

-State Species Abstract-  
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

*RANUNCULUS GELIDUS*  
TIMBERLINE BUTTERCUP  
Family: Ranunculaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.  
Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

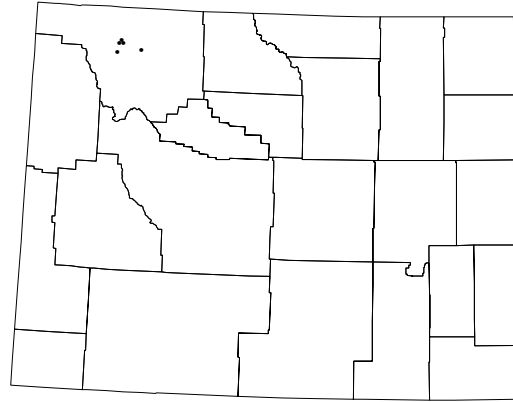
Global: G5 State: S1  
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low  
conservation priority)

Description: Timberline buttercup is a low-growing perennial herb with slender, fibrous roots and stems 5-15 cm high. Basal leaves are long-petioled with heart or kidney-shaped blades palmately cleft into 3 main round-toothed lobes. Stem leaves are sessile and divided into 3-5 narrowly linear segments 0.8-2 cm long. Flowers number 1-3 per stem and have 5 hairy sepals, 5 yellow petals 4-5 (6) mm long (about equal to the sepals), and numerous pistils on an elongated, narrow receptacle. Fruits are glabrous achenes 1-1.5 mm long with a stout, recurved beak (Hitchcock and Cronquist 1964; Dorn 1992; Scott 1997).

Synonyms: *Ranunculus verecundus*

Similar Species: *Ranunculus eschscholtzii* has petals 6-15 mm long, and fruits with a straight, slender beak. *R. inamoenus* var. *alpeophilus* has shallowly lobed leaf blades that are wedge-shaped at the base. *R. pygmaeus* has stems less than 5 cm tall, petals 1.5-3.5 mm long, and leaf blades under 12 mm long.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: July-August.



Above: Wyoming distribution of *R. gelidus*.

Distribution: Alaska and Northwest Territories south to Oregon, Idaho, NE Utah, SW Montana and N Colorado. In Wyoming it is known only from the Absaroka Range in Park County.

Habitat: Moist alpine tundra and talus slopes at 10000-11000 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 5 occurrences in Wyoming, all observed since 1979 (most recently in 1983).

Abundance: Not known.

Distribution: Peripheral; in Wyoming known only from the Absaroka Range in Park County.

Trends: Not known.

Protection Status: At least 3 occurrences are found in the North Absaroka Wilderness Area. Other known populations are on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: Not known.

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by Shoshone National Forest.

References:

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

Fertig, W. 1998. The status of rare plants on Shoshone National Forest: 1995-97 survey results. Report prepared by the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, Laramie, WY.

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

Scott, R.W. 1997. The Alpine Flora of the Rocky Mountains. Volume 1 The Middle Rockies. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.

Whittemore, A.T. 1997. *Ranunculus*. In: Flora of North America Editorial Committee. Flora of North America North of Mexico. Volume 3 Magnoliophyta: Magnoliidae and Hamamelidae. Oxford University Press, NY.

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