

White Bladderpod *Lesquerella pallida*

Listed as Endangered without Critical Habitat in 1987.

Global and State rank: G1S1

DESCRIPTION:

Annual member of mustard family ranging 2-25 inches high, erect or spreading.

Leaves linear or oblong, and margins smooth, toothed, or wavy.

Basal leaves up to 4 inches long and deeply lobed (on stalks up to 1.5 inches long).

Leaves further up stem are smaller and unlobed.

Flowers April-May.

Flowers on short stalks and consist of 4 white, egg-shaped, half-inch petals.

Flowers occur singly on tops of stems or in groups of as many as 20 along an elongated stem.

Fruits are in pods that pop open to release seeds.

OCCURRENCE: San Augustine County.

HABITAT:

Grassy openings or open edges on or near outcrops of Weches geological formation.

Weches outcrops consist of a layer of calcareous marine sediments above an impermeable layer of grayish-green glauconite clay. This results in islands of seepy, alkaline, open glades, that support herbaceous, and specialized plant communities. More than 100 species have been found to be associated with these glades.

SOURCE OF IMPACTS:

Road construction and maintenance, urban development, overuse of herbicides, overgrazing, conversion of native plants to improved pasture, mining of glauconite ("greenrock"), and poultry farms. Most serious current impact is encroachment by invasive, non-native plant species, particularly Macartney rose and Japanese honeysuckle.

STATUS:

Only 3 populations were known at the time of its listing. Six more small populations have been discovered. However, no protection measures are in place for any of these. All sites have been, and are being, degraded by highly invasive non-native plants. The bladderpod is being increasingly overgrown and crowded out by these non-natives, and numbers are declining at most sites.

RECOVERY EFFORTS:

- o Shrub removal from three sites with hydro-axe in 1995. Good response following spring, but new work is necessary.
- o Seed-base established and maintained at three propagation facilities.
- o Under a Cooperative Agreement with Clear Lake office, Nature Conservancy of Texas has developed "Conservation Area Plan for the San Augustine Glades". Although the Weches glades are considered high-priority for protection, TNC does not currently have the funds to pursue conservation easements or other form of protection.

