

THE POTENTIAL OF SNOWY BUCKWHEAT (*ERIOGONUM NIVEUM*) FOR REVEGETATION OF XERIC MINE SPOIL SITES¹

by

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Abstract. Snowy buckwheat is a native of the steppe region of the northern intermountain region in the Pacific Northwest. The range of the species extends from southern British Columbia to extreme northern Nevada and eastward into southern Idaho. All of the habitat types in which this species is abundant represent some of the most xeric environments of the region. Dietary studies of big game populations in central Washington have shown that snowy buckwheat is an important species in the winter diets of several deer species. Because of the species importance to wildlife and its drought tolerance, the Soil Conservation Service Plant Materials Center at Pullman, WA, developed and released an accession of 'Umatilla' snowy buckwheat as conservation plant material for use on rangelands, wildlife upland habitat improvement, and critical area stabilization. The plant is a half-shrub, growing to three feet under ideal conditions, but generally averaging 1-2 feet maximum canopy height with a spreading canopy of 1-3 feet. Growth characteristics and survival data of snowy buckwheat containerized planted material planted on altered and unaltered mine spoil material will be presented to illustrate the potential of including this species as part of the revegetation effort of xeric mine sites.

Key Words: *Eriogonum niveum*, snowy buckwheat, mine spoil revegetation, drought-tolerant shrub.

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