Symphoricarpos occidentalis Shrubland (Provisional)

COMMON NAME	Western Snowberry Shrubland
SYNONYM	Western Snowberry Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Shrubland (III)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Deciduous shrubland (III.B)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/Semi-natural (III.B.2.N)
FORMATION	Temporarily flooded cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2.N.d)
ALLIANCE	SYMPHORICARPOS OCCIDENTALIS TEMPORARILY FLOODED SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE

CLASSFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 1

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Terrestrial

RANGE

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Western snowberry, wolfberry, or buckbrush, shrublands are found throughout the project area on a wide variety of topographic situations. The vast majority of the stands are relatively small, often occurring below the minimum mapping unit.

Globally

This community is widespread in western Montana and North Dakota. It is also present in South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Saskatchewan.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

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These shrublands are common throughout the area in swales, draws, and small depressions. These sites generally receive supplemental moisture in the form of runoff. Western snowberry stands occur in close association, and often intermixed with, a wide variety of vegetation types.

Globally

This community is found in mesic swales, depressions, ravines and floodplains. Some examples of this community experience intermittent and brief flooding. The soils are fertile and well drained to imperfectly drained silts and loams. The upper soil horizon is usually deep, although a thin layer of sand may be present if the site has been recently flooded (Jones 1995).

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

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Stratum	Species
Tree Canopy	*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
Short Shrub	*Symphoricarpos occidentalis Prunus virginiana*
Herbaceous	*Pascopyrum smithii, Poa pratensis, Nassella viridula*

Globally

Stratum	Species
Short Shrub	*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Symphoricarpos occidentalis, Pascopyrum smithii, Nassella viridula

Globally

Symphoricarpos occidentalis

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

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Symphoricarpos occidentalis is the dominant species usually forming dense patches that are frequently intermixed with other vegetation types such as the *Artemisia cana – Pascopyrum smithii* within the sagebrush flats area and the *Fraxinus pennsylvanica (Ulmus americana*). Woodland Alliance that occur in upland draws. The *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* alliance also occurs, at or below minimum mapping unit size, in shallow depressions within the *Pascopyrum smithii – Nassella viridula* Herbaceous Vegetation. Although a wide variety of species can be found associated within this alliance, *S. occidentalis* usually occurs in such dense patches

that abundance of most species is quite low. The most common associates include *Poa pratensis, Pascopyrum smithii*, and *Nassela viridula*.

Throughout its range this community is dominated by shrubs approximately 1 m tall. Shrub cover is typically greater than 50%, and in places it can approach 100%. These shrubs form dense clumps that exclude most other species. *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* is the most common shrub, but *Rhus aromatica* (or *Rhus trilobata*) and *Prunus virginiana* can be locally abundant and can grow to 2-3 meters in places. Herbaceous species and smaller shrubs are most abundant at the edge of this community and in gaps between the clumps of taller shrubs where the shading is less complete. *Rosa woodsii* is a typical smaller shrub. Common graminoids include *Pascopyrum smithii* and *Poa pratensis*. *Achillea millefolium, Artemisia ludoviciana, Galium boreale*, and *Solidago* spp. are common forbs of this community. Woody vines sometimes occur, incl. *Parthenocissus itacea*.

CONSERVATION RANK G4G5. This type is common througout the northen Great Plains. Historically, it may never have been very extensive. It has been observed to grow out from forest or woodland edges and shade out the grasses. It is tolerant of both grazing and fire (Hansen and Hoffman 1988), and is under no threat from human activities. In some cases, heavily grazed pastures may favor this types. Many examples are somewhat weedy; thus the type is not demonstrably secure.

DATABASE CODE CEGL001131

SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS
Fraxinus pennsylvanica - Ulmus americana / Prunus virginiana Woodland (Related in terms of habitat; floristically distinct.)

COMMENTS
The *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* shrubland type occurs as thickets thoughout its range. These thickets are surrounded by grasslands or occasionally by tall shrublands (e.g., *Prunus virginana*). *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* Shrublands often have a significant component of exotic species, especially where grazing has been heavy. *Bromus inermis, Cirsium arvense*, and *Poa pratensis* are among the most abundant of these exotics. *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* seems to thrive in disturbed areas (Hansen and Hoffman 1988), especially those subject to disturbance by fire and cattle grazing.

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