

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

ERIOPHORUM VIRIDICARINATUM
GREEN KEELED COTTON-GRASS
Family: Cyperaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None

Agency Status: None

Heritage Rank:

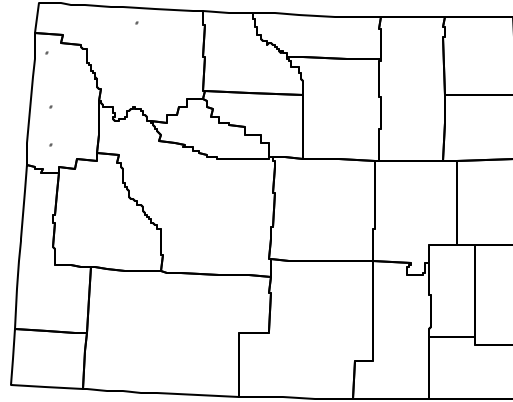
Global: G5 State: S1S2

WYNDD Plant List: peripheral (low conservation priority)

Description: Green-keeled cottongrass is a rhizomatous perennial with 3-angled stems 2-9 dm tall. Leaves are 2-6 mm wide, flat (except at the very tip), and borne along the stem and in a basal cluster. The inflorescence consists of 3 or more drooping spikelets arranged in an umbel-like cyme and subtended by 2-3 leafy green bracts. Each flower of the spikelet has a drab greenish to blackish scale with a prominent pale midrib running its full length and expanding at the distal tip. Perianth bristles are cottony, white, and greatly exceed the scales and fruit in length, giving the fruiting heads a cotton-ball appearance. Fruits are blackish, 2-3 mm long achenes (Hitchcock et al. 1969; Moss 1983; Fertig 1998).

Similar Species: *Eriophorum polystachion* has tawny brown scales (occasionally blackish) with a slender midrib that does not reach the tip of the scale and anthers longer than 2 mm. Other *Eriophorum* species in Wyoming differ in having a single spikelet or leafy bract per stem or in having triangular and deeply channeled leaf blades.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Produces mature fruits from late June until August (Lesica 1991).



Above: Wyoming distribution of *E. viridicarinatum*.

Distribution: Newfoundland to Alaska south to New York, Michigan, Colorado, and N Idaho. In Wyoming, known from Jackson Hole, the Yellowstone Plateau, and the northern Absaroka Range in Park and Teton counties.

Habitat: This species inhabits boggy woods and wet meadows in foothills and montane zones. It is found on deep, flooded, or saturated, loamy soils (Fertig & Jones 1992, Lesica 1991). Elevation 6,280-7,350 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 4 occurrences in Wyoming, 2 of which have been discovered or relocated since 1992 (most recently in 1999).

Abundance: Populations may be locally abundant, but are typically limited to small microsites.

Trends: Not known.

Protection Status: 4 populations are protected in the Swamp Lake Special Botanical Area, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, and the National Elk Refuge.

Threats: Threatened primarily by changes in water availability (flooding or draining of its wetland habitat).

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by Shoshone National Forest, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and the National Elk Refuge.

References:

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Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, and M. Owenbey. 1969. Pt. 1. Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons, IN: Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Owenbey, and J.W. Thompson (eds). Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Publications in Biology 17(1): 1-914.

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

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