

-State Species Abstract-  
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

*SELAGINELLA WATSONII*  
WATSON'S SPIKE-MOSS  
Family: Selaginellaceae

Status:

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

Heritage Rank:

Global: G4 State: S1  
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low  
conservation priority)

Description: Watson's spikemoss is a densely matted perennial with creeping stems 5-15 cm long and upright branches up to 4 cm long and 2 mm thick. Leaves are 2-3 mm long and densely crowded, with those on the upper surface of the stem equal in size to leaves on the lower side. The smooth to ciliate-margined leaves are strongly keeled and abruptly narrowed to a yellowish-green bristle-tip 0.2-0.4 mm long. Strobili (sporangia-bearing cone-like structures) are 4-angled, 0.5-2.5 cm long, and comprised of sporangia-bearing leaves that are narrower than the vegetative leaves. Spore cases are yellow or orange (Welsh et al. 1993; Scott 1997).

Similar Species: *Selaginella densa* has longer leaves on the lower side of the stem and terminal leaf bristles 1.25-1.9 mm long.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: July-September

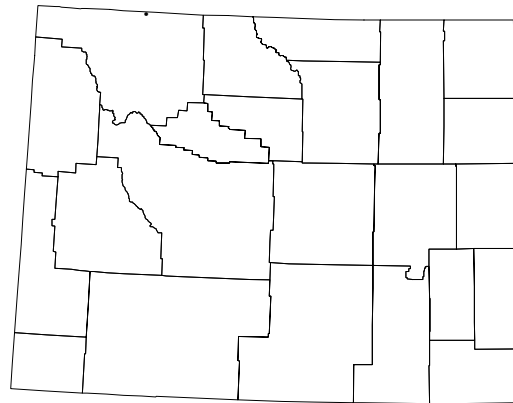
Distribution: California and Oregon, east to Montana, Wyoming and Colorado. In Wyoming, it is known only from the Beartooth Mountains in Park County.

Habitat: Granitic cliffs and rocky slopes at 9950-10600 feet.



Above: *Selaginella watsonii* by Jane Dorn from Dorn and Dorn (1972).

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from a single occurrence in Wyoming, last observed in 1985. Until 1994, this population was thought to represent *Selaginella densa*. This species is not included in Dorn's 1992 flora of Wyoming.



Above: Wyoming distribution of *S. watsonii*.

Abundance: Census data are not available, but the single known occurrence occupies a small area.

Trends: Not known, but presumed to be stable at the present time.

Protection Status: Found just outside the proposed Line Creek/Twin Lakes RNA on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: Threats probably low due to the plants rugged habitat (although the one site in Wyoming does receive high recreation use).

Managed Areas: Found on Shoshone National Forest.

References:

Dorn, R.D. and J. Dorn. 1972. Ferns and other Pteridophytes of Montana, Wyoming, and the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Fertig, W. 1995. More new plant species for Wyoming. *Castilleja* 14(1): 4-5.

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.

Flora of North America Editorial Committee. 1993. Flora of North America North of Mexico. Vol. 2 Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms. Oxford Univ. Press, New York.

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