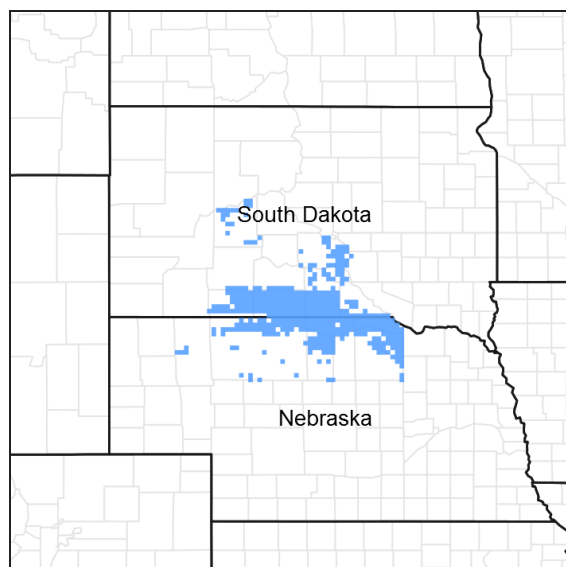


# **Ecological site R066XY032NE** **Sandy 18-22" P.Z.**

Accessed: 05/18/2024

## **General information**

**Approved.** An approved ecological site description has undergone quality control and quality assurance review. It contains a working state and transition model, enough information to identify the ecological site, and full documentation for all ecosystem states contained in the state and transition model.



**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.

## **Classification relationships**

Level IV Ecoregions of the Conterminous United States: 43i - Keya Paha Tablelands.

## **Associated sites**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| R066XY033NE | <b>Sands 18-22 P.Z.</b><br>Sands 18-22" P.Z.  |
| R066XY046NE | <b>Subirrigated</b><br>Subirrigated           |
| R066XY054NE | <b>Sandy 22-25 P.Z.</b><br>Sandy 22-25" P.Z.  |
| R066XY062NE | <b>Shallow To Gravel</b><br>Shallow to Gravel |

## **Similar sites**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| R066XY033NE | <b>Sands 18-22 P.Z.</b><br>Sands 18-22" P.Z. (steeper slope; lower production; sand bluestem dominant; less little bluestem) |
|-------------|--|

**Table 1. Dominant plant species**

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

## Physiographic features

This site occurs on tablelands, ancient high terraces, interdunes of uplands and on the sides of valleys.

**Table 2. Representative physiographic features**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Landforms         | (1) Plain<br>(2) Hill<br>(3) Interdune |
| Elevation         | 579–914 m                              |
| Slope             | 0–15%                                  |
| Water table depth | 203 cm                                 |
| Aspect            | Aspect is not a significant factor     |

## Climatic features

MLRA 66 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 the winds move freely across the plains and account for rapid changes in temperature.

Annual precipitation ranges from 18 to 22 inches per year. The normal average annual temperature is about 47° F. January is the coldest month with average temperatures ranging from about 20° F (Valentine, NE) to about 23° F (Ainsworth, NE). July is the warmest month with temperatures averaging from about 73° F (Harrington, SD) to about 75° F (Ainsworth, NE). The range of normal average monthly temperatures between the coldest and warmest months is about 53° F. This large annual range attests to the continental nature of this area's climate. Hourly winds average about 10 miles per hour annually, ranging from about 11 miles per hour during the spring to about 9 miles per hour 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 miles per hour.

Growth of native cool season plants begins mid to late March and continues to late June. Native warm season plants begin growth in early May and continue to late August. 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 (average)   | 154 days |
| Freeze-free period (average)  | 172 days |
| Precipitation total (average) | 559 mm   |

## Influencing water features

No significant water features influence this soil.

## Soil features

The features common to all soils in this site are the loam to fine sand textured surface layers and slopes of 0 to 15 percent. The soils in this site are from well drained to excessively drained. They formed primarily in eolian deposits,

sandy and gravelly alluvium, and material weathered from petrocalcic horizons. Pivot soils are formed in sandy and gravelly alluvium. O'Neill soils formed in loamy material over sandy and gravelly alluvium. Anselmo soils formed in mixed loamy and sandy eolian material. Dunday soils formed in eolian sands. Brunswick, Duda, Holt, and Ronson soils formed in material weathered from petrocalcic horizons. McKelvie soils formed in eolian sands and sandy material weathered from petrocalcic horizons. The surface layer is 3 to 19 inches thick. The texture of the control section generally ranges from loam to fine sand. This site should show slight to no evidence of rills, wind scoured areas or pedestalled plants. Water flow paths are broken, irregular in appearance or discontinuous with numerous debris dams or vegetative barriers. The soil surface is stable and intact. Sub-surface soil layers are not restrictive to water movement and root penetration.

These soils are mainly susceptible to water erosion. The hazard of water erosion increases on slopes greater than about 10 percent.

More information can be found in the various soil survey reports. Contact the local USDA Service Center for soil survey reports that include more detail specific to your location.

## **Ecological dynamics**

This plant community developed under Northern Great Plains climatic conditions, and included natural influence of large herbivores and occasional fire. Changes will occur in the plant communities due to management actions and/or climatic conditions.

This site is the most dominant site in the MLRA. Natural fire played a significant role in the maintenance of this site by limiting conifer establishment. The recent control of fire, and the increased seed source from shelterbelts results in occasional juniper and/or ponderosa pine encroachment.

The plant community upon which interpretations are primarily based is the Bluestem/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community. This plant community has been determined by study of rangeland relic areas, areas protected from excessive disturbance, and areas managed 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 used.

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

## **State and transition model**

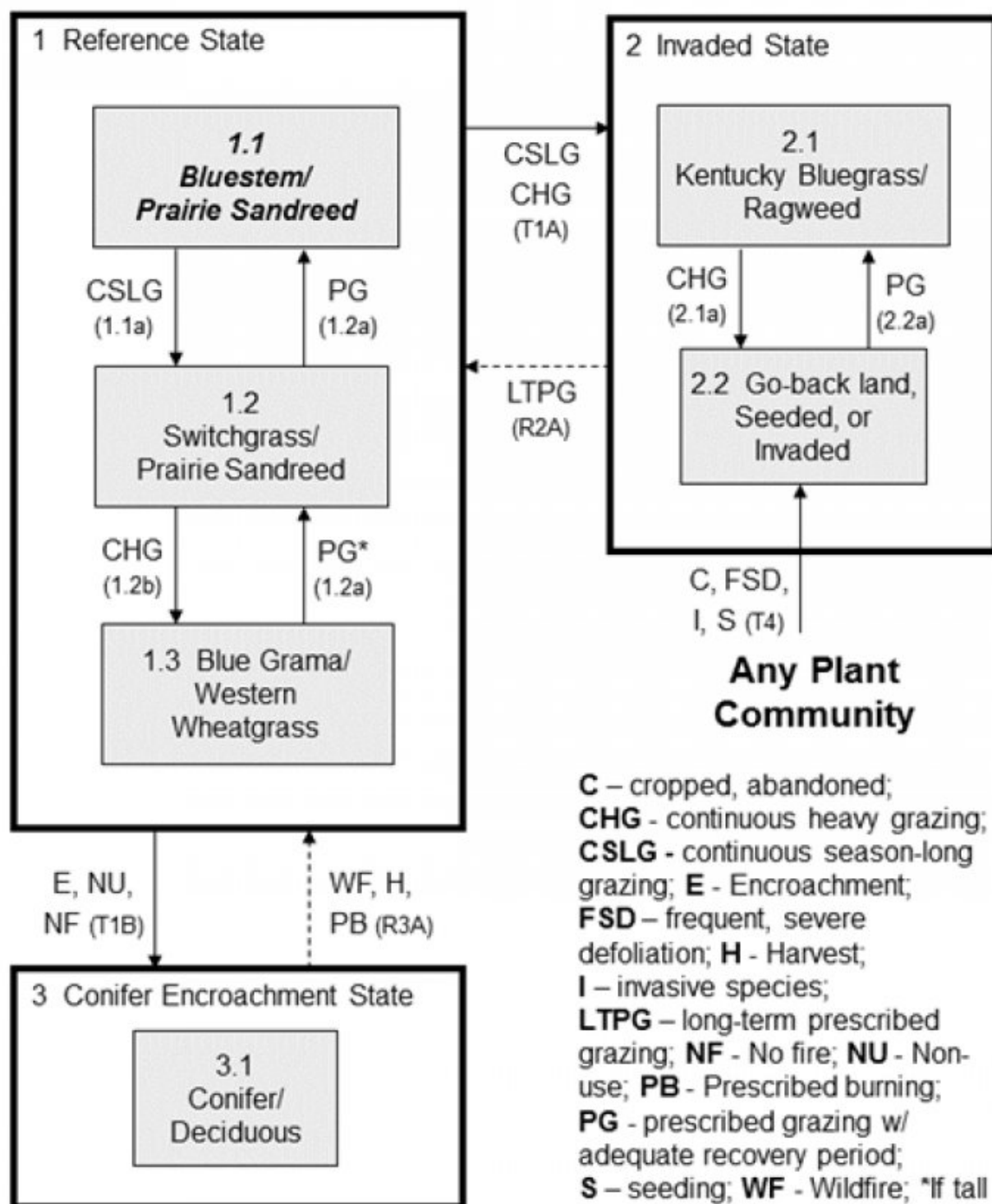


Figure 4. Sandy State and Transition Diagram

State 1  
Invaded State

Community 1.1  
Kentucky Bluegrass/Ragweed

With sustained excessive herbivory during the summer months the plant community will become dominated by cool season grasses and forbs. The potential vegetation is about 70% grasses or grass-like plants, 20% forbs, and 10% shrubs. Dominant grasses include Kentucky bluegrass, blue grama, Scribner panicum and sand dropseed. Other grasses or grass-likes include needleandthread, sedges and cheatgrass. Dominant forbs include green sagewort, western ragweed, Rocky Mountain beeplant and thistles. The tall warm season grasses are replaced by blue grama and sand dropseed. Cool season grasses such as Scribner’s panicum, annual brome, and bluegrass will increase and fill the void left by the disappearing tall warm season grasses. Sedges will flourish in the understory. Western ragweed and green sagewort increase in abundance. Invader thistles and annual forbs increase along with grazing resistant shrubs such as cactus and small soapweed. This is a relatively stable plant community that requires a considerable amount of time and/or energy to transition this plant community. If this plant community becomes dominated by Kentucky bluegrass (greater than 40%), an ecological threshold will be crossed and return to another plant community will be extremely difficult.

Figure 6. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month).  
NE6635, Eroded Tableland, cool-season dominant, warm-season subdominant.

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     | 5   | 10  | 25  | 30  | 15  | 5   | 5   | 5   |     |     |

State 2  
Conifer Encroachment State

Community 2.1  
Conifer/Deciduous

This plant community can develop whenever conifer and/or deciduous trees occur adjacent to the originating plant community, and encroachment of various species occurs. On the upper slopes where this site occurs, ponderosa pine and/or eastern redcedar are typically the first species to encroach/increase. On the lower slopes, typically various deciduous trees followed by eastern redcedar are the first to encroach/increase. In any case, eastern redcedar can become dominant. When this occurs a closed canopy of eastern redcedar may result. Because of fire suppression over many years, this plant community will develop extensive ladder fuels which can lead to a removal of most tree species with a wildfire. With properly managed intensive grazing, encroachment of deciduous trees will be minimal; however, this will not impact encroachment of conifer species. This plant community is made up of trees with a canopy cover of 50% or greater consisting of trees generally 12 feet or taller. The herbaceous component decreases proportionately in relation to the percent canopy cover, with the reduction being greater under a conifer overstory. This plant community is resistant to change, and resilient given normal disturbances. In higher canopy cover situations, the soil erosion will increase in relation to most of the plant communities from which this plant community originated. The water cycle is also significantly altered under higher canopy cover. Infiltration is reduced because of a lack of herbaceous cover and the rooting structure provided by the herbaceous species. Runoff is not greatly increased, as the soil is still capable of absorbing the rainfall that reaches the soil surface.

Figure 8. Plant community growth curve (percent production by month).  
NE6644, Eroded Tableland, heavy conifer canopy.

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 3   | 7   | 10  | 20  | 28  | 15  | 5   | 4   | 4   | 2   | 1   |

Transition 4

## State 2 to 1

Cropping abandonment, introduction of invasive species, or seeding of introduced species for agricultural purposes will lead to the Go-back Land, Seeded, or Invaded plant community.

## Additional community tables

Table 4. Community 1.1 plant community composition

| Group                  | Common Name                           | Symbol | Scientific Name                                      | Annual Production (Kg/Hectare) | Foliar Cover (%) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Grass/Grasslike</b> |                                       |        |  |                                |                  |
| 2                      | <b>Prairie Sandreed</b>               |        |  | 0–50                           |                  |
|                        | prairie sandreed                      | CALO   | <i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>                        | 0–50                           | –                |
| 4                      | <b>Needleandthread</b>                |        |  | 50–151                         |                  |
|                        | needle and thread                     | HECOC8 | <i>Hesperostipa comata ssp. comata</i>               | 50–151                         | –                |
| 5                      | <b>Grama</b>                          |        |  | 101–252                        |                  |
|                        | blue grama                            | BOGR2  | <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>                            | 101–252                        | –                |
|                        | hairy grama                           | BOHI2  | <i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>                             | 0–101                          | –                |
| 6                      | <b>Other Warm-Season Grasses</b>      |        |  | 101–252                        |                  |
|                        | sand dropseed                         | SPCR   | <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>                        | 101–202                        | –                |
|                        | mat sandbur                           | CELO3  | <i>Cenchrus longispinus</i>                          | 0–50                           | –                |
|                        | purple lovegrass                      | ERSP   | <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>                        | 0–50                           | –                |
| 7                      | <b>Native Grasses/Grass-Likes</b>     |        |  | 202–353                        |                  |
|                        | sedge                                 | CAREX  | <i>Carex</i>   | 50–151                         | –                |
|                        | Scribner's rosette grass              | DIOLS  | <i>Dichanthelium oligosanthos var. scribnerianum</i> | 50–151                         | –                |
|                        | western wheatgrass                    | PASM   | <i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>                            | 0–101                          | –                |
|                        | prairie Junegrass                     | KOMA   | <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>                            | 0–50                           | –                |
|                        | fall rosette grass                    | DIWI5  | <i>Dichanthelium wilcoxianum</i>                     | 0–20                           | –                |
|                        | Grass, perennial                      | 2GP    | <i>Grass, perennial</i>                              | 0–20                           | –                |
| 8                      | <b>Non-Native Grasses/Grass-Likes</b> |        |  | 50–404                         |                  |
|                        | bluegrass                             | POA    | <i>Poa</i>   | 50–404                         | –                |
|                        | cheatgrass                            | BRTE   | <i>Bromus tectorum</i>                               | 0–151                          | –                |
| <b>Forb</b>            |                                       |        |  |                                |                  |
| 9                      | <b>Forbs</b>                          |        |  | 50–202                         |                  |
|                        | Cuman ragweed                         | AMPS   | <i>Ambrosia psilostachya</i>                         | 50–202                         | –                |
|                        | tarragon                              | ARDR4  | <i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>                         | 0–50                           | –                |
|                        | thistle                               | CIRSI  | <i>Cirsium</i>                                       | 0–30                           | –                |
|                        | Rocky Mountain beeplant               | CLSE   | <i>Cleome serrulata</i>                              | 0–30                           | –                |
|                        | common sunflower                      | HEAN3  | <i>Helianthus annuus</i>                             | 0–30                           | –                |
|                        | white heath aster                     | SYER   | <i>Symphyotrichum ericoides</i>                      | 0–30                           | –                |
|                        | vervain                               | VERBE  | <i>Verbena</i>                                       | 0–30                           | –                |
|                        | Forb, annual                          | 2FA    | <i>Forb, annual</i>                                  | 0–20                           | –                |
|                        | Forb, perennial                       | 2FP    | <i>Forb, perennial</i>                               | 0–20                           | –                |
|                        | white sagebrush                       | ARLU   | <i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>                         | 0–10                           | –                |
|                        | rush skeletonplant                    | LYJU   | <i>Lygodesmia juncea</i>                             | 0–10                           | –                |

|                   |                    |        |                               |        |   |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|---|
|                   | beardtongue        | PENST  | <i>Penstemon</i>              | 0–10   | – |
|                   | scurfpea           | PSORA2 | <i>Psoralidium</i>            | 0–10   | – |
|                   | Missouri goldenrod | SOMI2  | <i>Solidago missouriensis</i> | 0–10   | – |
| <b>Shrub/Vine</b> |                    |        |                               |        |   |
| 10                | <b>Shrubs</b>      |        |                               | 10–101 |   |
|                   | Shrub (>.5m)       | 2SHRUB | <i>Shrub (&gt;.5m)</i>        | 0–50   | – |
|                   | rose               | ROSA5  | <i>Rosa</i>                   | 0–30   | – |
|                   | soapweed yucca     | YUGL   | <i>Yucca glauca</i>           | 0–30   | – |
|                   | pricklypear        | OPUNT  | <i>Opuntia</i>                | 0–20   | – |

Table 5. Community 2.1 plant community composition

| Group                  | Common Name                           | Symbol | Scientific Name                                      | Annual Production (Kg/Hectare) | Foliar Cover (%) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Grass/Grasslike</b> |                                       |        |  |                                |                  |
| 1                      | <b>Bluestem</b>                       |        |  | 0–56                           |                  |
|                        | big bluestem                          | ANGE   | <i>Andropogon gerardii</i>                           | 0–56                           | –                |
|                        | sand bluestem                         | ANHA   | <i>Andropogon hallii</i>                             | 0–56                           | –                |
| 2                      | <b>Prairie Sandreed</b>               |        |  | 0–22                           |                  |
|                        | prairie sandreed                      | CALO   | <i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>                        | 0–22                           | –                |
| 3                      | <b>Little Bluestem</b>                |        |  | 56–112                         |                  |
|                        | little bluestem                       | SCSC   | <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>                       | 56–112                         | –                |
| 4                      | <b>Needleandthread</b>                |        |  | 112–168                        |                  |
|                        | needle and thread                     | HECOC8 | <i>Hesperostipa comata ssp. comata</i>               | 112–168                        | –                |
| 5                      | <b>Grama</b>                          |        |  | 56–112                         |                  |
|                        | blue grama                            | BOGR2  | <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>                            | 56–112                         | –                |
|                        | hairy grama                           | BOHI2  | <i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>                             | 0–56                           | –                |
| 6                      | <b>Other Warm-Season Grasses</b>      |        |  | 168–280                        |                  |
|                        | sand dropseed                         | SPCR   | <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>                        | 22–112                         | –                |
|                        | switchgrass                           | PAVI2  | <i>Panicum virgatum</i>                              | 0–56                           | –                |
|                        | Fendler threeawn                      | ARPUL  | <i>Aristida purpurea var. longiseta</i>              | 0–56                           | –                |
|                        | sideoats grama                        | BOCU   | <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>                        | 11–56                          | –                |
|                        | mat sandbur                           | CELO3  | <i>Cenchrus longispinus</i>                          | 0–34                           | –                |
|                        | purple lovegrass                      | ERSP   | <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>                        | 0–34                           | –                |
|                        | sand lovegrass                        | ERTR3  | <i>Eragrostis trichodes</i>                          | 0–22                           | –                |
|                        | thin paspalum                         | PASE5  | <i>Paspalum setaceum</i>                             | 0–22                           | –                |
| 7                      | <b>Native Grasses/Grass-Likes</b>     |        |  | 112–224                        |                  |
|                        | western wheatgrass                    | PASM   | <i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>                            | 22–112                         | –                |
|                        | sedge                                 | CAREX  | <i>Carex</i>   | 22–90                          | –                |
|                        | Grass, perennial                      | 2GP    | <i>Grass, perennial</i>                              | 0–56                           | –                |
|                        | prairie Junegrass                     | KOMA   | <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>                            | 11–56                          | –                |
|                        | Scribner's rosette grass              | DIOLS  | <i>Dichanthelium oligosanthos var. scribnerianum</i> | 0–11                           | –                |
|                        | fall rosette grass                    | DIWI5  | <i>Dichanthelium wilcoxianum</i>                     | 0–11                           | –                |
| 8                      | <b>Non-Native Grasses/Grass-Likes</b> |        |  | 11–56                          |                  |
|                        | cheatgrass                            | BRTE   | <i>Bromus tectorum</i>                               | 0–56                           | –                |

|                   |                               |        |                                   |        |   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|--------|---|
|                   | bluegrass                     | POA    | <i>Poa</i>                        | 11–56  | – |
| <b>Forb</b>       |                               |        |                                   |        |   |
| 9                 | <b>Forbs</b>                  |        |                                   | 56–112 |   |
|                   | Forb, annual                  | 2FA    | <i>Forb, annual</i>               | 0–56   | – |
|                   | Forb, perennial               | 2FP    | <i>Forb, perennial</i>            | 0–34   | – |
|                   | tarragon                      | ARDR4  | <i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>      | 11–34  | – |
|                   | Missouri goldenrod            | SOMI2  | <i>Solidago missouriensis</i>     | 11–34  | – |
|                   | vervain                       | VERBE  | <i>Verbena</i>                    | 11–34  | – |
|                   | upright prairie<br>coneflower | RACO3  | <i>Ratibida columnifera</i>       | 11–22  | – |
|                   | white heath aster             | SYER   | <i>Symphotrichum ericoides</i>    | 11–22  | – |
|                   | spiderwort                    | TRADE  | <i>Tradescantia</i>               | 0–22   | – |
|                   | Cuman ragweed                 | AMPS   | <i>Ambrosia psilostachya</i>      | 0–22   | – |
|                   | thistle                       | CIRSI  | <i>Cirsium</i>                    | 0–22   | – |
|                   | blazing star                  | LIATR  | <i>Liatris</i>                    | 0–11   | – |
|                   | rush skeletonplant            | LYJU   | <i>Lygodesmia juncea</i>          | 0–11   | – |
|                   | beardtongue                   | PENST  | <i>Penstemon</i>                  | 0–11   | – |
|                   | scurfpea                      | PSORA2 | <i>Psoralegium</i>                | 0–11   | – |
|                   | white sagebrush               | ARLU   | <i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>      | 0–11   | – |
| <b>Shrub/Vine</b> |                               |        |                                   |        |   |
| 10                | <b>Shrubs</b>                 |        |                                   | 56–168 |   |
|                   | Shrub (>.5m)                  | 2SHRUB | <i>Shrub (&gt;.5m)</i>            | 0–56   | – |
|                   | leadplant                     | AMCA6  | <i>Amorpha canescens</i>          | 11–56  | – |
|                   | rose                          | ROSA5  | <i>Rosa</i>                       | 11–56  | – |
|                   | pricklypear                   | OPUNT  | <i>Opuntia</i>                    | 11–34  | – |
|                   | western sandcherry            | PRPUB  | <i>Prunus pumila var. besseyi</i> | 0–11   | – |
|                   | soapweed yucca                | YUGL   | <i>Yucca glauca</i>               | 0–11   | – |
| <b>Tree</b>       |                               |        |                                   |        |   |
| 11                | <b>Trees</b>                  |        |                                   | 56–168 |   |
|                   | eastern redcedar              | JUVI   | <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>       | 56–168 | – |

## Animal community

Grazing by domestic livestock is one of the major income-producing industries in the area. Rangeland in this area may provide year-long 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 well drained portions of this site. Normal rainfall is limited to 18-22 inches per year. Soils on this site are in Hydrologic Soil Group A and B. Some areas have high water tables. On well drained portions of this site, infiltration potential is high. On well drained areas, significant runoff is expected to occur only during intense storms (refer to Section 4, NRCS National Engineering Handbook for runoff quantities and hydrologic curves).

For the interpretive plant community, rills and gullies should not typically be present. Water flow patterns should be



barely distinguishable if at all present. Pedestals are only slightly present in association with bunchgrasses such as little bluestem. Litter typically falls in place, and signs of movement are not common. Chemical and physical crusts are rare to non-existent. Cryptogamic crusts are present but only cover 1-2% of the soil surface. Overall this site has the appearance of being very stable and productive.

## Recreational uses

This site provides hunting opportunities for upland game species. The wide variety of plants which bloom from spring until fall have an esthetic value that appeals to visitors.

## Other products

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

## Other references

High Plains Regional Climate Center, University of Nebraska, 830728 Chase Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0728.  
(<http://hpccsun.unl.edu>)

USDA, NRCS. National Water and Climate Center, 101 SW Main, Suite 1600, Portland, OR 97204-3224.  
(<http://wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>)

USDA, NRCS. National Range and Pasture Handbook, September 1997

USDA, NRCS. National Soil Information System, Information Technology Center, 2150 Centre Avenue, Building A, Fort Collins, CO 80526. (<http://nasis.nrcs.usda.gov>)

USDA, NRCS, 2002. National Soil Survey Handbook, title 430-VI.  
(<http://soils.usda.gov/procedures/handbook/main.htm>)

## Contributors

Dana Larsen

## 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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| Contact for lead author                     | Stan Boltz, <a href="mailto:stanley.boltz@sd.usda.gov">stanley.boltz@sd.usda.gov</a> , 605-352-1236 |
| Date  | 08/01/2006  |
| Approved by                                 | Stan Boltz  |
| Approval date                               |   |
| Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on | Annual Production   |

## Indicators

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

2. **Presence of water flow patterns:** None, or barely visible and discontinuous.
- 
3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Typically non-existent, but steeper areas may have limited pedestalling of bunchgrasses. No exposed roots should be present.
- 
4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** 0 to 5 percent is typical.
- 
5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** None should 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):** Litter should fall in place. Slight amount of movement of smallest size class litter is possible, but not normal.
- 
8. **Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):** Soil aggregate stability ratings should typically be 5 to 6, normally 6. Surface organic matter adheres to the soil surface. Soil surface fragments will typically retain structure indefinitely when dipped in distilled water (pre-wetting may be necessary to initially hold aggregates together).
- 
9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** A-horizon should be 6 to 20 inches thick (or greater) with mollic (dark) colors when moist. Structure typically is medium to fine granular at least in the upper A-horizon (some soils may be subangular blocky parting to granular).
- 
10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** Combination of shallow and deep rooted species (mid & tall rhizomatous and tufted perennial cool- and warm-season grasses) with fine and coarse roots positively influences infiltration.
- 
11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** None.
- 
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 warm-season rhizomatous grasses >>
- Sub-dominant: Mid, warm-season bunchgrasses > mid, cool-season grasses >
- Other: Short, warm-season grasses = grass-like species = forbs > shrubs

Additional: Other grasses in other functional groups occur in minor amounts.

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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** Very little evidence of decadence or mortality. Bunch grasses have strong, healthy centers and shrubs are vigorous.
  14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):** Litter cover typically 60 to 80 percent, with depth 0.25 to 0.5 inches.
  15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** Total annual production ranges from 1,800 to 3,000 pounds/acre, with the reference value being 2,400 pounds/acre (air-dry basis).
  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 weeds, Kentucky bluegrass.
  17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All species exhibit high vigor relative to climatic conditions. Do not rate based solely on seed production. Perennial grasses should have vigorous rhizomes or tillers.
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