

ERIOPHORUM GRACILE
SLENDER COTTON-GRASS
Family: Cyperaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None

Agency Status: USFS R2 sensitive

Heritage Rank:

Global: G5 State: S2

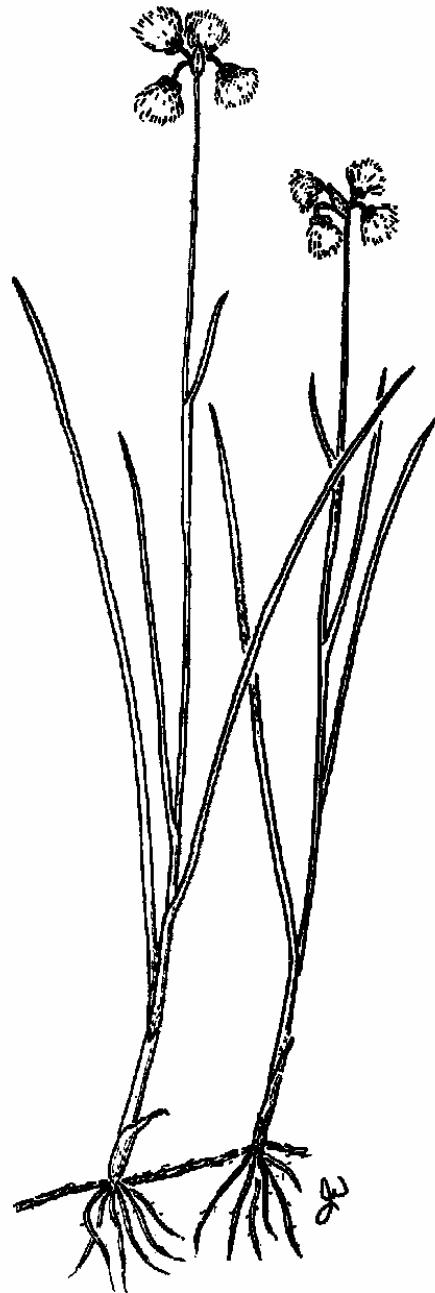
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (low
conservation priority)

Description: Slender cottongrass is a grass-like perennial with stems (culms) 20-60 cm high arising singly from a slender rhizome. The leaf blades are less than 2 mm wide and triangularly channeled for their entire length. The inflorescence consists of 2-5 heads (spikelets) on short, drooping stalks that often exceed the single green, leafy inflorescence bract. Scales are greenish-brown to blackish with a slender midrib. The perianth consists of numerous cottony, white bristles. Fruits are straw-colored achenes. (Marriott 1992; Hitchcock and Cronquist 1969).

Similar Species: *Eriophorum polystachion* and *E. viridicarinatum* have leaves that are flattened at the base and have two or more leafy inflorescence bracts. *E. chamissonis*, *E. callitrix*, and *E. scheuzeri* have single spikelets at the tip of the stem.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Mid-June through August.

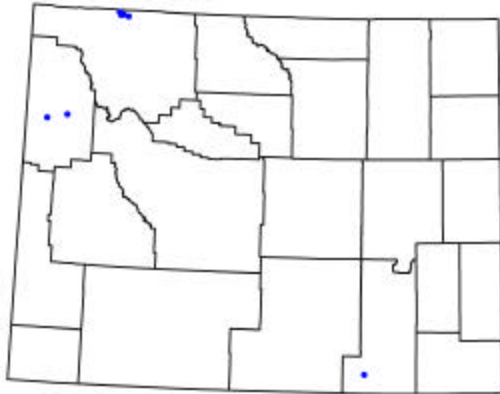
Distribution: Circumboreal south to Pennsylvania, Iowa, Colorado, Idaho, and central California (Hitchcock et al. 1969). In Wyoming, it is known from the Jackson Hole area and the Beartooth Plateau.



Habitat: Sedge meadows and floating bogs in saturated soil to shallow standing water at 6,900 – 8,000 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 5-6 extant and 1 historical records in Wyoming.

All of the extant populations have been located since 1991 (most recently in 1999).



Above: Wyoming distribution of *E. gracile*.

Abundance: The known populations in Wyoming range in size from 30 to nearly 1000 stems in a total area of ca 12 acres (Marriott 1991; Mills and Fertig 1996; Fertig 1996 census data).

Trends: Trend data are lacking. Populations may be relatively stable at present, although they may be in decline in the past century due to loss or degradation of wetland habitat.

Protection Status: 2-3 populations are protected in Grand Teton National Park and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area. One occurrence is located within the potential Lake Creek Research Natural Area. All other populations are on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: May be threatened by livestock grazing, trampling, and recreational use of its habitat.

Managed Areas: Found on lands managed by Grand Teton NP and Shoshone and Targhee National Forests. May also occur on Bridger-Teton NF.

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