

Ecological site R010XC064OR

SR North

9-12 PZ

Last updated: 4/10/2025
Accessed: 08/21/2026

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

R010XC020OR	SR Loamy 9-12 PZ SR Loamy 9-12" PZ
R010XC021OR	SR Clayey 9-12 PZ SR Clayey 9-12" PZ
R010XC025OR	SR Sandy 9-12 PZ SR Sandy 9-12 PZ
R010XC043OR	SR South 9-12 PZ SR South 9-12" PZ
R010XC063OR	SR Droughty North 9-12 PZ SR Droughty North 9-12 PZ

Similar sites

R010XC063OR	SR Droughty North 9-12 PZ SR Droughty North 9-12 PZ (droughtier site, predominantly on northeast and northwest aspects, different composition-bluebunch wheatgrass dominant)
--------------------	--

Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	(1) <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> var. <i>wyomingensis</i> (2) <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>tridentata</i>

Herbaceous	(1) <i>Festuca idahoensis</i> (2) <i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> ssp. <i>spicata</i>
------------	---

Physiographic features

This site occurs on north facing aspects of canyon side slopes, terraces, rolling uplands and tablelands. Slopes range from 12 to 70%. Elevations typically range from 2,000 to 3,600 feet.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Terrace (2) Canyon
Elevation	610 – 1,100 m
Slope	10 – 70 %
Aspect	N

Climatic features

The annual precipitation ranges from 9 to 12 inches, most of which occurs in the form of rain and snow during the months of December through March. Localized convection storms occasionally occur during the summer. The soil temperature regime is cool mesic with a mean air temperature of 50 degrees F. Temperature extremes range from 100 to -20 degrees F. The frost free period ranges from 100 to 130 days. The optimum growth period for plant growth is April through June.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	130 days
Freeze-free period (average)	
Precipitation total (average)	310 mm

Influencing water features

Soil features

The soils of this site are typically moderately deep to deep with a depth range of shallow to very deep. They are well drained. Typically the surface layer is a silt loam to clay loam or channery loam 5 to 20 inches thick. The subsoil is a silty clay loam to clay or channery loam 16 to 28 inches thick. Depth to bedrock, lacustrine or alluvium sediments ranges from 20 to 60 inches. Permeability is moderate slow to moderate. The available water holding capacity (AWC) is about 4 to 6 inches for the profile. The erosion potential is moderate to severe.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Surface texture	(1) Silt loam (2) Clay loam
-----------------	--------------------------------

Family particle size	(1) Clayey
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Moderately slow to moderate
Soil depth	50 – 150 cm
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	10.16 – 15.24 cm

Ecological dynamics

The potential native plant community is dominated by Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass. Wyoming big sagebrush and lesser amounts of basin big sagebrush are common. Sandberg bluegrass and a variety of forbs and other shrubs are present. Vegetative composition of the community is approximately 85 percent grasses, 5 percent forbs and 10 percent shrubs. The approximate ground cover is 80 to 90 percent (basal and crown).

Range Characteristics:

Idaho fescue is strongly dominant on due north slopes. Bluebunch wheatgrass increases on easterly and westerly exposures. Basin big sagebrush increases as precipitation approaches 12 inches. Production increases on deeper foot slope soils and at the upper end of the precipitation zone.

Response to Disturbance:

When the condition of the site deteriorates as a result of over grazing, Idaho fescue the preferred species decreases. Bluebunch wheatgrass, Sandberg bluegrass, Wyoming and basin big sagebrush increase. With continued deterioration bluebunch wheatgrass decreases and annuals strongly invade. With fire big sagebrush is severely impacted. Under deteriorated conditions rabbitbrush increases slightly and the site is dominated by cheatgrass, other annuals, and biennial forbs. Bare ground increases and excessive erosion, particularly in incised channel areas, contributes to downstream sedimentation.

States:

ARTRW/PSSPS-POSE-BRTE;CHVI8/POSE-BRTE/biennial forbs(following fire on degraded range)

State and transition model

Figure 1. State and Transition Model

Additional community tables

Table 5. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production (g)	Foliar Cover (%)
Grass/Grasslike					
1	Dominant, deep rooted perennial grass			673-942	
	Idaho fescue	FEID	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	673-942	–
2	Sub-dominant, deep-rooted perennial grass			202-336	
	bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSPS	<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata ssp. spicata</i>	202-336	–
3	Deep-rooted, perennial bunch grass			27-67	
	basin wildrye	LECI4	<i>Leymus cinereus</i>	27-67	–
4	Sub-dominant, shallow-rooted perennial grass			13-40	
	Sandberg bluegrass	POSE	<i>Poa secunda</i>	13-40	–

5	Other Perennial grasses			13-27	
	Thurber's needlegrass	ACTH7	<i>Achnatherum thurberianum</i>	0-13	–
	squirreltail	ELEL5	<i>Elymus elymoides</i>	0-13	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	0-13	–
Forb					
7	Dominant perennial forbs			34-67	
	arrowleaf balsamroot	BASA3	<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>	13-27	–
	lupine	LUPIN	<i>Lupinus</i>	13-27	–
	common yarrow	ACMI2	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	7-13	–
9	Other forbs			36-94	
	agoseris	AGOSE	<i>Agoseris</i>	0-13	–
	milkvetch	ASTRA	<i>Astragalus</i>	7-13	–
	brodiaea	BRODI	<i>Brodiaea</i>	0-13	–
	hawksbeard	CREPI	<i>Crepis</i>	7-13	–
	fleabane	ERIGE2	<i>Erigeron</i>	3-13	–
	buckwheat	ERIOG	<i>Eriogonum</i>	7-13	–
	woodland-star	LITHO2	<i>Lithophragma</i>	0-13	–
	stoneseed	LITHO3	<i>Lithospermum</i>	7-13	–
	desertparsley	LOMAT	<i>Lomatium</i>	3-13	–
	phlox	PHLOX	<i>Phlox</i>	0-13	–
	goldenrod	SOLID	<i>Solidago</i>	0-13	–
Shrub/Vine					
11	Dominant, evergreen shrubs			54-108	
	Wyoming big sagebrush	ARTRW8	<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis</i>	40-67	–
	basin big sagebrush	ARTRT	<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. tridentata</i>	13-40	–
14	Other shrubs			9-101	
	yellow rabbitbrush	CHVI8	<i>Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus</i>	9-27	–
	wild crab apple	PERA4	<i>Peraphyllum ramosissimum</i>	0-27	–
	antelope bitterbrush	PUTR2	<i>Purshia tridentata</i>	0-27	–
	threetip sagebrush	ARTR4	<i>Artemisia tripartita</i>	0-20	–

Animal community

Livestock Grazing: This site is suitable for livestock grazing use in the spring, early summer, and fall under a planned grazing system. Use should be postponed until the soils are firm enough to prevent trampling damage and soil compaction. Grazing management should be keyed for Idaho fescue. Deferred grazing or rest is recommended at least once every three years. **Native Wildlife Associated with the Potential Climax Community:** This site is commonly used by pronghorn antelope, mule deer, rabbits, rodents, upland birds and various predators. It is a preferred site for sage grouse rearing. Antelope and mule deer make excellent use of the site for fall, late winter and spring forage.

Hydrological functions

The soils of this site are in an upland topographic position. They have moderately high runoff potential and medium infiltration rates when the hydrologic cover is high. Hydrologic cover is high when the Idaho fescue and other deep rooted bunchgrass component is >70 percent of potential. The soils are in hydrologic group C.

Contributors

A Bahn, H Futter, K Danks, G Kuehl, H Barrett
 Bob Gillaspay
 E Ersch
 T.Bloomer, E.Petersen & A.Bahn

Approval

Kirt Walstad, 4/10/2025

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 and Bruce Frannsen
Contact for lead author	State Rangeland Management Specialist for NRCS in Oregon
Date	08/07/2012
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

2. Presence of water flow patterns: None to some

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes: None to very few (some frost heaving)

4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground): 0-5%

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

6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas: None, moderate 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): Slightly to significantly resistant to erosion: aggregate stability = 2-5

9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness): Moderately deep to deep well drained silt loam, channery loam, very sandy loam, or clay loam (5-20 inches thick): Moderate OM (2-4%)

10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff: Significant ground cover (80-90%) and gentle to steep slopes (12-70%) moderately to significantly 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: Idaho fescue > Bluebunch wheatgrass > shrubs > forbs

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: 1700, Normal: 1100, Unfavorable: 800 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: Western Juniper readily invades the site. Cheatgrass and Medusahead invade sites that have lost deep rooted perennial grass functional groups.
-

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