

Rare Plant Status Review: *Mentzelia inyoensis*
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Background

Mentzelia inyoensis is a newly described species (*Madrono* 51(4): 379-393 (2004)) in the Loasaceae from Inyo and Mono Counties in California, as well as from Nevada. The earliest collection of this species was by K. Brandegee in 1913, from the east slope of the Sierra Nevada, but this site has not been relocated. The species was next collected by Munz in 1949 in Silver Canyon, White Mountain, Inyo County. While there are about 8 occurrences of this species currently known from California, the most recent collection was made in 1985. However, based on communications with Jim Andre, the occurrence from Mazourka Canyon has been observed in recent years. The species was listed in *The Jepson Manual* as a *nomen nudum* pending Latin diagnosis and type information. The taxonomy and nomenclature of this species appears to have been resolved with the publication of this species in *Madrono* 51(4): 379-393 (2004).

CNPS is not recommending a specific list for this species due to the contrary opinions that have been received in regards to *M. inyoensis* and its distribution. Discussions on *M. inyoensis* have been ongoing in CNPS for more than 10 years before the species was finally placed in the "postponed" file until further information could be gathered. This species has recently come up again for review by Dean Taylor who feels that *M. inyoensis* would be a good addition to CNPS List 1B. Dave Silverman, on the other hand, feels that this species should not be on List 1B (and should possibly be placed on List 3), because it is most likely under-collected, under-identified, under-observed and it can be difficult to access sites where this species grows. Others have expressed views in the past that its habitat is quite common in the northern Mojave Desert and will therefore probably turn out to not be rare enough to warrant placing on a list. Another problematic issue appears to be its similarity to *Mentzelia oreophila*, making it difficult to identify.

Approximately 8 occurrences of this species are recorded from California and about 2 occurrences are known from Nevada. Because of its restricted distribution and the small number of documented occurrences, the species requires review for inclusion in both the CNPS Inventory and the CNDDDB. Please state which CNPS list, if any, you feel that this species should be placed on. The *Madrono* abstract describing this species is included below for your reference.

"A new species, *M. inyoensis* H.J. Thompson & Prigge from Inyo and Mono Counties, California and Esmeralda and Churchill Counties, Nevada is described and illustrated. Based on chromosome number and floral and seed morphology, we consider *M. inyoensis* to be closely related to a group of species that include *M. candalariae*, *M. oreophila*, *M. leucophylla*, and possibly *M. pumila*."

Recommended Actions

CNPS: Add to CNPS List 1B.3

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB as G2 / S2.3

Please review the draft CNPS Inventory record below, respond Yes or No on the proposal to add this species to the Inventory and CNDDDB. Please mention which list you feel this species should

be placed on and provide any edits/comments. If responding No, please provide supporting information.

Draft CNPS Inventory Record

Mentzelia inyoensis H.J. Thompson & Prigge

Loasaceae

"blazing star"

List 1B.3

Inyo, Mono

274C [Horse Thief Springs/3511578], 349A [Ubehebe Peak/3611765], 349C [Nelson Range/3611756], 372D [Bee Springs Canyon/3611871], 390B [Hanging Rock Canyon/3711726], 412B? [Blanco Mtn./3711842], 413A? [Laws/3711843], 414D? [Tungsten Hills/3711835], 431A [Dyer/3711861]

Great Basin scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland / rocky; elevation 1158-1980 meters.

Shrub, blooms April-October.

See *Madrono* 51(4): 379-383 (2004) for original description.