

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

DOWNINGIA LAETA
GREAT BASIN DOWNINGIA
Family: Campanulaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G5State: S1

WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low conservation priority)

Description: Great Basin downingia is a glabrous annual forb with stems mostly under 20 cm tall. Leaves are linear and 0.5-2 mm wide by 5-18 mm long. Flowers are sessile and occur singly in the axils of elliptic to lance-ovate leaf-like bracts. The corolla is irregular, 4-7 mm long, and light blue to purplish with a yellowish, funnel-shaped corolla tube cut deeply into triangular-acute upper lobes and a white or yellow lower lip. Calyx lobes are elliptic and 3-7 mm long. Fruits are terete, narrow capsules 1-2 mm long (McVaugh 1941).

Similar Species: *Porterella carnosula* has flowers over 8 mm long borne on pedicels. *Heterocodon* and *Triodanis* species have regular flowers and separate stamen filaments.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Flowering and fruiting occurs from late June to early September.

Distribution: Occurs from southern Alberta and western Montana to eastern Oregon, northern California, and central Nevada to southern Wyoming. In Wyoming, known from the Laramie Basin, Sweetwater River



Plateau, and Overthrust Belt in Albany, Carbon, and Uinta counties.

Habitat: Rangelwide, this species is reported from wet muddy places in low fields, ditches, and the banks of sloughs, ponds, streams, and vernal pools (McVaugh 1941). Wyoming populations occur in moist clay or sandy openings along ditch banks and reservoirs at 6160-7600 feet. It may occur in sparse communities of *Distichlis stricta*/*Potentilla anserina* within denser *Distichlis*/*Hordeum jubatum* meadows.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 2 historical records and 2 extant occurrences in Wyoming (most recently observed in 1999).

Abundance: Total population size in Wyoming is not known. One population surveyed in 1999 contained 250-400 individuals in an area of ca 1-2 acres.

Trends: Unknown.

Protection status: All known populations are on state or public lands managed for multiple use. One occurrence on state lands in Albany County is within the "Sand Creek Wind Erosion Natural Landmark" site, but receives no special management attention.

Threats: Threats not known. May be affected by pollution and recreational activities on sandy beach margins.

Managed Areas: Known from the BLM Rawlins Field Office and possibly the BLM Kemmerer Field Office.

References:

Cronquist, A., A. H. Holmgren, N. H. Holmgren, and J. L. Reveal. 1984. Intermountain Flora. Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, USA. Vol 4. Subclass Asteridae. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

Dorn, R.D. 1992. Vascular Plants of Wyoming, second edition. Mountain West Publishing, Cheyenne, WY.

Fertig, W., L. Welp, and S. Markow. 1998. The status of rare plants in southwest

Wyoming. Report prepared for the Bureau of Land Management by the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, Laramie, WY.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, and M. Ownbey. 1959. Pt. 4. Ericaceae through Campanulaceae. In: C.L. Hitchcock, A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Publications in Biology 17(4):1-510.

Lesica, P. & J. S. Shelly. 1991. Sensitive, Threatened and Endangered Vascular Plants of Montana. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Occ. Publ. No. 1. Helena, MT.

McVaugh, R. 1941. A monograph on the genus Downingia. Memoirs Torrey Botanical Club 19(4): 1-57.

Author: Walter Fertig

Updated: 00-12-22