

## Ecological site R010XY007OR Sodic Bottom

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### 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

|             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| R010XY003OR | <b>Wet Meadow</b><br>Wet Meadow.     |
| R010XY005OR | <b>Loamy Bottom</b><br>Loamy bottom. |
| R010XY008OR | <b>Sodic Meadow</b><br>Sodic Meadow. |

### Similar sites

|             |                                                                                               |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R010XY008OR | <b>Sodic Meadow</b><br>Sodic Meadow (lower position, higher and longer duration water table). |
| R010XY005OR | <b>Loamy Bottom</b><br>Loamy bottom (not salt affected, higher production).                   |

Table 1. Dominant plant species

|            |                                                             |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tree       | Not specified                                               |
| Shrub      | (1) <i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>                          |
| Herbaceous | (1) <i>Leymus cinereus</i><br>(2) <i>Distichlis spicata</i> |

### Physiographic features

This site occurs on low to mid-elevation floodplains of perennial streams and rivers. Slopes range from 0 to 3%. Elevation varies from 500 to 4,000 feet.

**Table 2. Representative physiographic features**

|           |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Landforms | (1) Flood plain                    |
| Elevation | 150 – 1,220 m                      |
| Slope     | 0 %                                |
| Aspect    | Aspect is not a significant factor |

### **Climatic features**

9The annual precipitation ranges from 9 to 12 inches, which occurs in the form of snow and rain during the months of November through March. A perennial supply of subsurface moisture augments the precipitation. Localized convection storms occasionally occur during the summer. The soil temperature regime is mesic with a mean annual air temperature of 52 degrees F. Temperature extremes range from 100 to -10 degrees F. The frost-free period ranges from 90 to 180 days. The optimum growth period for native plants is from April through August.

**Table 3 Representative climatic features**

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Frost-free period (average)   | 180 days |
| Freeze-free period (average)  |          |
| Precipitation total (average) | 310 mm   |

### **Influencing water features**

### **Soil features**

The soils of this site are recent, very deep and somewhat poorly drained. Saturated conditions occur during the winter and spring months. Typically the surface layer is a silt loam about 9 inches thick. The subsoil is a silt loam to 60 inches or more. The upper 40 inches of soil is moderately to very strongly alkaline (pH 8.4 to 9.6) with a Sodium Absorbtion Ratio exceeding 13 in the upper 20 inches. Permeability is moderate to moderately slow. The available water holding capacity (AWC) is about 10 to 12 inches for the profile. Perennial to near perennial subsurface flows augment the available water. The potential for water erosion is high. See Appendix II for soils on which this site occurs.

**Table 4. Representative soil features**

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Surface texture      | (1) Silt loam               |
| Family particle size | (1) Loamy                   |
| Permeability class   | Moderate to moderately slow |

|                                         |                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Soil depth                              | 0 – 150 cm      |
| Available water capacity<br>(0-101.6cm) | 25.4 – 30.48 cm |
| Sodium adsorption ratio<br>(0-101.6cm)  | 0 – 10          |

## Ecological dynamics

### Range in Characteristics-

Basin wildrye production is dependent on soil salinity and the quality and duration of subsurface water flows. Production increases as soil salinity decreases and where subsurface water flows are of higher quality and longer duration. Conversely, basin wildrye production decreases and inland saltgrass increases as soil salinity increases, as salts in subsurface flow increase and as a subsurface flows decrease. The flow frequency of fire influences the amount of basin big sagebrush.

### Response to Disturbance-

If the condition of the site deteriorates as a result of overgrazing basin wildrye decreases. Black greasewood, inland saltgrass and poverty weed increase. Rabbitbrush and iris increase in areas of lower soil salinity. Similarly quackgrass and foxtail barley invade areas of bare ground increases and saline conditions are accentuated. Streambanks become unstable from loss of vegetation and channels may degrade, becoming deeper and wider in the process. Subsurface flows are affected. The water table drops and production decreases substantially.

## 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 (%) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Grass/Grasslike</b> |                                             |        |                              |                      |                  |
| 1                      | <b>Perennial, Deep-rooted, Dominant</b>     |        |                              | 3138-4035            |                  |
|                        | basin wildrye                               | LECI4  | <i>Leymus cinereus</i>       | 3138-4035            | –                |
| 2                      | <b>Perennial, Deep-rooted, Sub-Dominant</b> |        |                              | 224-673              |                  |
|                        | saltgrass                                   | DISP   | <i>Distichlis spicata</i>    | 224-673              | –                |
| 5                      | <b>Perennial, Other (PPGG), All</b>         |        |                              | 90-448               |                  |
|                        | squirreltail                                | ELEL5  | <i>Elymus elymoides</i>      | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | rush                                        | JUNCU  | <i>Juncus</i>                | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | bluegrass                                   | POA    | <i>Poa</i>                   | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | Lemmon's alkaligrass                        | PULE   | <i>Puccinellia lemmonii</i>  | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | alkali sacaton                              | SPAI   | <i>Sporobolus airoides</i>   | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | alkali cordgrass                            | SPGR   | <i>Spartina gracilis</i>     | 15-75                | –                |
|                        | clustered field sedge                       | CAPR5  | <i>Carex praegracilis</i>    | 0-22                 | –                |
| <b>Forb</b>            |                                             |        |                              |                      |                  |
| 9                      | <b>Perennial, Other (PPFF), ALL]</b>        |        |                              | 45-90                |                  |
|                        | common yarrow                               | ACMI2  | <i>Achillea millefolium</i>  | 8-15                 | –                |
|                        | white sagebrush                             | ARLU   | <i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> | 8-15                 | –                |
|                        | milkvetch                                   | ASTRA  | <i>Astragalus</i>            | 8-15                 | –                |

|                   |                                           |        |                                             |         |   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|---------|---|
|                   | iris                                      | IRIS   | <i>Iris</i>                                 | 8-15    | – |
|                   | thelypody                                 | THELY  | <i>Thelypodium</i>                          | 8-15    | – |
|                   | povertyweed                               | IVAX   | <i>Iva axillaris</i>                        | 8-15    | – |
| <b>Shrub/Vine</b> |                                           |        |                                             |         |   |
| 11                | <b>Perennial, Evergreen, Dominant</b>     |        |                                             | 135-359 |   |
|                   | greasewood                                | SAVE4  | <i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>              | 135-359 | – |
| 12                | <b>Perennial, Evergreen, Sub-Dominant</b> |        |                                             | 90-179  |   |
|                   | basin big sagebrush                       | ARTRT  | <i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. tridentata</i> | 45-90   | – |
|                   | rabbitbrush                               | CHRY9  | <i>Chrysothamnus</i>                        | 45-90   | – |
| 15                | <b>Perennial, Other(SSSS), ALL</b>        |        |                                             | 45-90   |   |
|                   | horsebrush                                | TETRA3 | <i>Tetradymia</i>                           | 45-90   | – |

## Animal community

Wildlife- This site will offer food and cover for mule deer, rodents and a variety of birds. It is an important wintering area for mule deer. Livestock grazing- This site is suited to use by cattle, sheep and horses in the late spring, summer, fall and early winter. Limitations in the late winter and early spring are saturated wet soils and unstable banks. Use should be postponed until the soils are firm enough to prevent trampling damage and soil compaction yet, while soil moisture is adequate to allow the completion of the plant growth cycle. Improvement and/or maintenance of bank protecting vegetation should be considered during all seasons, particularly in the fall and winter for spring high flow periods.

## Hydrological functions

Watershed- The soils are in hydrologic group D. the soils of this site have high runoff potential. This site is potentially subject to three high flow periods: low elevation snowmelt, high elevation snowmelt, and summer cloudburst flow.

## Other information

The soils in this site have good water holding capacities providing late season water for plant growth and slow water release to streams. As a salinity affected site it is imperative to maintain vigorous plant growth. With a reduction of plant cover and organic matter, surface salts increase, soil particles become dispersed, water intake rates are reduced and production is affected. When incised channels are present, rehabilitation will improve production and restore good hydrologic characteristics. On altered sites the reintroduction of desirable deep rooted plants maybe needed to fully restore the site potential. The soils are corrosive to concrete and steel.

## Contributors

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## Approval

Kirt Walstad, 5/13/2025

## 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 |
|--------------------------|-----------|

|                                             |                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Contact for lead author                     | Oregon NRCS State Rangeland Management Specialist |
| 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

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2. Presence of water flow patterns: Occasional flooding eith seasonal high water table

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

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4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):  
0-10%

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

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

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

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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):  
Moderately resistant to erosion: aggregate stability = 3-4

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9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness): Deep, very deep, somewhat poorly drained with a silt loam surface about 12" thick - upper 30" of soil is moderately to very strongly alkaline (pH 8.4-9.6): Moderate OM (2-4%)

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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 very gentle slopes (0-3%) effectively limit rainfall impact and overland flow

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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: Basin wildrye > Inland saltgrass > other grasses > Black greasewood > other shrubs > forbs

Sub-dominant:

Other:

Additional:

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

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

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15. Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production): Favorable: 5000, Normal: 4000, Unfavorable: 3000 lbs/acre/year at high RSI (HCPC)

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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: Black greasewood will increase with deterioration of plant community. Inland saltgrass strongly increases on sites that have lost deep rooted perennial grass functional groups. Bare alkali areas will increase with loss of vegetation.

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

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