

## **Ecological site R011XY010ID Calcareous Loam 7-10 PZ ATCO-PIDE4/ACHY-ACTH7**

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### **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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Approved by	Kendra Moseley
Approval date	
Composition (Indicators 10 and 12) based on	Annual Production

### **Indicators**

1. **Number and extent of rills:** rills rarely occur on this site due to the gravelly to extremely gravelly surface soils.
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2. **Presence of water flow patterns:** water-flow patterns rarely occur on this site. When they do occur they are short and disrupted by cool season grasses, shrubs, and surface gravels. They are not extensive.
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3. **Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:** rarely occur on this site.
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4. **Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are not bare ground):** ranges from 15-75 percent but additional data is needed.
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5. **Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:** does not occur on this site.
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6. **Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:** usually not present in the Reference Plant Community Phase.
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7. **Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):** fine litter in the interspaces typically moves up to three feet primarily by wind. Coarse litter generally does not move.
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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):** values should range from 4 to 6 but needs to be tested.
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9. **Soil surface structure and SOM content (include type of structure and A-horizon color and thickness):** Structure ranges from weak, moderate, or strong thin to medium or thick platy. Soil organic matter (SOM) is 0 to 1 percent. The A or A1 horizon is typically 1 to 6 inches thick.
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10. **Effect of community phase composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:** bunchgrasses, especially deep rooted perennials, slow runoff and increase infiltration. Medium height shrubs accumulate some snow in the interspaces.
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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):** not present.

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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: medium height shrubs

Sub-dominant: cool season perennial grasses

Other: perennial forbs

Additional: shallow rooted perennial bunchgrasses

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13. **Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):** very little mortality or decadence is expected on this site. Mortality of shallow rooted grasses may occur as a result of extended periods of drought.
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14. **Average percent litter cover (%) and depth ( in):** additional data is needed but is expected to be low and at a shallow depth.
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15. **Expected annual annual-production (this is TOTAL above-ground annual-production, not just forage annual-production):** is 450 pounds per acre (500 Kg/ha) in a year with normal precipitation and temperatures. Perennial grasses produce 40-50 percent of the total production, forbs 5-10 percent, and shrubs 40-50 percent.
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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:** includes cheatgrass, kochia, halogeton and Russian thistle.

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17. **Perennial plant reproductive capability:** all functional groups have the potential to reproduce in normal and favorable years.
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