

# **SMALL GRANTS ADVANCE CONSERVATION OF MONTANA' S NATIVE FLORA**

*by Cathie Jean*

*from Kelseya, Spring 2003*

The MNPS Board of Directors is pleased to announce two awards, one each in education and research, in this year's Small Grants competition. The Small Grants Committee received 12 excellent proposals encompassing school and interpretive gardens, as well as a variety of educational and scientific projects. Each proposal was worthy of funding and would have made an excellent contribution towards better understanding, appreciating and conserving Montana's native flora. Following is a list of proposal titles that we received:

## **RESEARCH (including inventory)**

- Nutcracker foraging and minimum tree densities for restoring whitebark pine.
- Whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) regeneration within a community context: restoring a keystone species.
- Snowshoe Peak: an ice-age *refugium* in northwest Montana?
- How do herbivore impacts on arrowleaf balsamroot change depending on elevation?
- *Trillium ovatum* in western Montana – implications for conservation.
- Commercializing production of native Montana species.

## **EDUCATION**

- Preserving Nature's Living History Through Growth
- Flora of Montana – Rimrocks to River (Part 1 – Rimrocks)
- The 10 Most Desired Native Plants Poster
- DeSmet's Last Best Place
- Habitat Enhancement Series – Grasslands Restoration on Teller Wildlife Refuge Property

- Meadow Hill Neighborhood Park

This year's education award goes to Marijka Wessner, Weed Education Specialist for the Missoula County Weed District. Marijka is creating a poster of important desirable native vegetation found in Missoula Valley open spaces. The poster will depict 5 native grasses and 5 native wildflowers and will include a brief written description, line drawings and pictures. The overall goal of this project is to increase awareness of native vegetation and help to educate new urban landowners about the importance of native plant communities. The MNPS will contribute \$500.00 to help with printing costs.

The second successful proposal was submitted by Tarn Ream, a graduate student at the University of Montana. Tarn is conducting research to advance the scientific understanding of *Trillium ovatum* in order to determine rates of sustainable harvest. *Trillium ovatum* is a long-lived species and the roots and rhizomes are collected for medicinal purposes. There is concern that unsustainable harvesting could decimate populations in a very short time. Tarn's research will help determine this species' vital rates (plant fecundity, seedling recruitment, and survival) and is expected to provide critical information for conservation planning. The MNPS contributed \$500.00 in 2002 towards this project and will contribute \$1,000.00 in 2003.

We have asked Marijka and Tarn to prepare Kelseya articles about their projects to keep MNPS members informed of their progress in 2003.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's competition. We hope to hear from many of you again in future competitions.