

Ecological site R022AZ050CA  
CHANNERY MORaine

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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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 022A–Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi Mountains

This ESD was developed using older policy requirements which have been improved with the intent of improving ESD products overall. Users should approach these materials with some caution as the content herein, while likely useful for some purposes, was developed within parameters now recognized as needing varying levels of improvement. As always, a site-specific investigation is highly recommended when site-specific management alternatives are to be developed and/or management decisions are to be made. Each ESD is an interpretation of the ecological relationships between biotic and abiotic aspects of the landscape. Users of this document should be aware of the limitations of this tool to the extent that specific local conditions may not be entirely captured within the ESD. In particular, management decisions should be supported by site-specific inventories, assessments and planning processes based on the best available information including and extending beyond the ESD. An ESD is not a permanent determination of ecological dynamics. Rather, each ESD is an evolving body of work intrinsically tied to the soil surveys and data associated with soil map unit components of correlated soil-ecological site relationships. As new information becomes available, updates may be made or may be underway at any given time. Minor updates may be made without announcement when such changes do not modify the ecological site concept, the soils correlated or the state-and-transition model.

Associated sites

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| F022AY127NV | PICO/CAREX/POA              |
| R022AY010NV | MOUNTAIN SHOULDERS 30+ P.Z. |
| R022AY011NV | MOUNTAIN RIDGE 30+ P.Z.     |
| R022AY021NV | SOUTH SLOPE 30+ P.Z.        |
| R022AY032NV | ALPINE RIDGE                |

Table 1. Dominant plant species

|      |               |
|------|---------------|
| Tree | Not specified |
|------|---------------|

|            |                                                 |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Shrub      | (1) <i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana</i>   |
| Herbaceous | (1) <i>Achnatherum occidentale</i><br>(2) CAREX |

### Physiographic features

This site occurs on shoulders of moraines having a smooth to slightly concave shape. Slopes range from 8 to over 30 percent, but slope gradients of 15 to 25 percent are most typical. Elevations are 8000 to over 9500 feet.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

|           |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Landforms | (1) Moraine                        |
| Elevation | 2,440 – 2,900 m                    |
| Slope     | 10 – 30 %                          |
| Aspect    | Aspect is not a significant factor |

### Climatic features

The climate on this site is subhumid-continental, characterized by cold, moist winters, and cool dry summers. The average annual precipitation ranges from 30 to 45 inches, mostly occurring as snow. The mean annual air temperature ranges from 36 to 40 degrees F. The average frost free growing season is 30 to 60 days. Climate data used to support this section were derived from PRISM and is not specifically tied to any dominant climate station.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Frost-free period (average)   | 60 days  |
| Freeze-free period (average)  | 0 days   |
| Precipitation total (average) | 1,140 mm |

### Influencing water features

There are no influencing water features associated with this site.

### Soil features

The soils associated with this site are very deep and well drained. They are formed in till derived from igneous and metamorphic rocks with additions of volcanic ash. The soils are skeletal and have a mollic epipedon and a cambic horizon. Runoff is low and permeability is moderately rapid. The soils are moist during late fall, winter and spring and dry from July through early October.

Soils correlated to this site include Dunderberg.

CA729 Toiyabe National Forest Area, California  
560;Dunderberg-Conwayridge association;Dunderberg;dry

Table 4. Representative soil features

|                                                          |                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Surface texture                                          | (1) Ashy sandy loam<br>(2) Very gravelly sandy loam |
| Family particle size                                     | (1) Loamy                                           |
| Drainage class                                           | Well drained to somewhat poorly drained             |
| Permeability class                                       | Rapid to moderately rapid                           |
| Soil depth                                               | 180 cm                                              |
| Surface fragment cover <=3"                              | 60 %                                                |
| Surface fragment cover >3"                               | Not specified                                       |
| Available water capacity<br>(0-101.6cm)                  | 9.65 cm                                             |
| Electrical conductivity<br>(0-101.6cm)                   | Not specified                                       |
| Sodium adsorption ratio<br>(0-101.6cm)                   | Not specified                                       |
| Soil reaction (1:1 water)<br>(0-101.6cm)                 | 6.1 – 7.3                                           |
| Subsurface fragment volume <=3"<br>(Depth not specified) | 20 – 40 %                                           |
| Subsurface fragment volume >3"<br>(Depth not specified)  | 10 – 30 %                                           |

### Ecological dynamics

As ecological condition declines, big sagebrush, snowberry and other woody plants increase in prevalence as Letterman's needlegrass, mountain brome and other perennial grasses and forbs decline in the understory.

## Fire Ecology:

The fire return interval for mountain big sagebrush communities ranges from 15 to 40 years. Mountain big sagebrush is highly susceptible to injury from fire. Plants are readily killed in all seasons, even by light severity fires. Mountain big sagebrush plants are top-killed by fire and will not resprout. Regeneration of mountain big sagebrush is from on-site or off-site seed. Depending on circumstances of the environment and seed source, mountain big sagebrush seeds may sprout profusely the spring after burning, or very sparsely.

## 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>Primary Grasses/Grasslikes</b>  |        |                                                 | 238-381              |                  |
|                        | western needlegrass                | ACOCO  | <i>Achnatherum occidentale ssp. occidentale</i> | 142-239              | –                |
|                        | sedge                              | CAREX  | <i>Carex</i>                                    | 95-142               | –                |
| 2                      | <b>Secondary Perennial Grasses</b> |        |                                                 | 19-48                |                  |
|                        | mountain brome                     | BRMA4  | <i>Bromus marginatus</i>                        | 4-29                 | –                |
|                        | big squirreltail                   | ELMU3  | <i>Elymus multisetus</i>                        | 4-29                 | –                |
|                        | purple oniongrass                  | MESP   | <i>Melica spectabilis</i>                       | 4-29                 | –                |
|                        | bluegrass                          | POA    | <i>Poa</i>                                      | 4-29                 | –                |
| <b>Forb</b>            |                                    |        |                                                 |                      |                  |
| 3                      | <b>Primary Perennial Forbs</b>     |        |                                                 | 38-96                |                  |
|                        | tapertip hawksbeard                | CRAC2  | <i>Crepis acuminata</i>                         | 19-48                | –                |
|                        | lupine                             | LUPIN  | <i>Lupinus</i>                                  | 19-48                | –                |
| 4                      | <b>Secondary Perennial Forbs</b>   |        |                                                 | 19-48                |                  |
|                        | rockcress                          | ARABI2 | <i>Arabis</i>                                   | 4-19                 | –                |
|                        | buckwheat                          | ERIOG  | <i>Eriogonum</i>                                | 4-19                 | –                |
|                        | mountain monardella                | MOOD   | <i>Monardella odoratissima</i>                  | 4-19                 | –                |
|                        | phlox                              | PHLOX  | <i>Phlox</i>                                    | 4-19                 | –                |
| <b>Shrub/Vine</b>      |                                    |        |                                                 |                      |                  |
| 5                      | <b>Primary Shrubs</b>              |        |                                                 | 381-476              |                  |
|                        | mountain big sagebrush             | ARTRV  | <i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana</i>       | 381-476              | –                |
| 6                      | <b>Secondary Shrubs</b>            |        |                                                 | 95-142               |                  |
|                        | slender buckwheat                  | ERMI4  | <i>Eriogonum microthecum</i>                    | 10-19                | –                |
|                        | granite prickly phlox              | LIPU11 | <i>Linanthus pungens</i>                        | 10-19                | –                |
|                        | antelope bitterbrush               | PUTR2  | <i>Purshia tridentata</i>                       | 10-19                | –                |
|                        | roundleaf snowberry                | SYRO   | <i>Symphoricarpos rotundifolius</i>             | 10-19                | –                |

## Animal community

Livestock Interpretations: Mountain big sagebrush is eaten by domestic sheep and cattle, but has long been considered to be of low palatability to domestic livestock, a competitor with more desirable species, and a physical impediment to grazing. Mountain brome is palatable to all classes of livestock throughout the growing season. Plants become fibrous at maturity but livestock readily graze the ripe seed heads. Domestic sheep have shown rapid weight gain on ranges with an abundance of ripe Mountain brome seed heads. Wildlife Interpretations: Mountain big sagebrush is highly preferred and nutritious winter forage for mule deer.

## Hydrological functions

None

## Recreational uses

## Other information

Mountain big sagebrush is easily propagated from seed under greenhouse, nursery, and common garden conditions and has been successfully seeded directly into field sites. Mountain big sagebrush has also been successfully planted in field sites using nursery-grown bareroot and containerized stock. Mountain brome is useful for revegetating disturbed sites due to rapid establishment and good soil stabilizing capability. It has proved effective for stabilizing watersheds.

## Type locality

|                             |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Location 1: Mono County, CA |                                                                                                            |
| Township/Range/Section      | T3N R25E S32                                                                                               |
| Latitude                    | 38° 4′25″                                                                                                  |
| Longitude                   | 119° 13′49″                                                                                                |
| General legal description   | Toiyabe National Forest, about 2.8 miles southwest of Conway Summit in the Dog Creek area; Mono County, CA |

## Other references

Fire Effect Information System (Online; <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/>).

USDA-NRCS Plants Database (Online; <http://plants.usda.gov/>).

## Contributors

ALM/GKB

## 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:**

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**2. Presence of water flow patterns:**

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**3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:**

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

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**5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:**

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

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

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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):**

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

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

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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):**

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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:**

**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):**

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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):**

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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:**

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**17. Perennial plant reproductive capability:**

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