

## ***Poa nervosa*** (Hook.) Vasey

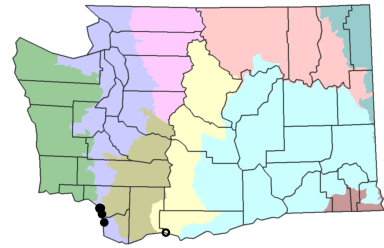
synonym: *Poa nervosa* (Hook.) Vasey var. *nervosa*

Wheeler's bluegrass

Poaceae - grass family

status: State Sensitive, BLM strategic, USFS strategic

rank: G3? / S2



**General Description:** Adapted from Flora of North America (1993+): Short-rhizomatous perennial, producing loose tufts or solitary shoots. Stems erect or with decumbent bases, 20-65 cm tall. Leaf sheaths smooth or sparsely roughened, hairless or sparsely short-hairy, closed for 2/3 to 9/10 their length. Collars of lower leaves usually densely long-hairy on and near the margins. Ligules 0.5-1.5 mm, hairy, truncate or widely rounded. Blades 2-4.5 mm wide, usually flat, lax, tips broadly prow-shaped.

**Floral Characteristics:** Panicles 8-15 cm long, usually open, with 25-80 spikelets; nodes with 3-5 branches. Branches 2.5-8 cm, ascending to spreading, with 2-8 spikelets. Spikelets 4-7 mm long, laterally compressed, up to 3.5 times longer than wide, with 3-8 flowers. Glumes shorter than adjacent lemmas, lanceolate, distinctly keeled. Lemmas 3-4.5 mm long, lanceolate, distinctly keeled, keels and marginal veins usually hairless; lemma bases usually hairless, rarely minutely webbed. Anthers usually 2.5-4 mm long, sometimes vestigial (less than 0.3 mm). Identifiable April to August.

**Identification Tips:** *Poa wheeleri*\* differs in having hairless or short-hairy leaf collars, vestigial anthers, and usually lower sheaths densely roughened with downward-pointing hairs (sheaths are rough to the touch when pulling upward). Unlike *P. nervosa*, it occurs at middle to high elevations east of the Cascade crest.

**Range:** Endemic from Vancouver Island, B.C., to northwest OR.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Low-elevation wet habitats west of the Cascade crest; forest openings with minimal canopy cover, mossy rock outcrops, cliff crevices, and occasionally talus. Sites are moist fall through winter, but dry out quickly in spring and summer. Often sparsely vegetated, with little soil development. Adjacent woods are dominated by Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*). Elevations in WA: 3-240 m (10-800 ft).

**Comments:** Road maintenance and construction, herbicides, and quarrying are the main threats to the known occurrences. This taxon may have been extirpated from B.C.

**References:** Cronquist et al. 1972-94, vol. 6; Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 24.



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photo by David Powell

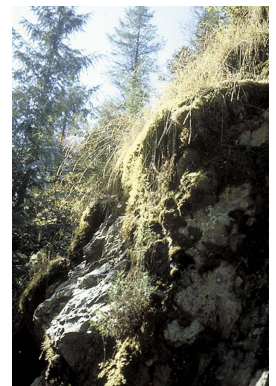


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