

## 16. *Bouteloua gracilis* Grassland Association

### Blue grama Grassland Association

This herbaceous association is characterized by a moderately dense (20–55% cover) herbaceous layer (<0.5 m) solely dominated by the warm-season, perennial shortgrass, blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*). This species has a patchy to even distribution, with cover values ranging from 8% to 30% and averaging to 16%. This association is predominately present as an herbaceous opening surrounded by woodlands dominated by oneseed juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) and two-needle pinyon (*Pinus edulis*). As a result, these species are often present in low cover (<1%), typically near the margins of this association. Other examples occur in areas where the Miller Fire burned severely enough to consume all tree species, rendering former pinyon-juniper savanna stands now dominated solely by blue grama (*B. gracilis*). Other associated species in the herbaceous layer include bristly wolfstail (*Muhlenbergia alopecuroides*), false boneset (*Brickellia eupatorioides*), little hogweed (*Portulaca oleracea*), Colorado four o'clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*), dwarf stickpea (*Calliandra humilis*), weeping lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*), spidergrass (*Aristida ternipes*), purple threeawn (*Aristida purpurea*), and ragleaf bahia (*Amauriopsis dissecta*).

This type occurs on flat-to-gently sloping mesa tops (1–6%) around the TJ unit of the monument and on the mesa tops south of Woody's Corral, at 1,700–1,800 meters (5,600–5,800 ft). Surface cover is generally dominated by a mix of gravel and bare soil. Overall, this association covers 3.3% (34.08 ha/82.21 ac) of the project area and 3.5% (7.57 ha/18.70 ac) of the monument, exclusively at the TJ unit.

#### Common species

- *Bouteloua gracilis*
- *Portulaca oleracea*
- *Muhlenbergia alopecuroides*
- *Brickellia eupatorioides*
- *Aristida ternipes*

