

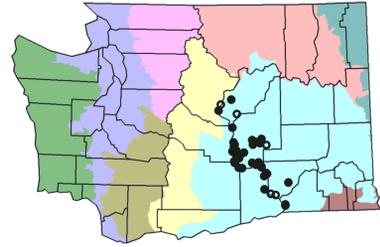
Cryptantha leucophaea (Douglas) Payson

gray cryptantha

Boraginaceae - borage family

status: State Sensitive, Federal Species of Concern, BLM sensitive

rank: G2G3 / S2S3



General Description: Perennial with clustered stems 1.5-4 dm tall; herbage mostly with long, straight appressed hairs below, becoming rough with stiff or bristly hairs upward. Leaves relatively narrow and elongate, tapering to an acute tip, the lower 5-10 cm long (poorly defined petiole included) x 3-6 mm; stem leaves similar but becoming sessile and sometimes 1 cm wide. Bristles of the leaves mostly appressed and inconspicuous, those on the upper surface of the lower leaves often poorly developed and scarcely pustulate at the base, or lacking.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers whitish with yellow centers; corolla tube surpassing the calyx, the limb 5-9 mm wide. Calyx persistent. Flowers May to June.

Fruits: Nutlets usually 4, ovate, smooth and shining, gray, 4 mm long, sharp-edged, the scar closed; style moderately or strongly surpassing the nutlets.

Identification Tips: Distinguishing characters include the perennial habit, smooth nutlets, and corolla tube that is longer than the calyx at anthesis.

Range: Regional endemic from the Columbia and lower Yakima Rivers in the western Columbia Basin (Wenatchee, WA, south to The Dalles, OR). In OR, this species is known from 1 historical collection and is assumed to be extirpated.

Habitat/Ecology: Sandy substrates, especially sand dunes that have not been completely stabilized. It appears to be restricted to areas where there is still some wind-derived movement of open sand. Elevations: 90-760 m (300-2500 ft). Associated species include bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), pale evening primrose (*Oenothera pallida*), needle-and-thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), snow buckwheat (*Eriogonum niveum*), sulfur penstemon (*Penstemon attenuatus*), and crouching milk-vetch (*Astragalus succumbens*).

Comments: The narrow habitat requirements and habitat loss are factors in the status of this species. Threats include off-road vehicle use, weed invasion, and changes in sand deposition. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), knapweed (*Centaurea* spp.), and Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) have become established in portions of the species' habitat.



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