

Symphoricarpos occidentalis Shrubland

COMMON NAME	Western Snowberry Shrubland
SYNONYM	Wolfberry 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	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> Temporarily Flooded Shrubland Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 1

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Upland

RANGE

Globally

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

Wind Cave National Park

Stands of western snowberry are found throughout Wind Cave NP, in both forested and prairie areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

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).

Wind Cave National Park

Western snowberry shrublands occur most commonly on level sites in the bottoms of draws, drainages and swales in both forested and prairie areas. Stands of western snowberry are found occasionally on gentle to moderate slopes of various aspects.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Shrub	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> , <i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>

Wind Cave National Park

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Herbaceous	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> , <i>Nassella viridula</i> , <i>Poa pratensis</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Globally

Pascopyrum smithii, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

Wind Cave National Park

Nassella viridula, *Poa pratensis*, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Globally

Throughout its range this community is dominated by shrubs approximately 1 m tall. Shrub cover is typically greater than 50%. 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. *Achillea millefolium*, *Artemisia*

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Wind Cave National Park

ludoviciana, *Galium boreale*, and *Pascopyrum smithii* are common herbaceous species of this community. Woody vines sometimes occur, including *Parthenocissus vitacea*.

The *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* shrubland type occurs as thickets throughout its range. These thickets are surrounded by grasslands or occasionally tall shrublands (e.g., *Prunus virginiana*)

Wind Cave National Park

Western snowberry shrublands at Wind Cave NP typically have dense shrub cover, in the 75-100% range. Western snowberry usually is strongly dominant, but occasionally other shrubs are codominant, including chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), downy indigobush (*Amorpha canescens*) and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron pubescens*). Herbaceous cover is sparse; green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and white sagebrush (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) occur frequently. Occasionally, herbaceous cover may be dense, with forbs such wild bergamot bee-balm (*Mondarda fistulosa*) or wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*) overtopping the shrubs.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

CONSERVATION RANK G4G5

DATABASE CODE CEGL001131

MAP UNITS

The western snowberry community corresponds to map unit 35, western snowberry shrubland, on the Wind Cave vegetation map.

COMMENTS

Wind Cave National Park

The western snowberry type occasionally grades into chokecherry shrubland, and some stands are difficult to classify. Western snowberry shrubland is a common vegetation type at Wind Cave NP. Relatively few stands were visited during preparation of the vegetation map, as structure and composition of stands is quite consistent.

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