

Ecological site R087BY005TX

Deep Sand

Last updated: 9/21/2023

Accessed: 08/31/2026

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.

MLRA notes

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA): 087B–Texas Claypan Area, Northern Part

This area is in northeastern Texas (79 percent) and southeastern Oklahoma (21 percent). It makes up about 4,480 square miles (11,610 square kilometers). The towns of Greenville, Sulphur Springs, Paris, Mount Vernon, Canton, and Athens, Texas, and Durant, Oklahoma, are in this MLRA. Interstates 30 and 20 and Highways 69, 70, 80, and 82 cross the area. The Caddo National Grasslands is in the north end of the area.

Classification relationships

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2006. -Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 87B

Ecological site concept

The Deep Sand is characterized by very deep soils with a sand layer that extends at least 40 inches into the subsoil before any noticeable clay accumulations. This causes the site to be droughty.

Associated sites

R087BY006TX	Very Deep Sand
R087BY007TX	Loamy Bottomland
R087BY002TX	Claypan Savannah
R087BY004TX	Sandy

Similar sites

R087AY007TX	Deep Sand
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Table 1. Dominant plant species

Tree	(1) <i>Quercus incana</i> (2) <i>Quercus marilandica</i>
Shrub	Not specified
Herbaceous	(1) <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> (2) <i>Eragrostis trichodes</i>

Physiographic features

This site occupies gently sloping to sloping ridges. The slope ranges from 0 to 15 percent, but is typically 1 to 8 percent.

Table 2. Representative physiographic features

Landforms	(1) Plains > Interfluve
Runoff class	Negligible
Flooding frequency	None
Ponding frequency	None
Elevation	80 – 230 m
Slope	0 – 10 %
Water table depth	150 – 200 cm
Aspect	Aspect is not a significant factor

Table 3. Representative physiographic features (actual ranges)

Runoff class	Not specified
Flooding frequency	Not specified
Ponding frequency	Not specified
Elevation	Not specified
Slope	0 – 20 %

Water table depth	Not specified
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Climatic features

The average annual precipitation is 47 inches in most of this area, but it can be higher or lower depending on the exact location. Most of the rainfall occurs in spring and winter. The average annual temperature is 62 to 66 degrees F. The freeze-free period averages 235 days and frost-free period averages 210 days.

Table 4 Representative climatic features

Frost-free period (average)	210 days
Freeze-free period (average)	240 days
Precipitation total (average)	1,190 mm

- (1) BONHAM 3NNE [USC00410923], Bonham, TX
- (2) BOSWELL 1 S [USC00340980], Boswell, OK
- (3) EMORY [USC00412902], Emory, TX
- (4) DURANT [USC00342678], Durant, OK
- (5) CLARKSVILLE 2NE [USC00411772], Clarksville, TX
- (6) MT PLEASANT [USC00416108], Mount Pleasant, TX
- (7) PARIS [USC00416794], Paris, TX
- (8) DENISON DAM [USC00412394], Cartwright, TX
- (9) LAKE FORK RSVR [USC00414976], Quitman, TX
- (10) MT VERNON [USC00416119], Mount Vernon, TX

Influencing water features

A stream does not influence the plant community of this site.

Wetland description

Wetlands are not associated with this site.

Soil features

The soils of this site are very deep, well drained, moderately rapid permeable, fine sands. The soils are classified as grossarenic, meaning the sand continues to a depth of 40 inches until a noticeable amount of clay increases in the subsoil. Moisture enters the soil rapidly, and quickly passes through and out of the root zone. Moisture holding capacity and inherent fertility is low. Water erosion is generally not a hazard but the site is susceptible to wind erosion when the soil is exposed. The site is subject to erosion where adequate herbaceous cover is not maintained and on heavy use areas such as roads and livestock trails. Soils correlated to this site include: Catilla and Kenney.

Table 5. Representative soil features

Parent material	(1) Residuum – sandstone and shale (2) Alluvium – sandstone
Surface texture	(1) Fine sand

Family particle size	(1) Sandy
Drainage class	Well drained
Permeability class	Moderately slow
Soil depth	200 cm
Surface fragment cover <=3"	Not specified
Surface fragment cover >3"	Not specified
Available water capacity (0-101.6cm)	10.16 cm
Calcium carbonate equivalent (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Electrical conductivity (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Sodium adsorption ratio (0-101.6cm)	Not specified
Soil reaction (1:1 water) (0-101.6cm)	4.5 – 7.3
Subsurface fragment volume <=3" (Depth not specified)	Not specified
Subsurface fragment volume >3" (Depth not specified)	Not specified

Ecological dynamics

The Deep Sand site evolved and was maintained by the grazing and herding effects of native wild large ungulates, periodic fires, and climatic fluctuations. Conversion of this site to cropland (watermelons, peanuts, etc.) and the subsequent abandonment of cropping removed the natural native vegetation, organic matter and fertility, and allowed woody species to dominate the site. Continuous grazing

by confined domestic livestock and the suppression of fire on non-cropland sites removes little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum* spp.), and preferred forbs like tephrosia (*Tephrosia* spp.) and prairie clover (*Dalea* spp.). Less productive perennial and annual grasses and forbs will replace these plants. Years of continuous grazing generally lead to periods of prolonged rest for recovery of the perennial herbaceous plant component. These prolonged rest periods with no fire or brush management lead toward a community dominated by woody species such as winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), and blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*).

State and transition model

Additional community tables

Table 6. Community 1.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 7. Community 2.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 8. Community 3.1 plant community composition

Group	Common Name	Symbol	Scientific Name	Annual Production ()	Foliar Cover (%)
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Table 9. Community 4.1 plant community composition

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

The historic savannah provided habitat to bison, deer, turkey, migratory birds and large predators such as wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, and black bear. White-tailed deer, turkey, coyotes, bobcats, and resident and migratory birds find suitable habitat in these savannahs today. Domestic livestock and exotic ungulates are the dominant grazers and browsers of this site. As the savannah transitions through the various vegetative states towards woodlands, the quality of the habitat may improve for some species and decline for others. Management must be applied to maintain a vegetative state in optimum habitat quality for the desired animal species.

Hydrological functions

Peak rainfall periods occur in May and June from frontal passage thunderstorms and in September and October from tropical systems as well as frontal passages. Rainfall amounts may be high (three to five inches per event) and events may be intense. The site is subject to erosion where adequate herbaceous cover is not maintained and on heavy use areas such as roads and livestock trails. Gullies following livestock trails to water are common on this site where continuous grazing is practiced and adequate herbaceous cover is not maintained. Extended periods (60 days) of little to no rainfall during the growing season are common. The hydrology of this site may be manipulated through management to yield higher runoff volumes or greater infiltration to groundwater. Management for less herbaceous cover will favor higher surface runoff while dense herbaceous cover and litter will favor ground water recharge. Potential pollution from sediment, pesticides, and both organic and inorganic fertilizers should always be considered when managing for higher volumes of surface runoff.

Recreational uses

Hunting, camping, bird watching, equestrian are common activities.

Wood products

Post oak and blackjack oak are used for firewood. Yaupon is used for landscaping.

Other products

Fruit from dewberries, grapes, and plums are harvested.

Inventory data references

These site descriptions were developed as part a Provisional Ecological Site project using historic soil survey manuscripts, available site descriptions, and low intensity field traverse sampling. Future work to validate the information is needed. This will include field activities to collect low, medium, and high-intensity sampling, soil correlations, and analysis of that data. A final field review, peer review, quality control, and quality assurance review of the will be needed to produce the final document.

Other references

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Contributors

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Approval

Bryan Christensen, 9/21/2023

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	08/31/2026

Approved by	
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

Indicators

1. Number and extent of rills:

2. Presence of water flow patterns:

3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:

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

5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:

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

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

8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages - most sites will show a range of values):

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

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

11. Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):

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:

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

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):

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:

17. Perennial plant reproductive capability:
