

Review of Selected Rare Plants of Southwestern Colorado

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WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Primary References

Ackerfield, Jennifer. 2022. Flora of Colorado. Fort Worth, BRIT Press.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program. 2023. Colorado Rare Plant Guide. <https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant>. Accessed 2024/09.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). 2024. Biodiversity Tracking and Conservation System (Biotics). Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

NatureServe. 2024. NatureServe Network Biodiversity Location Data accessed through NatureServe Explorer [web application]. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. <https://explorer.natureserve.org/>.

SEINet Portal Network. 2024. <http://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/index.php>.

iNaturalist. 2024. [inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).

USDA, NRCS. 2024. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC. USA.

Personal communications; Peer-reviewed publications

Aliciella sedifolia (*Gilia sedifolia*)

Stonecrop Gilia

Rank: G1/S1

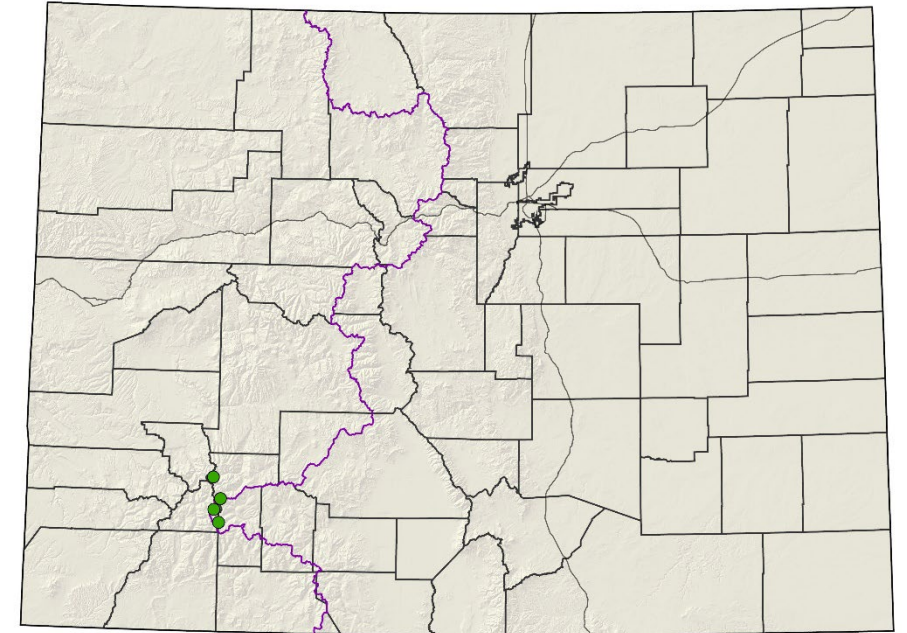
Status: USFS Sensitive

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/SGIN

Elevation: 12,351-13,830 feet

CO occurrences: 4

Historical: 0

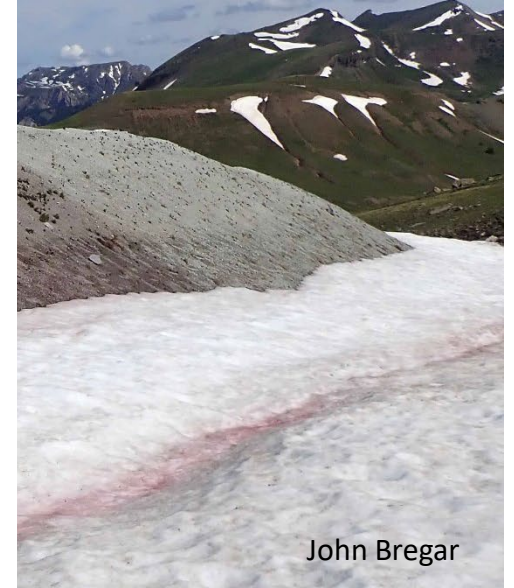
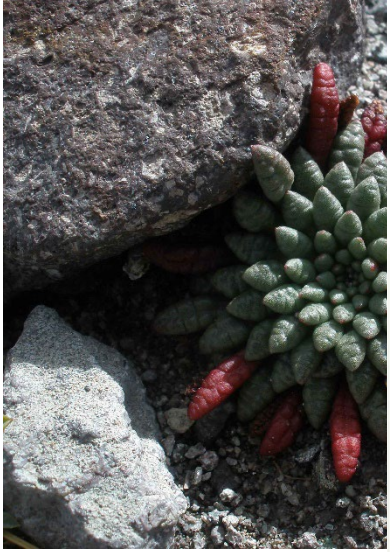


- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Hinsdale, San Juan)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2021, Ross McCauley, Fort Lewis College
- Threats: motorized and non-motorized recreation, livestock grazing, climate change
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Aliciella sedifolia

Stonecrop Gilia



John Bregar



Connie Colter

Astragalus deterior
Cliff Palace Milkvetch

Rank: G2/S2

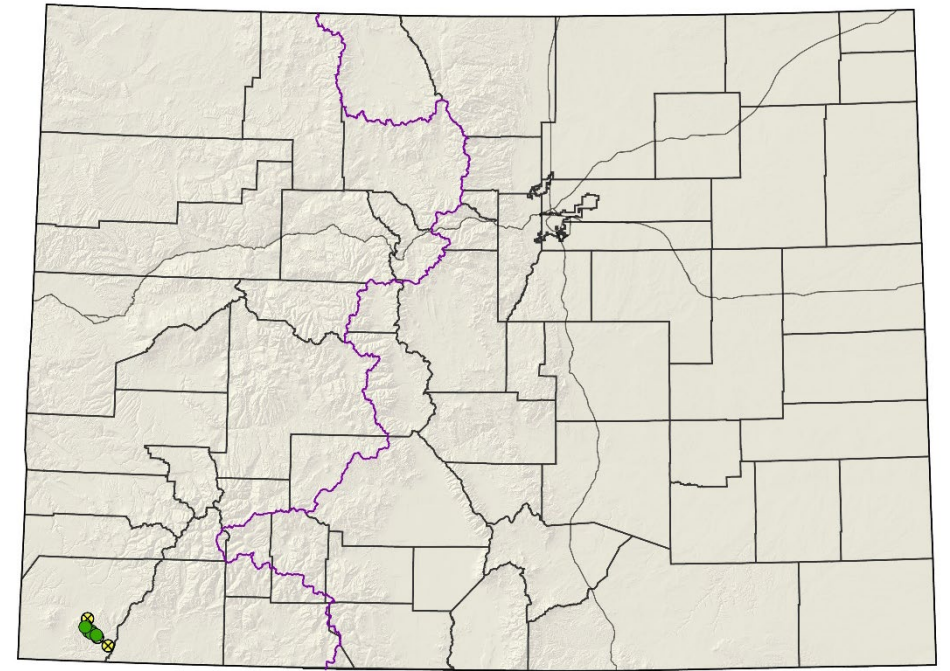
Status: N/A

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 6,326-8,136 feet

CO occurrences: 10

Historical: 4



- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Montezuma County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2023, John Kelly, iNaturalist; 2022, Sage Stowell, NPS
- Primary threats: non-motorized recreation, invasive species (*Bromus tectorum*), climate change (long-term drought)
- Land ownership/management: NPS, Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



Astragalus deterrior

Cliff Palace Milkvetch



Lynn Moore



Mesa Verde National Park Vegetation Program

Astragalus humillimus

Mancos Milkvetch

Rank: G1?/S1?

Status: Endangered

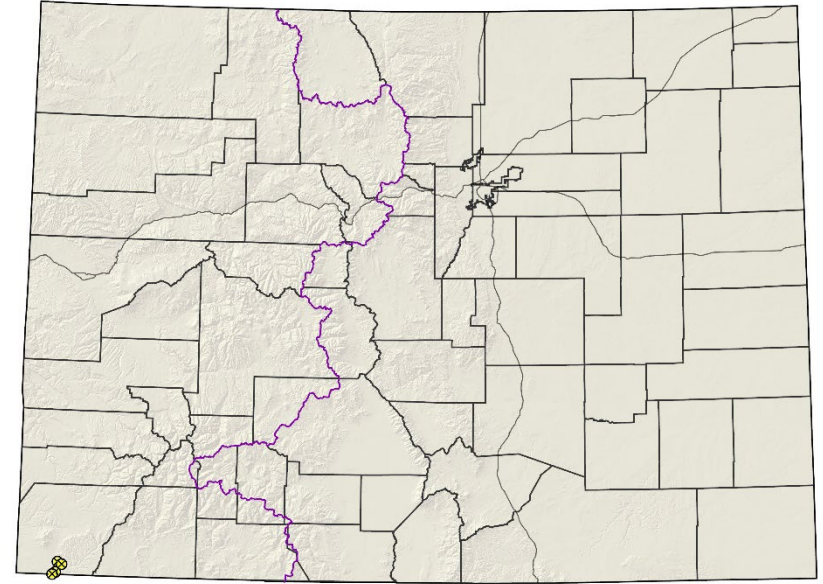
2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 5,240-6,166 feet

CO occurrences: 4

Historical: 4

- Global distribution: New Mexico and Colorado (Montezuma County).
- Last observed in Colorado: 1989, Bill Hevron, Navajo Natural Heritage Program
- Primary threats: mineral, oil and gas development, seismic exploration
- Land ownership/management: Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



Astragalus humillimus



Astragalus schmolliae

Schmoll's Milkvetch

Rank: G1G2/S1S2

Status: None (Proposed Threatened Listing Withdrawn, 2022)

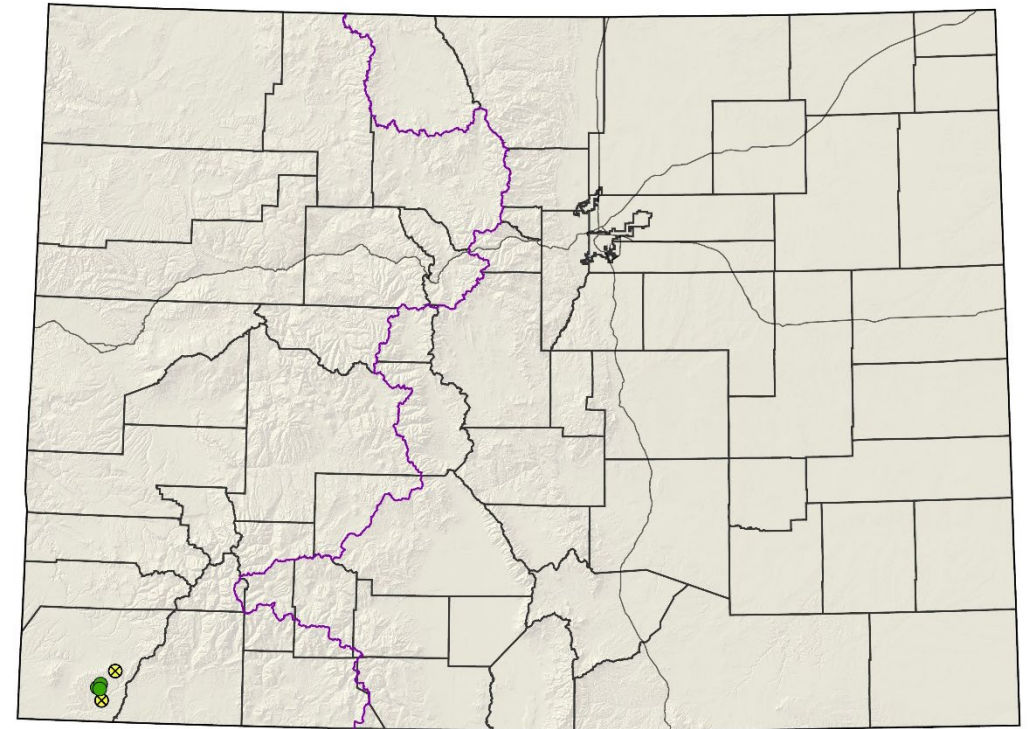
2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/ Tier 1

Elevation: 5,716 – 7,423 feet

CO occurrences: 5

Historical: 2

- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Montezuma County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2022, Sage Stowell, NPS
- Primary threats: wildfire and fire mitigation, infrastructure development, grazing, non-motorized recreation and long-term drought
- Land ownership/management: NPS, Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



Astragalus schmolliae

Schmoll's Milkvetch



Bernadette Kuhn



Dave Anderson

Astragalus tortipes
Sleeping Ute Milkvetch

Rank: G1/S1

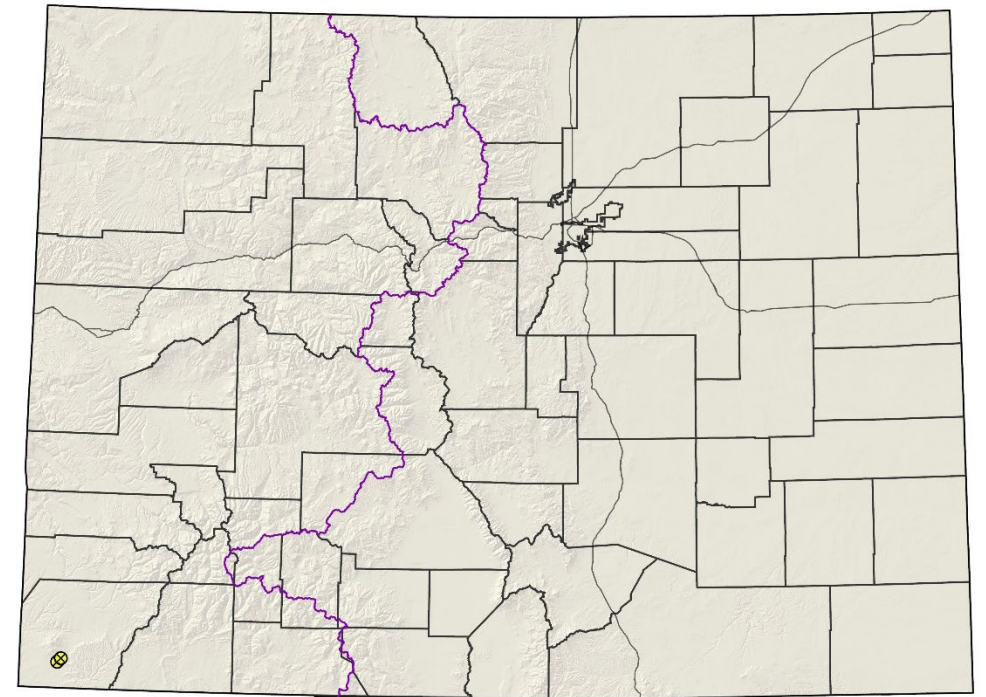
Status: None (Former Candidate ESA, Not Warranted, 2015)

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 5,450 – 5,772 feet

CO occurrences: 2

Historical: 2

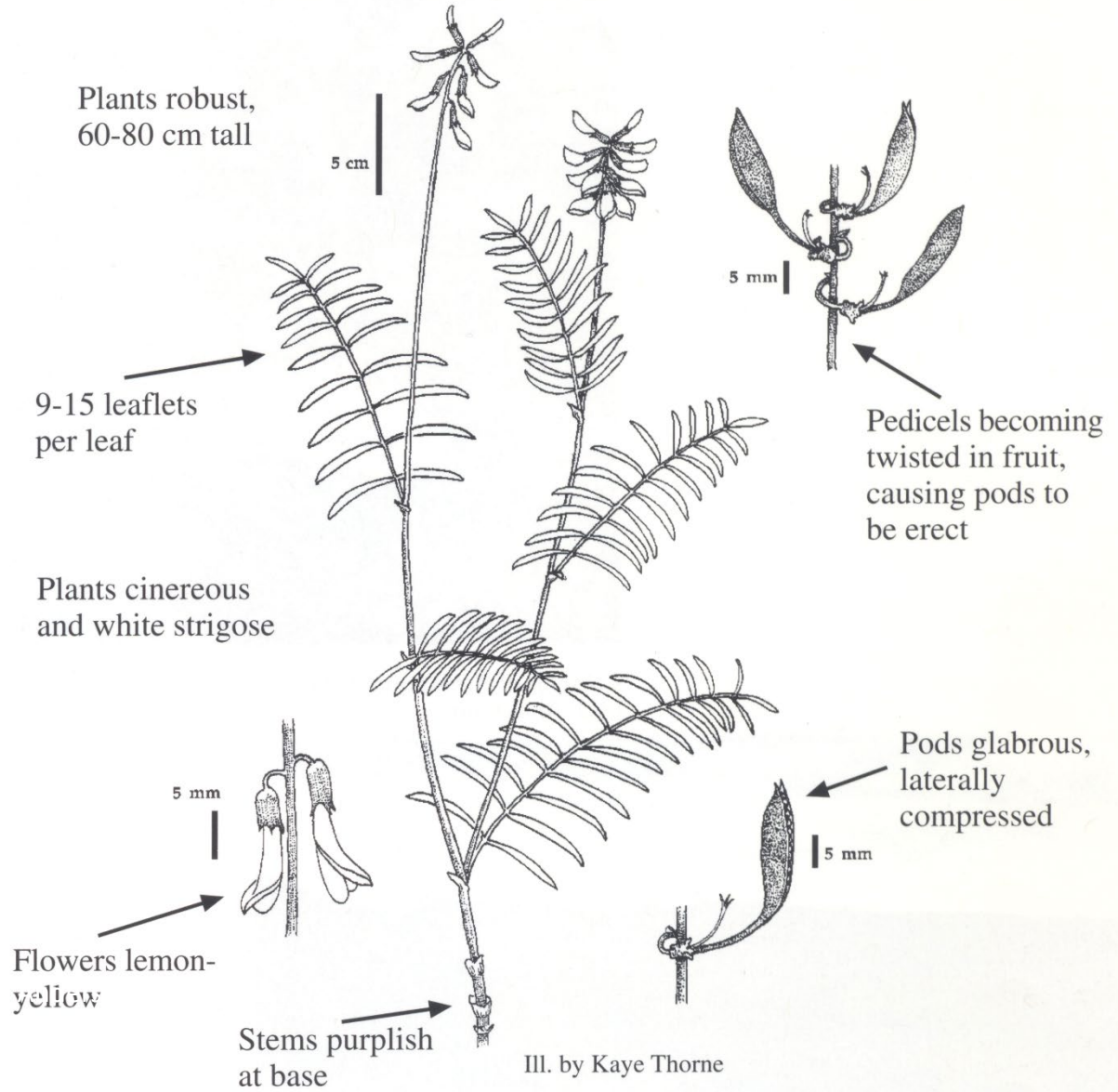


- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Montezuma County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2000, Marilyn Colyer, NPS
- Primary threats: Motorized recreation, development for water diversions, climate change
- Land ownership/management: Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



Astragalus tortipes

Sleeping Ute Milkvetch



Erigeron abajoensis

Abajo Daisy

Rank: G2G3/S1

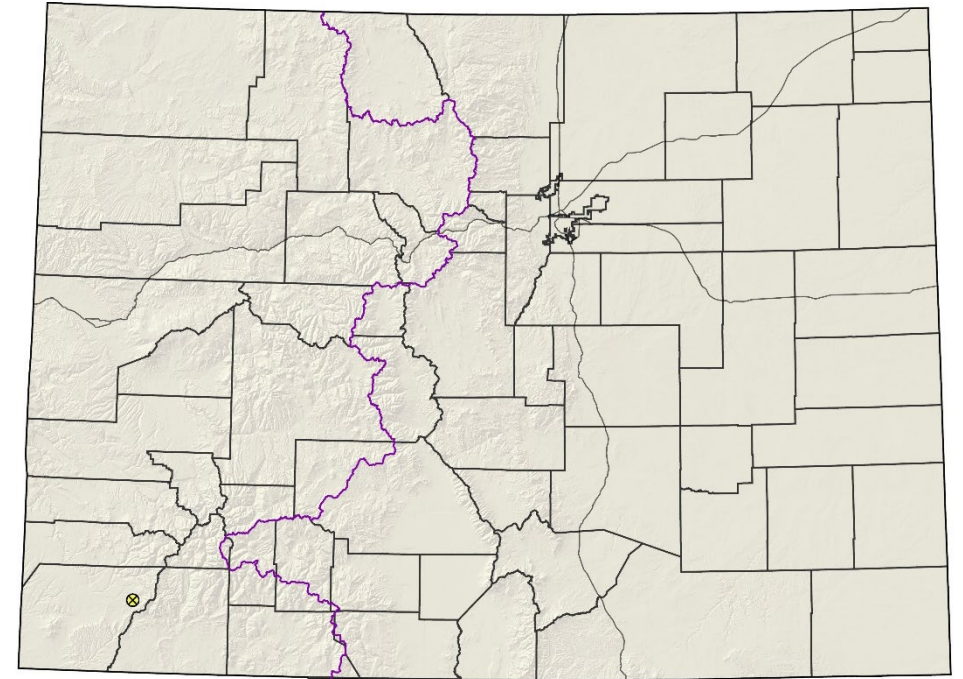
Status: None

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: None/Tier 2

Elevation: 9,314 feet

CO occurrences: 1

Historical: 1



- Global distribution: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado (Montezuma County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2003, Steve O’Kane and Ken Heil, San Juan College specimen
- Primary threats: unknown
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Erigeron abajoensis

Abajo Daisy



Gutierrezia elegans
Lone Mesa Snakeweed

Rank: G1/S1

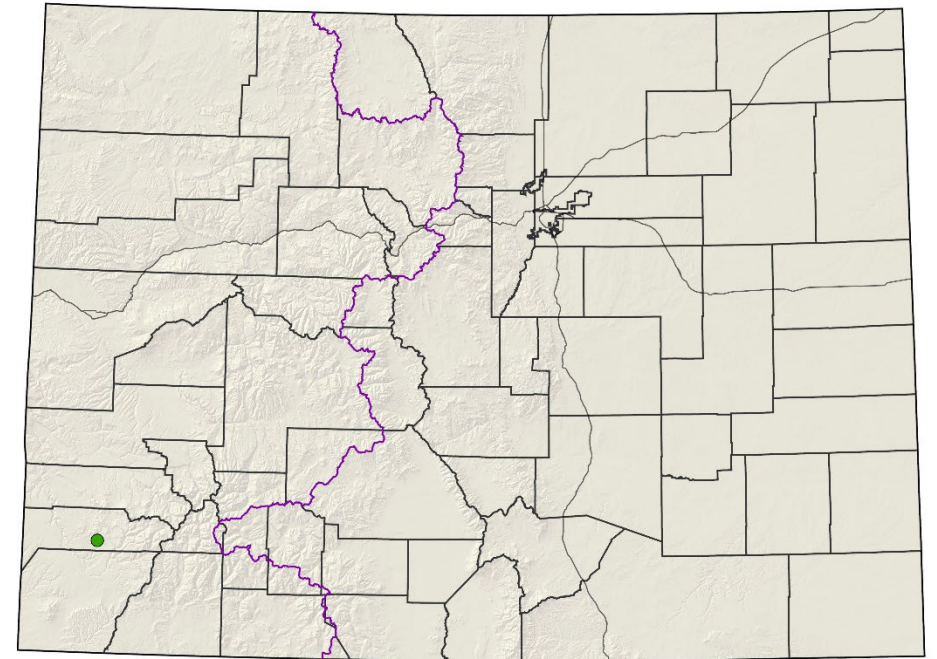
Status: BLM and USFS Sensitive

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 7,526-7,806 feet

CO occurrences: 1

Historical: 0



- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Dolores County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2011, Shelly Silva, Fort Lewis College and U of CO specimens
- Primary threats: grazing, recreation, climate change
- Land ownership/management: BLM, State, Private, USFS



Gutierrezia elegans

Lone Mesa Snakeweed



Ipomopsis polyantha

Pagosa Skyrocket

Rank: G1G2/S1S2

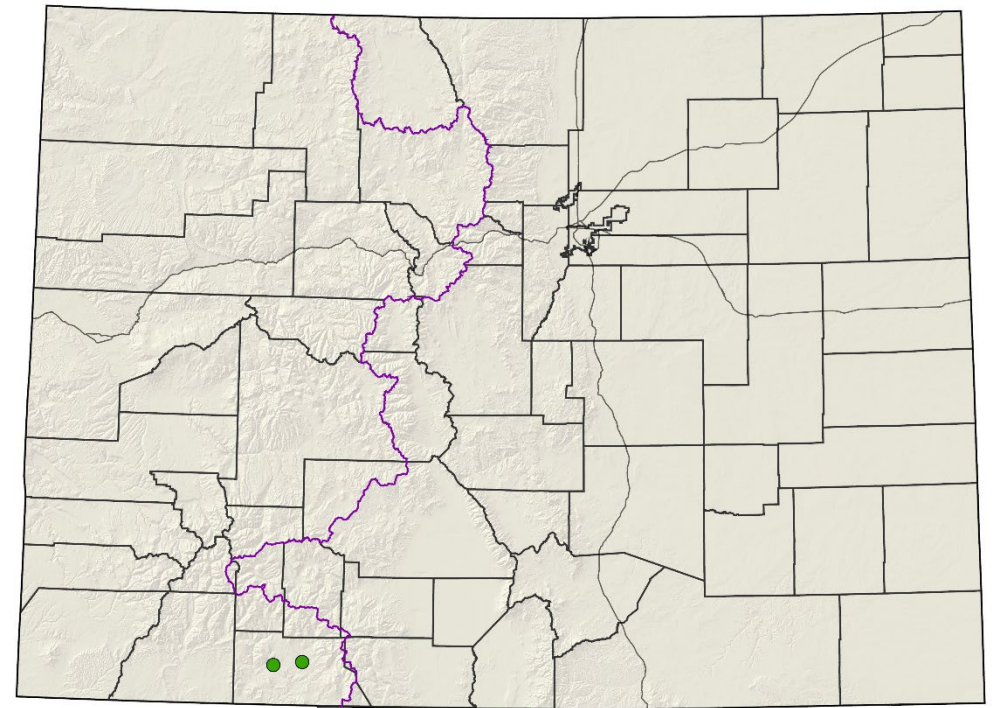
Status: Endangered

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 6,764-7,364feet

CO occurrences: 2

Historical: 0



- Global distribution: **Colorado endemic** (Archuleta County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024 (CNHP, CNAP)
- Primary threats: Residential development, road construction and maintenance
- Land ownership/management: Private, State, BLM



Ipomopsis polyantha

Pagosa Skyrocket



CNAP



Sara Brinton



Jessica Smith

Mentzelia paradoxensis

Paradox Stickleaf

Rank: G2/S2

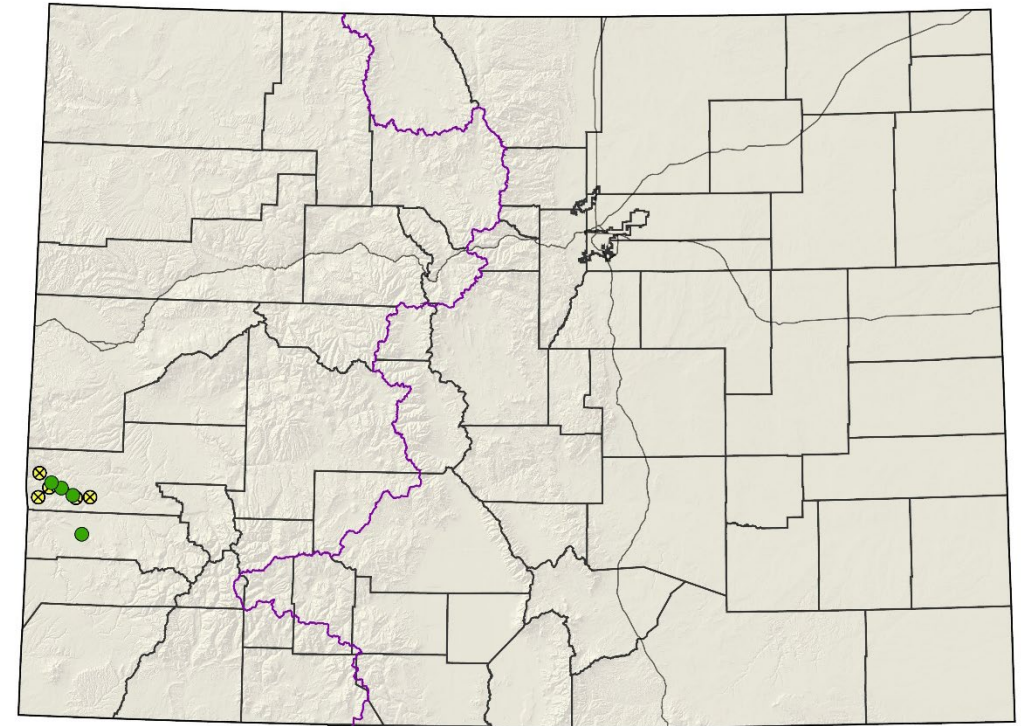
Status: BLM Sensitive

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 2/SGIN

Elevation: 4,960-6,623 feet

CO occurrences: 9

Historical: 5



- Global distribution: **Colorado endemic** (Montrose, San Miguel)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024, Bob Lagier and Matt Langemeier, iNaturalist
- Primary threats: road maintenance, invasives, climate change
- Land ownership/management: BLM, Private



Mentzelia paradoxensis

Paradox Stickleaf



© Front Range Wildflowers- iNat CC-BY-NC



Peggy Lyon

Peggy Lyon

Oenothera dodgeniana (*Gaura neomexicana* ssp. *neomexicana*)

New Mexico Butterfly Plant

Rank: G3T3/S1

Status: None

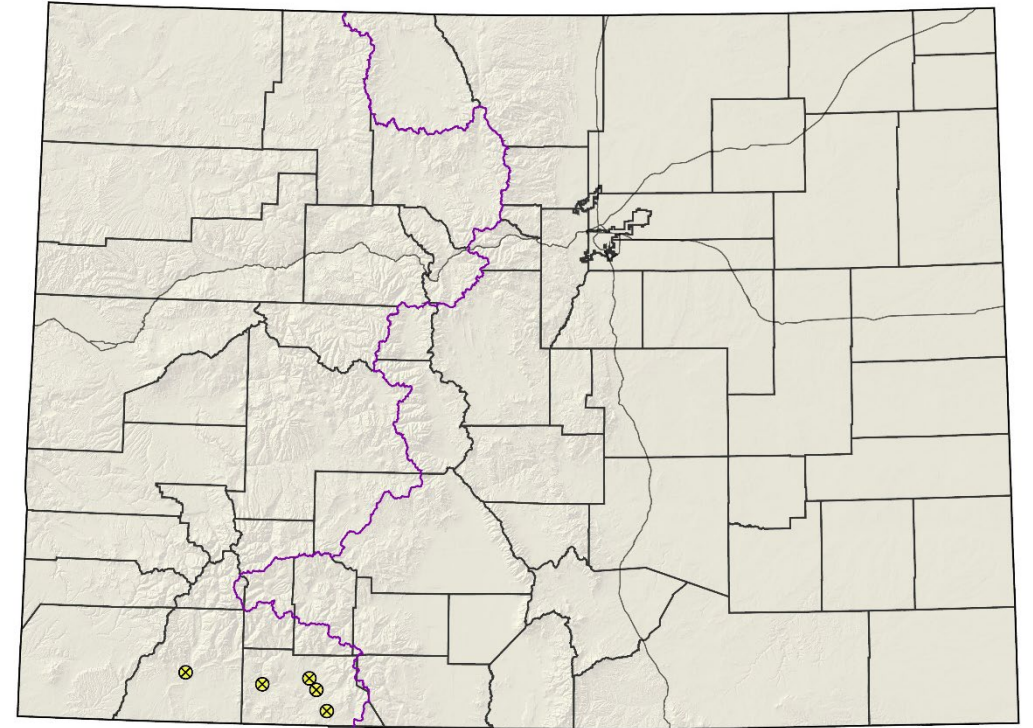
2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: None/Tier 2
(reclassify to SGIN at best, likely drop off list)

Elevation: 6,467-7,661 feet

CO occurrences: 5

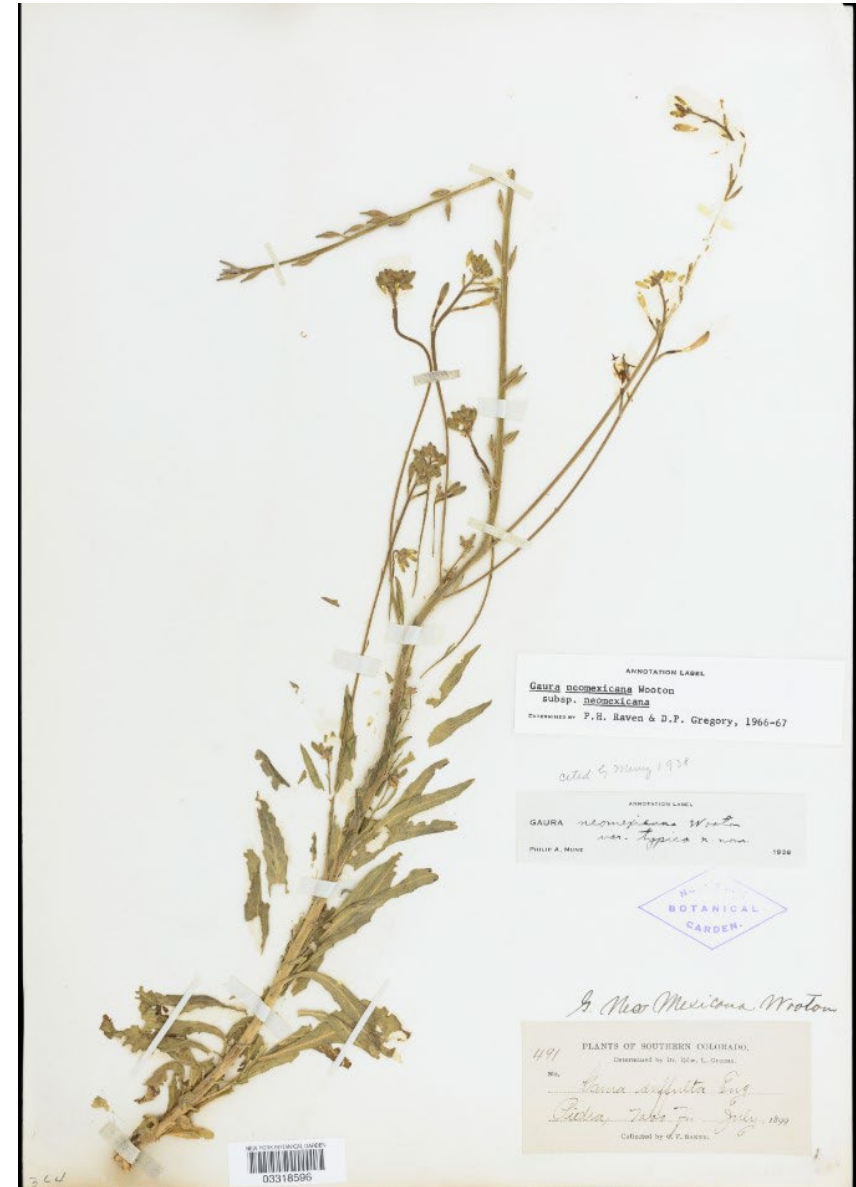
Historical: 5

- Global distribution: New Mexico, Colorado (Archuleta, La Plata counties)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2001, Ken Heil, San Juan College specimen
- Primary threats: unknown
- Land ownership/management: USFS, Private, Unknown



Oenothera dodgeniana

New Mexico Butterfly Plant



Physaria pulvinata
Cushion Bladderpod

Rank: G1/S1

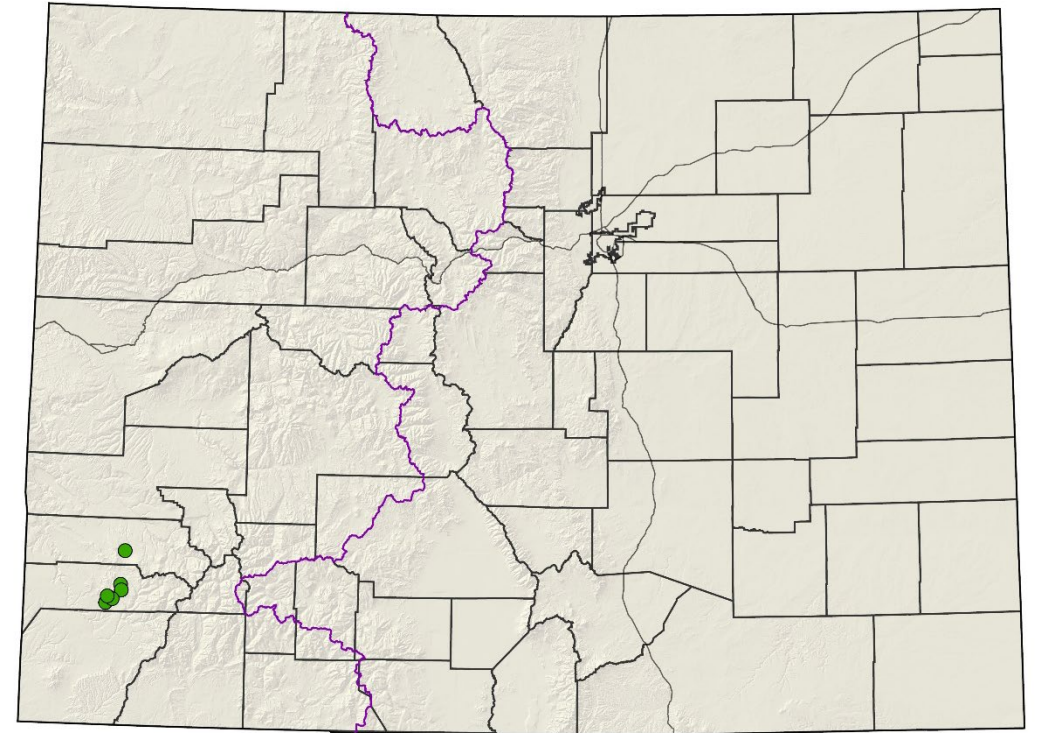
Status: USFS Sensitive

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 7,543-8,487 feet

CO occurrences: 6

Historical: 0



- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (Dolores, San Miguel)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024, CNHP
- Primary threats: recreation, livestock trampling, invasive species, climate change - drought
- Land ownership/management: BLM (1%), State, Private, USFS



Physaria pulvinata

Cushion Bladderpod



Physaria scrotiformis
West Silver Bladderpod

Rank: G1/S1

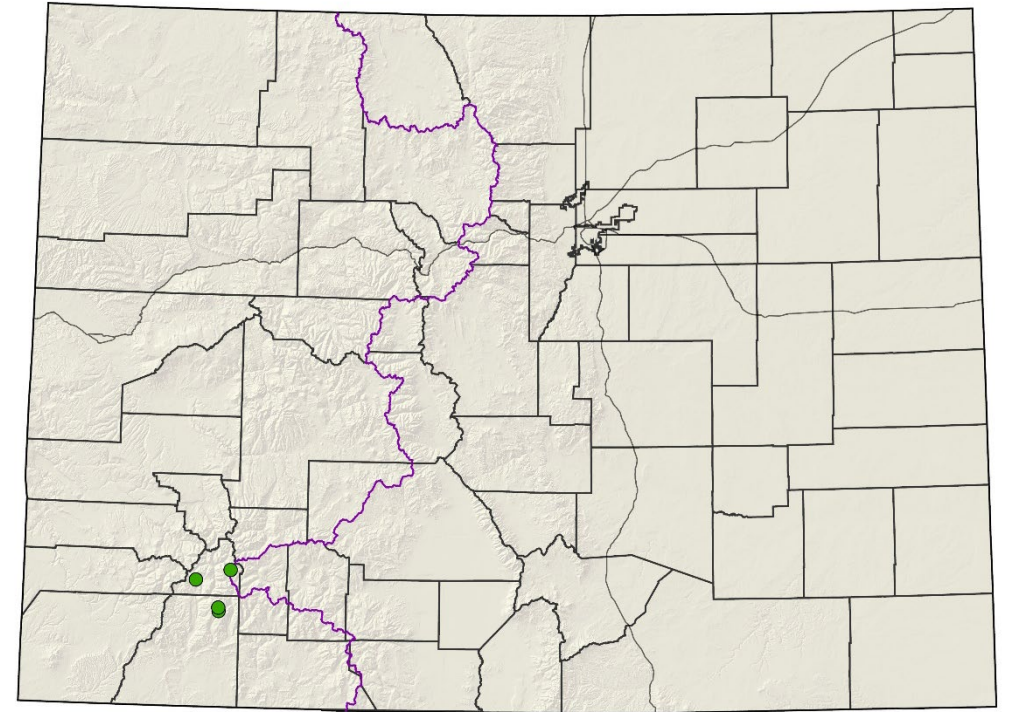
Status: USFS Sensitive

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/SGIN

Elevation: 11,555-12,533 feet

CO occurrences: 4

Historical: 0

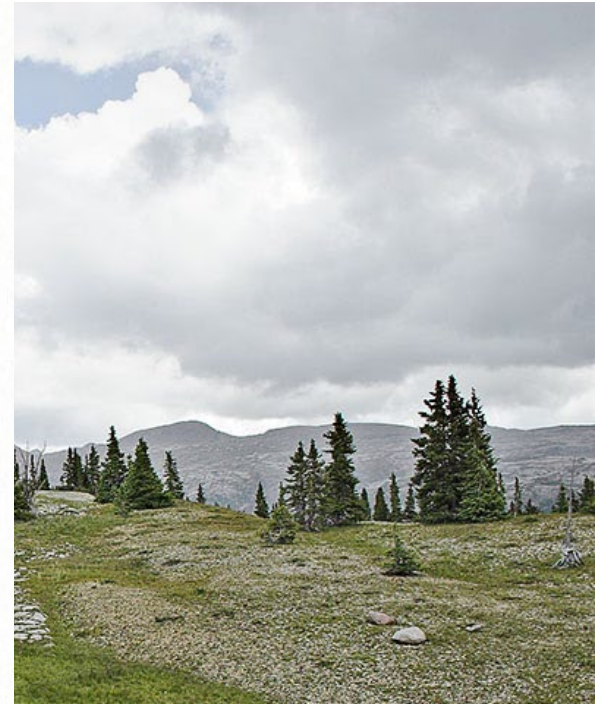


- Global distribution: Colorado endemic (La Plata, San Juan)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2017, Peggy Lyon, Renee Rondeau, CNHP and Gay Austin, USFS
- Primary threats: trampling & erosion from sheep grazing and hiking, climate change
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Physaria scrotiformis

West Silver Bladderpod



Proatriplex pleiantha

Mancos Saltbush

Rank: G3/S1

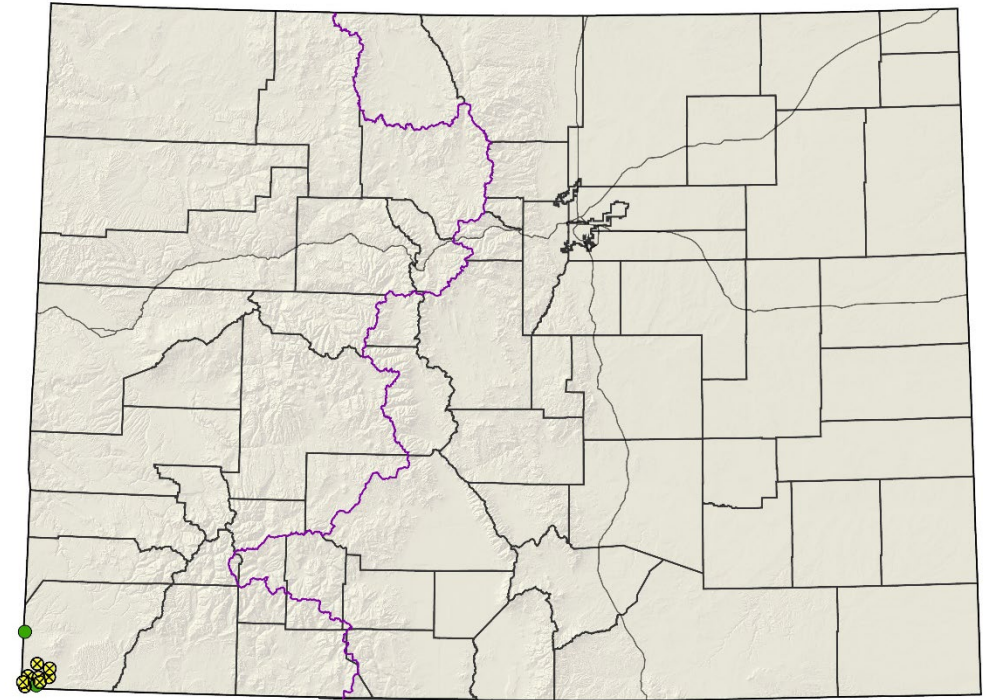
Status: None (Former Candidate ESA, Not Warranted 1993)

2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: None/SGIN

Elevation: 4,721-5,102 feet

CO occurrences: 10

Historical: 8



- Global distribution: Navajo Nation, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado (Montezuma)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2017, Al Schneider, swcoloradowildflowers and pers comm
- Primary threats: unknown
- Land ownership/management: Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe, BLM (Canyon of the Ancients)



Proatriplex pleiantha

Mancos Saltbush



Sclerocactus mesae-verdae

Mesa Verde Cactus

Rank: G2/S2

Status: Threatened

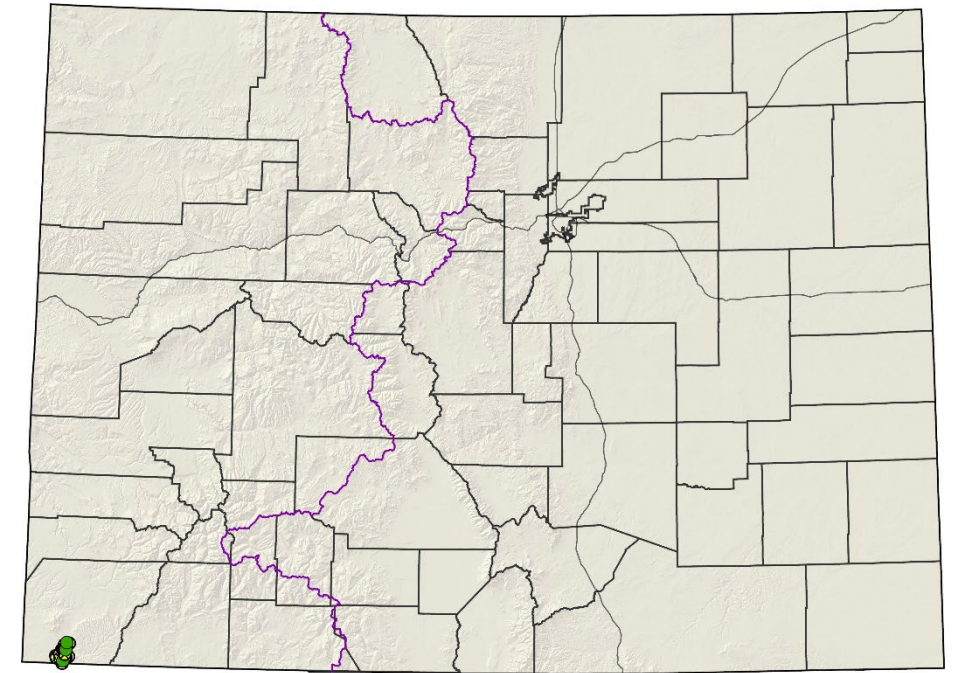
2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: Tier 1/Tier 1

Elevation: 5,045-5,844 feet

CO occurrences: 22 (probably a single large occurrence)

Historical: 19

- Global distribution: New Mexico, Colorado (Montezuma County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2005, CNAP monitoring [obscured iNat obs from 2023 and 2024]
- Primary threats: cactus collecting, energy development, off-road vehicles, trampling by livestock, climate change
- Land ownership/management: Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



Sclerocactus mesae-verdae

Mesa Verde Cactus

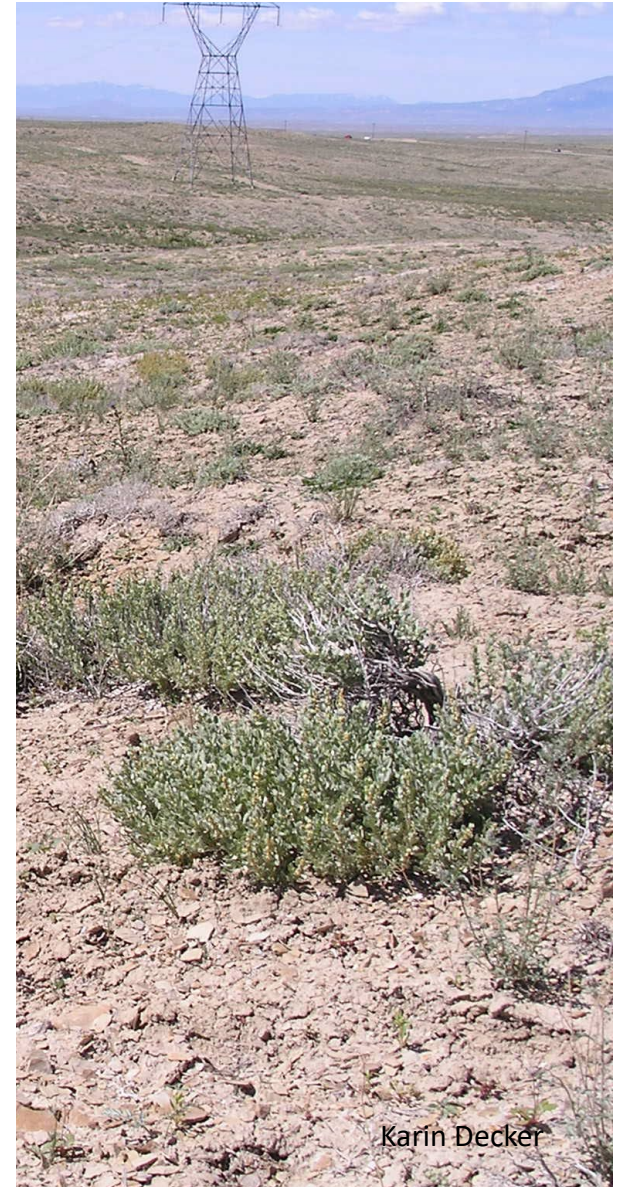


Steve C



Ann A. Fleming

Sclerocactus mesae-verdae



Karin Decker

Senecio inexpectatus (*Senecio fremontii* var. *inexpectatus*)

Prickly Groundsel

Rank: G5T1/S1

Status: None

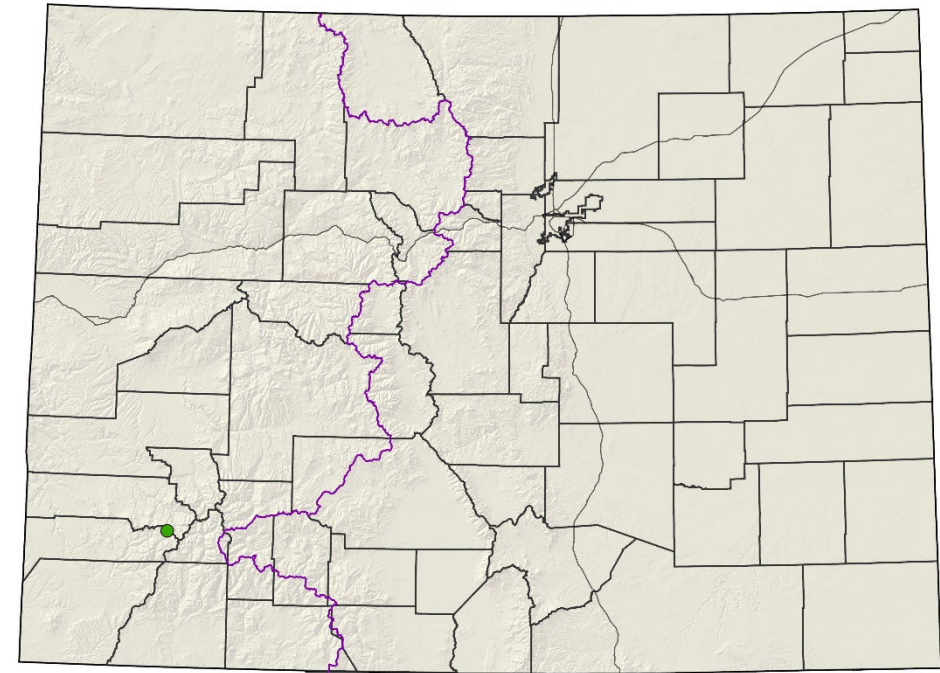
2015/2025 (proposed) SWAP: None/SGIN

Elevation: 11,938 feet

CO occurrences: 1

Historical: 0

- Global distribution: Utah, Colorado (Dolores County)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2008, Al Schneider
- Primary threats: non-motorized recreation
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Senecio inexpectatus

Prickly Groundsel



How You Can Help! Submit Data

- Update Element Occurrence (EO) Records
- Find new Occurrences
- Adopt-a-Rare-Plant Program (CoNPS)
- Learn to recognize rare plant species
- Work with herbaria to document your findings*

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/ourdata/contribute-data/>

Thank you!
Jessica Smith
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