USDA, SCS
Section II-E
Technical Guide
Areas 23.25

VEGA
RANGE SITE DESCRIPTION
PE 19-25

Land Resource Area Rio Grande Plain

Location

Date 1/1/72

1. TOPOGRAPHY AND ELEVATION: This site usually occurs as sandy, level to nearly level, flood plains of the Rio Grande. This site is located approximately near and above the river channel and frequently overflows when the river is on a rise. Slopes range from 0 - 3%, but may have escarpments of steep slopes. Elevations range from about 600 to 800 feet.

2. SOILS:

a. Soils of this site are quite variable. Soil profiles are composed of layers of gravel, sand and clay, in no certain arrangement. In places, this stratification is not pronounced and profiles of one texture may be found. Color of the soil materials vary from dark gray to pale brown. The soils are subject to flooding when the Rio Grande is on a rise. Surfaces are undulating on wavy fine sandy loam, loamy fine sand and sandy alluvium. Much of the site is subirrigated which favors the growth of giantreed grass and provides deep moisture for plant growth.

b. Some soil taxonomic units which characterize this site are:

Rio Grande very fine sandy loam, frequently flooded
Sandy alluvium
Zolla loamy fine sand, low
Zavala loamy fine sand, low

c. Specific site location:

3. CLIMAX VEGETATION:

a. Climax vegetation is not fully known, but evidence indicates big sacaton, common reed, white tridens and bristlegrasses associated with such plants as Devilweed aster, Willow, Baccharis and forbs were of minor importance in the plant community; however, over the past four to five hundred years of settlement and intensive use the introduced species giantreed and Bermudagrass have become dominant. They are now quite adapted and stable on this site and can survive the added soil erosion debris and overflows now common.

Management objectives can be to maintain or improve the existing stands of Giantreed and Bermudagrass in adequate amounts for protection and grazing use; in which case, condition class need not be determined. Woody plants such as Willow baccharis, Devilweed aster, Salt cedar and Annuals should be considered as invading plants and when found in such quantities that affect forage production, control should be considered.

RELATIVE PERCENTAGE

Grasses	85%	Woody	10%	Forbs	5%
Common reed	40	Black willow		Spiky aster	5
Big sacaton	25	Baccharis		Annuals	T
White tridens	10	Brickellbrush	8		
Southwest bristlegrass	10	Apache plume			
Vine mesquite		Black walnut			
Wild rye	T	Catclaw	2		
		Mesquite			

b. As retrogression occurs, from fire and grazing the tall grasses decrease, bermudagrass and annuals increase greatly and giantreed dominates in spots. Many species may show up temporarily from overflow and salt deposition.

c. Approximate total annual yield of this site in excellent condition ranges from 3000 pounds per acre in poor years to 6500 pounds per acre of air-dry vegetation in good years.

4. WILDLIFE NATIVE TO THE SITE: Deer and javelina as well as birds would use the site.

5. GUIDE TO INITIAL STOCKING RATE:

a.

Condition Class	Percent Climax Vegetation	Ac/AU/Yearlong
Excellent	76-100	8-10
Good	51-75	9-13
Fair	26-50	12-15
Poor	0-25	15+

b.

Introduced Species	Percent Ground Cover			
	100-76	75-51	50-26	25-0
Bermuda and Giantreed grass	8-10	9-13	12-15	15+

RELATIVE FORAGE QUALITY OF SPECIES 1/

a. For Cattle

Primary	Secondary	Low Value
Following burns	White tridens	Spiny aster
Common reed	Vine mesquite	Willow
Big Sacaton	Apache plume	Black walnut
		Catclaw
		Annuals

b. For Deer

Primary	Secondary	Low Value
Annual forbs	Spiny aster	Black walnut
Apache plume	Brickellbrush	Mesquite
Wildrye	Catclaw	Big grasses
	Willow	

c. For Javelina

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Primary	Secondary	Low Value
Roots & rhizomes of common seed	Woody plant seed	Woody plants
Giantreed		Grass foliage
Bermudagrass		

1/ Definitions of terms and an explanation of interpretations is given on a separate page which is attached or submitted with each group of range site descriptions.