

Ecological site R087AY008TX Very Deep Sand

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Rangeland health reference sheet

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health is a qualitative assessment protocol used to determine ecosystem condition based on benchmark characteristics described in the Reference Sheet. A suite of 17 (or more) indicators are typically considered in an assessment. The ecological site(s) representative of an assessment location must be known prior to applying the protocol and must be verified based on soils and climate. Current plant community cannot be used to identify the ecological site.

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Approved by	David Kraft
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:** Water flow patterns are uncommon for this site.

3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** Pedestals or terracettes are uncommon for this site when occupied by the reference community.

4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** Expect no more than 40 percent bare ground randomly distributed in small patches.

5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** No gullies should be present.

6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** Blowouts or dunes could occur but should be uncommon under reference community.

7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** This site has very highly permeable soils with very high infiltration rates. Only small-sized litter will move short distances with intense storms.
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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):** Soil surface is resistant to erosion.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Soil surface structure is greater than 80 inches thick with colors from pale brown fine sand to pale brown fine sand and generally single grain structures. SOM is less than one percent.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** The savannah of trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and forbs, along with adequate litter and little bare ground, provides for maximum infiltration and little runoff under normal rainfall events.
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11. **Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):** None.
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12. **Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground annual-production or live foliar cover using symbols: >>, >, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):**
- Dominant: Warm-season tallgrasses >>
- Sub-dominant: Warm-season midgrasses >
- Other: Trees > Shrubs/Vines > Forbs
- Additional:
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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** There should be little mortality or decadence for any functional groups.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):** Litter is primarily herbaceous.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** 2,250 pounds per acre for below average moisture years to 2,800 pounds per acre for above average moisture years.
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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: Potential invasive species include post oak, bluejack oak, blackjack oak, yaupon, and elm.

17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** All perennial plants should be capable of reproducing, except for periods of prolonged drought conditions, heavy natural herbivory and intense wildfires.
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