

Ecological site R040XA115AZ Sandy Wash 10"-13" 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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Approved by	S. Cassady
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- 1. Number and extent of rills:** Rills are present on this site but are well vegetated and not eroding.

- 2. Presence of water flow patterns:** Highly variable, function of upland overland flow input. Water flow paths are braided channels which change with a frequent flooding regime.

- 3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** No accululated or erosional pedestals on most perennial plants. Woody debris dams form around larger shrubs and trees from frequent flooding.

- 4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** 15-40%

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

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

- 7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Highly variable, function of upland

overland flow input.

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** Expect ratings of 1-3 across site.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Weak platy to granular; color is 7.5-10YR6/4 dry; 7.5-10YR4/4 moist, thickness to 16 inches.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** Canopy 60-70%; 10-30 perenial grass, 40% shrubs, 10% subshrubs, 10% perennial forbs, and 5-10% trees. Cover is well dispersed throughout 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
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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: Perennial grasses = trees > subshrubs > perennial forbs > succulents (Not: annual forbs and grasses may be greater than subshrubs in El Nino years.)

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** 20-30% canopy mortality in trees and shrubs; 90-100% mortality of perennial grasses.
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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):** 517 lbs/ac unfavorable precipitation, 1800 lbs/ac normal precipitation; 2910 lbs/ac favorable precipitation.
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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:** mesquite, blue paloverde, retama, big bursage, burrobrush, buffleggrass, London Rocket, malta

starthistle, desert broom Bermuda grass

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** Not impaired for shrubs, drought impaired for perennial grasses and forbs.
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