

ATTACHMENT SS2

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: *Sporobolus airoides* / Great Plains Salt Meadows, Alkali Sacaton

Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
<p>1 Distribution within R2</p>	C	<p>Region 2 harbors a central portion of the distribution of Alkali sacaton, where it occurs in all five states. Within Wyoming, it occurs in the central and eastern portions of the state, including Thunder Basin National Grassland and possible both Bighorn and Medicine Bow national forests. It is known or likely to be on most national grasslands of Region 2.</p> <p>In Wyoming, Great Plains salt meadows is commonly found between 4000-6600 feet in elevation in wet clay-rich streambeds, <i>Sarcobatus/Atriplex</i> flats, and shale slopes and outwashes, where it sometimes dominates the herbaceous layer. The species is a facultative halophyte, having a broad tolerance to salinity. Its habitats are extensive on the landscape.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorn 2001 • Great Plains Flora Association 1986 • Hallsten et al. 1987 • University of Wyoming 1998 • USDA Forest Service R2 2001
<p>2 Distribution outside R2</p>	C	<p>Outside of Region 2, it spans central and western states from North Dakota to Washington and south to Missouri, Texas, Mexico, and California.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Plains Flora Association 1986 • NatureServe 2002
<p>3 Dispersal Capability</p>	C	<p>Alkali sacaton reproduces from seeds and tillers. Seed production is abundant, and seeds remain viable for many years. Seedcoats need not be scarified, but seeds must undergo an afterripening period of several months for good germination. Water movement in floodplains disperses seeds, some of which are deposited in saturated sediments where they later germinate. Alkali sacaton is classified as tolerant of, but not resistant to, fire. Top-killing by fire is probably frequent, and the plants can be killed by severe fire.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Forest Service 2002

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4 Abundance in R2	C	<p>Alkali sacaton is known from well over 100 records in Wyoming, all but 2 lying east of the Continental Divide within the Region 2 perimeter. Most occurrences lie below national forest boundaries, and it is known from app. 6 records on Thunder Basin National Grassland, and in or near the Medicine Bow and Shoshone national forests.</p> <p>In Wyoming, it is ranked "S4" and is not tracked. In Colorado, it is ranked "S3." It is present but not ranked in Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NatureServe 2002 • University of Wyoming 1998 • WYNDD 2002
5 Population Trend in R2	D	<p>Not known.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -
6 Habitat Trend in R2	BA	<p>The riparian habitat of this species may have historically declined with conversion to planted meadows and cropland, but the species is also widely distributed in secondary range where trends are likely to be stable.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -
7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification	C	<p>The upland habitats and most salt-affected of riparian habitats of this species are highly resilient to conversion or modification.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -

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8 Life History and Demographics	D	<p>Alkali sacaton is a long-lived, warm-season, densely tufted perennial bunchgrass. Panicles are nearly half the length of the plant with stiff, slender, widely spreading branches. Spikelets have 1 flower and tend to diverge from the panicles, appearing scattered. Seeds are free from the lemma and fall readily from the spikelet at maturity. Flowering occurs from June to October in the Great Plains. Seeds are produced from late summer to October. They usually germinate in July after a 9-month afterripening period. Grasses are generally wind-pollinated.</p> <p>Additional information on the species, including life history stages, population structure, longevity, mortality, and seed biology, are not available.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Forest Service 2002
Initial Evaluator(s): Bonnie Heidel and Scott Laursen			Date: July 6, 2002

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

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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<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely	<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	Known	Likely
Arapaho-Roosevelt NF			Cimmaron NG			Samuel R. McKelvie NF			Black Hills NF			Shoshone NF		
White River NF						Halsey NF			Buffalo Gap NG			Bighorn NF	?	
Routt NF						Nebraska NF			Ft. Pierre NG			Black Hills NF		
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison NF						Ogalala NG						Medicine Bow NF	?	
San Juan NF												Thunder Basin NG	X	
Rio Grande NF														
Pike-San Isabel NF														
Comanche NG														

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