

Ecological site R009XY055OR

Shallow North

10-15 PZ

Last updated: 5/06/2025
Accessed: 08/28/2026

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

R009XY003OR	Fan 10-15 PZ Fan 10-15" PZ
R009XY050OR	Loamy Bench 10-15 PZ Loamy Bench 10-15" Pz
R009XY051OR	Loamy South 10-15 PZ Loamy South 10-15" PZ
R009XY052OR	Loamy Shallow South 10-15 PZ Loamy Shallow South 10-15" PZ
R009XY053OR	Very Shallow South 10-15 PZ Very Shallow South 10-15" PZ

Similar sites

R009XY048OR	Shallow North 14+ PZ Shallow North 14"+ PZ
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Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	Not specified

Physiographic features

This site occurs on north facing aspects along the lower slopes of canyons. It is typically on slopes having north and northeast aspects. Slopes range from 15 to 90%. With slopes of 30 to 60% being the most typical. Elevation varies from 800 to 2800 feet.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Canyon
Elevation	240 – 850 m
Slope	20 – 90 %
Aspect	N, NE

Climatic features

The annual precipitation ranges from 10 to 15 inches. The precipitation occurs as rain and snow during the months of November through March. Localized, occasionally severe, convection storms occur during the summer. The mean annual air temperature is approximately 50 degrees F. Extreme temperatures range from 100 degrees F. to -20 degrees F. soil temperature regimes are mesic. The frost-free period ranges from 90 to 120 days. The period of optimum plant growth is from early April through June.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	120 days
Freeze-free period (average)	
Precipitation total (average)	380 mm

Influencing water features

Soil features

The soils of this site are formed in colluvium and loess over old, lower Miocene basalt bedrock. They are very shallow to shallow. Typically the surface layer is a cobbly loam over a cobbly loam to cobbly clay loam subsoil. Soil permeability is moderate. The available water holding capacity (AWC) is 1 to 3 inches. The erosion potential is high.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Cobbly loam
Family particle size	(1) Loamy
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Moderate

Ecological dynamics

Range in Characteristics:

Variability in plant composition and production is dependent on soil depth, slope and aspect. Bluebunch wheatgrass increases on northeast and northwest aspects. Idaho fescue increases on steep, due north exposures. Production increases as soil depth approaches 20 inches. Soil depth, production and composition changes occur in short distances as this site is normally in complex with sites having deeper soils.

Response to Disturbance:

If the condition of the site deteriorates as a result of overgrazing, Idaho fescue decreases and bluebunch wheatgrass increases. Sand dropseed, cheatgrass, Japanese brome, annual fescues and a variety of unpalatable forbs invade. With further deterioration, bluebunch wheatgrass decreases, annuals strongly increase, threeawn invades and total forage production decreases. Under deteriorated conditions areas of bare ground appear, soil erosion accelerates and potential site productivity decreases.

State and 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	Perennial Deep-rooted Dominant			404-538	
	bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSP6	<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>	404-538	–
2	Perennial Deep-rooted Dub-dominant			67-202	
	Idaho fescue	FEID	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	67-202	–
5	PPGG			20-40	
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	10-20	–
	Sandberg bluegrass	POSE	<i>Poa secunda</i>	10-20	–
Forb					
7	Perennial All Dominant			20-61	
	common yarrow	ACMI2	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	7-20	–
	buckwheat	ERIOG	<i>Eriogonum</i>	7-20	–
	phlox	PHLOX	<i>Phlox</i>	7-20	–
9	PPFF			7-34	
	agoseris	AGOSE	<i>Agoseris</i>	1-4	–
	milkvetch	ASTRA	<i>Astragalus</i>	1-4	–
	arrowleaf balsamroot	BASA3	<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>	1-4	–
	brittle bladderfern	CYFR2	<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	1-4	–
	shaggy fleabane	ERPU2	<i>Erigeron pumilus</i>	1-4	–
	hawkweed	HIERA	<i>Hieracium</i>	1-4	–
	desertparsley	LOMAT	<i>Lomatium</i>	1-4	–
	lupine	LUPIN	<i>Lupinus</i>	1-4	–
Shrub/Vine					
11	Perennial Evergreen Dominant			7-13	
	broom snakeweed	GUSA2	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	7-13	–

Animal community

Livestock Grazing: This site is suited to spring and fall use by cattle, sheep and horses under a planned grazing system. The key species is Idaho fescue. Idaho fescue can be damaged if heavily grazed during periods of flowering and seed formation when root reserves and soil moisture is low. Use in the spring should be postponed until the soils are firm enough to prevent trampling damage, soil compaction and soil mass movement. Wildlife: When the ecological condition is high this site provides food for deer, elk, other mammals and upland

birds. It is an important wintering area for deer and elk. Native Wildlife Associated With The Potential Climax Community: Mule deer, white-tail deer, elk, rodents and a variety of upland birds use this site for food.

Hydrological functions

When the ecological condition is high this site provides food for deer, elk, other mammals and upland birds. It is an important wintering area for deer and elk.

Other information

When in poor condition this site has virtually no potential for range seeding because it is droughty, stony and usually steep. Technology for seeding is currently not available.

Contributors

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Approval

Kirt Walstad, 5/06/2025

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)	Jeff Repp
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Date	07/30/2012
Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills: none to some, severe sheet & rill erosion hazard
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2. Presence of water flow patterns: None to some

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes: None to some

4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):
5-15%

5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies: None

6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas: None, slight wind erosion hazard

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

8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):
Moderately to significantly resistant to erosion; aggregate stability = 3-6

9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness): Shallow to very
shallow, well drained, with a cobbly loam surface; low to moderate OM (1-3%)

10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on
infiltration and runoff: Moderate to significant ground cover (70-90%) and moderate to very steep slopes (15-90%) moderately limit
rainfall impact and overland flow

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: Bluebunch wheatgrass > Idaho fescue > forbs > other grasses > shrubs

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

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

Normal decadence and mortality expected

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):

Favorable: 800, Normal: 600, Unfavorable: 400 lbs/acre/year at high RSI (HCPC)

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: Perennial forb and brush species will increase with deterioration of plant community. Sand dropseed, annual bromes, and annual fescues invade sites that have lost deep rooted perennial grass functional groups. Excessive erosion may occur, deteriorating site potential.

17. Perennial plant reproductive capability: All species should be capable of reproducing annually
