

Oxytropis campestris* (L.) DC. var. *wanapum Joyal

Wanapum crazyweed

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,

BLM sensitive

rank: G5T1 / S1



General Description: Tufted perennial, 17-30 cm tall; herbage silvery, with dense, silky, long, soft hairs. Leaves pinnately compound, 14-18 cm long. Leaflets 19-26, linear to narrowly oblong, 15-25 mm long, scattered, subopposite. Stipules membraneous, with long, soft hairs, 6.5-9 mm long, the blades free for half their length, margins ciliate.

Floral Characteristics: Scapes erect to spreading, 17-21 cm long, racemes with 6-12 flowers. Corolla pale lavender with darker penciling; keel spotted, drying blue, 11-14 mm long. Banner obovate, 14-16 mm long; wings 13-15 mm long. Flowers in May.

Fruits: Pods sessile to short-stalked, erect, 1-celled with the suture not or only slightly intruded, membraneous-leathery, 10-20 mm long, the beak 6 mm long.

Identification Tips: This variety is not included in Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973). The pale lavender flower color, while not unique in the genus, is unknown among other Pacific Northwest members of *O. campestris*. Plants of var. *wanapum* are more robust than other varieties of *O. campestris*; the average leaf length (16 cm), average leaflet length (20 mm), and average scape length (20 cm) are greater than those of var. *columbiana*, *cusickii*, and *gracilis*. This taxon also has a greater number of leaflets than varieties *columbiana* and var. *cusickii* (which usually have less than 17).

Range: Known only from Grant Co., WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Open sagebrush communities dominated by shrubs and grasses. The taxon occurs on deep sand derived from volcanic ash, at or slightly below north-facing ridge crests. The environment is harsh; mature individuals probably face little competition from other vegetation. Associated species include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), gray rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), purple sage (*Salvia doriai*), mountain monardella (*Monardella odoratissima*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*).

Comments: The taxon's extremely small range, the size of the populations, and the potential for incompatible land use contribute to its status. Threats include grazing, off-road vehicle use, mineral and gas exploration, and rock hounding. Maintenance of the physical integrity of the habitat is critical for the taxon's survival.

References: Joyal 1990; Daubenmire 1970.



© Wendy Gibble



© Wendy Gibble