

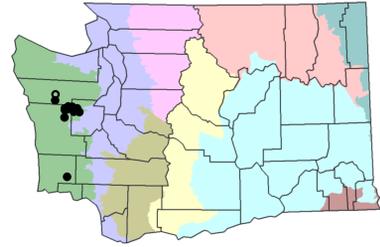
# ***Parnassia palustris* L. var. *neogaea* Fernald**

northern grass-of-pannassus

Saxifragaceae - saxifrage family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5TNR / S2



**General Description:** Hairless perennial herb; flowering stems (7) 10-25 (30) cm tall. Leaves all basal. Petioles mostly 1.5-4 times as long as leaf blades. Blades triangular to elliptic-ovate, (0.5) 1-2 (3) cm long, abruptly tapered, squared at the base or somewhat heart-shaped to kidney-shaped.

**Floral Characteristics:** Flowering stems with a lanceolate to broadly ovate bract, up to 3 x 2.5 cm, usually borne below (sometimes at) the midlength of the stem. Flowers solitary, terminal. Calyx adnate to ovary for (1.5) 2-3 mm; lobes 5, (4) 5-8 (9) mm long, with 5-9 veins. Petals white, (6) 7-12 mm long, nearly twice as long as the calyx lobes, with 7-13 veins; usually persistent. Fertile stamens 5, alternating with sterile stamens. Sterile stamens slender at the base; upper portion broader, divided into (5) 7-11 (to many) slender fingerlike segments ending in head-shaped tips. Flowers July to August.

**Fruits:** Ovoid capsules (8) 10-12 mm long.

**Identification Tips:** This variety is not in Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973). The petals of *P. fimbriata* are conspicuously fringed at the base with a row of equally spaced marginal hairs. *P. kotzebuei* has sterile stamens with entire ends or up to 6 short segments, and usually bractless flowering stems. In contrast, *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* has bracts that are borne at or below the midlength of the flowering stems, and sterile stamens with 7 to many long, fingerlike segments. *P. parviflora* has smaller flowers, with petals 4-7 (10) mm long and usually with 5-7 veins.

**Range:** Peripheral and possibly disjunct in WA. AK south to WA, across northern N.A., to Newfoundland.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Arctic tundra to moist montane areas, often associated with limestone, usually along streams or springs. In WA it grows in stream channels, moist meadows, bogs, and seeps, from 100-1000 m (360-3300 ft) elevation. Associated species include deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Alaskan cedar (*Chameacyparis nootkatensis*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon* spp.), clubmoss (*Lycopodium* spp.), fringed grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia fimbriata*), western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), and beargrass (*Xerophyllum tenax*).

**Comments:** Found in areas with heavy elk use and active timber management. Douglas et al 1998-2002, vol. 5 do not recognize varieties.

**References:** Cody 1996; Klinkenberg 2008.



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
©1961 University of Washington  
Press



photo by Kathy Ahlenslager



photo by Kathy Ahlenslager