

**Added to CNPS Inventory on April 8, 2011**

**Rare Plant Status Review: *Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum***

**Proposed New Add to Rank 1B.2, G3G4T2 / S2**

Aaron Sims (CNPS) and Roxanne Bittman (CNDDDB)

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**Background**

*Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* is a perennial herb in the Asteraceae that is endemic to San Luis Obispo County, California. It is included in *The Jepson Manual, Second Edition* (available online at: <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/tjm2/review/treatments/compositae.html#81502>) and the *Flora of North America* (Vol.19). In *The Jepson Manual* (1993), Keil and Turner treated *C. occidentale* var. *lucianum* as an “atypical race of *C. occidentale* var. *californicum*”, however it is now recognized and distinguished from var. *californicum* by having darkly pigmented involucre and dark, reddish purple corollas (Keil 2004). *Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* “approaches the ranges of var. *californicum* and var. *venustum*, but [is] not known to grow with either of these varieties” and it “may represent a stabilized emergent form derived by prehistoric hybridization” between the two (Keil 2004). *Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* flowers from April to June.

*Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* occurs along steep, rocky slopes and disturbed roadsides in chaparral openings. It typically grows in serpentine soils at approximately 500 to 750 meters in elevation.

*Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* is known only from approximately 9 occurrences in the southern Santa Lucia Mountains of San Luis Obispo County. The type locality is Cuesta Ridge “1.3 mi W of E boundary sign for Cuesta Ridge Botanical Area” (Junak and Ayers 4073). Of the 9 known occurrences, only 2 have been documented in the past 20 years. Some occurrences (i.e. Occ #'s 2, 6, and 9 in “Localities” tab of attached excel file) are too vague to determine whether they constitute a separate population. Therefore future surveys should be conducted to determine whether some populations are contiguous or not.

*Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* may be fire responsive and is possibly threatened by fire suppression. The Cuesta Ridge population of *C. occidentale* var. *lucianum* was larger after a 1994 fire, and appears to have reduced significantly since (D.J. Keil pers. comm. 2011).

Based on the available information, CNPS and CNDDDB recommend that *Cirsium occidentale* var. *lucianum* be added to CNPS 1B.2.

**Recommended Actions**

CNPS: Add to CNPS 1B.2

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB G3G4T2 / S2

Please review the draft CNPS Inventory record below, respond Yes or No on the proposal to add this species to the Inventory and CNDDDB, and provide any edits/comments. If responding No, please provide supporting information.

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**Draft CNPS Inventory Record**

*Cirsium occidentale* (Nutt.) Jeps. var. *lucianum* D.J. Keil

Cuesta Ridge thistle

Asteraceae

Rank 1B.2

San Luis Obispo

Atascadero (246B) 3512046, Lopez Mountain (246D) 3512035, San Luis Obispo (246C) 3512036

Chaparral (openings)/Serpentinite. Often steep rocky slopes and disturbed roadsides; elevation 500-750 meters.

Perennial herb. Blooms April-June.

Known only from fewer than 10 extant occurrences in the southern Santa Lucia Mtns. of SLO Co. Possibly threatened by fire suppression. Similar to var.

*californicum*. Not in *The Jepson Manual* (1993). See *Sida* 21(1):207-219 (2004) for original description.