

**Rangeland Health—Reference Sheet** TECHNICAL GUIDE Section II USDA-NRCS-MT Rev. June 2014

Author(s)/participant(s): T. DeCock / R. Kilian

Contact for lead author: Tammy DeCock Reference site used? Yes/No

<p><b>Date:</b> <u>Rev. June 2014</u> <b>MLRA:</b> <u>58AE and 60BE</u> <b>Ecological Site:</b> <u>Wet Meadow 10-14” p.z.</u> This <i>must</i> be verified based on soils and climate (see Ecological Site Description). Current plant community <i>cannot</i> be used to identify the ecological site. <b>Indicators.</b> For each indicator, describe the potential for the site. Where possible, (1) use numbers, (2) include expected range of values for above- and below-average years for <b>each</b> community within the reference state, when appropriate and (3) cite data. Continue descriptions on separate sheet.</p>
<p><b>1. Number and extent of rills:</b> Rills should not be present.</p>
<p><b>2. Presence of water flow patterns:</b> Barely observable.</p>
<p><b>3. Number and height of erosional pedestals or terracettes:</b> Essentially non-existent.</p>
<p><b>4. Bare ground from Ecological Site Description or other studies (rock, litter, lichen, moss, plant canopy are <i>not</i> bare ground):</b> Bare ground is &lt; 5%. Bare ground will occur as small areas less than 2 inches in diameter.</p>
<p><b>5. Number of gullies and erosion associated with gullies:</b> Active gullies should not be present. Existing gullies should be “healed” with a good vegetative cover.</p>
<p><b>6. Extent of wind scoured, blowouts and/or depositional areas:</b> None.</p>
<p><b>7. Amount of litter movement (describe size and distance expected to travel):</b> Plant litter remains in place and is not moved by erosional forces.</p>
<p><b>8. Soil surface (top few mm) resistance to erosion (stability values are averages – most sites will show a range of values for both plant canopy and interspaces, if different):</b> Surface Soil Aggregate Stability should typically be 6 with or without plant canopy.</p>
<p><b>9. Soil surface Loss or Degradation (consider thickness of the surface horizon, soil organic matter and structure):</b> Use soil survey series description.</p>
<p><b>10. Effect of plant community composition (relative proportion of different functional groups) and spatial distribution on infiltration and runoff:</b> High grass canopy and basal cover and small gaps between plants should reduce raindrop impact and slow overland flow, providing increased time for infiltration to occur. Healthy, deep-rooted native grasses and grass likes enhance infiltration and reduce runoff.</p>
<p><b>11. Presence and thickness of compaction layer (usually none; describe soil profile features which may be mistaken for compaction on this site):</b> No compaction layer should be evident.</p>
<p><b>12. Functional/Structural Groups (list in order of descending dominance by above-ground weight using symbols: &gt;&gt;, &gt;, = to indicate much greater than, greater than, and equal to):</b> <b>Dominant:</b> sedges and rushes = Cool season, tall-stature, rhizomatous grasses <b>Sub-dominant:</b> Warm season, tall-stature, rhizomatous grasses = Cool season, mid-stature, bunch grasses <b>Minor Components:</b> Cool season, mid-stature, bunch grasses; Cool season, mid-stature, rhizomatous grasses; warm season, mid-stature, bunch grasses; forbs; shrubs.</p>
<p><b>13. Amount of plant mortality and decadence (include which functional groups are expected to show mortality or decadence):</b> Very low.</p>
<p><b>14. Average percent litter cover (40 to 50 %).</b> Litter cover is in contact with soil surface.</p>
<p><b>15. Expected annual production (this is TOTAL above-ground production, not just forage production):</b> 6250 to 6500 #/acre (13 to 14 inch precip. Zone) 5500 to 6000 #/acre (10 to 12 inch precip. Zone).</p>
<p><b>16. Potential invasive (including noxious) species (native and non-native). List species which characterize degraded states and which, after a threshold is crossed, “can, and often do, continue to increase regardless of the management of the site and may eventually dominate the site”:</b> Purple loosestrife, common tansy, oxeye daisy, Reed canarygrass.</p>
<p><b>17. Perennial plant reproductive capability:</b> All species are capable of reproducing.</p>