

Ecological site EX043B23B122

Loamy (Ly)

Absaroka Upper Foothills

Last updated: 4/30/2024

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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): 043B–Central Rocky Mountains

Major Land Resource Unit (MLRA) 43B: Central Rocky Mountains 43B – Central Rocky Mountains – The Central Rocky Mountains extends from northern Montana to southern extent of Wyoming and from Idaho to central Wyoming. The southern extent of 43B is comprised of a combination of metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary mountains and foothills. Climatic changes across this extent are broad and create several unique breaks in the landscape. Further information regarding MLRAs, refer to: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook 296. Available electronically at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/ref/?cid=nrcs142p2_053624#handbook.

LRU notes

Land Resource Unit (LRU) 43B23B: Absaroka Upper Foothills Based on the shifts in geology, precipitation patterns and other climatic factors, as well as elevations and vegetation, the Absaroka Range was divided into LRU 23. Further division of this LRU is necessary due to the gradient moving from the foothills to the summit, as well as aspect shifts (north/east face versus south/west face). Subset B is set for the higher elevations within the foothills, with 15 to 19 inches of precipitation. To verify or identify Subset B (the referenced subset for this ecological site), refer to the Wyoming LRU matrix key contained within the Ecological Site Key. This particular LRU/Subset occurs along the eastern foothills of the Absaroka Range. This LRU starts north of Clark, WY and runs to the Thermopolis, WY area. Once the foothills cross into the Northern Beartooth Range, the climatic patterns and elevational changes shifts the plant community and allows for a break in LRU's near the Montana state line. As the LRU follows to the south and then tracks east to the intersection of the Absaroka Range and the Owl Creek Range, the face changes aspect and geology creating a shift in plant dynamics and a break in the LRU. The extent of soils currently correlated to this ecological site does not fit within the digitized boundary. Many of the noted soils are provisional and will be reviewed and corrected in mapping update projects. Other map units are correlated as small inclusions within other MLRA's/LRU's based on elevation, landform, and biological references. Moisture Regime: Typic Ustic Temperature Regime: Frigid Dominant Cover: Rangeland – Sagebrush Steppe (major species is Mountain Big Sagebrush) Representative Value (RV) Effective Precipitation: 15-19 inches (381 – 483 mm) RV Frost-Free Days: 37 - 80 days

Classification relationships

Relationship to Other Established Classification Systems: National Vegetation Classification System (NVC): 2 Shrub & Herb Vegetation Class 2.B Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland Subclass 2.B.2 Temperate Grassland & Shrubland Formation 2.B.2.Na Western North American Grassland & Shrubland Division Division M048 Central Rocky Mountain Montane-Foothill Grassland & Shrubland Macrogroup G273 Central Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill & Valley Grassland Group Ecoregions (EPA): Level I: 10 North American Deserts Level II: 10.1 Cold Deserts Level III: 10.1.18 Wyoming Basin Level IV: 10.1.18.b Big Horn Basin and 10.1.18.d Foothills and Low Mountains

Ecological site concept

- Site receives no additional water.
- Slope is 30%
- Soils are:
 - o Textures range from very fine sandy loam to clay loam in top 4" (10 cm) of mineral soil surface
 - o Clay content is ? 32% in top 4" (10 cm) of mineral soil surface
 - o Each following subsurface horizon has a clay content of ?18% but 35% by weighted average
 - o Moderately deep to very deep (20-79+ in. (50-200+ cm)
 - o 3% stone and boulder cover and 20% cobble and gravel cover
 - o Not skeletal (35% rock fragments) within 20" (51 cm) of mineral soil surface
 - o None to Slightly effervescent throughout top 20" (51 cm) of mineral soil surface
 - o Non-saline, sodic, or saline-sodic

Associated sites

R043BY308WY	Coarse Upland (CU) 15-19" Foothills and Mountains East Precipitation Zone Coarse Upland
R043BY330WY	Overflow (Ov) 15-19" Foothills and Mountains East Precipitation Zone Overflow
R043BY362WY	Shallow Loamy (SwLy) 15-19" Foothills and Mountains East Precipitation Zone Shallow Loamy
R043BY366WY	Shallow Sandy (SwSy) 15-19" Foothills and Mountains East Precipitation Zone Shallow Sandy

Similar sites

R032XY322WY	Loamy (Ly) 10-14" East Precipitation Zone Loamy 10-14" Foothills and Basins East P.Z., has lower production.
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Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	Not specified
Shrub	(1) <i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana</i>
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Achnatherum nelsonii</i> (2) <i>Leucopoa kingii</i>

Legacy ID

R043BX622WY

Physiographic features

This site typically occurs on gently undulating rolling land, but can occur on steeper gradual slopes.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Foothills > Hillslope (2) Foothills > Alluvial fan (3) Foothills > Ridge (4) Foothills > Stream terrace
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Runoff class	Negligible to high
Elevation	1,830 – 2,740 m
Slope	0 – 30 %
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Climatic features

Annual precipitation and modeled relative effective annual precipitation ranges from 15 to 19 inches (381 – 483 mm). The normal precipitation pattern shows peaks in June tapering into September. This amounts to about 50% of the mean annual precipitation. Average snowfall is about 150 inches annually. Wide fluctuations may occur in yearly precipitation and result in more dry years than those with more than normal precipitation.

Because of the varied topography, the wind will vary considerably for different parts of the area. The wind is usually much lighter at the lower elevations and in the valleys as compared with the higher terrain. The average winter wind velocity is 8.5 mph while the summer wind velocity averages 7.5 mph. Winds during storms and on ridges may exceed 45 mph.

Temperatures show a wide range between summer and winter and between daily maximums and minimums, due to the high elevation and dry air, which permits rapid incoming and outgoing radiation. Cold air outbreaks from Canada in winter move rapidly from northwest to southeast and account for extreme minimum temperatures. Chinook winds may occur in winter and bring rapid rises in temperature. High winds are generally blocked by high mountains but occur in conjunction with thunderstorms, which are common in late summer. Growth of native cool-season plants begins about May 1 to May 15 and continues until about October 15.

For detailed information visit the Natural Resources Conservation Service National Water and Climate Center at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/>. Historically, "Crandall Creek" was the representative weather stations within this subset. However, "Sunshine 3NE" is the only available weather station within a close proximity in location and characteristics for this subset. The following graphs and charts are a collective sample representing the averaged normals and 30-year annual rainfall data for the selected weather stations from 1981 to 2010.

Table 3 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (characteristic range)	40 days
Freeze-free period (characteristic range)	80 days
Precipitation total (characteristic range)	360 mm
Frost-free period (actual range)	40 days
Freeze-free period (actual range)	80 days
Precipitation total (actual range)	360 mm
Frost-free period (average)	40 days

Freeze-free period (average)	80 days
Precipitation total (average)	360 mm

- (1) SUNSHINE 3NE [USC00488758], Meeteetse, WY

Influencing water features

The characteristics of these upland soils have no influence from ground water (water table below 60 inches (150 cm)) and have minimal influence from surface water/overland flow. There may be isolated features that are affected by snow pack that persists longer than surrounding areas due to position on the landform (shaded/protected pockets).

Soil features

The soils of this site are deep to moderately deep (greater than 20" to bedrock), moderately well to well-drained & moderately slow to moderately permeable. The surface soil will vary from 3" to 6" in thickness depending on the texture and permeability of the subsoil. The soil characteristic having the most influence on the plant community is the available moisture and depth to a root restrictive barrier.

Table 4. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Alluvium – sandstone and shale (2) Residuum
Surface texture	(1) Cobbly, gravelly loam (2) Silt loam (3) Very fine sandy loam
Family particle size	(1) Fine-loamy
Drainage class	Moderately well drained to well drained
Permeability class	Moderately slow to moderate
Soil depth	50 – 150 cm
Surface fragment cover >3"	0 – 10 %
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	7.62 – 20 cm

Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm)	0 – 10 %
Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm)	0 – 10
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	6.6 – 8.4
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	0 – 20 %
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	0 – 10 %

Ecological dynamics

Ecological Dynamics of the Site:

Potential vegetation on this site is dominated by mid cool-season perennial grasses. Other significant vegetation includes big sagebrush, rubber rabbitbrush, and a variety of forbs. The expected potential composition for this site is about 75% grasses, 15% forbs and 10% woody plants. The composition and production will vary naturally due to historical use, fluctuating precipitation and fire frequency.

As this site deteriorates species such as big sagebrush, rubber rabbitbrush, and bluegrasses will increase. Cool season grasses such as Columbia needlegrass, spikefescue, and Idaho fescue will decrease in frequency and production. As conditions deteriorate further, annuals such as cheatgrass will invade.

Big sagebrush may become dominant on areas with an absence of fire and a sufficient amount of precipitation. Wildfires are actively controlled in recent times and as a result old decadent stands of big sagebrush persist. Chemical and mechanical controls have replaced the historic role of fire on this site. Recently, prescribed burning has regained some popularity.

The big sagebrush component may not be as resilient once it has been removed or severely reduced, if a vigorous stand of grass exists and is maintained. The exception to this is where the herbaceous component is severely degraded at the time of treatment, growing conditions are unfavorable after treatment, and/or recovery of herbaceous species are inadequate due to poor grazing management. Regeneration of big sagebrush may also be suppressed if three-tip sagebrush and rubber rabbitbrush are established. This situation is more likely to develop in areas where fires have occurred in a relatively short cycle. Three-tip sagebrush and rubber rabbitbrush are strong resprouters and will out compete other shrubs where a site is disturbed. Any thinning project should be designed in a way to maintain the viability of the stand and to consider wildlife requirements.

The Historic Climax Plant Community (description follows the plant community diagram) has been determined by study of rangeland relic areas, or areas protected from excessive disturbance. Trends in plant communities going from heavily grazed areas to lightly grazed areas, seasonal use pastures, and historical accounts have also been used.

The following is a State and Transition Model Diagram that illustrates the common plant communities (states) that can occur on the site and the transitions between these communities. The ecological processes will be discussed in more detail in the plant community narratives following the diagram.

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				151-379	
	Columbia needlegrass	ACNE9	<i>Achnatherum nelsonii</i>	151-379	–
2				151-379	
	spike fescue	LEK12	<i>Leucopoa kingii</i>	151-379	–
3				151-379	
	Idaho fescue	FEID	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	151-379	–
4				76-228	
	bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSP6	<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>	76-228	–
5				151-379	
	Grass, perennial	2GP	<i>Grass, perennial</i>	0-76	–
	Letterman's needlegrass	ACLE9	<i>Achnatherum lettermanii</i>	0-76	–
	nodding brome	BRAN	<i>Bromus anomalus</i>	0-76	–
	Pumpelly's brome	BRINP5	<i>Bromus inermis ssp. pumpellianus var. pumpellianus</i>	0-76	–
	mountain brome	BRMA4	<i>Bromus marginatus</i>	0-76	–
	sedge	CAREX	<i>Carex</i>	0-76	–
	California oatgrass	DACA3	<i>Danthonia californica</i>	0-76	–
	onespike danthonia	DAUN	<i>Danthonia unispicata</i>	0-76	–
	Montana wheatgrass	ELAL7	<i>Elymus albicans</i>	0-76	–
	slender wheatgrass	ELTR7	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	0-76	–
	needle and thread	HECO26	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>	0-76	–
	prairie Junegrass	KOMA	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	0-76	–
	western wheatgrass	PASM	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	0-76	–
	muttongrass	POFE	<i>Poa fendleriana</i>	0-76	–
	Sandberg bluegrass	POSE	<i>Poa secunda</i>	0-76	–
	spike trisetum	TRSP2	<i>Trisetum spicatum</i>	0-76	–
Forb					
6				76-228	
	Forb, perennial	2FP	<i>Forb, perennial</i>	0-76	–
	yarrow	ACHIL	<i>Achillea</i>	0-76	–
	agoseris	AGOSE	<i>Agoseris</i>	0-76	–
	pussytoes	ANTEN	<i>Antennaria</i>	0-76	–
	milkvetch	ASTRA	<i>Astragalus</i>	0-76	–
	balsamroot	BALSA	<i>Balsamorhiza</i>	0-76	–
	corn gromwell	BUAR3	<i>Buglossoides arvensis</i>	0-76	–
	Indian paintbrush	CAST12	<i>Castilleja</i>	0-76	–
	field chickweed	CEAR4	<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	0-76	–
	tapertip hawksbeard	CRAC2	<i>Crepis acuminata</i>	0-76	–
	buckwheat	ERIOG	<i>Eriogonum</i>	0-76	–
	green gentian	FRASE	<i>Frasera</i>	0-76	–
	common sneezeweed	HEAU	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	0-76	–

	flax	LINUM	Linum	0-76	–
	wild bergamot	MOFI	Monarda fistulosa	0-76	–
	lousewort	PEDIC	Pedicularis	0-76	–
	beardtongue	PENST	Penstemon	0-76	–
	phlox	PHLOX	Phlox	0-76	–
	silky phacelia	PHSE	Phacelia sericea	0-76	–
	American vetch	VIAM	Vicia americana	0-76	–
	mule-ears	WYETH	Wyethia	0-76	–
Shrub/Vine					
7				0-151	
	big sagebrush	ARTR2	Artemisia tridentata	0-151	–
8				0-76	
	rubber rabbitbrush	ERNA10	Ericameria nauseosa	0-76	–
9				0-76	
	Shrub (>.5m)	2SHRUB	Shrub (>.5m)	0-76	–

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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Table 9. Community 5.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 10. Community 6.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 11. Community 7.1 plant community composition

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

Animal Community – Wildlife Interpretations Columbia Needlegrass/Spikefescue Plant Community (HCPC): The predominance of grasses in this plant community favors grazers and mixed-feeders, such as deer, bison, elk, and antelope. Suitable thermal and escape cover for deer may be limited due to the low quantities of woody plants. However, topographical variations could provide some escape cover. Due to the location of these sites on the foot slopes of mountains they are valuable for elk and deer winter ranges. When found adjacent to sagebrush dominated states, this plant community may provide brood rearing/foraging areas for sage grouse, as well as lek sites. Other birds that would frequent this plant community include western meadowlark, lark bunting, sage thrasher, horned larks, red-tail and ferruginous hawks, and golden eagles. Many grassland obligate small mammals would occur here. Idaho Fescue/Big Sagebrush Plant Community: The combination of an overstory of big sagebrush and an understory of grasses and forbs provides a very diverse plant community for wildlife. The crowns of sagebrush tend to break up hard crusted snow on winter ranges, so mule deer, elk, and antelope may use this state for foraging and cover year-round, as would cottontail and jack rabbits. It provides important winter, nesting, brood-rearing, and foraging habitat for sage grouse. Brewer's sparrows' nest in big sagebrush plants and hosts of other nesting birds utilize stands in the 20-30% cover range. Other birds that would frequent this plant community include western meadowlark, lark bunting, sage thrasher, horned larks, red-tail and ferruginous hawks, and golden eagles. Rhizomatous Wheatgrass/Big Sagebrush Plant Community: The combination of an overstory of big sagebrush and an understory of grasses and forbs provides a very diverse plant community for wildlife. The crowns of sagebrush tend to break up hard crusted snow on winter ranges, so mule deer, elk, and antelope may use this state for foraging and cover year-round, as would cottontail and jack rabbits. It provides important winter, nesting, brood-rearing, and foraging habitat for sage grouse. Brewer's sparrows' nest in big sagebrush plants and hosts of other nesting birds utilize stands in the 20-

30% cover range. Other birds that would frequent this plant community include western meadowlark, lark bunting, sage thrasher, horned larks, red-tail and ferruginous hawks, and golden eagles. Dense Shrub/Bluegrass Plant Community: This plant community can provide important winter foraging for elk, mule deer and antelope, as sagebrush can approach 15% protein and 40-60% digestibility during that time. This community provides escape and thermal cover for large ungulates, as well as nesting and brood rearing habitat for sage grouse. Other birds that would frequent this plant community include western meadowlark, lark bunting, sage thrasher, horned larks, red-tail and ferruginous hawks, and golden eagles. Due to the lack of herbaceous production and diversity of mid cool season grasses on this site, it is not as beneficial to grazers. Montana Wheatgrass/Rubber Rabbitbrush and/or Three-tip Sagebrush Plant Community: The production of herbaceous species provided for good foraging to grazers. However, the lack of tall or mid growing shrubs does not benefit browsers nor provides cover for many wildlife species. As these site greens-up sooner in the spring, this site tends to provide early new growth for foraging large and small mammals. If located adjacent to shrub dominated sites, It provides good foraging habitat for sage grouse. Other birds that would frequent this plant community include western meadowlark, lark bunting, sage thrasher, horned larks, red-tail and ferruginous hawks, and golden eagles. Rhizomatous Wheatgrass/Lettermans Needlegrass Plant Community: The production of herbaceous species provided for good foraging for grazers. However, the lack of tall or mid growing shrubs does not benefit browsers nor provides cover for many wildlife species. As these site greens-up sooner in the spring, this site tends to provide early new growth for foraging large and small mammals. If located adjacent to shrub dominated sites, It provides good foraging habitat for sage grouse. Bluegrass/Annual Plant Community: This community provides limited foraging for elk and other grazers. They may be used as a foraging site by sage grouse if proximal to woody cover. Generally, these are not target plant communities for wildlife habitat management. Animal Community – Grazing Interpretations The following table lists suggested stocking rates for cattle under continuous season-long grazing under normal growing conditions. These are conservative estimates that should be used only as guidelines in the initial stages of the conservation planning process. Often, the current plant composition does not entirely match any particular plant community (as described in this ecological site description). Because of this, a field visit is recommended, in all cases, to document plant composition and production. More precise carrying capacity estimates should eventually be calculated using this information along with animal preference data, particularly when grazers other than cattle are involved. Under more intensive grazing management, improved harvest efficiencies can result in an increased carrying capacity. If distribution problems occur, stocking rates must be reduced to maintain plant health and vigor. Plant Community Production Carrying Capacity* (lb./ac) (AUM/ac) Columbia Needlegrass/Spikefescue 1100-1600 .6 Idaho Fescue/Big Sagebrush 1000-1500 .5 Rhizomatous WG/Big Sagebrush 800-1300 .4 Dense Shrub/Bluegrass 700-1000 .3 Montana WG/R. Rabbitbrush/Three-tip Sagebrush 1000-1500 .5 Rhizomatous WG/Lettermans Needlegrass 700-1000 .3 Bluegrass/Annual 350-650 .2 * - Continuous, season-long grazing by cattle under average growing conditions. Grazing by domestic livestock is one of the major income-producing industries in the area. Rangeland in this area may provide seasonal forage for cattle, sheep, or horses. During the dormant period, the forage for livestock use needs to be supplemented with protein because the quality does not meet minimum livestock requirements.

Hydrological functions

Water is the principal factor limiting forage production on this site. This site is dominated by soils in hydrologic group C, with localized areas in hydrologic group B and D. Infiltration ranges from moderately slow to moderate. Runoff potential for this site varies from low to moderate depending on soil hydrologic group and ground cover. In many cases, areas with greater than 75% ground cover have the greatest potential for high infiltration and lower runoff. An example of an exception would be where short-grasses form a strong sod and dominate the site. Areas where ground cover is less than 50% have the greatest potential to have reduced infiltration and higher runoff (refer to Part 630, NRCS National Engineering Handbook for detailed hydrology information). Rills and gullies should not typically be present. Water flow patterns should be barely distinguishable if at all present. Pedestals are only slightly present in association with bunchgrasses. Litter typically falls in place, and signs of movement are not common. Chemical and physical crusts are rare to non-existent. Cryptogamic crusts are present, but only cover 1-2% of the soil surface.

Recreational uses

This site provides hunting opportunities for upland game species. The wide varieties of plants that bloom from spring until fall have an esthetic value that appeals to visitors. Other recreational uses may included hiking, camping, mountain biking, and in the winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Wood products

No appreciable wood products are present on the site.

Other products

None noted.

Inventory data references

Information presented here has been derived from NRCS clipping data and other inventory data. Field observations from range trained personnel were also used. Those involved in developing this site include: Chris Krassin, Range Management Specialist, James Haverkamp, Range Management Specialist, Steven Gullion, Range Management Specialist, James Mischke, District Conservationist,

and Everet Bainter, State Range Management Specialist. Other sources used as references include USDA NRCS Water and Climate Center, USDA NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook, and USDA NRCS Soil Surveys from various counties.

Contributors

J. Haverkamp

Approval

Kirt Walstad, 4/30/2024

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.

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Date	05/01/2008
Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills: Rare to nonexistent. Where present, short and widely spaced.

2. Presence of water flow patterns: Barely observable.

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes: Rare to nonexistent.

4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground): Bare ground can range from 0-20%.

5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies: Active gullies should not be present.

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

7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel): Herbaceous and large woody litter not expected to move.

8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values): Soil Stability Index ratings range from 3 (interspaces) to 6 (under plant canopy), but average values should be 4.0 or greater.

9. Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness): Soil data is limited for this site. Described A-horizons vary from 6-23 inches (15-58 cm) with OM of 2 to 5%.

10. Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff: Plant community consists of 70-80% grasses, 15% forbs, and 5-15% shrubs. Evenly distributed plant canopy (60-95%) and litter plus moderate infiltration rates result in minimal runoff. Basal cover is typically 5-15% for this site and does affect runoff on this site.

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: Mid-size, cool season bunchgrasses

Sub-dominant: perennial shrubs = perennial forbs tall, cool season bunchgrasses

Other: cool season rhizomatous grasses=short cool season bunchgrasses

Additional:

13. Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence): Minimal decadence, typically associated with shrub component.

14. Average percent litter cover (%) and depth (in): Litter ranges from 5-40% of total canopy measurement with total litter (including beneath the plant canopy) from 50-90% expected. Herbaceous litter depth typically ranges from 5-15mm. Woody litter can be up to a couple inches (4-6 cm).

15. Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):
English: 1100-1600 lb/ac (1350 lb/ac average); Metric 1232-1792 kg/ha (1512 kg/ha average).
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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: Bare ground greater than 30% is the most common indicator of a threshold being crossed. Big sagebrush, rubber rabbitbrush, and bluegrasses are common increasers. Kentucky bluegrass, common dandelion, thistles, and annual weeds such as kochia and mustards are common invasive species in disturbed sites.
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17. Perennial plant reproductive capability: All species are capable of reproducing, except in extreme drought years.
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