USDA, SCS
Section II-E
Technical Guide
Area 24

PRAIRIE
SALTY SITE
RANGE SITE DESCRIPTION
PE 25-44

Land Resource Area RIO GRANDE PLAIN

Location _____

Date 1/1/72

1. TOPOGRAPHY AND ELEVATION: This site is nearly level with surfaces plane to slightly concave. This site occurs near the coast and also occupies some inland swales and river bottoms that are influenced by saline conditions. Slopes are less than 1 percent.

2. SOILS:

a. Soils of this site are saline clays, clay loams, and fine sandy loams. The soils are poorly drained and often have a high water table. Surface runoff is slow to very slow and permeability is slow to very slow. Available water limited due to salinity.

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

Benito clay
Latina sandy clay loam
Leona clay, saline
Livia clay loam
Lyford sandy clay loam, saline
(Aransas clay, saline)

c. Specific site location:

3. CLIMAX VEGETATION:

a. The climax plant community is an open grassland dominated by gulf cordgrass with small amounts of switchgrass, Hartweg paspalum, seashore saltgrass, marshay cordgrass and some bushy sea-oxeye. Variations in salinity and soil moisture causes local variations in the plant community, particularly along streams.

RELATIVE PERCENTAGE

Grasses	95%	Woody	3%	Forbs	2%
Gulf cordgrass	70	prickly pear	3	annual forbs	2
Marshay cordgrass	5	Bushy sea-oxeye		Buckwheat	
Seashore saltgrass		spiny aster		Pickleweed	
Hartweg paspalum	5	woody glasswort		Texas varilla	
Shoregrass	T			slim aster	
Knotroot bristlegrass	T			sea lavender	
Alkali sacaton, Little bluestem, Switchgrass	5				
Vine mesquite, Buffalograss	5				
White tridens, Silver bluestem	5				
Annual grass	T				

b. As retrogression occurs, mesquite and scattered pear may invade. Some invaders on the site are whorled dropseed, sumpweed, and annual forbs. The height of mesquite is somewhat stunted due to the soil salinity and imperfectly drained soils. Gulf cordgrass increases at first and later decreases with continued burning and overgrazing.

c. Approximate total annual yield of this site in excellent condition ranges from 2000 pounds per acre in poor years to 7000 pounds per acre of air-dry vegetation in good years.

4. WILDLIFE NATIVE TO THE SITE: The site is used by deer. Forbs and sedges serve as a prime feed for deer. The site does not offer very much cover for deer. Water fowl also use this site.

5. GUIDE TO INITIAL STOCKING RATE:

a.

Condition Class	Climax Vegetation	Ac/AU/Yr.L
Excellent	76-100	7-10
Good	51-75	9-12
Fair	26-50	11-16
Poor	0-25	15+

Stocking rates vary greatly, depending upon how the cordgrass is managed as to time of grazing and burning.

RELATIVE FORAGE QUALITY OF SPECIES

a. Cattle

Primary	Secondary	Low Value
Little bluestem	Gulf cordgrass	Pickleweed
Hartweg paspalum	Shoregrass	annual forbs
Marshay cordgrass	Bushy oxeye	pear
Switchgrass	sedges	mesquite
White tridens	Knotroot bristlegrass	annual grasses
Vine mesquite	Spiny aster	

b. Deer

Primary	Secondary	Low Value
annual forbs	Knotroot bristlegrass	other grasses
Spiny aster	annual grasses	mesquite
Bushy sea oxeye		Buckwheat
Sea lavender		Pickleweed
		Gulf cordgrass
		pear

c. Ducks and geese

annual forbs
tender grass leaves and seed

Legend and Definitions for Range Site Descriptions.

1/ This rating system provides general guidance as to animal preference for plant species. It also indicates possible competition between kinds of animals for the various plants. Grazing preference changes from time to time and place to place depending upon the animals, upon plant palatability and nutritive value, stage of growth and season of use, relative abundance, and associated plants. Grazing preference does not necessarily reflect a plant's ecological place in the climax plant community.

The following definitions apply to cattle, sheep, goats, deer, and antelope grazing.

Primary: These species generally decrease when the climax plant community is subjected to continuous heavy grazing pressure by the animals listed.

Secondary: These plants usually increase initially, then decrease when the site is subjected to continuous heavy grazing use by the animals listed.

Low Value: These plants continue to increase or invade with heavy continuous grazing use of the site.

For squirrel, peceary and birds the terms primary, secondary, and low value indicate species preference only. They do not indicate plant response to feeding pressure, nor do they have any ecological significance.