

Pagosa Skyrocket

Ipomopsis polyantha



Pagosa skyrocket / Alicia Langton

When Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (Act) in 1973, it recognized that many of our nation's native plants and animals were in danger of becoming extinct. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Act to preserve these imperiled species and their habitats for future generations.

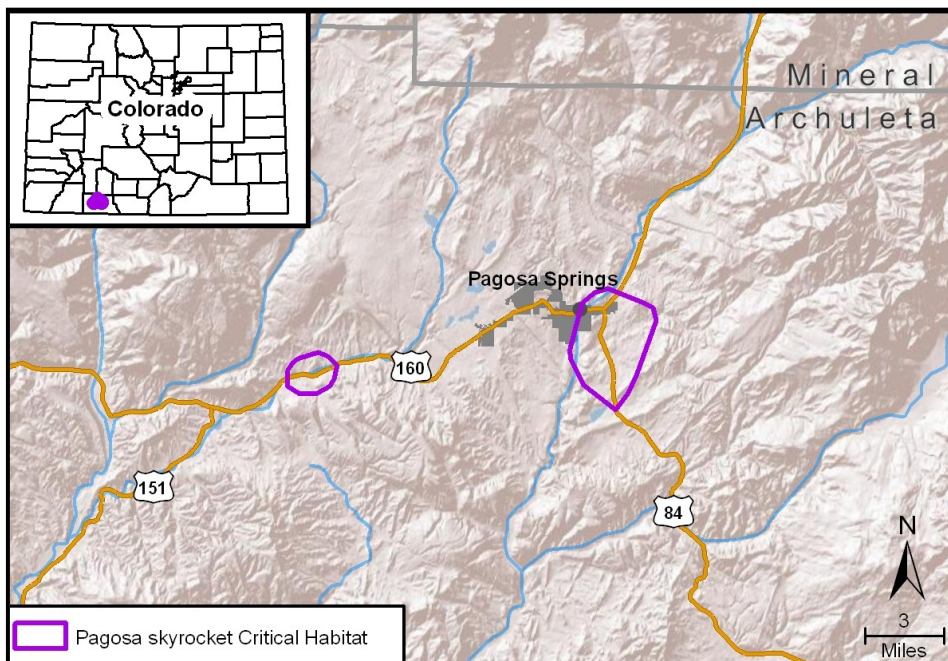
On August 26th, 2011, Pagosa skyrocket was listed as an endangered species (76 FR 45054).

What does the Pagosa skyrocket look like?

Pagosa skyrocket is a non-woody (herbaceous) plant species in the phlox family. It grows 12 to 24 inches tall from a rosette of finely dissected leaves. Clusters of white or light pink flowers, often flecked with purple or pink spots, run along the stems. Pagosa skyrocket can be seen in bloom in June and July. The plant grows as a rosette for one to many years until conditions are right to flower and reproduce.



Pagosa skyrocket / Ellen Mayo



Where does the Pagosa skyrocket occur?

Pagosa skyrocket is only found in two populations in and near the town of Pagosa Springs at an elevation of 6,800 to 7,300 ft. The plant can be found on gray soils derived from Mancos Shale in open grasslands and grassland understories at the edges of open forests. The species has adapted to grow on these shale soils, which are very dry and erosive, making the conditions harsh and difficult for most other plant species to survive. Due to development impacts, remaining Pagosa skyrocket habitat is often found adjacent to roads, in dry ditches, among buildings, and in some pastures.



Pagosa skyrocket in its native habitat / Ellen Mayo

What can you do to help conserve Pagosa skyrocket?

- Funding and assistance may be available to help conserve the species on private and local government lands. Funding opportunities could include costs for fencing, tax credits, or assistance with conservation easements.
- Spread the word about this local treasure!
- Contact us and network with others working to conserve Pagosa skyrocket.
- Participate in recovery planning and conservation efforts.

Why does the Pagosa skyrocket need protection?

The primary threat to Pagosa skyrocket is land use changes including commercial, residential, municipal, and agricultural property development, and associated utility installations and access roads. In addition, nonnative invasive plants (weeds), concentrated livestock use, and the potential effects of climate change may impact the species. Because of its extremely limited distribution, the species is vulnerable to habitat modification and changes in the environment. Pagosa skyrocket also relies on insect pollinators to reproduce. The loss of pollinators and pollinator habitat is considered a threat to this species.

What have we done to recover the Pagosa skyrocket?

Since Pagosa skyrocket was recently listed, conservation and recovery actions are in their beginning phases. However, many efforts to conserve the species began even before the species was listed:

- Many local, state, and federal agencies and organizations, as well as privately owned businesses, have been working together to conserve the species.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies have worked with private landowners to implement on-the-ground management and protection.
- The Rare Plant Conservation Initiative has developed a

Conservation Action Plan for the rare and threatened species in the Pagosa Springs area which outlines needed conservation actions.

What do we need to do to recover the Pagosa skyrocket?

We will develop a Recovery Plan for Pagosa skyrocket in the next few years that will include the following actions deemed necessary to achieve recovery:

- Establish conservation areas to protect Pagosa skyrocket habitat and habitat for pollinators.
- Establish a management plan to help address threats and protect the species in perpetuity.
- Develop propagation and transplantation protocols for future restoration or reintroduction efforts.
- Conduct education and outreach in the community.



Pagosa skyrocket rosettes / Alicia Langton



Pagosa skyrocket and pollinator close-up / Alicia Langton

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