

ATTACHMENT SS2

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: (<i>Astragalus proximus</i> (Rydb.) Woot. & Standl./Aztec milkvetch /ASPR8 – USDA PLANTS)			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
1 Distribution within R2	B	<p><i>Astragalus proximus</i> is a regional endemic that occurs in Archuleta, Conejos and La Plata Counties in southern Colorado. It is awarded a B-rank as it has a very patchy distribution.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence data from: The Colorado Natural Heritage Program provided by Michael Menefee, September 16, 2002; The University of New Mexico Herbarium provided by Jane Mygatt September 2002; The San Juan College Herbarium records provided by Ken Heil September 2002; The University of Colorado Herbarium provided by Nan Lederer September 2002; The Colorado State University Herbarium records provided by J. Rowens Ackerfield, September 2002; the New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council website: http://nmrareplants.unm.edu.
2 Distribution outside R2	B	<p><i>Astragalus proximus</i> occurs in southern Colorado and the adjacent counties of San Juan, Rio Arriba and, possibly, Sandoval counties in New Mexico. The report that the plant occurs in Sandoval county appears unsubstantiated.</p> <p>A “B-rank” is awarded because it has a limited distribution outside the Rocky Mountain Region.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
3 Dispersal Capability	D	<p>Little information about either seed dispersal or pollination biology is known. The species is likely insect pollinated. Seed dispersal is likely restricted within suitable habitat.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

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4 Abundance in R2	B	<p>This species is often described as locally abundant but it is likely that the abundance varies from year to year depending upon weather conditions. Colorado Natural Heritage Program (2002) records indicate that at some sites where the species is locally very abundant in some years, in other years there will be very few plants. Barneby (1964) described it as “locally plentiful in favorable seasons”. Population size ranges from estimates of 25 individuals in a small area to up to 300+ individuals over several (3 to 6) acres.</p> <p>A “B rank is awarded because it appears relatively uncommon. However, the current abundance (estimated number of individuals or populations) seems to be large enough that demographic stochasticity is not likely to lead to rapid extinction, but, in combination with highly variable environmental factors, could pose a threat.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barneby R.C. 1964. Atlas of North American Astragalus. Memoirs of the New York Botanical Garden vol.13 New York Botanical Gardens, Bronx, NY.
5 Population Trend in R2	B	<p>There are few data on which to base population trends. Data collection has tended to be sporadic and that, coupled with the apparently natural year-to-year variation, makes trend analysis difficult. <i>A. proximus</i> may be extirpated at one known site in Colorado because plants were not relocated in 2001 in an area where plants were reported in 1951 although increases at another site were reported in 2001 (estimate 350 individuals in 2001 compared to 243 in 1997).</p> <p>Considering that the number of relatively recent observations of the species in both New Mexico and Colorado a “B-rank” was assigned as the there appears stable numbers of populations.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank LOW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
6 Habitat Trend in R2	B	<p><i>Astragalus proximus</i> grows on mesas, bluffs and low hills in sandy, often alkaline, clay soil in sagebrush and pinon-juniper communities. It has been reported from areas that are predominately covered by <i>Melilotis</i> species, a weed, and from other areas that have experienced some disturbance.</p> <p>A “B rank” is awarded because there appears to be stable amounts of suitable or potential habitat within its range in R2.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

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7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification	B	<p>Some occurrences are likely impacted by road maintenance and development activities. Informal trails, e.g. motor bike, have been reported through some occurrences. Occupied habitat is also be vulnerable to livestock grazing (Fayette and Shogren 1998). The impact of invasive weeds on populations is not known.</p> <p>A “B-rank” is awarded because the habitat is somewhat vulnerable.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fayette, K. and A. Shogren 1998. <i>Astragalus proximus</i> – Element State Ranking Form. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
8 Life History and Demographics	D	<p>One problem with this species is that it resembles <i>A. flexuosus</i>. Although <i>A. proximus</i> is regarded as a unique taxon, for definitive identification the plant should have fruits and preferably flowers. Therefore, identification during much of the year is compromised. Vegetative characteristics are also similar to <i>A. wingatus</i> that is a close neighbor but does not share the same range (Barneby 1964). This propensity for mis-identification may lead to over- or under-estimation of extant populations.</p> <p>Multiple stems at least 8 cm distant from each other may belong to the same individuals (Barney 1964). Many aspects of the life history and demographics are not known.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Evaluator(s): Juanita A. R. Ladyman			Date: September 15, 2002

National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY (L)¹ to occur:

¹ Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.

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<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>		<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>		<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>		<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>		<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	
Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely
		Cimarron NG		Samuel R. McKelvie NF		Black Hills NF		Shoshone NF	
				Halsey NF		Buffalo Gap NG		Bighorn NF	
				Nebraska NF		Ft. Pierre NG		Black Hills NF	
				Ogalala NG				Medicine Bow NF	
	K							Thunder Basin NG	