

## *Cryptantha scoparia* A. Nels.

miner's candle

Boraginaceae (Borage Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive

**Rank:** G4?S1

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1959): This species is a slender annual that is 2 to 11¾ in. (5 to 30 cm) tall, usually freely branched and often without a well-defined central axis. The herbage has straight, sharp, stiff, appressed hairs or a few hairs that are more spreading, and the hairs of the leaves have towering pustules at the base. The leaves are linear. The spikes are naked and tend to be paired. The fruiting calyx is narrow, 1/8 to ¼ in. (4 to 6 mm) long, closely ascending, with straight, sharp, stiff, appressed hairs and/or rough stiff trichomes, and also is evidently bristly with long stiff trichomes. The corolla is about 1 mm wide. There are ordinarily 4 nutlets that are lanceolate, 1/16 in. (1.7 to 2.1 mm) long, and 0.5 to 0.7 mm wide. The nutlets appear serrate along the edges, especially toward the apex. The nutlet scar is closed or narrowly open and the style about equals the nutlets.

**Identification Tips:** The edges of the nutlets of *Cryptantha scoparia* are serrate when examined with a 10X or higher magnification hand lens. This feature is unique among the species of annual *Cryptantha* found in Washington. Nutlets should be mature for correct identification. The spreading hairs on the calyx are also diagnostic.

**Phenology:** In Washington, *C. scoparia* has been identified from April until June.

**Range:** This species is found in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. In Washington, *Cryptantha scoparia* has been found in Benton, Yakima, Grant, and Kittitas counties.

**Habitat:** In Washington this species has been found on south facing slopes and ridges between small canyons with fine, dry silt and talus at 1200 to 1280 ft (366 to 390 m) elevation. Sites may be a little more alkaline than surrounding areas. Associated species include common woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), snow buckwheat (*Eriogonum niveum*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), soft brome (*Bromus mollis*), chaparral willowherb (*Epilobium minutum*), and winterfat (*Eurotia lanata*). It has been found with two

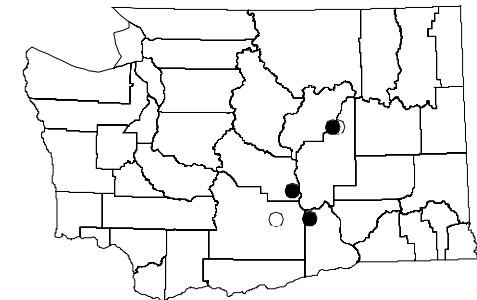
## *Cryptantha scoparia*

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Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish

Known distribution  
of *Cryptantha scoparia*  
in Washington



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

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Dana Visalli



Devin Malkin

2005 Produced as part of a cooperative project between the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Natural Heritage Program and the U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management. Persons needing this information in an alternative format, call (360) 902-1600 or TTY (360) 902-1125.

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other Washington rare species: Suksdorf's monkeyflower (*Mimulus suksdorfii*) and narrowstem cryptantha (*Cryptantha gracilis*).

**Ecology:** This species prefers dry areas with full sun and little competing vegetation.

**State Status Comments:** This species is known for fewer than 5 recent occurrences and 2 historical occurrences.

**Inventory Needs:** Dry, open shady slopes and ridges with silt and talus in Benton, Yakima, Grant, and Kittitas counties should be systematically surveyed for additional populations. Known occurrences should be revisited.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Specific threats have not been identified for this species. However, the small range of this species in Washington and the small number of known occurrences are major concerns.

### **References:**

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 4: Ericaceae Through Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 510 pp.

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