

R6 SENSITIVE VASCULAR PLANT PROFILE

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Date Prepared: June, 2002

Species Common Name: Least Phacelia

Species Scientific Name: *Phacelia minutissima* L. F. Henderson

Suspected or Documented Occurrence on USFS Region 6 National Forests:

Fremont National Forest: Suspected

Description:

The general description of *Phacelia minutissima* was taken from Moseley's Conservations Status written in 1995.

Dwarf, simple or branching annual up to 1 dm tall, shortly spreading-hairy and stipitate-glandular throughout; leaves mostly cauline, oblanceolate or linear-oblong, the blade up to about 1 cm long and 4 mm wide, tapering to the short petiole or subpetiolar base up to 4 mm long; inflorescence short and few-flowered, tending to be leafy-bracteate below, or terminating the stem and making up most of the height of the plant; pedicels short, only 1-2 mm long, or the lower more elongate and up to nearly 1 cm; calyx 2.5-4 mm long at early anthesis, the narrow, linear or oblanceolate segments markedly accrescent in fruit and becoming distinctly unequal in length and width, one or more of them sometimes foliaceous and 1 cm long or more; corolla inconspicuous, lavender, tubular-campanulate, 2.5-4 mm long; stamens included; style 1.5 mm long or less, cleft up to half its length; ovules about a dozen, the finely reticulate-pitted seeds of similar number and scarcely 1 mm long, or fewer and up to 1.5 mm long (Moseley, 1995).

Field Characteristics: The unequal calyx segments are the most distinctive features of this plant (Moseley, 1995) *Phacelia minutissima* closely resembles *Phacelia incana* and *Phacelia nama* spp. (Moseley, 1995). *Phacelia incana* has calyx segments that are more or less equal in fruit (Moseley, 1995). *Phacelia nama* has an inflorescence that are not helicoid cymes (Moseley, 1995).

Habitat and Distribution:

Habitat: The habitat for this species is not well understood due to the lack of recent population discoveries. However, the habitat conditions associated with most of the specimens historically collected were ephemerally moist, bare-soil areas of riparian zones and meadows in sagebrush-steppe and lower montane forests.

Habitat reported on the collection label for the species in Oregon described Buckhorn Spring as a riparian meadow in the Columbia River basalts at an elevation of 5,300 feet in montane forest with Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine (Moseley, 1995).

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Distribution: Eight scattered occurrences are known from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. The only known discovery in Oregon of the species was by Morton Peck in 1934. He found a population near Buckhorn Springs, on the edge of the Imnaha River Canyon in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. The former botanist for the Hells Canyon Recreation Area, Marty Stein, was not able to relocate this population. This population is now considered extirpated. (Moseley, 1995).

Abundance:

Historically, *Phacelia minutissima* is known from eight disjunct populations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada. In Region 6, this species currently sensitive on the Wallowa-Whitman and Wenatchee National Forests. Moseley further states that *Phacelia minutissima* has been considered extirpated in Oregon for many years.

Phenology:

Flowering has been reported between June to July. The population at the Oregon site was collected during mid-to late June

Threats/Potential Impacts of Management Activities:

The land near Buckhorn Spring has been fenced from cattle for about ten years. Previously, it was highly used and altered by grazing. All the other sites in Washington, Idaho and Nevada have had subjected to cattle grazing. The effects of grazing are unknown, but one grazed population in Idaho seemed to be unaffected (Moseley, 1995).

Mechanisms Providing for Species Conservation and Protection:

It is very unlikely that this species occurs on the Fremont/Winema National Forest. Unless a population is discovered, no conservation or protection measures are warranted. Until credible scientific information comes forward, this species should be removed from the S category on the R6 Sensitive Species List for the Fremont/Winema National Forest.

Prepared By: Robert Wooley and Jeannette Wilson

Image of *Phacelia minutissima*: (Nevada Natural Heritage Program, 2002)

Image of the Plant

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Image of the habitat



Prepared By: Jeannette Wilson, Silver Lake Ranger District

References:

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