

Ecological site group DX035X03BESG03

Chuska Mountains - Limy

Last updated: 09/02/2021
Accessed: 04/19/2024

Key Characteristics

- Chuska Mountains
- Soils not sodic
- Soils not saline
- Soils limy

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.

Physiography

This upland site occurs on river terraces, plateaus, and mesas. There are occasional drainageways. Slopes are generally from 0 to 8 percent; however, the river terrace slopes may be 40 percent. Elevations range from 4,800 to 6,400 feet above sea level.

Climate

This site has an arid, mild, dry climate with distinct seasonal temperature variations and large annual and diurnal temperature changes. Mean annual precipitation varies from 7 to 10 inches. May and June are the dry months. During July, August, and September, 3.5 inches of precipitation influences the presence and production of warm-season plants. Late-fall and winter moisture is conducive to the production of cool-season plants. The Gulf of Mexico is the principal source of moisture for summer precipitation, which is characterized by brief afternoon thunderstorms. Winter moisture occurs as light rain or snow. Spring and summer winds increase transpiration rates of native plants and rapidly dry the surface soil.

Soil features

The soils on these sites are deep and well-drained. The surface layer is a calcareous loam, sandy loam, or gravelly loam about three inches thick. These soils are calcareous throughout the profile. They formed in calcareous eolian and alluvial material derived from sandstone and shale. Water intake rate is moderate to moderately rapid. Available water-holding capacity ranges from 4.5 to 9.5 inches in a 5-foot profile. Potential for wind and water erosion is low to medium.

Vegetation dynamics

Please see associated ecological sites under subclasses to view state and transition models.

The vegetative aspect of these sites is grassland characterized by short- and mid- grasses. Shrubs and forbs are a relatively small component of the plant community. Plant species include slim tridens, fluffgrass, sixweeks fescue, annual brome grasses, sixweeks grama, ring muhly, Russian thistle, cholla cacti, pricklypear cacti, and Rocky Mountain beeplant. Overgrazing, drought and the introduction of non-native species lead to increased shrubs and an introduced, non-native state.

Major Land Resource Area

MLRA 035X

Colorado Plateau

Subclasses

- DX035X03E003–Limy

Stage

Provisional

State and transition model

Citations