

Ecological site R054XY033ND Thin Claypan

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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	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

- Number and extent of rills:** Rills should not be present.

- Presence of water flow patterns:** Broken, irregular in appearance or discontinuous with debris dams.

- Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Not evident on slopes < 8%. Erosional pedestals may be present with small terracettes present at debris dams on slopes >9%.

- Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Bare ground is 40 to 60%. "Slick" spots of varying size are a naturally occurring on this site and would be present in the reference state.

- Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** Active gullies should not be present.

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

- Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** Little to no plant litter movement. If litter

movement occurs, it is only for a short distance on “slick” spots.

8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** Plant cover and litter is at 35% or greater of soil surface and maintains soil surface integrity. Stability class anticipated to be 3 or greater.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Use soil series description for depth, color and structure of A-horizon.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** Moderately sparse plant canopy (30 to 50% maximum), very slow to slow infiltration rates, and the high amount of bare ground contribute to a naturally high runoff rate even in the reference state.
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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):** No compaction layer would be expected except for the naturally occurring pan within 6 inches of the soil surface.
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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: Mid, cool-season rhizomatous grass = short, warm-season grass >
- Sub-dominant: mid and short, cool-season bunchgrasses >
- Other: forbs > grass-likes = shrubs
- Additional: Due to differing root structure and distribution, Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome grass do not fit into reference plant community F/S groups.
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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Some plant mortality and decadence (5 to 10%) is expected on this site.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** Litter cover is in contact with soil surface.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** Representative value = 900 lbs/ac with a range of 500 lbs/ac to 1200 lbs/ac (air dry weight) depending upon growing conditions
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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: State and local noxious, Kentucky bluegrass, smooth brome grass

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** No limitations.
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