



Summer Field Trip Guide 2018

MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

"...to preserve, conserve and study Montana's native plants & plant communities."

mtnativeplants.org

MNPS Field Trip Guidelines

Enjoy a wide variety of fabulous Montana field trips this summer with the Montana Native Plant Society. Led by professional ecologists, botanists and natural scientists, these trips offer enriching and fun opportunities to get out and explore Montana's abundant beauty.

This guide is arranged by date so you can coordinate your summer Montana travel with an outing near your destination. You might even want to target a destination.

Always call the listed trip leader for the most current information. This guide, prepared in early spring, cannot anticipate the many changes that may occur throughout the summer due to weather, fires or other unforeseen events.

The trips vary from easy to difficult. Please read each description and contact the trip leader with your questions to insure the trip meets your expectations, physical abilities and circumstances.

Please leave dogs and firearms at home in fairness to other participants and wildlife.

Some field trips have size limits. If the leader requests that you call to reserve a spot, call again if you must cancel.

Some trips are more child-friendly than others. Check with your trip leader.

Be prepared for Montana's instantaneous weather changes. Wear appropriate clothes and shoes. Bring food, water, extra clothes, rain gear, sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, hat and any other personal gear you might need. You also may want to bring your favorite field guides and a notebook for recording species you see.

If you have a health condition, including allergies, that could affect you during the field trip, tell the trip leader and carry necessary medications.

Be aware of wildlife you might encounter and know how to behave to avoid conflicts. You may encounter bear, deer, elk, moose, snakes, mountain lions, bees and other species.

MNPS assumes no liability for personal injury or loss of property on MNPS-sponsored field trips. Each participant may be required to sign an attendance sheet and liability waiver before starting the field trip.



May

Thursdays, May ONLY – Swan River Nature Trail (Bigfork)

10:00 am. Here's an opportunity to join Anne Morley, one of the most devoted plant lovers in the valley, for a stroll along the "Wild Mile." You might spy a species of lady slipper from the Orchidaceae family, or perhaps a native reptile like last year's boa! For the rest of that story, join Anne for one – or all – of these outings. Meet in front of the Bigfork Summer Playhouse. Info: Anne at 886-2242.

Saturday, 5/5 – Lichen Identification Walk (Bozeman)

Time TBD. Do you ever notice lichens? Join Andrea Pipp, Montana Natural Heritage Program botanist, on this exploration of some of our more common lichen species that grow on trees, rocks and more surprising places. We'll discover how to differentiate lichens from mosses, how to see characteristics that distinguish species, and learn the common and/or scientific names of what we discover. Bring water, lunch, a good hand-lens and appropriate field gear, and plan on a leisurely half-day adventure. The location is still to be determined, but will be in the Gallatin Gateway, Hyalite Canyon or Bridger Canyon area. Info: Andrea Pipp at 444-3019, apipp@mt.gov or 444-3019.

Sunday, 5/6 – Native Garden Monitoring (Dillon)

10:00 am. Join Calypso Chapter members as they kick off the seasonal care of the downtown native garden in the median strip on Helena Ave. Bring gloves and a digging tool, and spend a couple of hours weeding out old, non-native perennials and encouraging the native plantings in their fourth year. Turn left at the first light coming southbound on Montana St. Info: Catherine at 498-6198, nativeplants@montana.com.

Monday-Friday, 5/7-11 – Flathead Forestry Expo Plant ID Station (Kalispell)

Times TBD. Help spread the joy of plant identification and appreciation to 5th graders from the Flathead Valley. Volunteer to spend a few hours guiding students in an activity-based lesson. You will be partnered with an experienced presenter. Info and to sign up: Betty Kuropat at 892-0129, bkuropat@centurytel.net or Chantelle DeLay at 758-5331, cbdelay@fs.fed.us.

Wednesday, 5/9 – Wildflower Walk at Milltown State Park (East Missoula)

5:30 pm. Celebrate National Wildflower Week on this evening walk in Milltown State Park. We will identify and catalog plant species in bloom along the Overlook Trail. This trail begins at the cliff that overlooks the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers and works its way through mixed ponderosa forest down to the flood plain of the Clark Fork River. Meet at the Overlook parking area on Deer Creek Rd. Info: Clare at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com. Or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkeForkChapter/events for a map and details.



Wednesday, 5/16 – Birdsong Tree Farm Evening Stroll (Kila)

5:30 pm. Valerie Beebe and her forest are a delight to visit. Birdsong Tree Farm is adjacent to the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area and supports a diversity of native and non-native plants. Valerie diligently implements her land management plan with the help of a conservation easement and lots of hard work. We'll see and hear about changes to the forest community as a result of her work, and some that has occurred on its own. Bring a picnic supper to enjoy at her outdoor living space and teepee. Meet at the parking lot east of the Social Security and Driver Services offices in Kalispell. Info: Valerie Beebe at 253-8536, cedartrees4me@montanasky.us or Betty Kuropat at 892-0129, bkuropat@centurytel.net. For more about Birdsong Tree farm, go to www.facebook.com/BirdsongTreeFarm.

Saturday, 5/19 – Wolf Creek Conservation Easement Hike (Bigfork)

9:00 am - 2:00 pm. In partnership with the Montana Land Reliance, come explore some unique private land near Bigfork that has been permanently protected with a conservation easement. Maria Mantas will lead the group through the native plant communities associated with this moist cedar/grand fir forest. Bring water, lunch and all-weather clothes. Meet at the Swan River School, across the street from the Echo Lake Cafe. Info: Mark Schiltz at 837-2178, mark@mtlandreliance.org.

Thursday, 5/24 – Plants for a Native Garden (Bozeman)

3:00 pm. On the western edge of Bozeman the MSU Horticulture Farm is home to a Pollinator Garden that the Valley of Flowers Chapter helped to fund and install, as well as to some experimental plots where native plants for home, commercial and public landscaping are trialed. Join Janice Hand and Professor Michelle Flenniken to tour these sites and share ideas and experiences of gardening with Montana native plants. This will be a leisurely ramble but in full sun. Meet by the greenhouse at the Horticulture Farm. Go west of S. 19th Avenue, turn south off West Garfield, park at the first intersection. Info: Janice Hand at 219-7766, janicehand1@gmail.com.

Saturday-Monday, 5/26-28 – American Prairie Reserve Weekend (Northeast Montana)

Join us at the American Prairie Reserve on Memorial Day weekend for three days packed with family-friendly activities, including plant, bird and wildlife walks; volunteer projects; evening presentations; and stargazing. Or just come for the day on Saturday, 5/26. All activities are included with your Buffalo Camp booking. Check the American Prairie Reserve Facebook page for more details. The event is weather permitting; check the website (www.americanprairie.org) before traveling. To reserve your space and book a campsite, email visit@americanprairie.org.



Saturday, 5/26 – Spring Beauties at the Matador Ranch (Malta)

8:00 am - noon. This is a great opportunity to see grassland wildflowers and to learn about, hear and see endemic grassland songbirds. Bring binoculars and a hand lens. If there is interest, we can also look at and learn how to ID grasses with vegetative characteristics. Easy to moderate hiking. Meet at the ranch bunkhouse at 8 am. The Matador Ranch is located 35 miles south of Malta on Highway 191, turn east down the driveway at mile marker 119. Info: Kelsey at 654-4566, kelseym88@gmail.com.

Saturday, 5/26 – Johnson Terraces (Whitefish)

9:00 am. - 3:00 pm. You never know what we will find on this annual outing led by Betty Kuropat. We could see rich purple larkspurs, magenta shooting stars, golden buckwheats and white death camas. Or we might catch a glimpse of *Suksdorfia*, a lovely, uncommon saxifrage that grows in rock ledge grottos. This is a two-mile round-trip walk with a one-hour drive each way. Bring water and lunch. Meet at the Grouse Mountain Lodge tennis court rest area parking. Info: Betty Kuropat at 892-0129, bkuropat@centurytel.net.

Wednesday, 5/30 – Viking Creek Trail and Wetlands Restoration (Whitefish)

5:30 - 8:00 pm. Meander through an area rich in a variety of wetland plants. The Whitefish Lake Institute acquired management of the area to prevent it from being drained for development. Mike Koopal will tell the wetland's story and talk about the Institute's efforts to protect the water quality of Whitefish Lake. Next, we'll stroll through the adjacent 200-acre property that is protected by a Nature Conservancy easement. It, too, has wonderful plants and an interesting story. Andrew Beltz will show us how Forestation and the Center for Native Plants cleaned up and restored a severely impacted utility corridor. Meet at the Super 1 parking lot, south of McDonald's and close to Hwy. 93. We plan to carpool, as parking is limited at both sites. Info: Andrew at 471-7752, andrew@forestation.com.

Thursday, 5/31 – Columbia Mountain Evening Wildflower Walk (Columbia Falls)

5:50 p.m. The Columbia Mountain Trail is a flower-lover's paradise. Join Greta Gansauer of Montana Wilderness Association and Ellen Horowitz of the Montana Native Plant Society for a three-hour evening wildflower walk. We'll travel at an easy pace and make lots of stops to view big, bold blossoms and beautiful, subtle ones alike. Meet at Columbia Mountain Trailhead. Sign up required; group size limited to 12. Sign up at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Info: Greta at 284-1747, ggansauer@wildmontana.org or Ellen at 752-2909, horowitz@centurytel.net.



June

Saturday, 6/2 – What’s Blooming at the Buffalo Jump? (Bozeman)

9:30 am. Join Kelly Ranch owner and Montana Land Reliance Greater Yellowstone Manager Kathryn Kelly to explore the Kelly Ranch along the Gallatin River west of Bozeman. This private ranch includes lush cottonwood gallery forest, grassland and sagebrush/juniper steppe habitats, plus well-preserved historic buildings and a pre-historic buffalo jump. It’s protected by a conservation easement with MLR. This will be an easy two or three hour walk on two-tracks and cattle trails. Meet in the southwest corner of the Gallatin Valley Mall parking lot (behind the pet store), to carpool. Info: Jeff Copeland at 539-6029, jouzelcopeland@gmail.com.

Thursday, 6/7 – Coram Evening Stroll (Coram)

5:30 pm. Join Rachel Potter and other plant lovers searching for blooms on Kim Pinter and Gil Jordan’s forested property. This Flathead Land Trust conservation easement is adjacent to the Coram Experimental Forest. Who knows? There just may be a rare plant lurking. If you choose, bring a sack dinner to eat while we chat about what we have seen. Please RSVP. Meet at Columbia Heights Park and Ride, junction of Highways 206 and 2. Info: Kim Pinter at 387-5814, sythewilddog@gmail.com.

Sunday, 6/10 – Prairie to Foothills: Ranching & Native Plant Conservation (Drummond)

10:00 am. Tour some of the healthiest native short grass prairie in the Upper Clark Fork Watershed on the 3,700-acre Peterson Angus Ranch in the foothills of the John Long Mountains, south of Drummond. This ranch became a Five Valleys Land Trust conservation easement in 2010 and contains a surprising diversity of plants. We’ll discuss the history of the ranch and the ongoing relationship between ranching practices and conservation of native plants and their habitats. Hiking will be moderate. Expect to return to Missoula around 5:00 pm. Meet at the east side of the Milltown truck stop parking lot to carpool from Missoula. Bring a water and lunch. Info: Clare at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com. Or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.

Thursday, 6/14 – East Gallatin Recreation Area (Bozeman).

5:30 pm. Join Jeff Copeland for a short walk through the East Gallatin Recreation Area to look at native plants surviving historic disturbances – the area is the location of an old garbage dump – and current intense recreational use and weed management. Conducted in partnership with the Gallatin Valley Land Trust as part of their Discovery Walks Program. This is approximately one mile of easy walking on graveled trails through riparian deciduous forests. Meet in the parking lot at the end of the Gallatin Recreation Area access road, off Manley Rd. Info: Jeff Copeland at 539-6029, jouzelcopeland@gmail.com.



Saturday, 6/16 – North Fork of Dupuyer Creek (Choteau)

8:15 am. This three-mile hike, co-sponsored with the Montana Wilderness Association, is through prairie and foothill wildflowers, across the Old North Trail and grizzly country. We will be on the Boone & Crockett Club's Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch, and will cross the prairie toward North Fork Canyon and Walling Reef. Dave Shea will help with plant and wildlife identification, and discuss the history and spectacular geology of the area. We expect to see more than 75 species of wildflowers, as well as tipi rings and features of the Old North Trail. Meet at the Choteau Information Center, near the Old Trail Museum. Registration required; sign up at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Info: Dave at 466-2161.

Thursday, 6/21 – Celebrate the First Day of Summer (Columbia Falls)

9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Steve Wirt continues to fascinate listeners with his knowledge of native plant life after a burn. We can see the history of fire in this area written on the face of the landscape as we travel up the North Fork Road toward Polebridge. At three or four stops along the way, we'll have an opportunity to learn how fire has affected the growth of flora over years and to quiz Steve about the effects of heat on our native species and plant restoration. Meet at the Columbia Heights Park and Ride, junction of Highways 206 and 2. Info: Steve at 261-2542, wirtland@yahoo.com.

Saturday, 6/23 – Evening on the Whitefish Trail (Whitefish)

5:00 - 7:00 pm. Flathead Valley Community College Botany Professor Mirabai McCarthy and student Danner Pickering, will lead a guided plant hike focusing on the flora surrounding the Beaver Lake area of the Whitefish Trail. In recent years McCarthy and Pickering have surveyed the vegetation in the lands accessed by the Whitefish Legacy Trail system and have produced a wildflower guide to aide in plant identification. These will be available for use during the hike. Following the hike, you might consider a picnic or swim nearby. Group size is limited to 12; please RSVP. Meet at the Beaver Lake Trailhead, www.whitefishlegacy.org/docs/WhitefishTrail-FullMap.pdf. Info: Mirabai McCarthy at 756-3624, MMcCarthy@fvcc.edu.

Sunday, 6/24 – National Pollinator Week at Lemhi Pass (Dillon)

Time TBD. We will spend the day in this scenic area, learning about its regional and cultural history and focusing on the native flora that have played a role in that history. One idea under consideration: to begin a multi-year project to prepare a visitor brochure on the native flora of the Lemhi Pass area. This first visit would be to investigate what flora are there and, if possible, also identify local pollinators. Info: Catherine Cain at 498-6198, nativeplants@montana.com.



Tuesday, 6/26 – Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail (Swan Lake)

Time TBD. This hike features a flora of contrasts; we'll observe the differences between areas that were cleared in the early 1990s and old-growth forest. We will hope to find blooms of paintbrush, bunchberry, honeysuckle, dogbane and rose. We may also see and hear the buzz of pollinators, such as bees and hummingbirds. Bring a lunch and soak up some natural history. Leader Anne Morley would like this experience to be relaxing and exploratory, so the exact starting time will depend on weather conditions. Please call if you plan to attend! Meet at the Sprunger-Whitney trailhead. Follow Highway 83 to approximately seven miles south of Swan Lake; turn right at Point Pleasant Campground, about half a mile south of mile marker 64. Follow signs to the Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail. Info: Anne at 886-2242.

Wednesday, 6/27 (tentative) – Bitterroot Bonanza (Butte)

Time TBD. Mike Garverich, retired NRCS geologist/botanist, will take us on an early evening walk into an area south of Butte that is crowded with the beautiful pink of our native flower *Lewisia rediviva*. Trip date depends on the blooming and may shift a few days. Info: Mike at 491-0887.

Wednesday, late June – Elk Park Walk (Butte)

Date and time, TBD. The beautiful blue camas (*Camissa quamish*) adorns Elk Park in the spring. Debbie Bishop will arrange access onto private property and lead an early evening walk where these lovely natives are particularly abundant. Info: Debbie at 782-4867.

Friday-Sunday, 6/29-7/1 – MNPS Annual Membership Meeting (Lincoln)

This year's meeting is hosted by the Clark Fork Chapter at Cane Ridge West Camp. Go to www.mtnativeplants.org for details and registration. Members and non-members welcome.

July

July, date TBD – Shoofly Meadows Research Natural Area (Missoula)

Time TBD. Shoofly Meadows contains a complex of wetlands – including a rare-for-Montana peat moss (Sphagnum) riparium. This wetland area near Missoula sits at the headwaters of the east fork of Rattlesnake Creek and was established as a RNA of the Lolo National Forest in 1997. We'll spend most of the day touring the diverse wetland habitats and their varied flora, including waterlily (*Nuphar polysepalum*), cottongrass (*Eriophorum chamissonis*), sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia* and *D. angica*), few-flowered spike-rush (*Eleocharis pauciflora*), small-leaved laurel (*Kalmia microphylla*) and Labrador tea (*Ledum glandulosum*). We should also be able to see a number of different butterflies as well. Bring water, lunch, footwear than can get wet and your favorite insect repellent, if you wish. Info: Clare at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com. Watch for final date and time at www.mtnativeplants.org/Clark_Fork and facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events.



Saturday, 7/7 – Bridger Foothills Wildflowers (Bozeman)

10:00 am. The west-facing, open slopes of the Bridger Mountains are a riot of blooms in early summer, while moisture-loving plants flower more subtly in the canyon bottoms below. Join Gretchen Rupp to see how many familiar plant friends we can identify, and perhaps make new ones as well. The three-mile walk includes a short but steep bushwhack; bring water, lunch and wear boots. We'll start from the Truman Gulch trailhead. Meet at the north end of the old Kmart parking lot (across Oak St. from the Bozeman Walmart). Info: Gretchen at 586-8363, beesgrmt@gmail.com.

Saturday, 7/7 – St. Paul Lake (Troy)

8:30 am. Join botanist Peter Lesica to explore Kootenai National Forest Trail #646 in the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness. We expect to see crazy white *Polemonium occidentale* (Jacob's ladder) on a trail described as having a "rain forest" feel, with an abundance of moss and large diameter trees. The hike to St. Paul Lake is 3.9 miles, starting at 3,060 feet. If necessary, we will break into groups to comply with the wilderness rule of eight people per group. The trail head is close to the wilderness boundary with a minimal incline for the first two miles. St. Paul Lake is at 4,780 feet, with Elephant Peak (7,938) and St. Paul Peak (7,714) towering over it. Most of the elevation gain is in the second half of the hike along with a challenging, bridge-less crossing of Isabella Creek. Bring water, lunch, appropriate clothing and footwear; bear spray is recommended. Meet at the rest area near Troy, junction of Highways 2 and 56, to carpool. Otherwise, meet at the trailhead at 9:30 am. Take Hwy 58 to milepost 8, turn east onto FSR 407 and travel approximately 5.6 miles to FSR 407A, follow for 0.18 miles to the trailhead. RSVP appreciated to estimate group size. Info: Pat McLeod at 295-4343, pat_mcleod@yahoo.com.

Saturday 7/14 – Wild About Wildflowers (Bozeman)

10:00 am. Join Ryan Quire, botanist for Confluence Consulting, for a stroll through lush wildflower displays in the meadows and open slopes of the Bridger Mountains. The Shaft House Trail offers a diversity of plant species along with spectacular views of the Bridger and Crazy Mountains and Frazier Lake. The approximately five-mile hike is moderately strenuous, starting at 6,000 feet and climbing to an elevation of 8,000 feet. Bring water, lunch and wear hiking boots. Meet at the north end of the old K-mart parking lot (across Oak St. from the Bozeman Walmart). Info: Ryan at (502) 330-8433, rquire@confluenceinc.com .



Sunday, 7/15 – Ear Mountain Natural Area and Yeager Flats Hike (Choteau)

9:00 am. In partnership with the Montana Wilderness Association, this moderately difficult, five-mile round-trip hike passes through limber pine savannah, narrow-leaved cottonwood groves, sagebrush, Douglas-fir/Englemann spruce forest, a portion of the 2000 lightning-caused Ear Mountain fire, and ends up in a vast, high-elevation native fescue prairie near the base of Ear Mountain. In these varied habitats grow a great variety of shrubs, grasses and forms, including bitterroot and several orchid species. Clark's nutcracker, chickadees and other birds are common, and prairie falcons nest on cliff faces. This is also good mule deer, elk, mountain sheep, and black and grizzly bear country. A short portion of this hike is actually on the Old North Trail, so archeology and history as well as Rocky Mountain Front geology, wildlife and management issues will be discussed. The hike concludes by dropping through meadows and old-growth forest to a Metis cemetery on the South Fork of the Teton River. Meet at the Choteau Information Center parking lot at the north end of town on Highway 89. We will drive to the Ear Mountain trailhead up the Teton River. Register online at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Info: Dave at 466-2161.

Sunday, 7/15 – Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge (Marion)

10:00 am.- 1:00 pm. A "dynamic quartet" will assist and guide you on this trip to the Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. Native Plant Restoration Program manager at Glacier National Park, Rebecca Lawrence, will hope to find a rare plant for you; ecologist Selita Ammond, a member of the River Design team, will share her knowledge about the area's river restoration; and wildlife biologists Kate Kendall and Beverly Skinner round out the team. Spalding's catchfly is one of the rare plant treasures we might see, and our leaders will help you appreciate the nuances of this unique vegetation and discover more. A plant species list for the refuge, compiled by Peter Lesica, is available for free at refuge headquarters. Meet at 9 am. behind Bojangles Diner, 275 Corporate Drive, Kalispell, in front of Social Security & Montana Driver Services, or at 10 am at Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge headquarters. Info: Rebecca Lawrence 406-888-7836.



August

Saturday 8/11 – Mountain Meadow Stroll (Sheridan)

10:00 am. The subalpine meadows above Upper Branham Lake in the Tobacco Root range offer spectacular wildflower displays and boast three members of the gentian family (if our timing is right, we might find arctic gentian). The lake is accessed by an 11-mile drive on a road that is well-traveled but unpaved, with steep sections. The hike from Upper Branham Lake, at 9,510 ft. elevation, is a comfortable one-mile with switch-backs. If time permits, on the way back we may stop and botanize at the Smugglers Mine town site. At the end of the trip, with our wheels safely back on pavement, we could also stop and admire Sheridan's beautiful community garden – Jackson's Garden. Meet at the USDA Service Center, south end of Sheridan; please RSVP. Info: Elizabeth Bergstrom at 581-6571; dodecatheon16@gmail.com.

September

September, date TBD – Primm Meadow (Potomac/Missoula)

Time TBD. Primm Meadow is often described as a "cathedral-like" grove of old-growth ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) and contains many trees that are more than 500 years old. The Meadow, situated in the Gold Creek drainage of the Blackfoot River on the Lolo National Forest, is over 100 acres and is currently owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy. You can see and touch a rich history of human interaction (e.g., Native American harvest of ponderosa inner bark and homesteading by Europeans) on this exploration. Info: Clare at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com. Watch for final date and time at www.mtnativeplants.org/Clark_Fork and facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events.

October

Sunday, 10/28 – Dyeing with Native Plants (Dillon)

Time TBD. This will be an opportunity to use native plant materials to dye yarns and fabrics. Several native dyes will be free and available at the event. Participants are also encouraged to bring in their own dye concoctions. A limited number of silk scarves will be available for purchase at the event. Come spend a morning at this season-ending Chapter event, presented by Jessie Salix, botanist with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Info: Jessie at 683-3749.



The logo features a stylized plant with a single leaf and a small flower, positioned to the left of the text.

MONTANA NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED