

1. **Species:** *Delphinium alpestre* (formerly *D. ramosum* var. *alpestre*) - Colorado larkspur
2. **Status:** Table 1 summarizes the current status of this species or subspecies by various ranking entity and defines the meaning of the status.

Entity	Status	Status Definition
NatureServe	G2	A ranking of G2 means that the taxa is globally imperiled
CNHP	S2	A ranking of S2 means that the taxa is imperiled in Colorado
Colorado State List Status	None	
USDA Forest Service	None	
USDI FWS ^b	None	
^a Colorado Natural Heritage Program.		
^b US Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service.		

The 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule defines Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) as “a species, other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species’ capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area” (36 CFR 219.9). This overview was developed to summarize information relating to this species’ consideration to be listed as a SCC on the Rio Grande National Forest, and to aid in the development of plan components and monitoring objectives.

3. Taxonomy

This species was previously known as *Delphinium ramosum* var. *alpestre* and thought to be a high elevation variant of the species. However, recent treatments in the Flora of North America and Ackerfield (2015) have placed this taxa as its own species based on habitat and smaller size. The taxa *D. alpestre* is accepted by the NRCS Plants National Database as well as ITIS.

4. Distribution, abundance, and population trend on the planning unit [12.53.2,3,4]:

This species is known from 10 occurrences in Colorado and 1 in New Mexico. Three of the known occurrences are from the Rio Grande NF. One of the Rio Grande NF occurrences is from 1939 and is considered historical, the other two were last observed in 1998. There is little information on the trend of this species on the Rio Grande NF or from any of the other occurrences. Occurrences tend to be dispersed from one another and the two reports (not from the Rio Grande) that have counted individuals report approximately 50 individuals and 50-100 individuals scattered over an area of 12 acres.

Table 2. Known Occurrence Frequency within the Planning Area (Colorado Natural Heritage Data)

Known Occurrences in the past 20 years	2
Year Last Observed	1998 for both

5. Brief description of natural history and key ecological functions [basis for other 12.53 components]:

This species grows in alpine meadows and talus slopes from 10,800 – 14,300 feet in elevation. Known occurrences have low vegetative cover and often Colorado larkspur is the only plant species present on steep and active talus slopes. One of the known occurrences noted that the species was present near seasonal seeps. The microhabitat of Colorado larkspur is unknown, but a common theme of the general habitat is the presence of rocky soil and exposed conditions. The 1939 occurrence from the Rio Grande NF noted that the species was rare and was collected “in burn above aspen”, the extent to which this species interacts with fire or any other disturbance is unknown especially since all of the other known occurrences are in barren areas, which presumably would not carry fire.

6. Overview of ecological conditions for recovery, conservation, and viability [12.53 7, 9?, 10, 11, 12] including Threats and Risk Factors:

The presence of this species is likely the result of edaphic factors that inhibit the growth of other vegetation. The rocky substrate and exposed conditions that represent the habitat of Colorado larkspur appear to be necessary for the continued viability of the species. Habitat alteration and damage to individuals from hiking and recreation is noted as a threat by Colorado Natural Heritage as is mining and energy development in some alpine areas. Changes in the climatic regime are also a possible threat.

7. Key literature:

Ackerfield, J. 2015. Flora of Colorado. Botanical Research Institute of Texas Press. Fort Worth, TX.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). 2015. Element Occurrence Records for *Delphinium alpestre* (Colorado larkspur). Unpublished data stored on U.S. Forest Service Geographic Information Systems Servers. Compiled onto USFS Servers from CNHP database February 2015.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). 2015. Colorado rare plant guide website for *Delphinium ramosum* var. *alpestre*. Accessed October 12, 2015 at <http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu/download/projects/rareplants/guide.asp?id=16702>

Flora of North America Editorial Committee, eds. 1993+. Flora of North America North of Mexico. 19+ vols. New York and Oxford. *Delphinium alpestre* treatment accessed September 25, 2015 at http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=1&taxon_id=233500470

Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS). 2015. Online database. <http://www.itis.gov/> Accessed September 2, 2015.

NatureServe, 2015. NatureServe Explorer. Online database. <http://explorer.natureserve.org/index.htm> Accessed September 2, 2015.

USDA NRCS Plants National Database. 2015. Online database. <http://plants.usda.gov/> Accessed September 25, 2015.