



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Woodsia obtusa (Spreng.) Torr.

Blunt-lobed Woodsia

Habitat: Rocky woods and ledges or dry wooded slopes. [Rocky summits and outcrops (non-forested, upland); Hardwood to mixed forest (forest, upland)]

Range: Nova Scotia and Maine to Wisconsin and south to Georgia, Alabama, and Texas. Also in Alaska and British Columbia. More common to the south, but rare in the northern part of its range.

Phenology: Fronds evergreen. Produces new leaves throughout the season.

Family: Polypodiaceae



Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: Cliff ferns (*Woodsia*) are largely slender ferns of ledges, cliffs, and talus. They are recognized by their distinctive indusium (covering over the sporangium) that is lanceolate into slender filaments. All of Maine's other species of cliff ferns have an articulated petiole, i.e., the petioles break at the same point so that all of the persistent petiole bases are the same height. This is not the case in *Woodsia obtusa*. This scaly and pubescent fern will have persistent petiole bases of various lengths. *Woodsia obtusa* is also the largest cliff fern in Maine, with leaf blades 8-60 cm long that are 2.5 times divided.

Ecological characteristics: Ecological relationships in Maine are not well known.

Synonyms: Former names include *Physematium obtusum* (Spreng.) Hook. and *Polypodium obtusum* Spreng.

Rarity of *Woodsia obtusa*

State Rank:	S1	Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity or vulnerability to extirpation.
New England Rank:	None	
Global Rank:	G5	Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure globally.

Status of *Woodsia obtusa*

Federal Status:	None	No Federal Status.
State Status:	Threatened	Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened. Listing criteria met: Few individuals, At edge of range, Declining populations, Vulnerable to human activity

Known Distribution in Maine:



▲ Historical (before 1982)
● Recent (1982 - present)

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 7 town(s) in the following county(ies): Kennebec, Oxford, York.

Dates of documented observations are: 1892, 1932, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1997, 2000 (3), 2001 (3)

Reason(s) for rarity:

Northeastern limit of range.

Conservation considerations:

Known populations are small, and subject to the vagaries of small populations like random fluctuations or localized disturbance events.

The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 18 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species,
please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

