
Ó American Botanical Council

HerbClip

FILE: · Wild Grasses
· Southwestern Plants

Date: January 6, 1997 HC 1-6-7-3

TO: General Distribution

Re: **Plants of New Mexico's Kiowa National Grassland**

Mohlenbrock, Robert H. Grass Roots. *Natural History*, May 1996, pp. 64-65.

Two blocks of land some 75 miles apart in northeastern New Mexico make up the Kiowa National Grassland. Part of the land revitalized by the federal Soil Conservation Service between the years 1938 and 1953, these grassland areas were given to the U.S. Forest Service and designated National Grasslands in 1960.

The western segment of Kiowa is a grassland plateau through which a Mills Canyon has been carved by the Canadian River. The vegetation of the area changes as one descends into the canyon. At the grassland level, blue grama, ring muhly, and buffalo grass dominate, with plains prickly pear and plains cholla cacti and various wildflowers, such as snow-on-the-mountain, yellow coneflower, Navajo tea, plains snakeweed, and Engelmann daisy, scattered throughout. Soapweed, a type of yucca, can also be seen, as well as the occasional juniper, the only kind of tree present. At the first hint of a descent into the canyon, the western grass galleta and pincushion cactus appear, as well as small trees, namely Colorado pinyon pine, another juniper, and three kinds of oak. After an abrupt drop, mountain mahogany and wafer ash appear along the roadside, along with wildflowers, including golden aster, globe mallow, and desert marigold, and ferns, including cloak fern, gold fern, and green spleenwort. As the road crosses the Canadian River halfway into the canyon, box elder, cottonwood, and willows crop up along the waterway. Where the land is marshy, giant cattails, sedges, spike rush, water parsnip, buttercups, and wetland dock appear. Smaller canyons branching off from the main section of Mills Canyon have their own unique plant communities. For further information about Kiowa National Grassland, contact the park supervisor at: Kiowa National Grassland, Clayton, New Mexico, 88415, telephone (505) 374-9652. —*Ginger Webb*

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