**Pterocaulon virgatum - wand blackroot**

Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S2/G5

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**Range:** LA and TX, also eastern Mexico and West Indies

**Recognition:**
- Perennial herb, usually robust with one to many stems, 0.8 to 1.5 m tall
- Leaves from 5 to 15 cm long (more than 7 times as long as wide) and usually less than 1 cm wide
- Leaf bases decurrent, forming narrow wings on the stem
- Leaves green above with white-woolly hairs underneath
- Flower heads occur terminally in a compact, interrupted, spike-like aggregation

**Flowering Time:** August to October

**Light Requirement:** Full sun

**Wetland Indicator Status:** FAC – similar likelihood of occurring in both wetlands and non-wetlands

**Habitat:**
Most Louisiana occurrences are in coastal prairie remnants; there are a few occurrences on pimple mounds in saline prairies and in pine flatwoods further inland. There is a report from Grant Parish which needs to be confirmed in the field.

**Threats:**
- Habitat conversion - mainly historical as virtually all coastal prairie has been converted to agriculture
- Intensive pine plantation forestry with concomitant threats such as chemical and mechanical site prep and fire exclusion

**Beneficial Management Practices:**
- Manage pine flatwoods with aggressive thinning (during dry periods) and prescribed burning
- This species is self-fertile and easily propagated by seed, with high germination rates, so re-introduction is relatively practical
**LA River Basins:** Calcasieu, Mermentau, Sabine, Red

**Above:** Stem of *Pterocaoulon virgatum* – note how leaf bases are decurrent forming leafy wings on the stem; also the lower surfaces of the leaves are clearly white and closer examination would reveal the presence of many wooly hairs.

**Right:** Large robust plant of *P. virgatum* in June as height growth is being made and prior to flowering; photo taken in De Soto Parish in a saline prairie.

**References:**

