

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

ASTRAGALUS TERMINALIS
RAILHEAD MILKVETCH
FABACEAE

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

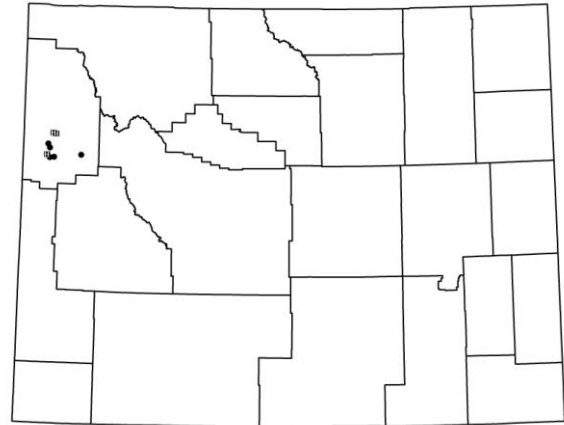
Global: G3State: S1

Range Context: Regional Endemic/Edge

Wyoming Contribution Rank: Medium

Description: Railhead milkvetch is a perennial herb from a woody, forked caudex with several erect, leafy stems 5-30 cm high. Foliage is ashy-gray with short, appressed, dolabriform hairs (hairs are attached at the middle and have 2 free ends, like a short "T"). Leaves are 5-17 cm long and divided into 11-21 oblong-elliptic, blunt-tipped leaflets. Stipules are lance-shaped, 3-5 mm long, and not fused on the side of the stem opposite the petiole. The inflorescence is a compact raceme of 10-30 nodding pea-like flowers borne on a peduncle 6-20 cm long. The banner and wing petals are 11-16 mm long, whitish to cream-colored, and often suffused with pale lilac, while the blunt-tipped keel is creamy white with a purple spot at the tip and 8.5-10.5 mm long. The calyx is 4-7 mm long, asymmetrical, and has short triangular teeth. Fruits are erect, narrowly oblong pods up to 1.7 mm long and have 2 locules. The pods are green and fleshy when young, but become leathery-woody at maturity (Barneby 1989; Culver and Marriott 1989; Fertig 1998).

Similar Species: *Astragalus miser* has a sharp-pointed keel, stipules fused on the side of the stem opposite the petiole, greenish leaves, and fruits with a single locule.



Wyoming distribution of *Astragalus terminalis*

Astragalus canadensis has stipules fused on the side of the stem opposite the petiole (Dorn 2001).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: June-August.

Distribution: Railhead milkvetch is a regional endemic of central Idaho, southwestern Montana, and northwestern Wyoming. All known Wyoming occurrences are from Jackson Hole and the surrounding foothills of the Gros Ventre Range.

Habitat: Occurs in gravelly outwash terraces, stony or grassy hillsides, and cushion plant-bunchgrass communities on summit flats of brownish-sandy clay soil with abundant surface gravel at 6400-7500 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 5 extant and 3 historical records in Wyoming, three of which have been relocated or discovered since 1995. Several of the records are in close proximity and may need to be combined with additional study.

Abundance: Population size is not known, although the species appears to be restricted to narrow corridors of river cobblestone habitat. Shaw (1976) refers to Grand Teton NP populations as "common".

Trends: Trend data are lacking, but populations appear to be stable.

Protection status: At least 4 occurrences are found in Grand Teton National Park or the National Elk Refuge. Other records are from public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: Populations outside of the park may be potentially threatened by gravel quarrying.

Managed Areas: Known from Bridger-Teton NF, Grand Teton NP, and the National Elk Refuge.

References:

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Author: Bonnie Heidel and Walter Fertig

Updated: by Joy Handley 08-08-01