

**Rare Plant Status Review: *Penstemon pahutensis***  
**Misa Ward (CNPS) and Roxanne Bittman (CNDDDB)**  
**Draft prepared by Bill Haskins (CNPS volunteer)**  
**January 11, 2006**

### **Background**

*Penstemon pahutensis* was proposed for addition to List 2 in the CNPS *Inventory* 6<sup>th</sup> edition, but its addition was postponed until it could be verified that there were indeed occurrences in California. *The Jepson Manual* reports its habitat as pinyon-juniper woodland and Great Basin scrub. Distinguishing characteristics include a short sepal length, bearded palate, and a staminode that is densely bearded for most of its length. Several historical specimens suggested that the species occurs in the state, but the locations were ambiguous. Brian Knaus has now verified two occurrences of "Pahute beardtongue" in California. In *Madrono* 52(3):207-8 (2005) (attached), he confirms occurrences from the Grapevine Mountains in Inyo County. These occurrences are at the western edge of this species' range, which is centered on the Nevada Nuclear Test Site and surrounding areas. A 1999 Death Valley National Park database print-out from Arnie Peterson reports specimens at the UNLV herbarium from the Funeral and Cottonwood Mountains. However, this is likely an error because UNLV staff have recently notified us that their collection does not include any *P. pahutensis* specimens from California. In addition, Brian Knaus did not locate these specimens during his research at the Death Valley herbarium. He considers the elevation of the Funeral Mountains rather low for this species and does not think it occurs in the Cottonwood Mountains (though *P. speciosus* occurs there).

In California, *P. pahutensis* can be locally common, but is only known from the two confirmed occurrences in the Grapevine Mountains (Knaus, pers. comm.). No threats were reported in the *Madrono* article, and both occurrences are within Death Valley National Park. In Nevada, it is known from 32 occurrences using a 1 km separation distance or 51 occurrences using a 1/10 mi separation distance. A 1995 study on the Nevada Test Site (Blomquist et al.) reports 76 locations but did not specify a separation distance. The study reports that those populations are somewhat resistant to disturbance and appear stable. *P. pahutensis* is on the Nevada Native Plant Society's Watch List. Natureserve assigns the species a Global Rank of G3. The Nevada Natural Heritage Program assigns it a State Rank of S3. Because it appears to be more common in Nevada, we propose a ranking of List 2. However, because it does appear to be borderline between List 1B and List 2, we welcome any comments and new information on its abundance in Nevada. Due to its rarity in California, this species requires review for inclusion in both the CNPS *Inventory* and CNDDDB.

**Recommended Actions**

CNPS: Add to CNPS List 2

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB as G3/S1.3

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

**Draft CNPS Inventory Record**

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***Penstemon pahutensis* N. H. Holmgren**

Scrophulariaceae

“Pahute beardtongue”

**List 2**

Inyo; Nevada

368A [Thimble Peak/3611771], 368B [Grapevine Peak], 368D [Wahyguyhe Peak/3611781]

Great Basin scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland / rocky, sometimes carbonate; elevation; 1900-2300 meters.

Perennial herb; blooms June.

Known in CA from only two confirmed occurrences in the Grapevine Mountains. Can be locally common. On Watch List in NV. See *Aliso* 7(3):351 (1971) for original description, and *Madrono* 52(3):207-8 (2005) for confirmation of occurrence in CA.