

West, N.E. 1983. Western intermountain sagebrush steppe. Pages 351-397 in N.E. West (ed). Ecosystems of the World. Chapter 5. Temperate deserts and semi-deserts. Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co, New York.

This ecosystem type occurs wherever there is or was a more or less equal sharing of dominance by sagebrush (woody *Artemisia*) and bunchgrasses (*Caespitose* forms) under semi-arid, pristine conditions. The question of what the relative amounts of brush and grass were or could be has stirred a considerable debate. Actually a whole gradient of situations probably occurred and continue to be found. This type is intermediate between grassland or woodlands on more mesic sites and shrublands on effectively drier sites. Topographic and edaphic conditions that promote aridity favor the dominance of *Artemisia* and companion shrubs.