

Rare Plant Status Review: *Eriophorum gracile*
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Background

Eriophorum gracile is a perennial herb in the Cyperaceae. *E. gracile* is known from much of the northern United States with the majority of states giving this species a status of SX (presumed extirpated), S1 (critically imperiled), or S2 (imperiled); the rest of the states it is known from have not rated this species (SNR). It is also known from Canada and Eurasia. In California, *E. gracile* is known from approximately 26 occurrences in Butte, El Dorado, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Nevada, Plumas, San Francisco, Sonoma, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, and Tuolumne Counties. This species is included in the Jepson Manual (1993), Flora of North America (2002), and several California regional floras among others. *E. gracile* was first described in *Catalecta Botanica* (1800). The California and Oregon specimens are sometimes referred to as *E. gracile* var. *caurianum* (see *Rhodora* 7 (1905)); however, the subspecific taxon, var. *caurianum*, is generally not accepted because California material is too variable to assign variety status (see *A Flora of the Marshes of California* (1957)). This emergent plant occurs most commonly in sphagnum bogs and acidic fens, as well as in meadows and seeps in yellow pine and red fir forests. It is known to occur on metamorphic and volcanic substrates. This species was nominated for inclusion into the Inventory by Dean Taylor, who mentions that grazing may be a potential threat to this species. *E. gracile* is known in California from less than 30 occurrences but occurs in 13 counties with several of these occurrences on protected lands. Due to its limited distribution, *E. gracile* requires review for inclusion in both the CNPS Inventory and the CNDDDB.

Recommended Actions

CNPS: Add to CNPS List 4.3

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB as G5 / S3.3

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

Eriophorum gracile Koch
"slender cottongrass"
List 4.3

Cyperaceae

Butte, El Dorado, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Nevada, Plumas, San Francisco*, Sonoma, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou?, Tuolumne; Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, and elsewhere

435B [Mt. Ritter/3711962], 437A [Half Dome/3711965], 456A [Lake Eleanor/ 3711987], 466C(*?) [San Francisco North/3712274], 502A [Sebastopol/3812247], 522C [Freal Peak/3811978], 554B [Hobart Mills/3912042], 555A [Independence Lake/3912043], 572A [Clio/3912065], 590A [Meadow Valley/3912181], 590C [Haskins Valley/3912172], 591B [Kimshew Point/3912184], 605C?

Element Code: PMCYP0A080
Added to CNPS List 4.3 on 10/31/06

[Crescent Mills/ 4012018], 606B [Almanor/4012122], 607A? [Humbug Valley/4012123], 607C [Jonesville/4012114], 608D [Butte Meadows/4012115], 624C [Chester/4012132], 625A [Mt. Harkness/4012143], 625B [Reading Peak/4012144], 641D [Pikes Point/4012057], 662B [Burney/4012186], 699C? [Mount Eddy/4112234]

Bogs and fens, meadows and seeps, upper montane coniferous forest / acidic; elevation 1280-2900 meters.

Perennial herb (rhizomatous); blooms May-September.

Does plant occur in Siskiyou County? Sometimes referred to as *Eriophorum gracile* var. *caurianum* (*Rhodora* 7:81-92, 129-136 (1905)).