

Ecological site R042BE063NM Gyp Upland, Cool Desert Grassland

Accessed: 05/13/2024

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.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

| Tree | Not specified |
|------------|---------------|
| Shrub | Not specified |
| Herbaceous | Not specified |

Physiographic features

This site usually occurs on alluvial fans, basins, valley floors, adjacent terraces or bajadas. They formed in loamy, calcareous, and gypsiferous sediments. Slopes range from 1 to 15 percent, but average 6 to 7 percent. Elevations range from 4,500 to 5,500 feet above sea level.

| Landforms | (1) Plain(2) Basin floor(3) Hill |
|--------------------|--|
| Flooding frequency | None |
| Ponding frequency | None |
| Elevation | 1,372–1,676 m |
| Slope | 1–12% |
| Ponding depth | 193 cm |
| Water table depth | 193 cm |
| Aspect | Aspect is not a significant factor |

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Climatic features

This site has an arid climate with distinct seasonal temperature variations and large annual and diurnal temperature changes characteristic of a continental climate.

Precipitation averages 8 to 10 inches annually. Deviations of 4 inches or more from the average are quite common. Fifty percent of the precipitation is received from July to November, which is the predominant growing season of native plants. Summer precipitation is characterized by high-intensity, short-duration rainstorms. Winter precipitation averages less than one-half inch per month, usually in the form of rain. There are occasional snowstorms of short duration.

Temperatures vary from a mean monthly average of 77 F in July to 34 F in January, with a maximum of 104 F and

a minimum of -10 F. The average last killing frost in spring is April 15, and the average first killing frost in fall is October 28. Frost-free season averages 185 days. Temperatures are conducive to native grass and forb growth from March through November.

Spring winds of 15 to 40 miles per hour are common from February to June. These winds increase transpiration rates of native plants and rapidly dry the surface soil. Small soil particles are often displaced by the wind near the soil surface. This results in structural damage to native plants, especially young seedlings.

Climate data was obtained from http://www.wrcc.sage.dri.edu/summary/climsmnm.html using 50% probability for freeze-free and frost-free seasons using 28.5 degrees F and 32.5 degrees F, respectively.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

| Frost-free period (average) | 165 days |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Freeze-free period (average) | 213 days |
| Precipitation total (average) | 254 mm |

Influencing water features

This site is not influenced by water from a wetland or stream.

Soil features

The soils are deep and well drained. Surface texture are loamy very fine sand, loamy sand, sandy loam or loam. The underlying material is a dense layers of soft or cemented gypsum material and gypsiferous earth at depths less than 8 inches may occur. The gypsum amounts range from 50 to 70 percent with 7 to 30 percent carbonates. These soils are droughty.

Areas of gypsum materials commonly outcrop to the surface as inclusions of raw gypsumland, which are void of vegetation and not part of the ecological site. In the lower part of the profile the semi indurated gypsum and caliche.

Minimum and maximum values listed below represent the characteristic soi for this site.

Characteristic soils: Yesum Campana Saido

| Surface texture | (1) Gypsiferous loam(2) Gypsiferous fine sandy loam(3) Gypsiferous loamy sand |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Family particle size | (1) Loamy |
| Drainage class | Well drained to excessively drained |
| Permeability class | Moderately slow to moderately rapid |
| Soil depth | 25–152 cm |
| Surface fragment cover <=3" | 0–5% |
| Surface fragment cover >3" | 0% |
| Available water capacity (0-101.6cm) | 0–10.16 cm |

Table 4. Representative soil features

| Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm) | 15–30% |
|--|--------------|
| Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm) | 4–8 mmhos/cm |
| Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm) | 2–4 |
| Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm) | 7.4–8.4 |
| Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified) | 2–20% |
| Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified) | 0% |

Ecological dynamics

The plant, soil, air, water relationship is poor. The site has a droughty appearance because of the soils inability to support a dense stand of vegetation. If unprotected by plant cover or organic residue, the soil becomes easily wind blown and water eroded.

State and transition model

Ecosystem states

| 1. Historic Climax Plant Community |
|---------------------------------------|
| |

State 1 submodel, plant communities



State 1 Historic Climax Plant Community

Community 1.1 Historic Climax Plant Community

This is a mixed grassland-shrub site with occasional scrub one-seed juniper trees scattered throughout the site. Forbs such as coldenia and cryptantha comprise an important part of the site. Other grasses that could appear on this site include: threeawn spp., needle-and-thread, New Mexico feathergrass, ring muhly, mat muhly, sandhill muhly, burrograss, fluffgrass, and Tridens spp. Other woody plants include: cliff fendlerbrush, cactus spp., rabbitbrush, broom dalea, sand sagebrush, and wolfberry. Other forbs include: threadleaf groundsel, globemallow, trailing four o'clock, bladderpod, and pricklyleaf dogweed.

Table 5. Annual production by plant type

| Plant Type | Low (Kg/Hectare) | Representative Value (Kg/Hectare) | High (Kg/Hectare) |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Grass/Grasslike | 314 | 510 | 706 |
| Forb | 90 | 146 | 202 |
| Shrub/Vine | 45 | 73 | 101 |
| Total | 449 | 729 | 1009 |

Table 6. Ground cover

| Tree foliar cover | 0% | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|
| Shrub/vine/liana foliar cover | 0% | | | | |
| Grass/grasslike foliar cover | | | | | |
| Forb foliar cover | 0% | | | | |
| Non-vascular plants | 0% | | | | |
| Biological crusts | 0% | | | | |
| Litter | 10% | | | | |
| Surface fragments >0.25" and <=3" | 0% | | | | |
| Surface fragments >3" | 0% | | | | |
| Bedrock | 0% | | | | |
| Water | 0% | | | | |
| Bare ground | 62% | | | | |

Figure 5. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month). NM2321, R042XA063NM-Gyp Upland-Warm Season Plant-HCPC. SD-1 HCPC Warm Season Plant Community.

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 25 | 30 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Figure 6. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month). NM2322, R042XA063NM-Gyp Upland-Cool Season Plant HCPC. SD-1 Loamy HCPC Cool Season Plant Community.

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | Мау | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0 | 5 | 20 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 0 |

Additional community tables

Table 7. Community 1.1 plant community composition

| Group | Common Name | Symbol | Scientific Name | Annual Production (Kg/Hectare) | Foliar Cover (%) | | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Grass | Grasslike | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Warm Season | | | 183–256 | | | | | | |
| | alkali sacaton | SPAI | Sporobolus airoides | 183–256 | - | | | | | |
| 2 | Warm Season | | | 73–146 | | | | | | |
| | black grama | BOER4 | Bouteloua eriopoda | 73–146 | _ | | | | | |
| | bush muhly MUPO | | Muhlenbergia porteri | 73–146 | - | | | | | |
| 3 | Warm Season | | | 37–73 | | | | | | |
| | gypsum grama BOBR | | Bouteloua breviseta | 37–73 | _ | | | | | |
| | blue grama | BOGR2 | Bouteloua gracilis | 37–73 | - | | | | | |

| 4 | Warm Season | 37–73 | | | |
|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|
| | James' galleta | PLJA | Pleuraphis jamesii | 37–73 | _ |
| 5 | Warm Season | | | 22–52 | |
| | spike dropseed | SPCO4 | Sporobolus contractus | 22–52 | _ |
| | sand dropseed | SPCR | Sporobolus cryptandrus | 22–52 | _ |
| | gyp dropseed | SPNE | Sporobolus nealleyi | 22–52 | - |
| 6 | Warm Season | | | 22–52 | |
| | Graminoid (grass or grass-like) | 2GRAM | Graminoid (grass or grass-like) | 22–52 | - |
| Shrub | /Vine | | | | |
| 7 | Shrub | | | 22–52 | |
| | fourwing saltbush | ATCA2 | Atriplex canescens | 22–52 | _ |
| 8 | Shrub | | | 8–22 | |
| | mormon tea | EPVI | Ephedra viridis | 8–22 | _ |
| 9 | Shrub | | | 8–22 | |
| | winterfat | KRLA2 | Krascheninnikovia lanata | 8–22 | - |
| 10 | Shrub | | | 8–22 | |
| | Bigelow sage | ARBI3 | Artemisia bigelovii | 8–22 | _ |
| | curved sicklegrass | PAIN | Parapholis incurva | 8–22 | _ |
| 11 | Shrub | | | 8–37 | |
| | уисса | YUCCA | Yucca | 8–37 | _ |
| 12 | Shrub | | | 8–37 | |
| | Forb (herbaceous, not grass nor grass-like) | 2FORB | Forb (herbaceous, not grass nor grass-like) | 8–37 | - |
| Forb | | - | • | | |
| 13 | Forb | | | 37–73 | |
| | cryptantha | CRYPT | Cryptantha | 37–73 | _ |
| | buckwheat | ERIOG | Eriogonum | 37–73 | _ |
| | dwarf mentzelia | MEPU3 | Mentzelia pumila | 37–73 | _ |
| | woody crinklemat | TICAC | Tiquilia canescens var. canescens | 37–73 | - |
| | hairy crinklemat | ТІНІ | Tiquilia hispidissima | 37–73 | _ |
| 14 | Forb | | | 37–73 | |
| | Forb (herbaceous, not grass nor grass-like) | 2FORB | Forb (herbaceous, not grass nor grass-like) | 37–73 | _ |

Animal community

This ecological site provides habitats which support a resident animal community that is characterized by coyote, black-tailed jackrabbit, desert cottontail, white-tailed antelope squirrel, Botta's pocket gopher, banner-tailed kangaroo rat, southern plains woodrat, burrowing owl, scaled quail, meadowlark, and brown towhee. These sites may be utilized by wintering flocks of chipping, rufous-crowned, and black-chinned sparrows. Note: No animal community narrative exists within old range site decription.

Hydrological functions

The runoff curve numbers are determined by field investigations using hydraulic cover conditions and hydrologic soil groups.

Hydrologic Interpretations Soil Series Hydrologic Group Yesum b Campana b Saido b

Recreational uses

This site has limited potential for recreational use.

Wood products

This site has no potential for wood products.

Other products

This site is well suited for year-long grazing use by cattle, sheep, horses, antelope, deer, and burros.

Other information

Guide to Suggested Initial Stocking Rate Acres per Animal Unit Month Similarity Index-----Ac/AUM 100 - 76------3.2 - 4.2 75 - 51------4.1 - 6.4

75 – 51-----4.1 – 6.4 50 – 26-----6.3 – 12.7 25 – 0-----12.7 +

Other references

Other References:

Data collection for this site was done in conjunction with the progressive soil surveys within the Southern Desertic Basins, Plains and Mountains, Major Land Resource Area 42, of New Mexico. This site has been mapped and correlated with soils in the following soil surveys. Valencia, Socorro and Bernalillo.

Characteristic Soils Are:

Contributors

Brandon Bestelmeyer Don Sylvester Michael Carpinelli Santiago Misquez

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 | |
| Approved by | |

| 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 annualproduction):
- 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: