

Penstemon pahutensis – Pahute Mesa beardtongue

Family: Scrophulariaceae (figwort)

Bloom Period: May-mid June

Perennial: 6-15 inches tall, compact woody base, 1-2 leafy stems

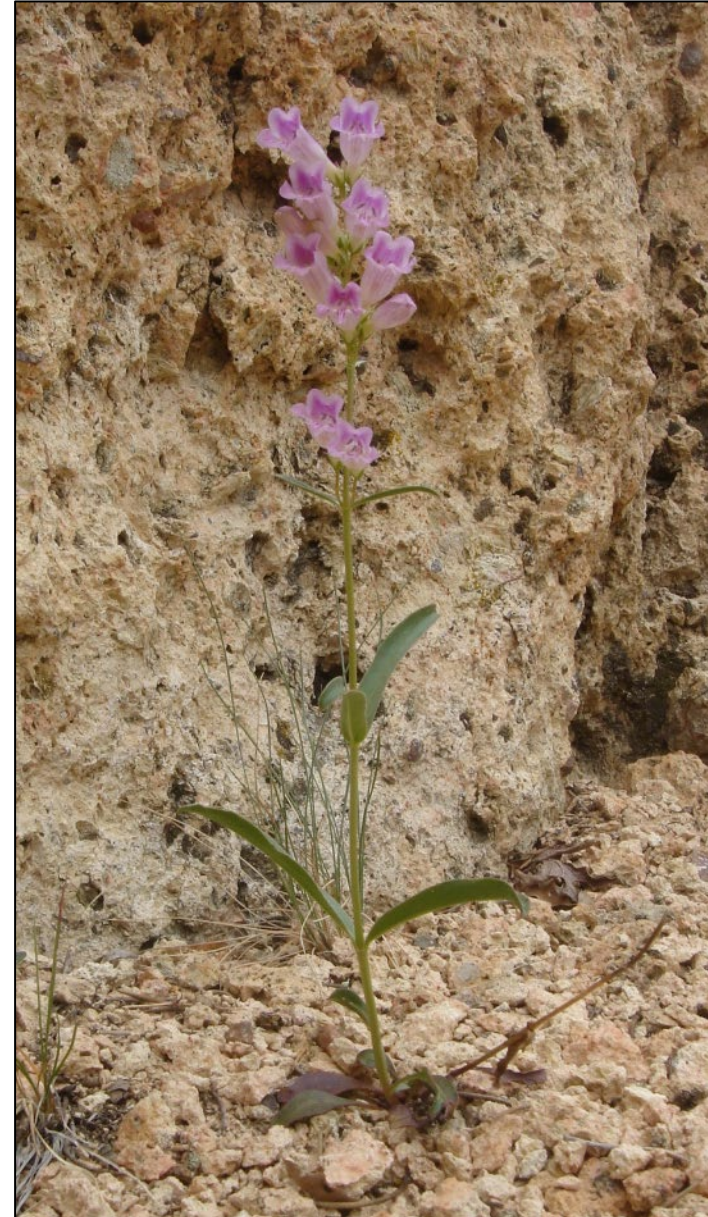
Leaves: Basal, linear to narrowly lanceolate, leafstalks that attach leaves to stems present (petiolate), not lobed or toothed (entire) around the edges (margins)

Flowers: Large, showy, tubular, pinkish-lavender to bluish, at the top of the plant, smooth, yellow-white bearded floor of the inside of the flower, pollen producing part of the flower (staminode) densely golden-yellow-hairy

Fruit/seed: Irregularly shaped, sometimes angular, brown to black

Uniqueness: Resembles *Penstemon speciosus*, which has no beard, can be found in similar habitat, but has not been found on the NNSS

Location it was first identified (type locality): Nye County, NV, NNSS, 19-01 Road, South Kawich Canyon (Reveal 1968)



Beards and Beardtongues

Pahute Mesa beardtongue is known for its “beard” (yellow-white hairs) on the lower, inner part of the flower. “Beardtongue” refers to the sterile stamen (pollen producing part of the flower) called a “staminode”, which for this plant is densely covered in golden yellow hairs and rests behind its “beard”. The staminode does not produce pollen, but plays a functional role in pollination.



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Habitat: Not restricted to one specific habitat, open areas on loose soil, or in very rocky areas among boulders or growing from crevices, disturbed areas

Distribution: NV (Nye and Esmeralda Counties), CA (Inyo County)

Elevation: 5,360-8,240 feet

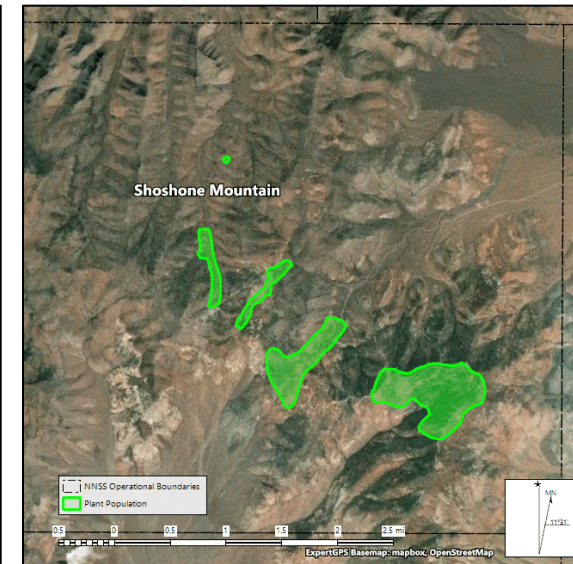
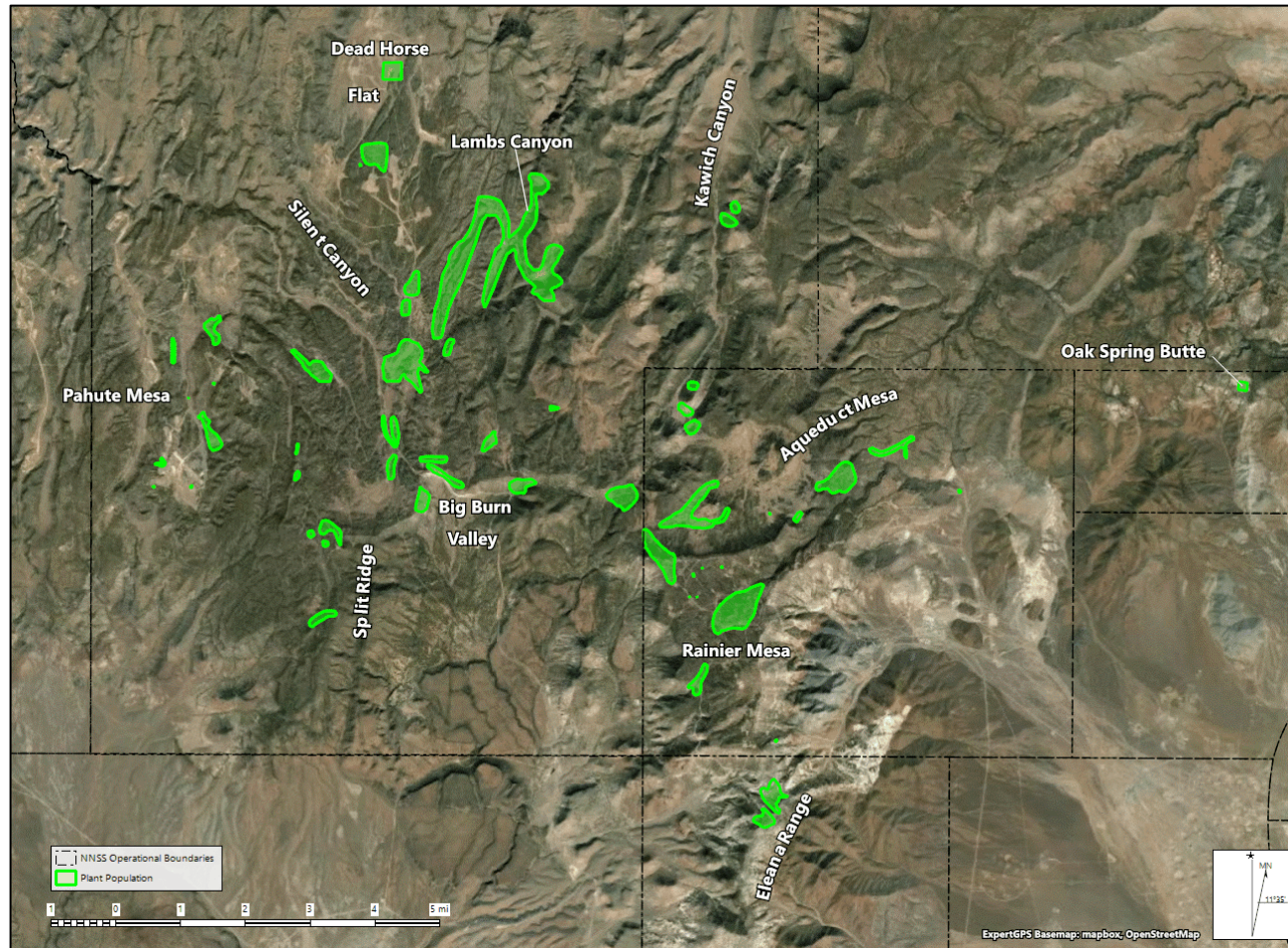
Associated Vegetation: Pinyon pine, juniper, sagebrush, bitterbrush, Gambel oak

Threats on the NNSS: Infrastructure maintenance (e.g., power pole replacements, road maintenance, etc.) pose a threat to individual plants



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Distribution on the NNSS: Kawich Canyon, Pahute Mesa (Silent Canyon, Dead Horse Flats, Lambs Canyon, Split Ridge), Rainier Mesa (Gold Meadows, Tongue Wash), Eleana Range, Aqueduct Mesa, Big Burn Valley, Shoshone Mountain; ~3,000 acres of habitat

Protection Status (NV): No federal or state protections. Listed on the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage At-Risk Plant and Animal Tracking List and the Nevada Native Plant Society Watch List (<https://heritage.nv.gov/documents/ndnh-current-tracking-list>)

Current Monitoring Goal: Very widely distributed on the NNSS; populations are opportunistically visited every year, with new populations and population expansions frequently discovered; survey subset of populations once every 5 years

Contact 702-295-0393 if
your activity might potentially
impact this sensitive species