

## **Ecological site R026XY034NV WASH 8-12 P.Z.**

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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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Date	07/12/2012
Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

### Indicators

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

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2. **Presence of water flow patterns:** Waterflow patterns are few to common depending on frequency of flooding.  

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

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4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Bare Ground  $\pm$  20% depending on amount of surface rock fragments.  

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

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

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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Fine litter (foliage of grasses and annual & perennial forbs) only expected to move during periods of flooding by adjacent streams. Persistent litter (large

woody material) will remain in place except during large flooding events.

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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):** Soil stability values will range from 4 to 6. (To be field tested.)
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Soil surface structure is platy or massive. Soil surface colors are light grays and the soils have ochric epipedons. Organic matter can range from 2 to 3 percent for much of the upper 20 inches.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** Deep-rooted, perennial, bunchgrasses slow runoff and increase infiltration. Tall stature and relatively coarse foliage of basin wildrye and associated litter break raindrop impact and provide opportunity for snow catch and snow accumulation on site.
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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):** None – Massive subsurface horizons are not to be interpreted as compaction.
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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: Tall-statured, deep-rooted, cool season, perennial bunchgrasses

Sub-dominant: relatively short-statured, deep-rooted, cool season, perennial bunchgrasses > tall shrubs > deep-rooted, cool season perennial forbs > rhizomatous, cool season, perennial grasses > fibrous, shallow-rooted, cool season, annual and perennial forbs.

Other:

Additional:

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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Dead leaf material is abundant in older basin wildrye plants. Shrubs may also display decadence with up to 30% of the canopy.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):** Under canopy and between plant interspaces (30-50%) and litter depth is  $\pm$  1 inch.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** For normal or average growing season (through June)  $\pm$  1000 lbs/ac; Favorable years 800 lbs/ac and unfavorable years 600 lbs/ac
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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: Potential invaders include cheatgrass, annual mustards, thistle, annual kochia, pigweed, tall whitetop and salt cedar.
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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All functional groups should reproduce in most years.
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