

***Parnassia palustris* L. var. *neogaea* Fern.**

northern grass of Parnassus
Saxifragaceae (Saxifrage Family)

Status: State Sensitive

Rank: G4T4S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961): This taxon has flowering stems that are 2 ¾ to 12 in. (7-30 cm) tall with lanceolate to broadly ovate, clasping bracts. The bracts are up to 1 1/8 in. (3 cm) long and 1 in. (2.5 cm) broad, and are usually borne at or below the midlength of the flower stem. The leaf stalks are mostly 1.5 to 4 times as long as leaf blades. The triangular to elliptic-ovate basal leaf blades, are ¼ to 1 1/8 in. (5-30 mm) long, glabrous, abruptly tapered, and either heart-shaped to kidney-shaped or squared at the base. The calyx lobes are oblong-lanceolate to somewhat acute and fused to the ovary for 1/16 to 1/8 in. (1.5-3 mm). The petals are white, and nearly twice as long as the calyx lobes, with 7-11 veins. The stamenodes (modified sterile stamens) are slender at the base with a broader upper portion, which is divided into 5-11 (to many) slender filament-like segments that end in more or less knob-like tips.

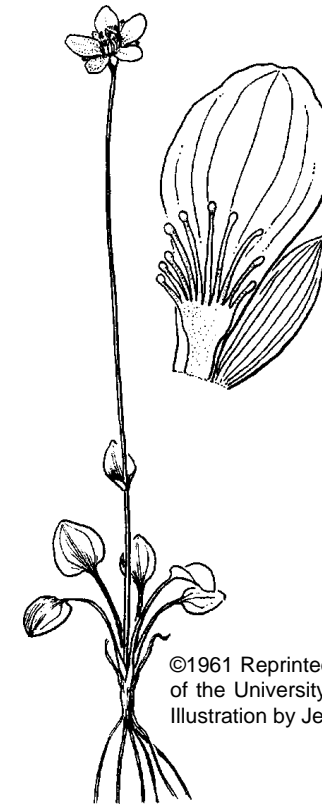
Identification Tips: *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* is more variable than other species of *Parnassia* in general size and in the structure of the leaves and stamenodes. It is easily distinguished from *P. fimbriata* and fairly distinguishable from *P. kotzebuei*. *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* is distinguished from *P. fimbriata* (and *P. fimbriata* varieties) because the petals of *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* lack any fringe, while the petals of *P. fimbriata* are conspicuously fringed with a row of close, equally spaced, hairs along the margin. *P. kotzebuei* is rare in Washington (with two occurrences in Okanogan County), and is distinguishable from *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* by the stamenodes and bracts. *P. kotzebuei* lacks fringe on the petals like *P. palustris* var. *neogaea*, but the stamenodes of *P. kotzebuei* end with 4-6 short segments instead of 5-11 (to many) like *P. palustris* var. *neogaea*. The flowering stems of *P. kotzebuei* are bractless, or sometimes with a near basal bract, while *P. palustris* var. *neogaea* has bracts that are borne at or below the midlength of the flowering stems.

Phenology: This taxon is in flower July through August.

Range: This taxon is found from Alaska south to Washington and as far east as Newfoundland. In Washington the taxon occurs in the Olympic National Forest (Clallam, Jefferson, Mason, Grays Harbor and Pacific counties).

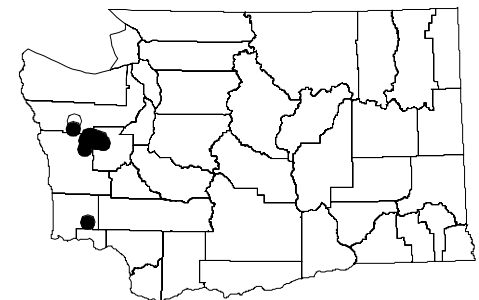
Parnassia palustris* var. *neogaea

northern grass of Parnassus



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Known distribution
of *Parnassia palustris*
var. *neogaea*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Kathy Ahlenslager



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Habitat: In Washington, the taxon is found in stream channels, moist meadows, bogs, and at or near seep areas, from 360 to 3300 feet (110-1005 meters) elevation. Associated plant species at one or more sites include deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Alaskan cedar (*Chameacyparis nootkatensis*), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon* sp.), clubmoss (*Lycopodium* sp.), fringed grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia fimbriata*), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), and common beargrass (*Xerophyllum tenax*).

Ecology: This taxon occurs in arctic tundra to montane moist areas, usually along streams or springs.

State Status Comments: There are fewer than fifteen occurrences of the taxon in Washington.

Inventory Needs: Bogs and meadows in the Cascades Range and Olympic Mountains should be inventoried for this taxon.

Threats and Management Concerns: This taxon is found in areas with heavy elk use and active timber management.

Comments: Hitchcock et. al (1961) refer to this taxon as *Parnassia palustris* L. var. *montanensis* (Fern & Rydb.) Hitch. A synonym for this taxon is *Parnassia multisetata* (Ledeb.) Fern.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 614 pp.