribes</i>	3–12	–
	roundleaf snowberry	SYRO	<i>Symphoricarpos rotundifolius</i>	3–12	–
	spineless horsebrush	TECA2	<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>	3–12	–

Animal community

Livestock Interpretations:

Western needlegrass has a spreading and deeply penetrating root system, which makes it resistant to trampling.

Letterman's needlegrass begins growth early in the year and remains green throughout the relatively long growing season, thus, making it valuable forage for livestock. Rapid seasonal development of prairie Junegrass provides good, early-spring forage for livestock. It also provides suitable forage in the fall after curing. Mountain big sagebrush is eaten by domestic livestock but has long been considered to be of low palatability, and a competitor to more desirable species.

Wildlife Interpretations:

Mountain big sagebrush is highly preferred and nutritious winter forage for mule deer and elk.

Sage-grouse: Sagebrush-grassland communities provide critical sage-grouse breeding and nesting habitats.

Meadows surrounded by sagebrush may be used as feeding and strutting grounds. Sagebrush is a crucial component of their diet year-round, and sage-grouse select sagebrush almost exclusively for cover. Sage-grouse prefer mountain big sagebrush and Wyoming big sagebrush communities to basin big sagebrush communities.

Prairie Junegrass is also utilized by bighorn sheep, mountain goats, elk, and mule deer in the spring and in fall after curing. Although, due to scattered distribution, prairie Junegrass does not maintain a significant role in the diet of most wildlife species. The short stature and scattered distribution of prairie Junegrass provide minimum coverage for larger birds and mammals.

Other products

Native Americans used big sagebrush leaves and branches for medicinal teas, and the leaves as a fumigant. Bark was woven into mats, bags and clothing.

Other information

Letterman's needlegrass has been used successfully in revegetating mine spoils. This species also has good potential for erosion control. Prairie Junegrass can recolonize areas that have been subjected to severe water stress. Recolonization by prairie Junegrass provides protective cover to help subsequent post-drought, successional plant species growth

Type locality

Location 1: Mono County, CA	
Latitude	38° 12' 58"
Longitude	118° 58' 83"
General legal description	Bodie Hills, approximately 4 miles northwest of Bodie, CA

Other references

Fire Effect Information System (Online; <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/>).

USDA-NRCS Plants Database (Online; <http://plants.usda.gov/>).

Contributors

A. Mushrush
Tamzen Stringham
Patti Novak-Echenique

Approval

Kendra Moseley, 4/10/2024

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)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	05/05/2024
Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. **Number and extent of rills:**

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:**

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:**

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

5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:**

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:**

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

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

9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):**

10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:**

11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):**

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:

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):**

14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):**

15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):**

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:**

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:**
