

## Rare Plant Species at Woolsey Prairie Updated July 2012

Eight plant species tracked as elements of conservation concern (rare species) by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, have been found at the Woolsey Prairie site. Most are sedges (family Cyperaceae) and all are characteristic of prairie remnants. These include:

***Carex arkansana* (Arkansas sedge) – G4S2** – This uncommon sedge is known in Arkansas from wet prairie remnants, hydric oak flatwoods, and similar open wetland habitats (ANHC, 2012). While it has no wetland indicator status code in the USDA Plants Database, it is listed by Yatskievych (1999) as occurring primarily in bottomland prairies and moist depressions of upland prairies. At Woolsey Prairie it is scattered in wetter areas of the prairie.

***Carex fissa* var. *fissa* (hammock sedge) – G4?S1** – Prior to its discovery at Woolsey Prairie, this rare sedge was known in Arkansas from only two sites in Franklin and Lonoke Counties where it occurs in prairie-associated wetlands (ANHC, 2012). At Woolsey Prairie it occurs in two naturally occurring prairie swales in cells W-1 and W-2.

***Carex opaca* (opaque prairie sedge) – G4S2S3** – This rare sedge is primarily associated with unplowed, wet tallgrass prairie remnants in Arkansas (ANHC, 2012). While it has no wetland indicator status code in the USDA Plants Database, it is listed by Yatskievych (1999) as primarily occurring in “bottomland prairies, moist depressions of upland prairies, and margins of fens”. At Woolsey Prairie it is scattered in wetter areas of the prairie.

***Carex pellita* (woolly sedge) – G5S1S2** – Prior to its collection at Woolsey Prairie, this species was known to be extant at a single Arkansas locality, in a fen in Marion County. It has since been found at three other sites in Benton, Washington, and Marion counties. At Woolsey Prairie it is found in several swales in cell W-2. It has increased at the site based on observations from 2007 to 2012.

***Carex scoparia* var. *scoparia* (pointed sedge) – G5S1S2** – This species is very rare in Arkansas and is known only from prairie-associated wetlands in Washington and Benton counties and from a wet depression on top of Rich Mountain in Polk County.

***Eleocharis wolfii* (Wolf’s spikerush) – G3G4S3** – This wetland sedge occurs in Arkansas primarily in wet areas in unplowed tallgrass prairie remnants but can persist in wet, open areas in landscapes that were formerly dominated by prairie vegetation (ANHC, 2012). At Woolsey Prairie it is locally common in several naturally occurring swales and has been found at the margins of two of the constructed marshes.

***Polygala incarnata* (pink milkwort) – G5S1S2** – This rare species of wildflower is known in Arkansas from remnant prairies and other historically open habitat like glades and savannas. A single plant was found on a pimple mound in cell E-4 in 2012. It is

known from scattered counties in Arkansas but most of the records are historical and many of the sites where it was historically found have since been destroyed.

***Rhynchospora macrostachya* (tall horned beaksedge) – G4S2** - Prior to its collection at Woolsey Prairie, this species was known in Arkansas only from a few scattered historical collections from remnant prairies. It has since also been found in several prairie-associated wetlands in Franklin County. At Woolsey Prairie it was known from two natural prairie swales prior to construction of the berms, but is now also increasing in several of the wetland cells.

#### **SOURCES:**

ANHC (Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission). 2012. Database of Elements of Conservation Concern. Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Little Rock, AR.

Yatskievych, G. 1999. Steyermark's Flora of Missouri. Vol. 1. Revised Edition. Missouri Dept. of Conservation & Missouri Botanical Garden Press. St. Louis, MO. 991 pp.