North Park phacelia

Phacelia formosula

North Park phacelia / Alicia Langton

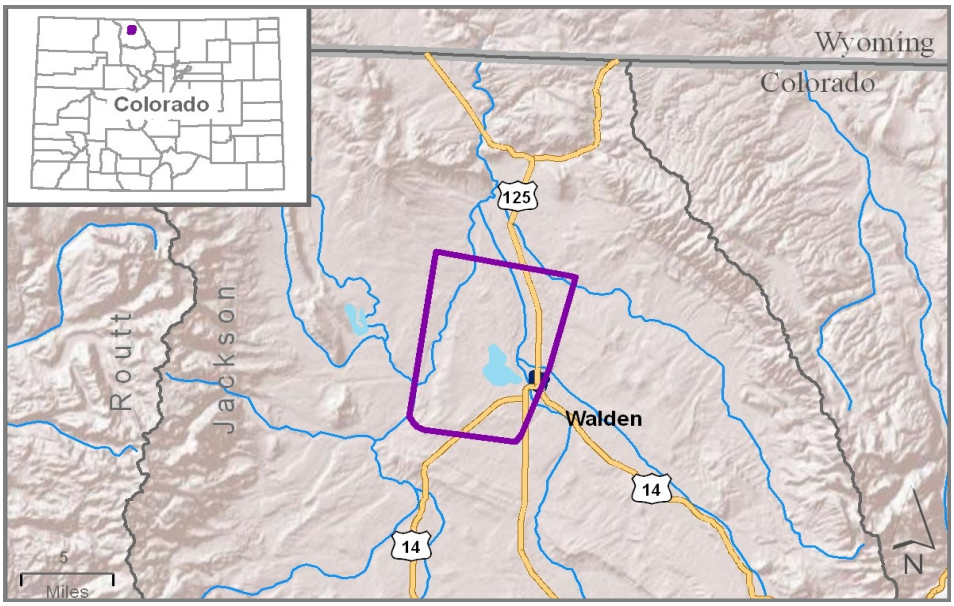
When Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (Act) in 1973, it recognized that many of our nation's native plants and animals were in danger of becoming extinct. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Act to preserve these imperiled species and their habitats for future generations.

On September 1, 1982, North Park phacelia was listed as an endangered species (47 FR 38540).

What does the North Park phacelia look like?

North park phacelia is a non-woody (herbaceous) plant species in the borage family. It grows on average 6 to 12 inches tall and its bright purple flowers are arranged in coils at the ends of stems. Leaves are dark green, deeply lobed, and covered with short, coarse stiff hairs. You can find North Park phacelia blooming in July and August. However, the species is a biennial surviving for one year as a rosette of leaves before flowering and dying the following year. North Park phacelia was first collected in 1918 by George Osterhout, a famed botanist from Colorado.

North Park phacelia / Alicia Langton



Where does the North Park phacelia occur?

North park phacelia is found only in North Park of northern Colorado's Jackson County. The species is limited to eroded soil outcrops composed of barren exposures of the Coalmont Formation, a coal-bearing substrate. The species is found at about 8,000 to 8,300 feet in elevation. Roughly 16,000 individuals are known from six separate populations and the entire species is known only

North Park phacelia habitat and surveyors / Ellen Mayo

to an area measuring roughly 10 miles in either direction (north to south, east to west).

Why does the North Park phacelia need protection?

The primary threats to North Park phacelia are concentrated livestock use (trampling), off-highway vehicle recreation, land use changes including energy development, commercial and residential development, and range improvements. Because of its extremely limited distribution, the species is vulnerable to habitat modification and changes in the environment. North Park phacelia also relies on insect pollinators to maintain genetic diversity. The loss of pollinators and pollinator habitat is considered a threat to the species.

What have we done to recover the North Park phacelia?

In March 1986, we published a recovery plan that lists necessary actions to recover the species. We have worked with Federal, State, and private partners to implement recovery objectives, including:

- Adapting livestock management practices to conserve North Park phacelia and implementing a monitoring program at Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge.
- Funding numerous research and conservation projects such as habitat and life history studies, genetic and taxonomic research, and propagation.
- The Rare Plant Conservation Initiative has developed a Conservation Action Plan for the rare and threatened species in the North Park area outlining needed conservation actions.
- A conservation area protecting North Park phacelia was established in a partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and a private landowner.

What do we need to do to recover the North Park phacelia?

In our last status review of North Park phacelia (December 2011), we recommended a number of future actions that we consider necessary to recover this species, including:

- Continuing surveys and establishing population monitoring.
- Conducting education and outreach in the community.

North Park phacelia close-up / Alicia Langton

- Helping private landowners and the State to conserve the species, its habitat and areas for pollinators.
- Establishing conservation areas on Federal lands for North Park phacelia.
- Addressing the impacts from concentrated livestock use, nonnative invasive plants (weeds), habitat fragmentation, and other impacts related to land development.

What can you do to help conserve North Park phacelia?

- 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 the species.
- Participate in recovery planning and conservation efforts.

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