

Ecological site R006XB014OR

Meadow Swale

14-26 PZ

Accessed: 08/08/2026

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.

Associated sites

R006XB012OR	Dry Pumice Meadow 14-26 PZ
R006XB013OR	Wet Pumice Meadow 14-26 PZ This site is associated with Wet Pumice Meadow, Dry Pumice Meadow, Marshy Swale, and Wet Marsh sites in the B6 South MLRA. They are frequently in complexes of all the sites and usually do not occupy large homogenous areas. They may be isolated wet areas within drier sites (Dry and Wet Pumice Meadow) or can be associated with standing water sites (Marshy Swale and Wet Marsh). The site also occurs adjacent to perennial streams on river terraces.
R006XB015OR	Marshy Swale 14-26 PZ
R006XB016OR	Wet Marsh 14-26 PZ

Similar sites

R006XB015OR	Marshy Swale 14-26 PZ
R006XB013OR	Wet Pumice Meadow 14-26 PZ

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

Basin

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Alluvial fan (2) Terrace
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding duration	Very long (more than 30 days)
Ponding frequency	Frequent
Elevation	1,220 – 1,830 m
Slope	0 %
Ponding depth	10 – 30 cm
Water table depth	0 – 120 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

This site is characterized by relatively short, hot summers and cold, snowy winters. The site receives approximately 20 inches of precipitation per year, the bulk of which is snowfall. There are frequent thunderstorms in the summer months. There may be ground fogs in the mornings during the growing season which affect stomatal gas exchange and photosynthetic activity.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	20 days
Freeze-free period (average)	50 days
Precipitation total (average)	640 mm

Influencing water features

Soil features

Soils for this site typically have a thin organic layer over loams, layer of coarse pumice over heavy clay loams. There is an apparent water table present for most of the year. The soils are ponded for a significant time in the spring and early summer. These relatively young soils

have been deposited over older, remnant fans and terraces. Variations and intergrades of soil characteristics are common.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Mucky silt loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Poorly drained
Permeability class	Slow
Soil depth	100 – 150 cm
Surface fragment cover ≤3"	Not specified
Surface fragment cover >3"	Not specified
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	10.16 – 16.51 cm
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Subsurface fragment volume ≤3" (Depth not specified)	Not specified
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	Not specified

Ecological dynamics

The site is a wet meadow site usually found in swales, which may be old channels that have been filled with pumice and sediments. They may also be found in claypan areas where they appear as small ponds filled with vegetation. The apparent water talbe comes to the sureface for much of the year (the site is ponded for part of the year), however, in later portions of the growing season the upper portion of the soil profile is dry. The interpretative plant community for this site is the Historic Climax Plant Community (HCPC).

State and transition model

Figure 3. Meadow Swale State & Transition Model

Additional community tables

Table 5. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1				3754-5212	
	analogue sedge	CASI2	Carex simulata	2522-3082	–
	Nebraska sedge	CANE2	Carex nebrascensis	841-1401	–
	clustered field sedge	CAPR5	Carex praeegracilis	280-560	–
	slenderbeak sedge	CAAT3	Carex athrostachya	111-168	–
2				111-168	
3				222-336	
	Sierra rush	JUNE	Juncus nevadensis	111-168	–
Forb					
4				560-841	
	Chamisso arnica	ARCHI4	Arnica chamissonis ssp. foliosa var. incana	560-841	–
5				9-56	
	agoseris	AGOSE	Agoseris	9-56	–
	small camas	CAQU2	Camassia quamash	9-56	–
	falsegold groundsel	PAPSP2	Packera pseud aurea var. pseud aurea	9-56	–
	American bistort	POBI6	Polygonum bistortoides	9-56	–
	western dock	RUAQ	Rumex aquaticus	9-56	–

Table 6. Community 2.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 7. Community 3.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 8. Community 4.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Animal community

Several grazing animals seasonally use the site. Mule deer, elk, and antelope use the site for grazing. The fine sedge component of the site provides good quality forage for a variety of animals. The position of the site makes it attractive to grazing animals when the adjacent sites are wet; or adjacent forage is coarse and/or unpalatable. The site supplies very good food and cover for nesting waterfowl. The site is an important source of invertebrates for foraging birds.

Contributors

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.

Author(s)/participant(s)	
Contact for lead author	
Date	
Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills:

2. Presence of water flow patterns:

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:

4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):

5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:

6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:

7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):

8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):

9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):

10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:

11. Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):

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:

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

13. Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):

14. Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in):

15. Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):

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:

17. Perennial plant reproductive capability:
