Rare Plants of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

Prepared for the
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
and
Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area,
National Park Service

by
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MONTANA
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and
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Executive Summary

We conducted systematic surveys of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) and documented new records for 17 of 25 rare plant species known or suspected to occur in the area.

Six globally rare species were found in the NRA, of which five are sufficiently rare to warrant special management attention. For three of the species, Bighorn Canyon NRA is one of the few areas where they occur that is managed primarily for natural and wildlife values, and is critical to their long-term viability. They include:

- Bighorn fleabane (*Erigeron allocotus*; global rank - G3)
- Persistent-sepal yellowcress (*Rorippa calycina;* global rank - G3)
- Hairy prince's-plume (*Stanleya tomentosa* var. *tomentosa;* global rank - G3T3).

Based on survey results, we also identified key tasks that advance the conservation of rare plant species in Bighorn Canyon NRA:

- Control noxious weeds.
- Evaluate the effects of management actions on the five globally rare species in the course of planning.
- Initiate monitoring of three species
- Identify the most vulnerable habitats of globally rare species as places of special management concern

This report summarizes information on the identification, biology, habitat, and distribution of the 25 globally and state rare plant species that are within the Bighorn Canyon NRA. These data are intended to help resource managers develop and prioritize management and monitoring plans and to identify important concentrations and habitats of rare species. It also contributes to evaluation of rare plant conservation priorities rangewide and statewide.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Globally and state rare vascular plant species considered as inventory targets in Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

Appendix B. Draft Update to the Flora of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

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