

ATTACHMENT SS2

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: <i>Aster mollis</i> / Soft Aster			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
<p>1 Distribution within R2</p>	A	<p>Soft Aster is almost restricted to Region 2 and is primarily on the Bighorn National Forest. It is restricted to the Bighorn Range (Big Horn, Johnson, Natrona, Sheridan, and Washakie counties) and Cliff Creek/Hoback Canyon area of Sublette County (Fertig et al. 1994).</p> <p>It occurs primarily on deep, rocky calcareous soils in dry mountain big sagebrush or shrubby cinquefoil grasslands and mountain meadows bordered by aspen or conifer woods at 6400-8500 feet. Populations have also been documented from limestone outcrops and redbeds. Common associated species include <i>Festuca idahoensis</i>, <i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>, <i>Stipa nelsonii</i>, <i>Leucopoa kingii</i>, <i>Erigeron subtrinervis</i>, <i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>, <i>Aster foliaceus</i>, <i>Potentilla arguta</i>, and <i>Penstemon procerus</i>.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertig 2000a, 2000b • Fertig et al. 1994. • Marriott 1992 • Hartman and Nelson 1993, 1994 • University of Wyoming 1998 • Welp et al. 2000
<p>2 Distribution outside R2</p>	A	<p>Soft aster is virtually a Wyoming endemic. It was discovered by Fertig in Montana in 2001, represented by a population that straddles the stateline. There is also one dubious occurrence outside of the Region 2 perimeter in Bridger-Teton National Forest.</p> <p>Jones (1984) also reports a specimen of <i>Aster ascendens</i> from Fremont County "with possible influence of <i>A. mollis</i>".</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertig 2000a, 2000b • Jones 1984
<p>3 Dispersal Capability</p>	D	<p>Not known.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -

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4 Abundance in R2	B	<p>It is known from 34 extant and 2 historical occurrences in Wyoming, 32 of which have been discovered or relocated since 1990 (most recently in 1999).</p> <p>Many populations are locally abundant, containing several thousand individual plants. Accurate censuses have been difficult to attain at some sites, however, due to the presence of hybrid individuals and other difficulties in making positive identifications.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertig 2000b
5 Population Trend in R2	BD	<p>Populations are probably stable, although trend data are lacking for most populations.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertig 2000b
6 Habitat Trend in R2	D	<p>Not known.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification	B	<p>Grazing and trampling have been identified as potential threats, although low levels of herbivory or disturbance do not appear to have a negative impact. It is documented from 8 potential Research Natural Areas on Bighorn National Forest. It is also found on lands managed by the BLM Buffalo, Casper, and Worland Field Offices. Most populations are on lands managed for multiple-use. Other lands are managed for multiple use.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertig 2000b Welp et al. 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1998f, 1998g, 1998h
8 Life History and Demographics	D	<p><i>Aster mollis</i> is a multi-stemmed herbaceous perennial that flowers more than once in its life cycle. It produces flowers from late July – mid September.</p> <p>Additional information on the species, including population structure, longevity, and mortality, are not available.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriott Fertig et al. 1994
Initial Evaluator(s): Bonnie Heidel and Scott Laursen			Date: 9 Feb 2002

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National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY(L)¹ to occur:

<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>		<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>		<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>		<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>		<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	
Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely
		Cimmaron NG		Samuel R. McKelvie NF		Black Hills NF		Shoshone NF	
				Halsey NF		Buffalo Gap NG		Bighorn NF	X
				Nebraska NF		Ft. Pierre NG		Black Hills NF	
				Ogalala NG				Medicine Bow NF	
								Thunder Basin NG	

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¹ Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.

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