

Agropyron cristatum - (Pascopyrum smithii, Hesperostipa comata) Semi-natural Herbaceous Vegetation

COMMON NAME Crested Wheatgrass - (Western Wheatgrass, Needle-and-Thread Grass) Semi-natural Herbaceous Vegetation
SYNONYM Crested Wheatgrass Semi-natural Grassland
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS Herbaceous Vegetation (V)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP Temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N)
FORMATION Medium-tall bunch temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.d)
ALLIANCE AGROPYRON CRISTATUM SEMI-NATURAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 3
USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Terrestrial

RANGE

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Introduced, exotic grasslands occur throughout the Refuge and are sometimes associated with disturbances such as roadsides, abandoned farm fields, and areas that were interseeded with exotic grasses. However, these exotic grasslands can and do invade intact native communities.

Globally

This type occurs most commonly in the northern Great Plains of the United States and Canada.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

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Crested wheatgrass grasslands are usually found on relatively level to gently rolling sites accessible to farming equipment. Typically the soils are silt and/or clay loams, which probably supported western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) grasslands in the past.

Globally

This type can occur in a wide variety of human-disturbed habitats, including highway rights-of-way, jeep trails, etc. It is also widely planted to revegetate pastures and rangelands.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

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<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Herbaceous	<i>Agropyron cristatum</i> , <i>Poa pratensis</i> , <i>Bromus inermis</i>

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Graminoid	<i>Agropyron cristatum</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

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Agropyron cristatum, *Poa pratensis*, *Bromus inermis*

Globally

Agropyron cristatum, *Pascopyrum smithii*

OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

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Stands typically have moderate herbaceous cover that ranges from 30-60%. Litter cover on the soil surface is often fairly dense.. The sites are dominated by crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), often with a host of invasive species such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) or smooth broom (*Bromus inermis*). The forb component is usually sparse.

Globally

The vegetation is dominated by medium-tall (0.5 - 1 m) graminoids. The dominant grass is *Agropyron cristatum*, a naturalized species from Europe. Other weedy species may occur as well, but native species are generally less than 10% cover. Native species may include mixed-grass prairie grasses, such as *Pascopyrum smithii* and *Hesperostipa comata*, as well as others.

CONSERVATION RANK GW. This is a naturalized type from Europe, widely planted to revegetate roadsides and pastures.

DATABASE CODE C EGL005266

SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS (n/a)

COMMENTS

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The introduced grassland group occupies previously disturbed sites that include roadsides, abandoned agricultural fields, and interseeded rangeland.

Globally

Hansen and Hoffman (1988, p 6, Fig. 6) show a seral stand of *Agropyron cristatum*, with signs of succession leading to the *Hesperostipa comata* / *Carex filifolia* habitat type.

REFERENCES

Hansen, P.L. and G.R. Hoffman. 1988. The vegetation of the Grand River/Cedar River, Sioux, and Ashland Districts of the Custer National Forest: a habitat type classification. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report RM-157, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Fort Collins, CO.