

# United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Ecological Site Description

**Site Type:** Rangeland

**Site Name:** Sandy

**Site ID:** R055CY009SD

**Major Land Resource Area (MLRA):** 55C – Southern Black Glaciated Plains



### Physiographic Features

This site occurs on nearly level to moderately sloping uplands.

**Landform:** plain, terrace, hill

**Aspect:** N/A

|                                    | <u>Minimum</u> | <u>Maximum</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Elevation (feet):</b>           | 1,300          | 2,000          |
| <b>Slope (percent):</b>            | 1              | 20             |
| <b>Water Table Depth (inches):</b> | 48             | 80             |
| <b>Flooding:</b>                   |                |                |
| <b>Frequency:</b>                  | None           | None           |
| <b>Duration:</b>                   | None           | None           |
| <b>Ponding:</b>                    |                |                |
| <b>Depth (inches):</b>             | None           | None           |
| <b>Frequency:</b>                  | None           | None           |
| <b>Duration:</b>                   | None           | None           |
| <b>Runoff Class:</b>               | Low            | Medium         |

### Climatic Features

MLRA 55C is considered to have a continental climate – cold winters and hot summers, low humidity, light rainfall, and much sunshine. Extremes in temperature may also abound. The climate is the result of this MLRA's location near the geographic center of North America. There are few natural barriers on the Northern Great Plains and air masses move freely across the plains and account for rapid changes in temperature.

Annual precipitation typically ranges from 19 to 25 inches per year. The average annual temperature is about 47°F. January is the coldest month with average temperatures ranging from about 15°F (Howard, South Dakota (SD)), to about 20°F (Wagner, SD). July is the warmest month with temperatures averaging from about 73°F (Howard, SD), to about 77°F (Wagner, SD). The range of normal average monthly temperatures between the coldest and warmest months is about 58°F. This large annual range attests to the continental nature of this area's climate. Hourly winds are estimated to average about 12 miles per hour (mph) annually, ranging from about 13 mph during the spring to about 11 mph during the summer. Daytime winds are generally stronger than nighttime and occasional strong storms may bring brief periods of high winds with gusts to more than 50 mph.

Growth of cool-season plants begins in early to mid-March, slowing or ceasing in late June. Warm-season plants begin growth about mid-May and continue to early or mid-September. Greenup of cool-season plants may occur in September and October when adequate soil moisture is present.

|  | <u>Minimum</u> | <u>Maximum</u> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Frost-free period (days):</b>           | 137            | 159            |
| <b>Freeze-free period (days):</b>          | 156            | 180            |
| <b>Mean Annual Precipitation (inches):</b> | 19             | 25             |

**Average Monthly Precipitation (inches) and Temperature (°F):**

|           | <b>Precip. Min.</b> | <b>Precip. Max</b> | <b>Temp. Min.</b> | <b>Temp. Max.</b> |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| January   | 0.42                | 0.54               | 3.4               | 31.0              |
| February  | 0.51                | 0.81               | 8.1               | 36.3              |
| March     | 1.00                | 1.61               | 20.5              | 47.7              |
| April     | 2.05                | 2.50               | 33.6              | 62.7              |
| May       | 2.85                | 3.47               | 44.8              | 74.6              |
| June      | 3.35                | 4.15               | 54.9              | 84.1              |
| July      | 2.38                | 2.97               | 59.9              | 91.1              |
| August    | 2.23                | 2.87               | 57.7              | 88.8              |
| September | 1.61                | 2.71               | 48.2              | 79.4              |
| October   | 1.39                | 1.76               | 36.1              | 65.9              |
| November  | 0.62                | 1.09               | 21.7              | 47.4              |
| December  | 0.42                | 0.65               | 9.4               | 34.8              |

| <b>Climate Stations</b> |                         | <b>Period</b> |           |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| <b>Station ID</b>       | <b>Location or Name</b> | <b>From</b>   | <b>To</b> |
| SD4037                  | Howard                  | 1893          | 2008      |
| SD5228                  | Marion                  | 1901          | 2008      |
| SD5561                  | Miller                  | 1902          | 2008      |
| SD8767                  | Wagner                  | 1916          | 2008      |

For local climate stations that may be more representative, refer to <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>.

**Riparian and Wetland Features**

No riparian areas or wetland features are directly associated with this site.

**Representative Soil Features**

The features common to all soils in this site are the loam, loamy fine sand, or fine sandy loam textured surface layers and slopes of 1 to 20 percent. The soils in this site are from moderately well-drained to excessively drained. They formed primarily in eolian deposits or alluvium over glacial till. The surface layer is 6 to 16 inches thick. This site should show slight to no evidence of rills, wind scoured areas, or pedestalled plants. Water flow paths are broken, irregular in appearance, or discontinuous. The soil surface is stable and intact. Subsurface soil layers are not restrictive to water movement and root penetration.

These soils are mainly susceptible to water erosion. The hazard of water erosion increases on slopes greater than about 10 percent. Loss of 50 percent or more of the surface layer of the soils on this site can result in a shift in species composition and/or production.

Access Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>) for specific local soils information.

**Parent Material Kind:** alluvium, eolian deposits  
**Parent Material Origin:**  
**Surface Texture:** fine sandy loam, loam, loamy fine sand  
**Surface Texture Modifier:** none  
**Subsurface Texture Group:** sandy  
**Surface Fragments ≤3” (% Cover):** 0-9  
**Surface Fragments >3” (%Cover):** 0-2  
**Subsurface Fragments ≤3” (% Volume):** 0-28  
**Subsurface Fragments >3” (% Volume):** 0-2

|   | <u>Minimum</u>  | <u>Maximum</u>     |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Drainage Class:</b>                          | moderately well | somewhat excessive |
| <b>Permeability Class:</b>                      | moderately slow | moderately rapid   |
| <b>Depth (inches):</b>                          | 80              | 80                 |
| <b>Electrical Conductivity (mmhos/cm)*:</b>     | 0               | 2                  |
| <b>Sodium Absorption Ratio*:</b>                | 0               | 0                  |
| <b>Soil Reaction (1:1 Water)*:</b>              | 5.6             | 8.4                |
| <b>Soil Reaction (0.1M CaCl<sub>2</sub>)*:</b>  | NA              | NA                 |
| <b>Available Water Capacity (inches)*:</b>      | 4               | 6                  |
| <b>Calcium Carbonate Equivalent (percent)*:</b> | 0               | 15                 |

\*These attributes represent from 0-40 inches or to the first restrictive layer.

## Plant Communities

### Ecological Dynamics of the Site

This site developed under Northern Great Plains climatic conditions, light to severe grazing by bison and other large herbivores, sporadic natural or man-caused wildfire (often of light intensities), and other biotic and abiotic factors that typically influence soil/site development. Changes will occur in the plant communities due to short-term weather variations, impacts of native and/or exotic plant and animal species, and management actions. While the following plant community descriptions describe more typical transitions that will occur, severe disturbances, such as periods of well below average precipitation, can cause significant shifts in plant communities and/or species composition.

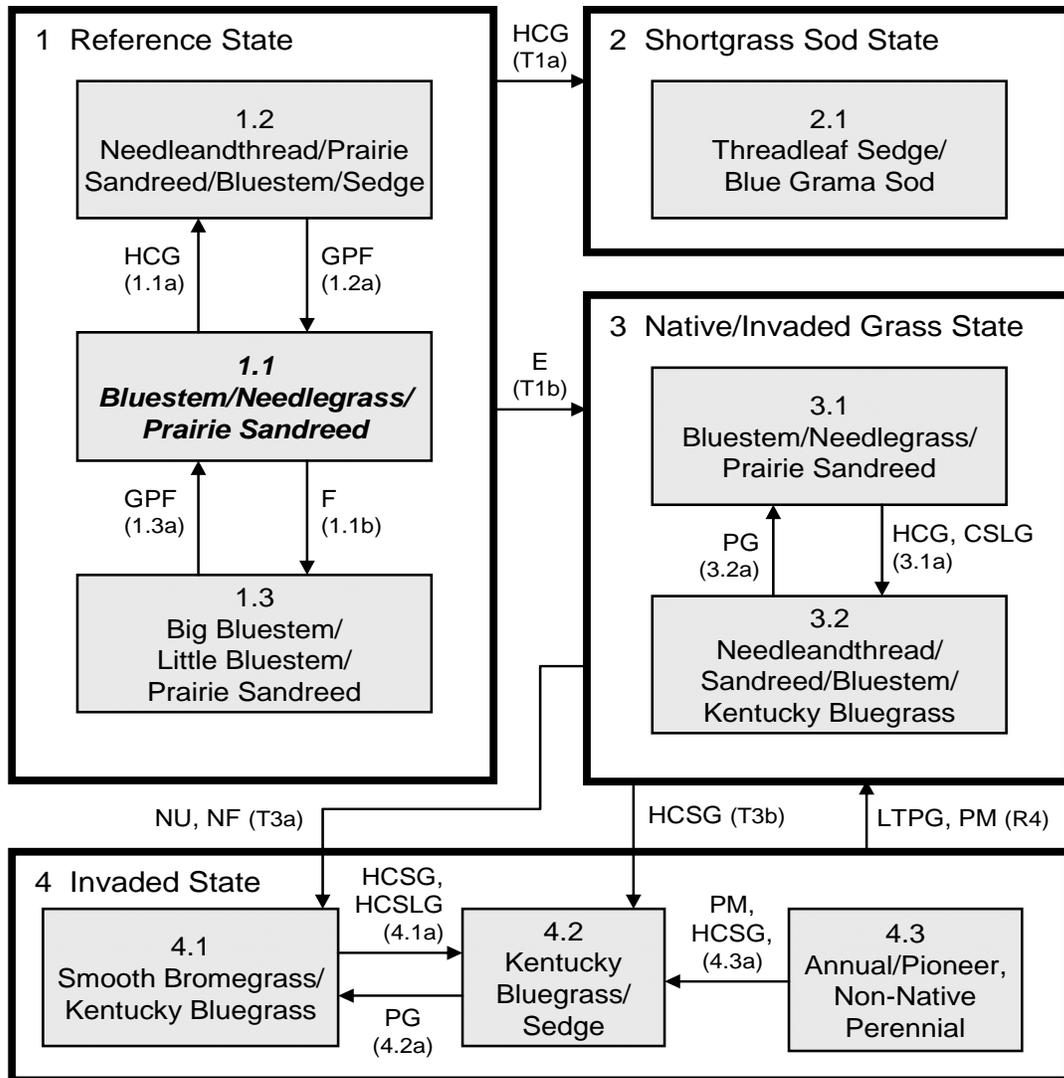
Heavy continuous grazing (season-long grazing during the typical growing season of April through October and/or repeated seasonal grazing during the same time of year each year) without adequate recovery periods following grazing events causes departure from the Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase (3.1). Sedge and blue grama will increase and eventually develop into a sod. Western wheatgrass will increase initially and then begin to decrease. Needleandthread, porcupine grass, sideoats grama, big bluestem, and little bluestem will decrease in frequency and production. Extended periods of nonuse and/or lack of fire will result in excessive litter and a plant community dominated by cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, smooth brome grass, and cheatgrass.

Interpretations are primarily based on the 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase. It has been determined by study of rangeland relic areas, areas protected from excessive disturbance, and areas under long-term rotational grazing regimes. Trends in plant community dynamics ranging from heavily grazed to lightly grazed areas, seasonal use pastures, and

historical accounts also have been used. Plant community phases, states, transitional pathways, and thresholds have been determined through similar studies and experience.

The following is a diagram that illustrates the common plant community phases that can occur on the site and the transition pathways between communities. These are the most common plant community phases based on current knowledge and experience and changes may be made as more data is collected. Narratives following the diagram contain more detail pertaining to the ecological processes.

## Plant Communities and Transitional Pathways



Refer to narrative for details on pathways: **C** – Cropped, abandoned; **CSLG** – Continuous season-long grazing; **E** – Encroachment of introduced species; **F** – Fire; **GPF** – Grazing, precipitation, and/or fire returning to more normal disturbance regime levels and frequencies; **HCG** – Heavy continuous grazing; **HCSG** – Heavy continuous seasonal grazing; **HCSLG** – Heavy continuous season-long grazing; **LTPG** – Long-term prescribed grazing; **NU, NF** – Non-use, no fire; **PG** – Prescribed grazing; **PM** – Pest management (herbicide); **S** – Seeding.

**Any Plant Community**

Plant Community Composition and Group Annual Production

|                                  |   |        | 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/<br>Prairie Sandreed |                   |                |
|----------------------------------|---|--------|---|-------------------|----------------|
| COMMON/GROUP NAME                | SCIENTIFIC NAME                               | SYMBOL | Group   | lbs./acre         | % Comp         |
| <b>GRASSES &amp; GRASS-LIKES</b> |   |        |   | 2550 - 2850       | 85 - 95        |
| <b>TALL WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b>  |   |        | <b>1</b>                                      | <b>600 - 1050</b> | <b>20 - 35</b> |
| big bluestem                     | Andropogon gerardii                           | ANGE   | 1   | 300 - 750         | 10 - 25        |
| prairie sandreed                 | Calamovilfa longifolia                        | CALO   | 1   | 150 - 600         | 5 - 20         |
| switchgrass                      | Panicum virgatum                              | PAVI2  | 1   | 30 - 150          | 1 - 5          |
| Indiangrass                      | Sorghastrum nutans                            | SONU2  | 1   | 30 - 150          | 1 - 5          |
| <b>COOL-SEASON BUNCHGRASSES</b>  |   |        | <b>2</b>                                      | <b>450 - 750</b>  | <b>15 - 25</b> |
| needleandthread                  | Hesperostipa comata ssp. comata               | HECOC8 | 2   | 300 - 600         | 10 - 20        |
| porcupine grass                  | Hesperostipa spartea                          | HESP11 | 2   | 60 - 300          | 2 - 10         |
| green needlegrass                | Nassella viridula                             | NAVI4  | 2   | 0 - 150           | 0 - 5          |
| Canada wildrye                   | Elymus canadensis                             | ELCA4  | 2   | 0 - 90            | 0 - 3          |
| <b>MID WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b>   |   |        | <b>3</b>                                      | <b>300 - 600</b>  | <b>10 - 20</b> |
| little bluestem                  | Schizachyrium scoparium                       | SCSC   | 3   | 150 - 600         | 5 - 20         |
| sideoats grama                   | Bouteloua curtipendula                        | BOCU   | 3   | 60 - 300          | 2 - 10         |
| <b>WHEATGRASS</b>                |   |        | <b>4</b>                                      | <b>150 - 300</b>  | <b>5 - 10</b>  |
| western wheatgrass               | Pascopyrum smithii                            | PASM   | 4   | 150 - 300         | 5 - 10         |
| slender wheatgrass               | Elymus trachycaulus                           | ELTR7  | 4   | 0 - 150           | 0 - 5          |
| <b>SHORT WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b> |   |        | <b>5</b>                                      | <b>90 - 240</b>   | <b>3 - 8</b>   |
| blue grama                       | Bouteloua gracilis                            | BOGR2  | 5   | 60 - 210          | 2 - 7          |
| sand dropseed                    | Sporobolus cryptandrus                        | SPCR   | 5   | 30 - 90           | 1 - 3          |
| <b>OTHER NATIVE GRASSES</b>      |   |        | <b>6</b>                                      | <b>60 - 210</b>   | <b>2 - 7</b>   |
| prairie junegrass                | Koeleria macrantha                            | KOMA   | 6   | 30 - 90           | 1 - 3          |
| Scribner panicum                 | Dichanthelium oligosanthes var. scribnerianum | DIOLS  | 6   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| Wilcox panicum                   | Dichanthelium wilcoxianum                     | DIWI5  | 6   | 0 - 60            | 0 - 2          |
| other grasses                    |   | 2GRAM  | 6   | 0 - 150           | 0 - 5          |
| <b>GRASS-LIKES</b>               |   |        | <b>7</b>                                      | <b>150 - 300</b>  | <b>5 - 10</b>  |
| threadleaf sedge                 | Carex filifolia                               | CAFI   | 7   | 60 - 240          | 2 - 8          |
| other grass-likes                |   | 2GL    | 7   | 30 - 150          | 1 - 5          |
| <b>FORBS</b>                     |   |        | <b>9</b>                                      | <b>150 - 300</b>  | <b>5 - 10</b>  |
| American licorice                | Glycyrrhiza lepidota                          | GLLE3  | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| American vetch                   | Vicia americana                               | VIAM   | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| catclaw sensitive briar          | Mimosa nuttallii                              | MINU6  | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| cudweed sagewort                 | Artemisia ludoviciana                         | ARLU   | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| curlycup gumweed                 | Grindelia squarrosa                           | GRSQ   | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| dotted gayfeather                | Liatris punctata                              | LIPU   | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| false boneset                    | Brickellia eupatorioides                      | BREU   | 9   | 0 - 60            | 0 - 2          |
| goldenrod                        | Solidago spp.                                 | SOLID  | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| heath aster                      | Symphotrichum ericoides                       | SYER   | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| hoary puccoon                    | Lithospermum canescens                        | LICA12 | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| penstemon                        | Penstemon spp.                                | PENST  | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| prairie coneflower               | Ratibida columnifera                          | RACO3  | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| prairie groundsel                | Packera plattensis                            | PAPL12 | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| purple coneflower                | Echinacea angustifolia                        | ECAN2  | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| purple prairie clover            | Dalea purpurea                                | DAPU5  | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| rush skeletonweed                | Lygodesmia juncea                             | LYJU   | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| scarlet gaura                    | Gaura coccinea                                | GACO5  | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| scurfpea                         | Psoralegium spp.                              | PSORA2 | 9   | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| stiff sunflower                  | Helianthus pauciflorus                        | HEPA19 | 9   | 30 - 90           | 1 - 3          |
| western ragweed                  | Ambrosia psilostachya                         | AMPS   | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| western yarrow                   | Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis        | ACMIO  | 9   | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| native forbs                     |   | 2FN    | 9   | 30 - 90           | 1 - 3          |
| <b>SHRUBS</b>                    |   |        | <b>10</b>                                     | <b>60 - 150</b>   | <b>2 - 5</b>   |
| fringed sagewort                 | Artemisia frigida                             | ARFR4  | 10  | 0 - 30            | 0 - 1          |
| leadplant                        | Amorpha canescens                             | AMCA6  | 10  | 30 - 120          | 1 - 4          |
| rose                             | Rosa spp.                                     | ROSA5  | 10  | 30 - 60           | 1 - 2          |
| snowberry                        | Symphoricarpos spp.                           | SYMPH  | 10  | 0 - 60            | 0 - 2          |
| other shrubs                     |   | 2SHRUB | 10  | 0 - 60            | 0 - 2          |

| Annual Production lbs./acre      |  | LOW    | RV   | HIGH  |
|----------------------------------|--|--------|------|-------|
| <b>GRASSES &amp; GRASS-LIKES</b> |  | 1810 - | 2670 | -3490 |
| <b>FORBS</b>                     |  | 135 -  | 225  | -345  |
| <b>SHRUBS</b>                    |  | 55 -   | 105  | -165  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     |  | 2000 - | 3000 | -4000 |

This list of plants and their relative proportions are based on near normal years. Fluctuations in species composition and relative production may change from year to year dependent upon precipitation or other climatic factors. RV = Representative value.

Plant Community Composition and Group Annual Production

| COMMON/GROUP NAME                  | SYMBOL | 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/<br>Prairie Sandreed |                    |         | 3.2 Needleandthread/Sandreed/<br>Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass |             |                    | 4.1 Smooth Bromegrass/<br>Kentucky Bluegrass |                    |         | 4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass/<br>Sedge |             |             |
|------------------------------------|--------|---|--------------------|---------|--|-------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|---------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                    |        | Grp   | lbs./acre          | % Comp  | Grp  | lbs./acre   | % Comp             | Grp  | lbs./acre          | % Comp  | Grp                              | lbs./acre   | % Comp      |
| <b>GRASSES &amp; GRASS-LIKES</b>   |        |   | 2550 - 2850        | 85 - 95 |  | 1760 - 1980 | 80 - 90            |  | 2380 - 2520        | 85 - 90 |                                  | 1615 - 1805 | 85 - 95     |
| <b>TALL WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b>    |        | 1   | 600 - 1050         | 20 - 35 | 1  | 110 - 440   | 5 - 20             | 1  |                    |         | 1                                |             |             |
| big bluestem                       | ANGE   | 1   | 300 - 750          | 10 - 25 | 1  | 0 - 220     | 0 - 10             |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| prairie sandreed                   | CALO   | 1   | 150 - 600          | 5 - 20  | 1  | 44 - 330    | 2 - 15             |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| switchgrass                        | PAV12  | 1   | 30 - 150           | 1 - 5   | 1  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| Indiangrass                        | SONU2  | 1   | 30 - 150           | 1 - 5   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>COOL-SEASON BUNCHGRASSES</b>    |        | 2   | 450 - 750          | 15 - 25 | 2  | 220 - 550   | 10 - 25            | 2  | 0 - 280            | 0 - 10  | 2                                | 0 - 95      | 0 - 5       |
| needleandthread                    | HECOC8 | 2   | 300 - 600          | 10 - 20 | 2  | 220 - 550   | 10 - 25            | 2  | 0 - 280            | 0 - 10  | 2                                | 0 - 95      | 0 - 5       |
| porcupine grass                    | HESP11 | 2   | 60 - 300           | 2 - 10  | 2  | 0 - 110     | 0 - 5              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| green needlegrass                  | NAV14  | 2   | 0 - 150            | 0 - 5   | 2  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 2  | 0 - 84             | 0 - 3   | 2                                | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| Canada wildrye                     | ELCA4  | 2   | 0 - 90             | 0 - 3   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>MID WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b>     |        | 3   | 300 - 600          | 10 - 20 | 3  | 22 - 220    | 1 - 10             | 3  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   | 3                                | 0 - 57      | 0 - 3       |
| little bluestem                    | SCSC   | 3   | 150 - 600          | 5 - 20  | 3  | 0 - 220     | 0 - 10             | 3  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   | 3                                | 0 - 57      | 0 - 3       |
| sideoats grama                     | BOCU   | 3   | 60 - 300           | 2 - 10  | 3  | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 3  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   |                                  |             |             |
| <b>WHEATGRASS</b>                  |        | 4   | 150 - 300          | 5 - 10  | 4  | 44 - 220    | 2 - 10             | 4  | 0 - 280            | 0 - 10  | 4                                | 0 - 95      | 0 - 5       |
| western wheatgrass                 | PASM   | 4   | 150 - 300          | 5 - 10  | 4  | 44 - 220    | 2 - 10             | 4  | 0 - 280            | 0 - 10  | 4                                | 0 - 95      | 0 - 5       |
| slender wheatgrass                 | ELTR7  | 4   | 0 - 150            | 0 - 5   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>SHORT WARM-SEASON GRASSES</b>   |        | 5   | 90 - 240           | 3 - 8   | 5  | 110 - 286   | 5 - 13             | 5  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   | 5                                | 38 - 380    | 2 - 20      |
| blue grama                         | BOGR2  | 5   | 60 - 210           | 2 - 7   | 5  | 66 - 264    | 3 - 12             | 5  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   | 5                                | 38 - 380    | 2 - 20      |
| sand dropseed                      | SPCR   | 5   | 30 - 90            | 1 - 3   | 5  | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 5  | 0 - 84             | 0 - 3   | 5                                | 0 - 95      | 0 - 5       |
| <b>OTHER NATIVE GRASSES</b>        |        | 6   | 60 - 210           | 2 - 7   | 6  | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 6  | 0 - 140            | 0 - 5   | 6                                | 0 - 76      | 0 - 4       |
| prairie junegrass                  | KOMA   | 6   | 30 - 90            | 1 - 3   | 6  | 22 - 44     | 1 - 2              | 6  | 0 - 84             | 0 - 3   | 6                                | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| Scribner panicum                   | DIOLS  | 6   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 6  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 6  | 0 - 56             | 0 - 2   | 6                                | 0 - 38      | 0 - 2       |
| Wilcox panicum                     | DIW15  | 6   | 0 - 60             | 0 - 2   | 6  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 6  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   | 6                                | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| other grasses                      | 2GRAM  | 6   | 0 - 150            | 0 - 5   | 6  | 0 - 110     | 0 - 5              | 6  | 0 - 112            | 0 - 4   | 6                                | 0 - 57      | 0 - 3       |
| <b>GRASS-LIKES</b>                 |        | 7   | 150 - 300          | 5 - 10  | 7  | 110 - 264   | 5 - 12             | 7  | 28 - 168           | 1 - 6   | 7                                | 95 - 665    | 5 - 35      |
| threadleaf sedge                   | CAFI   | 7   | 60 - 240           | 2 - 8   | 7  | 66 - 264    | 3 - 12             | 7  | 28 - 168           | 1 - 6   | 7                                | 95 - 665    | 5 - 35      |
| other grass-likes                  | 2GL    | 7   | 30 - 150           | 1 - 5   | 7  | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 7  | 0 - 84             | 0 - 3   | 7                                | 0 - 57      | 0 - 3       |
| <b>NON-NATIVE GRASSES</b>          |        | 8   |                    |         | 8  | 110 - 330   | 5 - 15             | 8  | 700 - 1960         | 25 - 70 | 8                                | 190 - 855   | 10 - 45     |
| annual bromegrass                  | BROMU  |   |                    |         | 8  | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 8  | 28 - 280           | 1 - 10  | 8                                | 0 - 133     | 0 - 7       |
| Kentucky bluegrass                 | POPR   |   |                    |         | 8  | 110 - 330   | 5 - 15             | 8  | 140 - 840          | 5 - 30  | 8                                | 190 - 855   | 10 - 45     |
| quackgrass                         | ELRE4  |   |                    |         | 8  | 0 - 110     | 0 - 5              | 8  | 0 - 420            | 0 - 15  | 8                                | 0 - 190     | 0 - 10      |
| smooth bromegrass                  | BRIN2  |   |                    |         | 8  | 0 - 110     | 0 - 5              | 8  | 280 - 1820         | 10 - 65 | 8                                | 0 - 133     | 0 - 7       |
| <b>FORBS</b>                       |        | 9   | 150 - 300          | 5 - 10  | 9  | 110 - 330   | 5 - 15             | 9  | 140 - 280          | 5 - 10  | 9                                | 38 - 228    | 2 - 12      |
| American licorice                  | GLLE3  | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| American vetch                     | VIAM   | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              | 9  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   |                                  |             |             |
| catclaw sensitive briar            | MINU6  | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| cudweed sagewort                   | ARLU   | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 22 - 88     | 1 - 4              | 9  | 28 - 84            | 1 - 3   | 9                                | 0 - 76      | 0 - 4       |
| curlycup gumweed                   | GRSQ   | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 9  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 9  | 0 - 56             | 0 - 2   | 9                                | 19 - 76     | 1 - 4       |
| dotted gayfeather                  | LIPU   | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| false boneset                      | BREU   | 9   | 0 - 60             | 0 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| goldenrod                          | SOLID  | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 22 - 88     | 1 - 4              | 9  | 28 - 84            | 1 - 3   | 9                                | 0 - 57      | 0 - 3       |
| heath aster                        | SYER   | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 22 - 66     | 1 - 3              | 9  | 28 - 56            | 1 - 2   | 9                                | 0 - 38      | 0 - 2       |
| hoary puccoon                      | LICA12 | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| penstemon                          | PENST  | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| prairie coneflower                 | RACO3  | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 22 - 44     | 1 - 2              | 9  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   |                                  |             |             |
| prairie groundsel                  | PAPL12 | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| purple coneflower                  | ECAN2  | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   |  |             |                    |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| purple prairie clover              | DAPU5  | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              | 9  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   |                                  |             |             |
| rush skeletonweed                  | LYJU   | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              | 9  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   | 9                                | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| scarlet gaura                      | GACO5  | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| scurfpea                           | PSORA2 | 9   | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 9  | 22 - 88     | 1 - 4              | 9  | 28 - 84            | 1 - 3   | 9                                | 0 - 38      | 0 - 2       |
| stiff sunflower                    | HEPA19 | 9   | 30 - 90            | 1 - 3   | 9  | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| western ragweed                    | AMPS   | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 9  | 22 - 66     | 1 - 3              | 9  | 28 - 112           | 1 - 4   | 9                                | 19 - 76     | 1 - 4       |
| western yarrow                     | ACMIO  | 9   | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 9  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 9  | 0 - 56             | 0 - 2   | 9                                | 19 - 95     | 1 - 5       |
| native forbs                       | 2FN    | 9   | 30 - 90            | 1 - 3   | 9  | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 9  | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   | 9                                | 19 - 57     | 1 - 3       |
| introduced forbs                   | 2FI    |   |                    |         | 9  | 0 - 110     | 0 - 5              | 9  | 28 - 140           | 1 - 5   | 9                                | 19 - 95     | 1 - 5       |
| <b>SHRUBS</b>                      |        | 10  | 60 - 150           | 2 - 5   | 10   | 22 - 110    | 1 - 5              | 10   | 28 - 112           | 1 - 4   | 10                               | 19 - 76     | 1 - 4       |
| fringed sagewort                   | ARFR4  | 10  | 0 - 30             | 0 - 1   | 10   | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 10   | 0 - 56             | 0 - 2   | 10                               | 19 - 76     | 1 - 4       |
| leadplant                          | AMCA6  | 10  | 30 - 120           | 1 - 4   | 10   | 0 - 22      | 0 - 1              |  |                    |         |                                  |             |             |
| rose                               | ROSA5  | 10  | 30 - 60            | 1 - 2   | 10   | 22 - 44     | 1 - 2              | 10   | 0 - 56             | 0 - 2   | 10                               | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| snowberry                          | SYMPH  | 10  | 0 - 60             | 0 - 2   | 10   | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 10   | 0 - 112            | 0 - 4   | 10                               | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| other shrubs                       | 2SHRUB | 10  | 0 - 60             | 0 - 2   | 10   | 0 - 44      | 0 - 2              | 10   | 0 - 28             | 0 - 1   | 10                               | 0 - 19      | 0 - 1       |
| <b>Annual Production lbs./acre</b> |        |   | LOW RV HIGH        |         | LOW RV HIGH  |             | LOW RV HIGH        |  | LOW RV HIGH        |         | LOW RV HIGH                      |             | LOW RV HIGH |
| <b>GRASSES &amp; GRASS-LIKES</b>   |        |   | 1810 - 2670 - 3490 |         | 1280 - 1914 - 2295   |             | 1650 - 2520 - 3155 |  | 1050 - 1720 - 2360 |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>FORBS</b>                       |        |   | 135 - 225 - 345    |         | 100 - 220 - 385  |             | 125 - 210 - 320    |  | 35 - 133 - 260     |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>SHRUBS</b>                      |        |   | 55 - 105 - 165     |         | 20 - 66 - 120  |             | 25 - 70 - 125      |  | 15 - 48 - 80       |         |                                  |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       |        |   | 2000 - 3000 - 4000 |         | 1400 - 2200 - 2800   |             | 1800 - 2800 - 3600 |  | 1100 - 1900 - 2700 |         |                                  |             |             |

This list of plants and their relative proportions are based on near normal years. Fluctuations in species composition and relative production may change from year to year dependent upon precipitation or other climatic factors. RV = Representative value. Refer to PLANTS database for scientific names and codes: <http://plants.usda.gov>

## Plant Community and Vegetation State Narratives

### Reference State (State 1)

This state represents the natural range of variability that dominated the dynamics of this ecological site (ES). This state was codominated by cool- and warm-season grasses. In pre-European times, the primary disturbance mechanisms for this site in the reference condition included periods of below and/or above average precipitation, periodic fire, and herbivory by insects and large ungulates. Timing of fires and herbivory coupled with weather events dictated the dynamics that occurred within the natural range of variability. Cool-season and taller warm-season grasses would have declined and a corresponding increase in short, warm-season grasses would have occurred. Today, a similar state can be found on areas that are properly managed with grazing and/or prescribed burning and sometimes on areas receiving occasional short periods of rest.

### 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase

Interpretations are based primarily on the Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase (this is also considered to be climax). The potential vegetation was about 85 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. The community was dominated by warm-season grasses with cool-season grasses subdominant. The major grasses included big bluestem, prairie sandreed, little bluestem, needleandthread, and porcupine grass. Other grass or grass-like species included sideoats grama, western wheatgrass, blue grama, threadleaf sedge, Indiangrass, switchgrass, and slender wheatgrass. This plant community was resilient and well adapted to the Northern Great Plains climatic conditions. The diversity in plant species allowed for high drought tolerance. This was a sustainable plant community in regards to site/soil stability, watershed function, and biologic integrity.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5504

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, warm-season dominant, cool-season subdominant.

Growth curve description: Warm-season dominant, cool-season subdominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 3   | 7   | 18  | 25  | 25  | 15  | 7   | 1   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities were as follows:

- 1.1a – Heavy continuous grazing which included herbivory at moderate to heavy levels at the same time of year each year without adequate recovery periods or a combination of disturbances such as extended periods of below average precipitation coupled with periodic or chronic heavy grazing will shift this community to the *1.2 Needleandthread/Prairie Sandreed/Bluestem/Sedge Plant Community Phase*.
- 1.1b – Fire occurring at relatively frequent intervals and occasional grazing events immediately following early season fire caused a reduction in cool-season grasses and an increase in warm-season grasses. The warm-season grasses were more tolerant of shorter return intervals of fire, and would increase in vigor and production leading to a temporary shift to the *1.3 Big Bluestem/Little Bluestem/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase*.

## 1.2 Needleandthread/Prairie Sandreed/Bluestem/Sedge Plant Community Phase

This plant community evolved under heavy continuous grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community was made up of approximately 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses included needleandthread, prairie sandreed, little bluestem, western wheatgrass, threadleaf sedge, and blue grama. Grasses of secondary importance included sideoats grama, porcupine grass, and sand dropseed. Forbs commonly found in this plant community included cudweed sagewort, prairie coneflower, and western yarrow. This plant community had similar plant composition to the 3.2 Needleandthread/Sandreed/Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase (refer to the plant composition tables). The main difference is that this plant community phase did not have the presence of nonnative invasive species such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome grass.

When compared to the Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase (1.1), needleandthread, threadleaf sedge, and blue grama increased. Big bluestem and porcupine grass decreased and production of mid- and tall warm-season grasses were also reduced. This plant community was moderately resistant to change. The herbaceous species present were well adapted to grazing; however, species composition could be altered through long-term overgrazing. If the herbaceous component was intact, it tended to be resilient if the disturbance was not long-term.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5503

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, cool-season/warm-season codominant.

Growth curve description: Cool-season, warm-season codominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 3   | 10  | 20  | 28  | 21  | 10  | 5   | 3   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities are as follows:

- T1a – Heavy continuous grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season, and often at the same time of year each year, typically beginning early in the season), will convert this plant community to the *2.1 Threadleaf Sedge/Blue Grama Sod Plant Community Phase* and the *Shortgrass Sod State*.
- 1.2a – Grazing, precipitation, and/or fire returned to normal disturbance regime levels and frequencies or periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest will convert this plant community to the *1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase*.

## 2.1 Threadleaf Sedge/Blue Grama Sod Plant Community

This plant community evolved under heavy continuous season grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community was made up of approximately 85 percent grasses and grass-like species, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses typically included threadleaf sedge and blue grama. Grasses of secondary importance included western wheatgrass and needleandthread. Forbs commonly found in this plant community included cudweed sagewort, green sagewort, and western yarrow. This vegetation state was very resistant to change. The herbaceous species present were well adapted to grazing. This plant community was less productive than other phases. The thick sod prevented other species from getting established due to decreased infiltration and increased runoff.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5503

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, cool-season/warm-season codominant.

Growth curve description: Cool-season, warm-season codominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 3   | 10  | 20  | 28  | 21  | 10  | 5   | 3   | 0   | 0   |

### 1.3 Big Bluestem/Little Bluestem/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase

This plant community was a result of fire occurring at relatively frequent intervals. This phase could have also resulted from a combination of grazing events immediately following early season fire (i.e., large ungulates attracted to highly nutritious vegetative growth following a fire). These events would have caused a reduction in cool-season grasses and an increase in warm-season grasses. The warm-season grasses were more tolerant of shorter return intervals of fire and would have increased in vigor and production leading to a temporary shift to this phase. Needlegrasses would have decreased most significantly amongst the cool-season grasses. The potential vegetation was about 80 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. The community was dominated by warm-season grasses. The major grasses included big bluestem, little bluestem, prairie sandreed, Indiangrass, switchgrass, and sideoats grama. Other grass or grass-like species included green needlegrass, porcupine grass, needleandthread, blue grama, slender wheatgrass, and threadleaf sedge. This plant community was not resistant to change and would have readily shifted back to the 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase with a return of more normal fire return intervals.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5505

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, warm-season dominant.

Growth curve description: Warm-season dominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 2   | 5   | 15  | 25  | 30  | 15  | 7   | 1   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities were as follows:

- 1.3a – Grazing, precipitation, and/or fire returned to normal disturbance regime levels and frequencies or periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest will convert this plant community to the *1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase*.

### Transition from Reference State (State 1) to the Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3)

- T1b – Encroachment of nonnative grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass, and disruption of natural disturbance regimes (typically as a result of fire suppression following settlement, led this state over a threshold to the *Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3)*.

### Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3)

This state represents the more common range of variability that exists with higher levels of grazing management but in the absence of periodic fire due to fire suppression. This state is dominated by

cool- and warm-season grasses. It can be found on areas that are properly managed with grazing and/or prescribed burning and sometimes on areas receiving occasional short periods of rest. Taller cool-season species can decline and a corresponding increase in short- statured grass will occur.

### 3.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase

This plant community phase is similar to the 1.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase, but it also contains minor amounts of nonnative invasive grass species such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome grass (up to about 15 percent by air-dry weight). The potential vegetation is about 85 percent grasses or grass-like plants, 10 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. The community is dominated by warm-season grasses with cool-season grasses subdominant. The major grasses include big bluestem, prairie sandreed, little bluestem, needleandthread, and porcupine grass. Other grass or grass-like species include sideoats grama, western wheatgrass, blue grama, threadleaf sedge, Indiangrass, switchgrass, and slender wheatgrass. This plant community is resilient and well adapted to the Northern Great Plains climatic conditions. The diversity in plant species allows for high drought tolerance. This is a sustainable plant community in regards to site/soil stability, watershed function, and biologic integrity.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5504

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, warm-season dominant, cool-season subdominant.

Growth curve description: Warm-season dominant, cool-season subdominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 3   | 7   | 18  | 25  | 25  | 15  | 7   | 1   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities are as follows:

- 3.1a – Heavy continuous grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season and often at the same time of year each year), or continuous season-long grazing, or a combination of disturbances such as extended periods of below average precipitation coupled with periodic heavy grazing will shift this community to the 3.2 *Needleandthread/Sandreed/Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase*.

### 3.2 Needleandthread/Sandreed/Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase

This plant community is a result of heavy continuous grazing, continuous season-long grazing or from over utilization during extended drought periods. The potential plant community is made up of approximately 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs. Dominant grasses include needleandthread, prairie sandreed, little bluestem, western wheatgrass, threadleaf sedge, and blue grama. Grasses of secondary importance include sideoats grama, porcupine grass, and sand dropseed. Forbs commonly found in this plant community include cudweed sagewort, prairie coneflower, and western yarrow.

When compared to the Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase (1.1), threadleaf sedge, needleandthread, and blue grama have increased. Big bluestem, little bluestem, and porcupine grass have decreased, and production of mid- and tall warm-season grasses has also been reduced. This plant community is moderately resistant to change. The herbaceous species present are well adapted to grazing; however, species composition can be altered through long-term overgrazing. If the herbaceous component is intact, it tends to be resilient if the disturbance is not long-term.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5503

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, cool-season/warm-season codominant.

Growth curve description: Cool-season, warm-season codominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 3   | 10  | 20  | 28  | 21  | 10  | 5   | 3   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities are as follows:

- T3b – Heavy continuous seasonal grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season, and at the same time of year each year, typically beginning early in the season) will cause a shift across a threshold leading to the *4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge Plant Community Phase* within the *Invaded State (State 4)*.
- 3.2a – Prescribed grazing (alternating season of use and providing adequate recovery periods) or periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest will convert this plant community to the *3.1 Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase*.

#### Transitions from Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3) to the Invaded State (State 4)

- T2b – Non-use and no fire for extended periods of time (typically for 10 or more years) will likely lead this state over a threshold resulting in the *4.1 Smooth Bromegrass/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase* within the *4.0 Invaded State*.

#### Invaded State (State 4)

This state is the result of invasion and dominance of introduced species. This state is characterized by the dominance of Kentucky bluegrass and smooth bromegrass and an increasing thatch layer that effectively blocks introduction of other plants into the system. Plant litter accumulation tends to favor the more shade tolerant introduced grass species. The nutrient cycle is also impaired and the result is typically a higher level of nitrogen which also favors the introduced species. Increasing plant litter decreases the amount of sunlight reaching plant crowns thereby shifting competitive advantage to shade tolerant introduced grass species. Studies indicate that soil biological activity is altered and this shift apparently exploits the soil microclimate and encourages growth of the introduced grass species. Once the threshold is crossed, a change in grazing management alone cannot cause a reduction in the invasive grass dominance. Preliminary studies would tend to indicate this threshold may exist when Kentucky bluegrass exceeds 30 percent of the plant community and native grasses represent less than 40 percent of the plant community composition.

Once the state is well established, even drastic events such as high intensity fires driven by high fuel loads of litter and thatch will not result in more than a very short-term reduction of Kentucky bluegrass. These events may reduce the dominance of Kentucky bluegrass but due to the large amount of rhizomes in the soil there is no opportunity for the native species to establish and dominate before Kentucky bluegrass rebounds and again dominates the system.

#### 4.1 Smooth Bromegrass/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase

This plant community phase is a result of extended periods of nonuse and no fire. It is characterized by a dominance of smooth bromegrass and Kentucky bluegrass. The dominance is at times so complete that other species are difficult to find on the site. A thick duff layer also accumulates at or

above the soil surface. Nutrient cycling is greatly reduced and native plants have great difficulty becoming established. When dominated by smooth brome grass, infiltration is moderately reduced and runoff is moderate. Production can be equal to or higher than the interpretive plant community. However, when dominated by Kentucky bluegrass, infiltration is greatly reduced and runoff is high. Production in this case will likely be significantly less. In either case, the period that palatability is high is relatively short as these cool-season species mature rapidly. Energy capture is also reduced.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5501

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, cool-season dominant.

Growth curve description: Cool-season dominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 4   | 12  | 25  | 36  | 10  | 5   | 4   | 4   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities are as follows:

- 4.1a – Heavy continuous seasonal grazing (stocking levels well above carrying capacity for extended portions of the growing season and at the same time of year each year) or heavy continuous season-long grazing will convert this plant community to the *4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge Plant Community Phase*.

#### 4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge Plant Community Phase

This plant community phase is a result of heavy, continuous seasonal grazing or heavy, continuous season-long grazing. It is characterized by a dominance of Kentucky bluegrass, sedge, and blue grama. The dominance is at times so complete that other species are difficult to find on the site. A relatively thick duff layer can sometimes accumulate at or above the soil surface. Nutrient cycling is greatly reduced and native plants have great difficulty becoming established. Infiltration is greatly reduced and runoff is high. Production will be significantly reduced when compared to the interpretive plant community. The period that palatability is high is relatively short as Kentucky bluegrass matures rapidly. Energy capture is also reduced. Biological activity in the soil is likely reduced significantly in this phase.

The following growth curve is an estimate of the monthly percentages of total annual growth of the dominant species expected during an average year:

Growth curve number: SD5501

Growth curve name: Southern Black Glaciated Plains, cool-season dominant.

Growth curve description: Cool-season dominant.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0   | 0   | 4   | 12  | 25  | 36  | 10  | 5   | 4   | 4   | 0   | 0   |

Transitions or pathways leading to other plant communities are as follows:

- 4.2a – Prescribed grazing (alternating season of use and providing adequate recovery periods) or periodic light to moderate grazing possibly including periodic rest may convert this plant community to the *4.1 Smooth Brome grass/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase*.

## Transition Pathway from Any Plant Community to the 4.3 Annual/Pioneer, Non-Native Perennial Plant Community Phase within the Invaded State (State 4)

- T5 – Encroachment of nonnative invasive/noxious species, abandonment of cropping, or seeding of introduced and/or native improved varieties of forage species may lead this plant community phase over a threshold to the *Invaded State (State 4)* and more specifically to the *4.3 Annual/Pioneer, Non-native Perennial Plant Community Phase*. In the case of a seeding, refer to the corresponding Forage Suitability Group (FSG) description for adapted species and expected production (production estimates in the FSG description may be unrealistically high due to the degraded condition of the site at this phase).

### 4.3 Annual/Pioneer, Non-Native Perennial Plant Community Phase

This plant community developed under continuous heavy grazing or other excessive disturbances (e.g., heavy use areas, defoliation by rodents, etc.). The potential plant community is made up of approximately 40 to 80 percent grasses and grass-like species, 20 to 60 percent forbs, and 0 to 5 percent shrubs. The species present in this phase are highly variable but often include nonnative invasive and/or early seral species. Plant diversity is low (plant richness may be high but areas are often dominated by a few species). The ecological processes are difficult to restore because of the loss of plant diversity and overall soil disturbance. Soil erosion is potentially very high because of the bare ground and shallow rooted herbaceous plant community. Water runoff will increase and infiltration will decrease due to animal related soil compaction and loss of root mass due to low plant diversity and vigor. This plant community will require significant economic inputs and time to move towards another plant community. This movement is highly variable in its succession. This is due to the loss of diversity (including the loss of the seed bank), within the existing plant community, and the plant communities on adjacent sites.

Transitions or pathways leading to other states are as follows:

- 4.3a – Pest management (herbicides) and often heavy continuous seasonal grazing will likely result in an eventual dominance by Kentucky bluegrass which will lead to the *4.2 Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge Plant Community Phase*.

### Restoration Pathway from the Invaded State (State 4) to the Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3)

- R4 - Long-term prescribed grazing (moderate stocking levels coupled with adequate recovery periods, or other grazing systems such as high-density, low-frequency intended to treat specific species dominance, or periodic light to moderate stocking levels possibly including periodic rest) may lead this plant community phase over a threshold to the *Native/Invaded Grass State (State 3)*. Pest management (i.e., herbicide) may also be needed to suppress cool-season invasive grasses. This will likely take a long period of time, possibly up to 10 years or more, and recovery may not be attainable. Success depends on whether native reproductive propagules remain intact on the site.

## **Ecological Site Interpretations**

### **Animal Community – Wildlife Interpretations**

-- Under Development --

**Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phases (1.1 & 3.1):**

**Needleandthread/Prairie Sandreed/Bluestem/Sedge Plant Community Phases (1.2):**

**Big Bluestem/Little Bluestem/Prairie Sandreed Plant Community Phase (1.3):**

**Threadleaf Sedge/Blue Grama Sod Plant Community Phase (2.1):**

**Needleandthread/Sandreed/Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase (3.2):**

**Smooth Bromegrass/Kentucky Bluegrass Plant Community Phase (4.1):**

**Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge Plant Community Phase (4.2):**

**Annual/Pioneer, Non-native Perennial Plant Community Phase (4.3):**

## Animal Preferences (Quarterly – 1,2,3,4†)

| Common Name                    | Cattle  | Sheep   | Horses  | Deer    | Antelope | Bison   | Elk     |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| <b>Grasses and Grass-likes</b> |         |         |         |         |          |         |         |
| big bluestem                   | U D P D | U D U U | U D P D | U D U U | U D U U  | U D P D | U D P D |
| blue grama                     | U D P U | D P P D | U D P U | D P P D | D P P D  | U D P U | U D P U |
| Canada wildrye                 | U D U U | N U N N | U D U U | N U N N | N U N N  | U D U U | U D U U |
| green needlegrass              | U P U D | N P N P | U P U D | N P N P | N P N P  | U P U D | U P U D |
| Indiangrass                    | U D P D | U D U U | U D P D | U D U U | U D U U  | U D P D | U D P D |
| little bluestem                | U D D U | N D N N | U D D U | N D N N | N D N N  | U D D U | U D D U |
| needleandthread                | U D U D | N D N U | U D U D | N D N U | N D N U  | U D U D | U D U D |
| porcupine grass                | U P U D | N D N U | U P U D | N D N U | N D N U  | U P U D | U P U D |
| prairie junegrass              | U D U D | N D N U | U D U D | N D N U | N D N U  | U D U D | U D U D |
| prairie sandreed               | U D D U | U D U U | U D D U | U U D U | U U D U  | U D D U | U D D U |
| sand dropseed                  | N U N N | N U N N | N U N N | N U N N | N U N N  | N U N N | N U N N |
| Scribner panicum               | U U D U | N U N N | U U D U | N U N N | N U N N  | U U D U | U U D U |
| sideoats grama                 | U D P U | U P D U | U D P U | U P D U | U P D U  | U D P U | U D P U |
| slender wheatgrass             | U P U U | N D U N | U P U U | N D U N | N D U N  | U P U U | U P U U |
| switchgrass                    | U D D U | U D U U | U D D U | N N N N | N N N N  | U D D U | U D D U |
| threadleaf sedge               | U D U D | U P N D | U D U D | U D U D | U D U D  | U D U D | U D U D |
| western wheatgrass             | U P D U | N D N N | U P D U | N D N N | N D N N  | U P D U | U P D U |
| Wilcox panicum                 | U U U U | N U N N | U U U U | N U N N | N U N N  | U U U U | U U U U |
| <b>Forbs</b>                   |         |         |         |         |          |         |         |
| American licorice              | U U D U | N U U N | U U D U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U D U | N U U N |
| American vetch                 | U D P U | U P P U | U D P U | U P P U | U P P U  | U D P U | U P P U |
| catclaw sensitive briar        | U D P U | U P P U | U D P U | U P P U | U P P U  | U D P U | U P P U |
| cudweed sagewort               | U U U U | U U D U | U U U U | U U D U | U U D U  | U U U U | U U D U |
| curlycup gumweed               | U U U U | N N N N | U U U U | N N N N | N N N N  | U U U U | N N N N |
| dotted gayfeather              | U U D U | U P P U | U U D U | U P P U | U P P U  | U U D U | U P P U |
| false boneset                  | U U D U | N D U N | U U D U | N D U N | N D U N  | U U D U | N D U N |
| goldenrod                      | U U D U | N U U N | U U D U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U D U | N U U N |
| heath aster                    | U U D U | U U P U | U U D U | U U P U | U U P U  | U U D U | U U P U |
| hoary puccoon                  | U U U U | N U U N | U U U U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U U U | N U U N |
| penstemon                      | U U U U | U P P U | U U U U | U P P U | U P P U  | U U U U | U P P U |
| prairie coneflower             | U U D U | U P P U | U U D U | U P P U | U P P U  | U U D U | U P P U |
| prairie groundsel              | T T T T | T T T T | T T T T | T T T T | T T T T  | T T T T | T T T T |
| purple coneflower              | U U D U | U P P U | U U D U | U P P U | U P P U  | U U D U | U P P U |
| purple prairie clover          | U D P U | U P P U | U D P U | U P P U | U P P U  | U D P U | U P P U |
| rush skeletonweed              | U U U U | N N N N | U U U U | N N N N | N N N N  | U U U U | N N N N |
| scarlet gaura                  | U U U U | N U U N | U U U U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U U U | N U U N |
| scurfpea                       | U U U U | N U U N | U U U U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U U U | N U U N |
| stiff sunflower                | U D P U | U D P U | U D P U | U D P U | U D P U  | U D P U | U D P U |
| western ragweed                | U U U U | N N N N | U U U U | N N N N | N N N N  | U U U U | N N N N |
| western yarrow                 | U U U U | N U U N | U U U U | N U U N | N U U N  | U U U U | N U U N |
| <b>Shrubs</b>                  |         |         |         |         |          |         |         |
| fringed sagewort               | U U U U | U U U U | U U U U | U D D U | U P P D  | U U U U | U U U D |
| leadplant                      | U P D U | U P D U | U P D U | U P D U | U P D U  | U P D U | U P D U |
| rose                           | U D D U | U D D U | U D D U | U D D U | U D D U  | U D D U | U D D U |
| snowberry                      | U U U U | U U U U | U U U U | D U D D | U U U U  | U U U U | D U U U |

**N** = not used; **U** = undesirable; **D** = desirable; **P** = preferred; **T** = toxic

† Quarters: 1 – Jan., Feb., Mar.; 2 – Apr., May, Jun.; 3 – Jul., Aug., Sep.; 4 – Oct., Nov., Dec.

## Animal Community – Grazing Interpretations

The following table lists annual, suggested initial stocking rates with average growing conditions. These are conservative estimates that should be used only as guidelines in the initial stages of conservation planning. Often, the current plant composition does not entirely match any particular plant community (as described in this ES description). Because of this, a resource inventory is necessary to document plant composition and production. More accurate carrying capacity estimates should eventually be calculated using the following stocking rate information along with animal preference data and actual stocking records, particularly when grazers other than cattle are involved. With consultation of the land manager, more intensive grazing management may result in improved harvest efficiencies and increased carrying capacity.

| Plant Community  | Average Annual Production (lbs./acre, air-dry) | Stocking Rate* (AUM/acre) |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Bluestem/Needlegrass/Prairie Sandreed (1.1 & 3.1)          | 3,000  | 0.82                      |
| Needleandthread/Sandreed/Bluestem/Kentucky Bluegrass (3.2) | 2,200  | 0.60                      |
| Smooth Bromegrass/Kentucky Bluegrass (4.1)                 | 2,800  | 0.77                      |
| Kentucky Bluegrass/Sedge (4.2)                             | 1,900  | 0.52                      |
| Annual/Pioneer, Non-Native Perennial (4.3)                 | 800  | 0.22                      |

\*Based on 912 lbs./acre (air-dry weight) per Animal Unit Month (AUM), and on 25 percent harvest efficiency (refer to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National Range and Pasture Handbook).

Grazing by domestic livestock is one of the major income-producing industries in the area. Rangeland in this area may provide yearlong forage. During the dormant period, the forage for livestock will likely be lacking protein to meet livestock requirements and added protein will allow ruminants to better utilize the energy stored in grazed plant materials. A forage quality test (either directly or through fecal sampling) should be used to determine the level of supplementation needed.

## Hydrology Functions

Water is the principal factor limiting forage production on this site. This site is dominated by soils in hydrologic groups A and B. Infiltration is typically high and runoff low on this site high depending on soil hydrologic group, slope and ground cover. In many cases, areas with greater than 75 percent ground cover have the greatest potential for high infiltration and lower runoff. An example of an exception would be where shortgrasses form a strong sod and dominate the site. Dominance by blue grama, sedge, bluegrass, and/or smooth bromegrass will result in reduced infiltration and increased runoff. Areas where ground cover is less than 50 percent have the greatest potential to have reduced infiltration and higher runoff (refer to Section 4, NRCS National Engineering Handbook for runoff quantities and hydrologic curves).

## Recreational Uses

This site provides hunting, hiking, photography, bird watching, and other opportunities. The wide varieties of plants that bloom from spring until fall have an esthetic value that appeals to visitors.

## Wood Products

No appreciable wood products are typically present on this site.

## Other Products

Seed harvest of native plant species can provide additional income on this site.

## Supporting Information

### Associated Sites

Loamy (R055CY010SD), Thin Upland (R055CY012SD), Loamy Overflow (R055CY020SD)

### Similar Sites

(R055CY020SD) – Loamy Overflow [more big bluestem; higher production]

(R055CY010SD) – Loamy [more green needlegrass and western wheatgrass; less needleandthread]

### 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: Stan Boltz, Range Management Specialist, NRCS.

| <u>Data Source</u> | <u>Number of Records</u> | <u>Sample Period</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>County</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| SCS-RANGE-417      | 2                        | 2005                 | SD           | Sanborn       |

### State Correlation

This site has been correlated, in SD, in MLRA 55C.

### Field Offices/Counties

|             |           |            |                |                    |           |
|-------------|-----------|------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Armour      | Douglas   | Huron      | Beadle         | Plankinton         | Aurora    |
| Chamberlain | Brule     | Lake Andes | Charles Mix    | Redfield           | Spink     |
| Clark       | Clark     | Madison    | Lake           | Salem              | McCook    |
| De Smet     | Kingsbury | Miller     | Hand           | Tyndall            | Bon Homme |
| Faulkton    | Faulk     | Mitchell   | Davison/Hanson | Wessington Springs | Jerauld   |
| Highmore    | Hyde      | Parker     | Turner         | Woonsocket         | Sanborn   |
| Howard      | Miner     | Parkston   | Hutchinson     | Yankton            | Yankton   |

### Relationship to Other Established Classifications

Level IV Ecoregions of the Conterminous United States: 42e – Southern Missouri Coteau, 42f – Southern Missouri Coteau Slope, 46n – James River Lowland.

### Other References

High Plains Regional Climate Center, University of Nebraska, 830728 Chase Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0728. (<http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/>)

USDA, NRCS. National Water and Climate Center, 101 SW Main, Suite 1600, Portland, OR 97204-3224. (<http://wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>)

USDA, NRCS. National Range and Pasture Handbook, September 1997

USDA, NRCS. National Soil Information System, Information Technology Center, 2150 Centre Avenue, Building A, Fort Collins, CO 80526. (<http://nasis.nrcs.usda.gov>)

USDA, NRCS. 2001. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.1 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

### Site Description Approval

\_\_\_\_\_  
SD, State Range Management Specialist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date