USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ecological site R055CY011SD
Clayey

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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.

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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 055C–Southern Black Glaciated Plains

The Southern Black Glaciated Plains (55C) is located within the Northern Great Plains Region. It is entirely within South Dakota encompassing about 10,835 square miles (Figure 1). The elevation ranges from 1,310 to 1,970 square feet. The MLRA is on nearly level to undulating glacial till plains interrupted by steeper slopes adjacent to streams and moraines. The James River is an under-fit stream. Its valley was carved by floodwaters draining glacial Lake Dakota and is filled with glacial outwash and alluvial deposits. (USDA-NRCS, 2006).

The dominant soil order in this MLRA is Mollisols. The soils in the area dominantly have a mesic soil temperature regime, an ustic soil moisture regime, and mixed or smectitic mineralogy. They generally are very deep, well drained to very poorly drained, and clayey or loamy. This area supports natural prairie vegetation characterized by western wheatgrass (Pascopyrum smithii), green needlegrass (Nassella viridula), needle and thread (Hesperostipa comata), and porcupinegrass (Hesperostipa spartea) with Prairie cordgrass (Spartina pectinata), and reed canarygrass (Phalaris arundinacea) as the dominant vegetation on the poorly drained soils. (USDA-NRCS, 2006).

Classification relationships

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): Southern Black Glaciated Plains (55C) (USDA-NRCS, 2006)

USFS Subregions: North Central Glaciated Plains Section (251B); Yankton Hills and Valleys Subsection (251Bf); Western Glaciated Plains Section (332B); James River Lowland Subsection (332Bb); North Central Great Plains Section (332D); Southern Missouri Coteau Slope Subsection (332Dd); Southern Missouri Coteau Subsection (332De) - (Cleland et al., 2007).

US EPA Level IV Ecoregion: Southern Missouri Coteau (42e); Southern Missouri Coteau Slope (42f); James River Lowland (46n) - (USEPA, 2013)

Ecological site concept

The Clayey ecological site occurs on upland areas. Soils are well drained and have greater than 40 percent clay in the surface or subsoil. The surface and subsoil textures typically are silty clay or clay. Some soils have a loamy surface and a clayey subsoil. In some areas the surface layer may consist of stony to extremely stony. Slopes can range from 0 to 6 percent. Vegetation in the Reference State is dominated by cool-season grasses such as western wheatgrass and needlegrasses. Forbs include cudweed sagewort, prairie coneflower, and western yarrow. Non-native grasses such as smooth bromegrass and Kentucky bluegrass or native conifers such as eastern redcedar may invade due to shifts in disturbance regime.

Associated sites

R055CY010SD	**Loamy** These sites occur on uplands. Soils are well drained and have less than 40 percent clay in the subsoil. The central concept soil series are Clarno, Hand, and Houdek, but other series are included.
R055CY013SD	**Claypan** These sites occur on uplands. Soils are moderately well drained and have a claypan (columnar structure) greater than 4 inches from the soil surface. The central concept soil series is Dudley, but other series are included.
R055CY012SD	**Thin Upland** These sites occur on uplands. Soils are well drained and will effervesce with acid at or near the surface. The central concept soil series are Ethan and Betts, but other series are included.

Similar sites

R055CY010SD	**Loamy** The Loamy site is in a similar landscape position, but the soils have less than 40 percent clay in the surface or subsoil. The Loamy site will have more big bluestem and less western wheatgrass than a Clayey site.

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	(1) *Pascopyrum smithii* (2) *Nassella viridula*

Physiographic features

This site typically occurs on nearly level to gently sloping, undulating uplands.

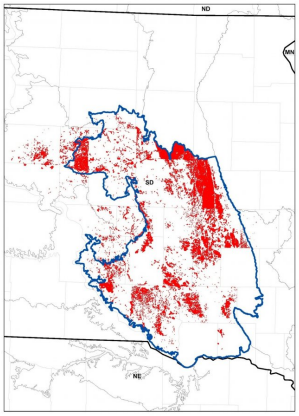

Figure 2. Distribution Map of the Clayey Site across MLRA 55C. In many cases, data is not spatially consistent across political boundaries due to the method with which soils were mapped; e. g. county subsets.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Plain (2) Till plain (3) Flood plain
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	396–610 m
Slope	1–8%
Water table depth	130–203 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

MLRA 55C is considered to have a continental climate: Cold winters and hot summers, low humidity, light rainfall, and much sunshine. Extremes in temperature may also abound. The climate is the result of this MLRA's location near the geographic center of North America. There are few natural barriers on the Northern Great Plains, and air masses move freely across the plains and account for rapid changes in temperature.

Annual precipitation typically ranges from 19 to 25 inches per year. The average annual temperature is about 47°F. January is the coldest month with average temperatures ranging from about 15°F (Howard, South Dakota [SD]), to about 20°F (Wagner, SD). July is the warmest month with temperatures averaging from about 73°F (Howard, SD), to about 77°F (Wagner, SD). The range of normal average monthly temperatures between the coldest and warmest months is about 58°F. This large annual range attests to the continental nature of this area's climate. Hourly winds are estimated to average about 12 miles per hour (mph) annually, ranging from about 13 mph during the spring to about 11 mph during the summer. Daytime winds are generally stronger than nighttime, and occasional strong storms may bring brief periods of high winds with gusts to more than 50 mph.

Growth of cool-season plants begins in early to mid-March, slowing or ceasing in late June. Warm-season plants begin growth about mid-May and continue to early or mid-September. Green-up of cool-season plants may occur in September and October when adequate soil moisture is present.

Table 3. Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	123-129 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	137-150 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	559-660 mm

Frost-free period (actual range)	114-130 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	133-155 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	533-686 mm
Frost-free period (average)	125 days
Freeze-free period (average)	143 days
Precipitation total (average)	610 mm

Climate stations used

- (1) FAULKTON 1 NW [USC00392927], Faulkton, SD
- (2) REDFIELD [USC00397052], Redfield, SD
- (3) MILLER [USC00395561], Miller, SD
- (4) HURON RGNL AP [USW00014936], Huron, SD
- (5) DE SMET [USC00392302], De Smet, SD
- (6) HOWARD [USC00394037], Howard, SD
- (7) FORESTBURG 4 NNE [USC00393029], Artesian, SD
- (8) CHAMBERLAIN MUNI AP [USW00094943], Chamberlain, SD
- (9) ACADEMY 2NE [USC00390043], Platte, SD
- (10) MITCHELL MUNI AP [USW00094950], Mitchell, SD
- (11) MITCHELL [USC00395669], Mitchell, SD
- (12) ALEXANDRIA [USC00390128], Alexandria, SD
- (13) SALEM 5NE [USC00395360], Salem, SD
- (14) BRIDGEWATER [USC00391032], Bridgewater, SD
- (15) MARION [USC00395228], Marion, SD
- (16) MENNO [USC00395481], Menno, SD
- (17) TYNDALL [USC00398472], Tyndall, SD
- (18) WAGNER [USC00398767], Wagner, SD
- (19) ARMOUR [USC00390296], Armour, SD

Influencing water features

No riparian areas or wetland features are directly associated with this site.

Soil features

The common features of soils in this site are the clay loam to clay textured subsoils and slopes of 1 to 8 percent. The soils in this site are well to moderately well-drained and formed in alluvium and clayey till. The loam to silty clay loam surface layer is 5 to 15 inches thick. The soils have a slow to very slow infiltration rate. When dry these soils crack. When the soils are wet, surface compaction can occur with heavy traffic. This site typically should show slight to no evidence of rills, wind scoured areas, or pedestalled plants. If present, water flow paths are broken, irregular in appearance, or discontinuous. The soil surface is stable and intact. Subsurface soil layers are nonrestrictive to water movement and root penetration.

Soil series are Beadle and Stickney.

These soils are mainly susceptible to water erosion. The hazard of water erosion increases on slopes greater than about 5 percent. Loss of 50 percent or more of the surface layer of the soils on this site can result in a shift in species composition and production. Access Web Soil Survey (http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm) for specific local soils information.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Loam (2) Silty clay loam (3) Silty clay

Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Very slow to slow
Soil depth	203 cm
Surface fragment cover <=3"	0–4%
Surface fragment cover >3"	0–2%
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	15.24–17.78 cm
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm)	0–20%
Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm)	0–16 mmhos/cm
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm)	0–15
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	5.6–9
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0–8%
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0–2%

Ecological dynamics

State and Community Phases
The information in this Ecological Site Description, including the state-and-transition model (STM), was developed based on historical data, current field data, professional experience, and a review of the scientific literature. As a result, all possible scenarios or plant species may not be included. Key indicator plant species, disturbances, and ecological processes are described to inform land management decisions.

The site which is located in the Southern Black Glaciated Plains Region developed under Northern Great Plains climatic conditions and included natural influence of large herding herbivores and occasional fire. Changes will occur in the plant communities due to weather fluctuations and management actions. Under adverse impacts, a relatively rapid decline in vegetative vigor and composition can occur. Under favorable conditions, the site has the potential to resemble the Reference State. Interpretations for this site are based primarily on the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase. This community phase and the Reference State have been determined by study of rangeland relic areas, areas protected from excessive disturbance, and areas under long-term rotational grazing regimes. Trends in plant community dynamics ranging from heavily grazed to lightly grazed areas, seasonal use pastures, and historical accounts also have been considered.

This ecological site (ES) has been grazed by domestic livestock since they were introduced into the area. The introduction of domestic livestock and the use of fencing and reliable water sources have changed the ecological dynamics of this site. Heavy, continuous grazing (during the typical growing season of May through October) or repeated seasonal grazing (e.g., every spring, every summer) without adequate recovery periods following grazing events cause departure from the 3.1 Green Needlegrass-Western Wheatgrass Plant Community Phase. Western wheatgrass will increase initially and then begin to decrease. Green needlegrass, needle and thread, porcupinegrass, sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), will decrease in frequency and production. Eventually, blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), quackgrass (*Elymus repens*), and Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) may develop into a sod. Extended periods of non-use and/or lack of fire will result in excessive litter and a plant community dominated by cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass (*Bromus inermis*).

Following the state-and-transition diagram are narratives for each of the described states and community phases. These may not represent every possibility, but they are the most prevalent and repeatable states and community phases. The associated plant composition tables have been developed from the best available knowledge at the

time of this revision. As more data are collected, some of these community phases and states may be revised or removed, and new ones may be added. The main purpose for including the descriptions here is to capture the current knowledge and experience at the time of this revision.

The following is a diagram that illustrates the common plant community phases that can occur on the site and the transition and community pathways between them. The ecological processes will be discussed in more detail in the plant community descriptions following the diagram.

State and transition model

Clayey – R055CY011SD

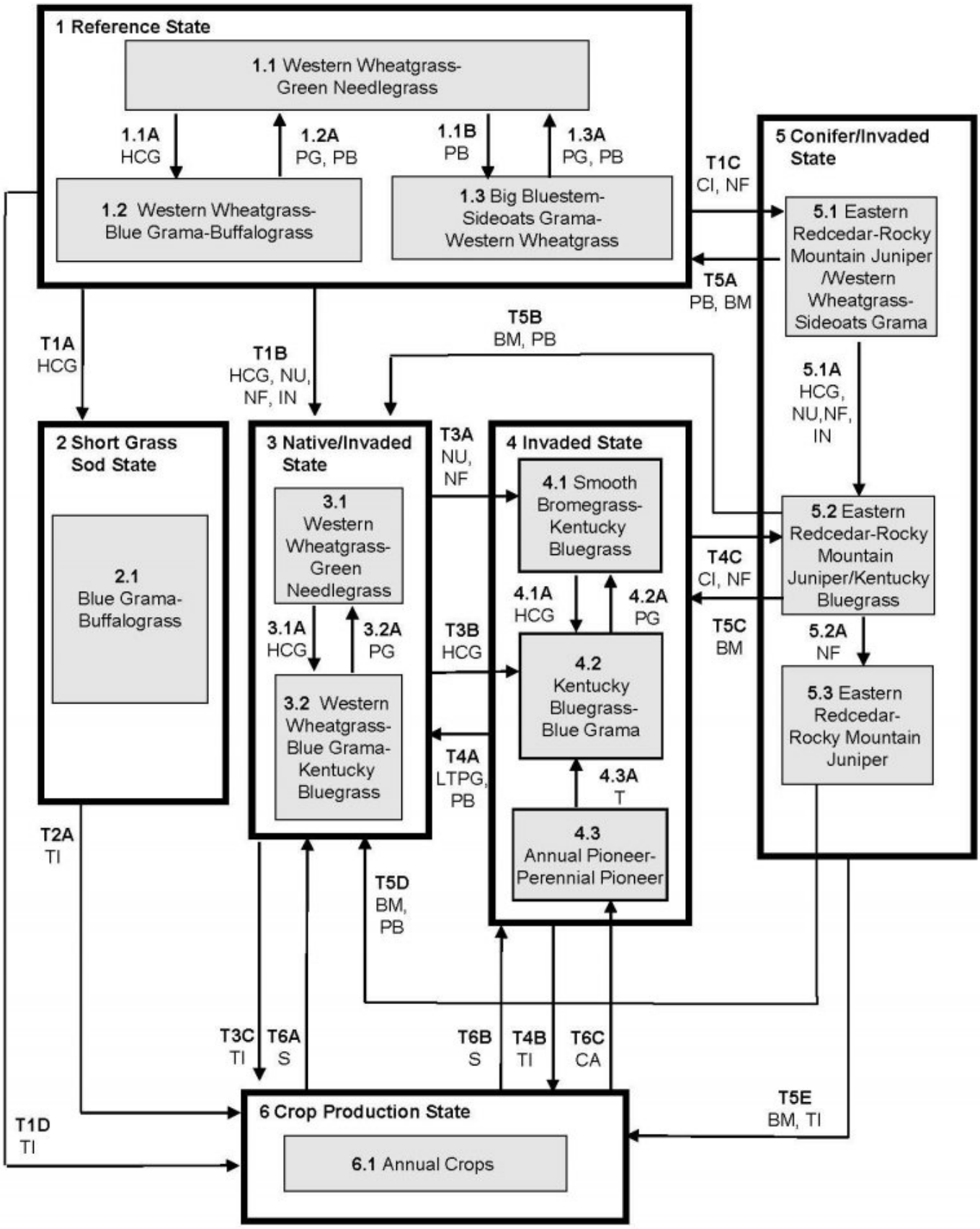

Figure 9. State-and-Transition Model for the Clayey Site in MLRA 55C.

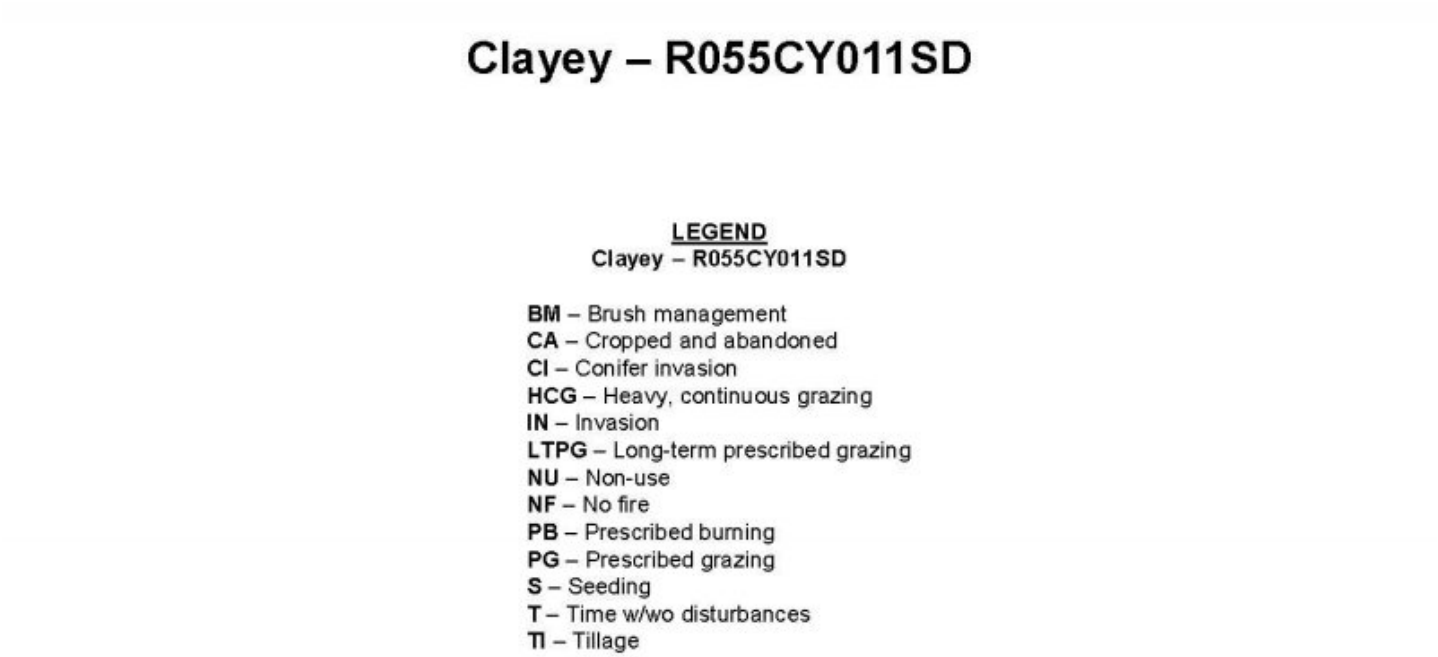

Figure 10. Legend for the Clayey Site in MLRA 55C.

Code	Process
T1A	Heavy, continuous grazing
T1B	Heavy, continuous grazing, non-use, no fire, invasion
T1C	Conifer invasion, no fire
T1D	Tillage
T2A	Tillage
T3A	Non-use, no fire
T3B	Heavy, continuous grazing
T3C	Tillage
T4A	Long term prescribed grazing, prescribed burning
T4B	Tillage
T4C	Conifer invasion, no fire
T5A	Prescribed burning, brush management
T5B	Brush management, prescribed burning
T5C	Brush management
T5D	Brush management, prescribed burning
T5E	Brush management, tillage
T6A	Seeding
T6B	Seeding
T6C	Cropped and abandoned
1.1A	Heavy, continuous grazing
1.1B	Prescribed burning
1.2A	Prescribed grazing with recovery periods, prescribed burning
1.3A	Prescribed grazing with recovery periods, prescribed burning
3.1A	Heavy, continuous grazing
3.2A	Prescribed grazing with recovery periods
4.1A	Heavy continuous grazing
4.2A	Prescribed grazing with recovery periods
4.3A	Time w/wo disturbances
5.1A	Heavy, continuous grazing, non-use, no fire, invasion
5.2A	No fire

Figure 11. Matrix for the Clayey Site in MLRA 55C.

State 1
Reference State

The Reference State represents the natural range of variability that dominates the dynamics of this ES. This state was dominated by cool-season grasses, with warm-season grasses being subdominant. Before European settlement in North America, the primary disturbance mechanisms for this site in the Reference condition included periodic fire, grazing by large herding ungulates, fluctuations in the water table, and ponding frequency and duration. Frequent surface fires (every 3 to 5 years) and grazing coupled with weather events dictated the dynamics that occurred within the natural range of variability. In some locations, this site likely received relatively heavy grazing pressure. Tall warm-season grasses would have declined and cool-season bunchgrasses and short to mid-statured warm-season grasses would have increased. Today, a similar state, the Native/Invaded State (State 3) can be found on areas that are properly managed with grazing and/or prescribed burning and sometimes on areas receiving occasional short periods of rest.

Community 1.1
Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass

Interpretations are based primarily on the Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase (this is also considered to be the Reference Community). The potential vegetation was about 85 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. The community was dominated by cool-season grasses. The major grasses included western wheatgrass and green needlegrass. Other grass or grass-like species included big bluestem, little bluestem, sideoats grama, slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), porcupinegrass, and blue grama. This plant community was resilient and well adapted to the Northern Great Plains climatic conditions. The diversity in plant species allowed for high tolerance to drought. This was a sustainable plant community in regards to site and soil stability, watershed function, and biologic integrity.

Community 1.2
Western Wheatgrass-Blue Grama-Buffalograss

This plant community evolved under heavy, continuous grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community was made up of approximately 85 percent grasses and grass-like species, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses included western wheatgrass, blue grama, buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), green needlegrass, sideoats grama, and needle and thread. Grasses of secondary importance included little bluestem, porcupinegrass, big bluestem, and sedge (Cyperaceae). Forbs commonly found in this plant community included cudweed sagewort (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), prairie coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*) and western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). This plant community had similar plant composition to the 3.2 Western Wheatgrass-Blue Grama-Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase. The main difference is that this plant community phase did not have the presence of non-native invasive cool-season species. When compared to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase, blue grama and buffalograss increased. Green needlegrass and porcupinegrass decreased and production of mid- and tall warm-season grasses were also reduced. This plant community was moderately resistant to change. The herbaceous species present were well adapted to grazing; however, species composition could be altered through long-term overgrazing. If the herbaceous component was intact, it tended to be resilient if the disturbance was not long-term. Most of the components of the ecological processes would have been functioning at optimum levels. However, the vigor and reproductive capability of the tall warm-season grasses would have been reduced due to grazing pressure or a combination of stressors. A reduction of this dominant functional group allowed for an increase in shorter-statured (and shallower rooted) species.

Community 1.3
Big Bluestem-Sideoats Grama-Western Wheatgrass

This plant community was a result of fire occurring at relatively frequent intervals. This phase could have also resulted from a combination of grazing events immediately following early season fire (i.e., large ungulates attracted to highly nutritious vegetative growth following a fire). These events would have caused a reduction in cool-season grasses and an increase in warm-season grasses. The warm-season grasses were more tolerant of shorter return intervals of fire and would have increased in vigor and production leading to a temporary shift to this phase. Needlegrasses would have decreased most significantly amongst the cool-season grasses. The potential vegetation was about 80 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. The community was dominated by warm-season grasses. The major grasses included little bluestem, big bluestem, Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), switchgrass, sideoats grama, and western wheatgrass. Other grass or grass-like species

included green needlegrass, porcupinegrass, needle and thread, blue grama, slender wheatgrass, tall dropseed (*Sporobolus compositus*), and sedges (Cyperaceae). This plant community was not resistant to change and would have readily shifted back to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlgrass Plant Community Phase with a return of more normal fire return intervals.

Pathway 1.1A
Community 1.1 to 1.2

Heavy, continuous grazing which includes herbivory at moderate to heavy levels at the same time of year each year without adequate recovery periods, or during periods of below normal precipitation when grazing frequency and intensity increases on these sites due to limited forage availability on adjacent upland sites, will shift this community to the 1.2 Western Wheatgrass-Blue Grama-Buffalograss Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 1.1B
Community 1.1 to 1.3

Prescribed burning occurring at relatively frequent intervals (every 3 to 5 years), a return to normal disturbance regime levels, and occasional grazing events immediately following early season fire, caused a reduction in cool-season grasses and an increase in warm-season grasses. The warm-season grasses were more tolerant of shorter return intervals of fire, and would increase in vigor and production leading to a temporary shift to the 1.3 Big Bluestem-Sideoats Grama-Western Wheatgrass Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 1.2A
Community 1.2 to 1.1

Prescribed grazing, prescribed burning (occurring at relatively frequent intervals, every 3 to 5 years), a return to normal disturbance regime levels and frequencies, or periodic light to moderate grazing (possibly including periodic rest) will convert this plant community to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 1.3A
Community 1.3 to 1.1

Prescribed grazing (alternating season of use and providing adequate recovery periods), periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest, and/or prescribed burning with late season fire (or at infrequent intervals, greater than 5 years) will convert this plant community to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase.

State 2
Short-grass Sod State

The Short-grass Sod State is the result of heavy, continuous grazing, and in the absence of periodic fire due to fire suppression. This state is dominated by blue grama and buffalograss, forming a dense sod layer that effectively blocks introduction of other plants into the system. Taller cool-season species will decline and a corresponding increase in short statured grass will occur. Once the threshold is crossed, a change in grazing management alone cannot cause a reduction in the sod grass dominance.

Community 2.1
Blue Grama-Buffalograss

This plant community evolved under heavy, continuous season grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community was made up of approximately 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses included blue grama and buffalograss. Grasses of secondary importance included sedge and western wheatgrass. Forbs commonly found in this plant community included cudweed sagewort, scurfpea (Psoralidium), and western yarrow. When compared to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase, the more grazing tolerant species such as blue grama and buffalograss were dominant on this plant community. Cool-season grasses decreased significantly. This vegetation state was very resistant to change, especially if the disturbance continued and the short-statured species

such as blue grama increased. The herbaceous species present were well adapted to grazing. This plant community was less productive than other phases.

State 3
Native/Invaded State

The Native/Invaded State represents the more common range of variability that exists with higher levels of grazing management, but in the absence of periodic fire due to fire suppression. This state is dominated by cool-season grasses. It can be found on areas that are properly managed with grazing and/or prescribed burning, and sometimes on areas receiving occasional short periods of rest. Taller cooler-season species can decline and a corresponding increase in short statured grass will occur.

Community 3.1
Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass

This plant community phase is similar to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase but it also contains minor amounts of non-native invasive grass species such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass (up to about 15 percent by air-dry weight). The potential vegetation is about 85 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. This community is dominated by cool-season grasses with warm-season grasses being subdominant. The major grasses include western wheatgrass and green needlegrass. Other grass or grass-like species include big bluestem, little bluestem, sideoats grama, slender wheatgrass, porcupinegrass, and blue grama. This plant community is resilient and well adapted to the Northern Great Plains climatic conditions. The diversity in plant species allows for high tolerance to drought. This is a sustainable plant community in regard to site and soil stability, watershed function, and biologic integrity.

Community 3.2
Western Wheatgrass-Blue Grama-Kentucky Bluegrass

This plant community is a result of heavy, continuous grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community is made up of approximately 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses include western wheatgrass, blue grama, and Kentucky bluegrass. Grasses of secondary importance include sideoats grama, little bluestem, green needlegrass, needle and thread, porcupinegrass, big bluestem, bufflaograss, smooth bromegrass, and sedge. Forbs commonly found in this plant community include cudweed sagewort, prairie coneflower, and western yarrow. When compared to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase, blue grama has increased. Green needlegrass and sideoats grama have decreased and production of mid- and tall warm-season grasses was reduced. This plant community is moderately resistant to change. The herbaceous species present are well adapted to grazing; however, species composition can be altered through long-term overgrazing. If the herbaceous component is intact, it tends to be resilient if the disturbance is not long-term. Most of the components of the ecological processes are functioning at optimum levels. However, the vigor and reproductive capability of the tall warm-season grasses are reduced due to grazing pressure or a combination of stressors. A reduction of this dominant functional group allows for an increase in shorter-statured (and shallower rooted) species. The introduction of nonnative invasive species such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass results in alterations to the soil profile. Organic matter levels tend to decrease and begin to be concentrated more in the surface layers and the structure will begin to be modified. These changes favor the shallow-rooted species and hasten their eventual dominance if steps are not taken to reduce these species.

Pathway 3.1A
Community 3.1 to 3.2

Heavy continuous grazing which includes herbivory at moderate to heavy levels at the same time of year each year without adequate recovery periods, or during periods of below normal precipitation when grazing frequency and intensity increases on these sites due to limited forage availability on adjacent upland sites will shift this community to the 3.2 Western Wheatgrass-Blue Grama-Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 3.2A
Community 3.2 to 3.1

Prescribed grazing (alternating season of use and providing adequate recovery periods) or periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest will convert this plant community to the 3.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community Phase.

State 4
Invaded State

The Invaded State is a result of encroachment mainly by invasive introduced cool-season grasses. The ecological processes are not functioning, especially the biotic processes and the hydrologic functions. The introduced cool-season grasses cause reduced infiltration and increased runoff. Preliminary studies would tend to indicate this threshold may exist when Kentucky bluegrass exceeds 30 percent of the plant community and native grasses represent less than 40 percent of the plant community composition. The opportunity for high intensity spring burns is severely reduced by early green-up and increased moisture and humidity at the soil surface. Grazing pressure cannot cause a reduction in sod-grass dominance. Production is limited to the sod-forming species. Infiltration continues to decrease, runoff increases, and energy capture into the system is restricted to early season low producing species. Nutrient cycling is limited by root depth of the dominant species.

Community 4.1
Smooth Bromegrass-Kentucky Bluegrass

This plant community phase is a result of extended periods of non-use and no fire or occasionally light levels of grazing over several years. It is characterized by dominance of smooth bromegrass, and to a lesser extent, Kentucky bluegrass. The dominance is at times so complete that other species are difficult to find on the site. A thick duff layer also accumulates at or above the soil surface and eventually a thatch-mat layer may develop. Nutrient cycling is greatly reduced and native plants have great difficulty becoming established. When dominated by smooth bromegrass, infiltration is moderately reduced and runoff is moderate. Production can be equal to or higher than the interpretive plant community. However, when dominated by Kentucky bluegrass, infiltration is greatly reduced and runoff is high. Production in this case will likely be significantly less. In either case, the period that palatability is high is relatively short, as these cool-season species mature rapidly. Energy capture is also reduced. The dominance of these introduced species has been shown to alter the biotic component of the soil, organic matter levels, and eventually the soil structure. These alterations perpetuate the dominance of Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass and tend to make re-establishment of native species extremely difficult.

Table 5. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Kg/Hectare)	Representative Value (Kg/Hectare)	High (Kg/Hectare)
Grass/Grasslike	2040	2746	3391
Forb	140	235	359
Shrub/Vine	62	157	286
Total	**2242**	**3138**	**4036**

Figure 13. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month). SD5302, Southern Dark Brown Glaciated Plains, cool-season dominant, warm-season subdominant.. Cool-season dominant, warm-season subdominant..

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	3	10	23	34	15	6	5	4	0	0

Community 4.2
Kentucky Bluegrass-Blue Grama

This plant community phase is a result of heavy, continuous seasonal grazing or heavy, continuous season-long grazing. It is characterized by a dominance of Kentucky bluegrass and blue grama. The dominance is at times so complete that other species are difficult to find on the site. A relatively thick duff layer can sometimes accumulate at or above the soil surface and eventually a thatch-mat layer may develop at the surface as well. Nutrient cycling is

greatly reduced and native plants have great difficulty becoming established. Infiltration is greatly reduced and runoff is high. Production will be significantly reduced when compared to the interpretive plant community. The period that palatability is high is relatively short as Kentucky bluegrass matures rapidly. Energy capture is also reduced. Biological activity in the soil is likely reduced significantly in this phase.

Table 6. Annual production by plant type

Plant Type	Low (Kg/Hectare)	Representative Value (Kg/Hectare)	High (Kg/Hectare)
Grass/Grasslike	1435	1725	1961
Forb	95	202	347
Shrub/Vine	39	91	157
Total	**1569**	**2018**	**2465**

Figure 15. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month). SD5301, Southern Dark Brown Glaciated Plains, cool-season dominant.. Cool-season dominant..

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	4	12	25	36	10	5	4	4	0	0

Community 4.3
Annual Pioneer-Perennial Pioneer

This plant community developed under continuous, heavy grazing or other excessive disturbances. The potential plant community is made up of approximately 40 to 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 20 to 60 percent forbs, and 0 to 5 percent shrubs. The species present in this phase are highly variable but often include nonnative invasive or early seral species. Plant diversity is low (plant richness may be high but areas are often dominated by a few species). The ecological processes are difficult to restore because of the loss of plant diversity and overall soil disturbance. Soil erosion is potentially very high because of the bare ground and shallow rooted herbaceous plant community. Water runoff will increase and infiltration will decrease due to animal related soil compaction and loss of root mass due to low plant diversity and vigor. This plant community will require significant economic inputs and time to move towards another plant community. This movement is highly variable in its succession. This is due to the loss of diversity (including the loss of the seed bank) within the existing plant community and the plant communities on adjacent sites. This community can be renovated to improve the production capability; however, if management changes are not made, the vegetation could revert back to early seral species.

Pathway 4.1A
Community 4.1 to 4.2

Heavy, continuous grazing which includes herbivory at moderate to heavy levels at the same time of year each year without adequate recovery periods, or during periods of below normal precipitation when grazing frequency and intensity increases on these sites due to limited forage availability on adjacent upland sites, will shift this community to the 4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass-Blue Grama Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 4.2A
Community 4.2 to 4.1

Prescribed grazing (alternating season of use and providing adequate recovery periods) or periodic light to moderate grazing, possibly including periodic rest, will convert this plant community to the 4.1 Smooth Bromegrass-Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase.

Conservation practices

Prescribed Grazing

Pathway 4.3A

Community 4.3 to 4.2

This community pathway occurs with the passage of time as successional processes take place and perennial plants gradually begin to establish on the site again. This pathway will lead to the 4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass-Blue Grama Plant Community Phase.

State 5
Conifer/Invaded State

The Conifer/Invaded State is dominated (canopy exceeds 20 percent of total surface area) by areas where trees have become established or have encroached onto the site due to the absence of periodic fire. This state is dominated by eastern redcedar and Rocky Mountain juniper with cool-season grasses being subdominant. The plant community can develop into a closed canopy that impedes the reproductive capability of the major native perennial grass species. A single eastern redcedar tree with a 7 foot crown diameter eliminates the equivalent of 3 pounds of forage. Further, the forage potential of a pasture with 250 mature eastern red cedar trees per acre (or one tree every thirteen feet) is reduced by 50 percent. It is suggested that reducing stocking rates by 10 percent for every 50 trees per acre. The increase in tree canopy which is a result of a disruption of the natural, and human related fire regimes that occurred prior to European settlement of North America, which kept trees from encroaching much of the grasslands.

Community 5.1
Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Western Wheatgrass-Sideoats Grama

This plant community evolved due to the invasion of conifers, such as eastern redcedar and Rocky Mountain juniper. This phase was a result of the absence of periodic fire. These events may cause a reduction in warm-season grasses and an increase in cool-season grasses and allow for the encroachment of conifers. The potential plant community is made up of approximately 50 percent grasses and grass-like species, 10 percent forbs, 10 percent shrubs, and 30 percent trees. Dominant grasses and grass-likes include western wheatgrass, green needlegrass, blue grama, buffalograss, big bluestem, and sideoats grama. As the canopy increases, warm-season grasses tend to decrease as the cool-season grasses increase. Forbs will be diverse. Trees species will include eastern redcedar and Rocky Mountain juniper. When compared to the 1.1 Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Plant Community, coniferous trees have increased significantly and herbaceous component has decreased. This plant community is susceptible to the encroachment of eastern redcedar and Rocky Mountain juniper.

Community 5.2
Eastern Redceder-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Kentucky Bluegrass

This plant community phase is a result of heavy, continuous seasonal grazing or heavy, continuous season-long grazing or non-use and/or no surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years). When compared to the 5.1 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Western Wheatgrass-Sideoats Grama Plant Community, the amount of non-native invasive cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass have increased significantly. It is characterized by a dominance of Kentucky bluegrass, smooth bromegrass, and blue grama. The dominance of Kentucky bluegrass is at times so complete that other species are difficult to find on the site. A relatively thick duff layer can sometimes accumulate at or above the soil surface and eventually a thatch-mat layer may develop at the surface as well. Production is limited to the sod forming species. The period that palatability is high is relatively short, as Kentucky bluegrass matures rapidly. Infiltration continues to decrease and runoff increases, energy capture into the system is restricted to early season low producing species. Nutrient cycling is limited by root depth of the dominate species. Biological activity in the soil is likely reduced significantly in this phase.

Community 5.3
Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper

This plant community phase is a result of no surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years). Coniferous trees have increased significantly, and the herbaceous component has decreased. With the dominance of the coniferous trees such as eastern redcedar and Rocky Mountain juniper, the canopy covers the area and grass species are unable to survive. Grass production for livestock is severely limited. Prescribed burning before the juniper species reach maturity and are still susceptible to fire (< 5 foot in height), or mechanical brush

management can be used to maintain or recover 5.3 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 5.1A
Community 5.1 to 5.2

Non-use and/or no surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density, heavy, continuous grazing, or invasion of non-native plant species will shift this plant community to the 5.2 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase.

Pathway 5.2A
Community 5.2 to 5.3

No surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density, will shift this plant community to the 5.3 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper Plant Community Phase.

State 6
Crop Production State

The Crop Production State is characterized by the production of annual crops using a variety of tillage and cropping systems along with management practices. Cropping on this site is enabled during years with drier than normal precipitation or with artificial drainage (surface or subsurface).

Community 6.1
Annual Crops

This plant community developed with the use of a variety of tillage and cropping systems for the production of annual crops including corn, soybeans, wheat, and a variety of other crops.

Transition T1A
State 1 to 2

Heavy, continuous grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season and often at the same time of year each year, typically beginning early in the season) will convert this plant community to the 2.1 Blue Grama-Buffalograss Plant Community Phase within the Short-Grass Sod State.

Transition T1B
State 1 to 3

Non-use and/or no surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density, heavy, continuous grazing, or invasion of non-native plant species will likely lead this state over a threshold resulting in the Native/Invaded State (State 3).

Transition T1C
State 1 to 5

No surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density, and invasion of conifer will likely lead this state over a threshold leading to the 5.1 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Western Wheatgrass-Sideoats Grama Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5).

Transition T1D
State 1 to 6

Tillage will cause a shift over a threshold leading to the 6.1 Annual Crops Plant Community Phase within the Crop

Production State (State 6).

Transition T2A
State 2 to 6

Tillage will cause a shift over a threshold leading to the 6.1 Annual Crops Plant Community Phase within the Crop Production State (State 6).

Transition T3A
State 3 to 4

Non-use and/or no surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density), will likely lead this state over a threshold leading to the 4.1 Smooth Bromegrass-Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase within the Invaded State (State 4). Heavy, continuous grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season and often at the same time of year each year), will likely lead this state over a threshold leading to the 4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass-Blue Grama Plant Community Phase within the Invaded State (State 4). Grazing repeatedly in the early growing season can expedite this shift by causing mechanical disturbance due to trampling.

Transition T3C
State 3 to 6

Tillage will cause a shift over a threshold leading to the 6.1 Annual Crops Plant Community Phase within the Crop Production State (State 6).

Restoration pathway T4A
State 4 to 3

Long-term prescribed grazing (moderate stocking levels coupled with adequate recovery periods, or other grazing systems such as high-density, low-frequency intended to treat specific species dominance, or periodic light to moderate stocking levels possibly including periodic rest) coupled with prescribed burning occurring at relatively frequent intervals (3 to 5 years) and a return to normal disturbance regime levels may lead this plant community phase over a threshold to the Native/Invaded State (State 3).

Transition T4C
State 4 to 5

No surface fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) causing litter levels to become high enough to reduce native grass vigor, diversity, and density, and invasion of conifer will likely lead this state over a threshold leading to the 5.2 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5).

Transition T4B
State 4 to 6

Tillage will cause a shift over a threshold leading to the 6.1 Annual Crops Plant Community Phase within the Crop Production State (State 6).

Restoration pathway T5A
State 5 to 1

Brush management (which would include the mechanical removal of the conifers), coupled with prescribed burning occurring at relatively frequent intervals (every 3 to 5 years), and a return to normal disturbance regime levels may lead this 5.1 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Western Wheatgrass Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5) over a threshold to the Reference State (State 1).

Restoration pathway T5B
State 5 to 3

Brush management (which would include the mechanical removal of the conifers), coupled with prescribed burning occurring at relatively frequent intervals (every 3 to 5 years), and a return to normal disturbance regime levels may lead this 5.2 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5) over a threshold to the Native/Invaded State (State 3). Brush management (which would include the mechanical removal of the conifers), coupled with prescribed burning occurring at relatively frequent intervals (every 3 to 5 years), and a return to normal disturbance regime levels may lead this 5.3 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5) over a threshold to the Native/Invaded State (State 3).

Restoration pathway T5C
State 5 to 4

Brush management (which would include the mechanical removal of the conifers) may lead this 5.2 Eastern Redcedar-Rocky Mountain Juniper/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase within the Conifer/Invaded State (State 5) over a threshold to the Invaded State (State 4).

Transition T5E
State 5 to 6

Brush management (which would include the mechanical removal of the conifers) coupled with tillage will cause a shift over a threshold leading to the 6.1 Annual Crops Plant Community Phase within the Crop Production State (State 6).

Restoration pathway T6A
State 6 to 3

Seeding may lead this Crop Production State (State 6) over a threshold to the Native/Invaded State (State 3).

Restoration pathway T6B
State 6 to 4

Seeding may lead this Crop Production State (State 6) over a threshold to the Invaded State (State 4) Cropping followed by abandonment may lead this plant community phase over a threshold to the Invaded State (State 4), and more specifically to the 4.3 Annual Pioneer-Perennial Pioneer Plant Community Phase.

Additional community tables

Table 7. Community 4.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Kg/Hectare)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	**Wheatgrass**			0–314	
	western wheatgrass	PASM	*Pascopyrum smithii*	0–314	–
2	**Needlegrass**			0–157	
	green needlegrass	NAVI4	*Nassella viridula*	0–157	–
	porcupinegrass	HESP11	*Hesperostipa spartea*	0–94	–
3	**Tall/Mid Warm-Season Grasses**			0–157	
	composite dropseed	SPCOC2	*Sporobolus compositus var. compositus*	0–157	–
	big bluestem	ANGE	*Andropogon gerardii*	0–94	–
	sideoats grama	BOCU	*Bouteloua curtipendula*	0–63	–

	switchgrass	PAVI2	*Panicum virgatum*	0–31	–
4	**Short Warm-Season Grasses**			0–157	
	threeawn	ARIST	*Aristida*	0–94	–
	blue grama	BOGR2	*Bouteloua gracilis*	0–94	–
	sand dropseed	SPCR	*Sporobolus cryptandrus*	0–31	–
	buffalograss	BODA2	*Bouteloua dactyloides*	0–31	–
5	**Other Native Grasses**			0–126	
	Graminoid (grass or grass-like)	2GRAM	*Graminoid (grass or grass-like)*	0–126	–
	Scribner's rosette grass	DIOLS	*Dichanthelium oligosanthes var. scribnerianum*	0–31	–
	fall rosette grass	DIWI5	*Dichanthelium wilcoxianum*	0–31	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	*Koeleria macrantha*	0–31	–
6	**Grass-likes**			0–94	
	sedge	CAREX	*Carex*	0–94	–
	Grass-like (not a true grass)	2GL	*Grass-like (not a true grass)*	0–31	–
7	**Non-Native Grasses**			1098–2511	
	smooth brome	BRIN2	*Bromus inermis*	785–2354	–
	bluegrass	POA	*Poa*	157–785	–
	brome	BROMU	*Bromus*	31–157	–
Forb					
8	**Forbs**			157–314	
	sweetclover	MELIL	*Melilotus*	31–251	–
	goldenrod	SOLID	*Solidago*	31–157	–
	Forb, introduced	2FI	*Forb, introduced*	0–126	–
	white sagebrush	ARLU	*Artemisia ludoviciana*	31–126	–
	Cuman ragweed	AMPS	*Ambrosia psilostachya*	31–94	–
	scurfpea	PSORA2	*Psoralidium*	0–94	–
	white heath aster	SYER	*Symphyotrichum ericoides*	0–94	–
	upright prairie coneflower	RACO3	*Ratibida columnifera*	0–63	–
	whorled milkweed	ASVE	*Asclepias verticillata*	0–63	–
	wavyleaf thistle	CIUN	*Cirsium undulatum*	0–63	–
	Forb, native	2FN	*Forb, native*	0–63	–
	western yarrow	ACMIO	*Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis*	31–63	–
	textile onion	ALTE	*Allium textile*	0–31	–
	pussytoes	ANTEN	*Antennaria*	0–31	–
	milkvetch	ASTRA	*Astragalus*	0–31	–
	dotted blazing star	LIPU	*Liatris punctata*	0–31	–
	American bird's-foot trefoil	LOUNU	*Lotus unifoliolatus var. unifoliolatus*	0–31	–
	scarlet globemallow	SPCO	*Sphaeralcea coccinea*	0–31	–
Shrub/Vine					
9	**Shrubs**			63–251	
	western snowberry	SYOC	*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*	31–251	–

	prairie sagewort	ARFR4	*Artemisia frigida*	0–94	–
	rose	ROSA5	*Rosa*	0–63	–
	Shrub (>.5m)	2SHRUB	*Shrub (>.5m)*	0–63	–
	leadplant	AMCA6	*Amorpha canescens*	0–31	–
	pricklypear	OPUNT	*Opuntia*	0–31	–

Table 8. Community 4.2 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (Kg/Hectare)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	**Wheatgrass**			0–101	
	western wheatgrass	PASM	*Pascopyrum smithii*	0–101	–
2	**Needlegrass**			0–61	
	green needlegrass	NAVI4	*Nassella viridula*	0–61	–
	needle and thread	HECOC8	*Hesperostipa comata ssp. comata*	0–20	–
3	**Short Warm-Season Grasses**			61–303	
	threeawn	ARIST	*Aristida*	20–202	–
	blue grama	BOGR2	*Bouteloua gracilis*	40–202	–
	sand dropseed	SPCR	*Sporobolus cryptandrus*	0–81	–
	buffalograss	BODA2	*Bouteloua dactyloides*	0–61	–
4	**Other Native Grasses**			0–81	
	Graminoid (grass or grass-like)	2GRAM	*Graminoid (grass or grass-like)*	0–61	–
	Scribner's rosette grass	DIOLS	*Dichanthelium oligosanthes var. scribnerianum*	0–20	–
	fall rosette grass	DIWI5	*Dichanthelium wilcoxianum*	0–20	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	*Koeleria macrantha*	0–20	–
5	**Grass-likes**			20–161	
	sedge	CAREX	*Carex*	20–161	–
	Grass-like (not a true grass)	2GL	*Grass-like (not a true grass)*	0–40	–
6	**Non-Native Grasses**			504–1412	
	bluegrass	POA	*Poa*	404–1211	–
	smooth brome	BRIN2	*Bromus inermis*	0–303	–
	brome	BROMU	*Bromus*	20–202	–
Forb					
7	**Forbs**			101–303	
	sweetclover	MELIL	*Melilotus*	0–202	–
	Cuman ragweed	AMPS	*Ambrosia psilostachya*	20–101	–
	goldenrod	SOLID	*Solidago*	0–101	–
	Forb, introduced	2FI	*Forb, introduced*	0–81	–
	white sagebrush	ARLU	*Artemisia ludoviciana*	0–81	–
	scurfpea	PSORA2	*Psoralidium*	0–61	–
	western yarrow	ACMIO	*Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis*	20–61	–
	white heath aster	SYER	*Symphyotrichum ericoides*	0–61	–
	Forb, native	2FN	*Forb, native*	0–40	–

	pussytoes	ANTEN	*Antennaria*	0–40	–
	wavyleaf thistle	CIUN	*Cirsium undulatum*	0–20	–
	scarlet globemallow	SPCO	*Sphaeralcea coccinea*	0–20	–
Shrub/Vine					
8	**Shrubs**			40–141	
	prairie sagewort	ARFR4	*Artemisia frigida*	20–101	–
	pricklypear	OPUNT	*Opuntia*	20–101	–
	western snowberry	SYOC	*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*	0–40	–
	Shrub (>.5m)	2SHRUB	*Shrub (>.5m)*	0–20	–

Animal community

The following table lists annual, suggested initial stocking rates with average growing conditions. These are conservative estimates that should be used only as guidelines in the initial stages of conservation planning. Often, the current plant composition does not entirely match any particular plant community (as described in this ES description). Because of this, a resource inventory is necessary to document plant composition and production. More accurate carrying capacity estimates should eventually be calculated using the following stocking rate information along with animal preference data and actual stocking records, particularly when grazers other than cattle are involved. With consultation of the land manager, more intensive grazing management may result in improved harvest efficiencies and increased carrying capacity. Stocking rates are calculated using Animal-Unit-Month (AUM), which is the amount of air-dry forage required to feed a cow, with or without calf, for one month.

Western Wheatgrass/Green Needlegrass (1.1 & 3.1)
Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry): 3,000
Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre): 0.82

Western Wheatgrass/Blue Grama/Kentucky Bluegrass (3.2)
Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry): 2,200
Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre): 0.60

Smooth Bromegrass/Kentucky Bluegrass (4.1)
Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry): 3,000
Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre): 0.82

Kentucky Bluegrass/Blue Grama (4.2)
Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry): 1,800
Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre): 0.49

Annual/Pioneer, Non-Native Perennial (4.3)
Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry): 800
Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre): 0.22

*Based on 912 lbs./acre (air-dry weight) per Animal Unit Month and on 25 percent harvest efficiency (refer to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Range and Pasture Handbook).

Grazing by domestic livestock is one of the major income-producing industries in the area. Rangeland in this area may provide yearlong forage. During the dormant period, the forage for livestock will likely be lacking protein to meet livestock requirements, and added protein will allow ruminants to better utilize the energy stored in grazed plant materials. A forage quality test (either directly or through fecal sampling) should be used to determine the level of supplementation needed.

Hydrological functions

Water is the principal factor limiting forage production on this site. This site is dominated by soils in hydrologic group

D. Infiltration varies from very slow to slow and runoff potential for this site varies from high to very high depending on soil hydrologic group, slope, and ground cover. In many cases, areas with greater than 75 percent ground cover have the greatest potential for high infiltration and lower runoff. An example of an exception would be where shortgrasses form a strong sod and dominate the site. Dominance by blue grama, buffalograss, bluegrass, or smooth bromegrass will result in reduced infiltration and increased runoff. Areas where ground cover is less than 50 percent have the greatest potential to have reduced infiltration and higher runoff (refer to Section 4, NRCS National Engineering Handbook for runoff quantities and hydrologic curves).

Recreational uses

This site provides hunting, hiking, photography, bird watching, and other opportunities. The wide varieties of plants that bloom from spring until fall have an aesthetic value that appeals to visitors.

Wood products

No appreciable wood products are typically present on this site.

Other products

Seed harvest of native plant species can provide additional income on this site.

Other information

Ecological Site Correlation Issues and Questions:

• SD087 McCook County, SD did not use the (Sd) Stickney-Dudley silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (national symbol 2wkpg) as used in the adjoining SD097 Miner County, SD.
• SD087 McCook County, SD did not use the (CnA) Houdek-Stickney-Tetonka complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes (national symbol 2wkpc) as used in the adjoining SD097 Miner County, SD.
• SD003 Aurora County, SD did not use the (TsA) Tetonka-Stickney complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes (national symbol cv84) as used in the adjoining SD035 Davison County, SD.
• SD059 Hand County, SD did not use the (StA) Stickney-Java loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes (national symbol cw6g) as used in the adjoining SD069 Hyde County, SD.
• SD059 Hand County, SD did not use the (SvA) Stickney-Java-Hoven complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes (national symbol cw6h) as used in the adjoining SD069 Hyde County, SD.
• SD059 Hand County, SD did not use the (HwA) Houdek-Stickney complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes (national symbol 2wkp9) as used in the adjoining SD115 Spink County, SD.

Inventory data references

Information presented here has been derived from NRCS clipping data and other inventory data. Field observations from range-trained personnel were also used. Those involved in developing this site include: Stan Boltz, Range Management Specialist, NRCS; and Bruce Kunze, Soil Scientist, NRCS.

Data Source	Sample Period	State	County
SCS-Range-417 (9026846023)	9/5/1968	SD	Charles Mix

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Approval

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Acknowledgments

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This Provisional Ecological Site concept has passed both Quality Control and Quality Assurance processes. Officially approved for publication by David Kraft as of 11/12/2020.

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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	12/07/2004
Approved by	Suzanne Mayne-Kinney
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

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

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

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Essentially, non-existent.

4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Bare ground less than five percent and less than two inches in diameter.

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

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

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

litter remains in place and is not moved by erosional forces.

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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):** Stability class usually six. Typically high root content, organic matter, and granular structure. Soil surface is very resistant to erosion.

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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 and color 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:** Healthy, deep rooted native grasses enhance infiltration and reduce runoff.

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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 should be evident. Somewhat restrictive layers of clayey texture can occur at depths of less than 14 inches.

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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 grasses > mid and tall cool-season bunchgrasses >>

    Sub-dominant: Tall warm-season grasses = mid warm-season grasses >

    Other: Short warm-season grasses = forbs > short cool-season grasses/grass-likes > shrubs.

    Additional: Due to differing root structure and distribution, Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass 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):** Very little to no evidence of decadence or mortality.

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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):** 2,200–3,800 lbs./acre air-dry weight, average 3,000 lbs./acre air-dry weight.

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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: Refer to State and Local Noxious Weed List, also Kentucky bluegrass, smooth bromegrass.

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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All species are capable of reproducing.
