

Walter Fertig. 1992. A Floristic Survey of the West Slope of the Wind River Range, Wyoming. M.S. degree, Department of Botany, University of Wyoming, Laramie, ix + 188 pp.

Located in west central Wyoming, the Wind Rivers are the most rugged range in the state with more than 40 peaks exceeding 12,000 feet and straddles the Continental Divide for nearly 110 miles from Togwotee Pass southeastward to South Pass. Nearly half of Forest Service land is located in the Bridger Wilderness, so long hikes were often required. Walt conducted the floristic inventory during the summers of 1990 and 1991. With the assistance of Ernie Nelson and Ron Hartman, more than 13,725 collections were acquired from 396 sites (see map). As is typical of our studies, sites were selected based on areas with a diversity of habitats. When traveling on road, every species in flower or fruit was collected at the first site and then additional species were obtained at each additional site over a course of about ten miles. When traveling by trail, recollecting began at the end of every four or five mile segment or with every 3,000 foot gain in elevation. Upon returning to the vehicle, specimens were stored on ice. The next day was spent pressing plants and writing the locational and ecological data in a log book. The above cycle was then repeated. Over a course of two seasons this relatively “fine grain” sampling method based on voucher specimens, captured the distribution for each species. These specimens also preserved the genotypic and phenotypic variation. During the academic year, specimens were identified using relevant taxonomic literature and then verified with authenticated material in the Rocky Mountain Herbarium. The annotated checklist in the thesis contained 962 species (1,030 unique taxa, varieties and subspecies included). Of these, 27 were recognized as species of conservation concern by state or federal agencies, fourteen of which were newly documented for the area. In addition, *Erigeron lanatus* represented a first record for Wyoming. The thesis also contained sections describing the geographic regions of the study area, the climate, geology, and soils, and the diversity of plant communities.

During the summers of 2005 and 2006, Rob Massatti did a complimentary study on the east slope of the Winds. The combined results of the two studies, and portions of two others, brought the total number of documented species in the range to 1,282 unique taxa. A compilation of the work was published in: W.F. Fertig, R.T. Massatti, B.E. Nelson, and R.L. Hartman. 2013. Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Flora of the Wind River Range, Wyoming (U.S.A.). J. Bot. Res. Inst. Texas 7: 905-939.

For a “hike” along the Highline Trail and photos of lots of wild flowers [click here](#) for:

Green River Lakes and Square Top Mountain

You Are There! Highline Trail Trailhead...

Green River Lakes

rare flowers

Mountain Meadow...

Subalpine Coniferous Forest...

Alpine Landscape...

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(<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/regions/intermountain/GreenRiverLakes>)