

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM - POLICY AND GUIDELINES MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (MNPS)

Objectives

The MNPS Small Grants Program was established in 1996 to:

- 1) To stimulate research, conservation, and educational activities which help foster an appreciation of Montana's native plants and plant communities.
- 2) To promote native plant conservation through a better understanding of Montana's native flora and vegetation and the factors affecting their survival.

Program Funding

Funding for small grants come from MNPS's general budget. Each grant will not exceed \$1500. The funding available will be set during the annual budget process (proposed by the Small Grants Committee and ratified by the Board). Funds approved but not spent shall remain in the general budget.

Qualifications

Anyone may apply for a MNPS small grant.

(Changed by BOD in Oct. 2015 from "To qualify for a MNPS small grant the applicant must be a resident of Montana or a member of the Montana Native Plant Society").

Applications must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Proposals must pertain to native plants of Montana.
- 2) Revenue-generating projects will generally not be included unless a part of the proceeds are dedicated to the Small Grants Program.
- 3) Funding requests must meet the eligible expenses as described below.
- 4) Applications must include all relevant information and be formatted as described in below in Application and selection procedure.

Expenses eligible for coverage

Up to \$1500 of expenses may be covered per proposal, including:

- 1) Direct cost of travel, meals, and lodging for research, conservation, or education projects.
- 2) Supply and service expenses used for the sole purpose of the project (e.g., consumable supplies such as CDs/media cards, laboratory chemicals, soil and nursery stock, and services such as phone and computer time).

3) Direct printing costs for public outreach projects or research publications.

Non-eligible expenses include wages, durable equipment with a longer life span than the project, and any expenses nonessential to the project.

Application and selection procedure

- 1) Proposals shall be submitted by sending a written proposal by e-mail to the Chair of the Small Grants Committee by January 31 of each year. Proposals must not exceed four double-spaced pages or 2 single-spaced pages with 1 inch margins and Times New Roman 12 point font or equivalent, and should include:
 - Project title
 - Contact person and organizational affiliation, as appropriate
 - Mailing address, telephone number, e-mail, and FAX number (if applicable)
 - Short project abstract (2-5 sentences)
 - Project description (objectives, methods, final product, dissemination of results)
 - How the proposed project will benefit native plant conservation in Montana
 - For garden or native plant restoration projects, include:
 - short- and long-term maintenance plan
 - advisor or lead planner expertise and experience
 - species list and/or types of plant materials and sourcing
 - Budget showing amount requested from MNPS (\$1500 or less) as well as other funding sources, and how the funds will be used
 - Time frames for completion of the proposed project
 - Brief statement of applicant's qualifications or biography
 - Pages may be added for appendices with species lists, literature cited, and diagrams.
- 2) Each Committee member will review each written proposal, and rate according to three criteria (listed below). A maximum of 5 points will be granted for each criterion (for a total maximum score of 15 points). The rating will be a basis for discussion by the small grants committee who are responsible for making a recommendation to the Board of Directors (BOD). A simple majority will decide decisions that cannot be made by consensus; in case of a tie the Chairperson's vote shall decide.

The Committee Chairperson will present the Committee decision to the BOD for approval at the spring Board meeting. The BOD and Committee may suggest proposal modifications with funding contingent upon the modification. The BOD

has discretion to fund fewer proposals than budgeted for or to fund additional proposals if budget allows.

- 3) Applicants will be notified by e-mail or in writing of the Board's approval of the Committee's recommendation. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided information on the considerations for rejection of their proposals.
- 4) Grant awards will be announced in the Spring or Summer *Kelsey* Newsletter.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

Project Qualifications and Adequacy of Resources:

- Demonstrated qualifications adequate for successful project completion, e.g. track record; realistic objectives.
- Budget suitable for achieving objectives.
- Preference will be given to proposals demonstrating cooperation with others.
- For school or community garden or native plant restoration projects: specialists or expertise are identified and qualified.

Merit of Project:

- Preference will be given to proposals that generate data or public support that advances the conservation of native plants in the wild.
- Project directly leads to conservation, appreciation, or understanding of native plants.
- Project shows an evident need (urgency).
- Project reaches a broad audience, is distinctive and imaginative, and results extend beyond the grant year.
- Projects emphasizing operational costs, such as utilities or rent, will be less preferred.

Methods:

- Purpose and methods are clearly described.
- Procedures are appropriate to the proposed problem.
- Methods have a negligible negative impact on native plant communities.
- A plan for the dissemination of results is included.
- For school or community garden or native plant restoration projects: Maintenance plan (water and weed management) is clearly defined; species list or types of plants and sources are described and appropriate for planting location, goals, and intended audience or users.

Reporting and Payment Schedule

- 1) First payment of 50% of the grant award (up to \$750) will be made at the request of the awardee to the Small Grants Committee Chair any time after notification of award. The Committee Chair will notify the Treasurer of the total award, payment amount, and contact information for the awardee.
- 2) Final payment will be made at the request of the awardee to the Committee Chair after or along with submission of a final report or product to the Committee Chair (see the following stipulations). The Committee Chair will notify the Treasurer of receipt of the acceptable report and request for payment.
- 3) A final report is due by January 31st of the year following the award. The Chairperson will monitor the receipt of the final report and make efforts to encourage recipient to respond in a timely manner. Awardees may request an extension by describing the extenuating circumstances to the Committee Chairperson. Final reimbursement cannot be made without the awardee submitting a final report. If the report is more than six months late, the awardee will be reimbursed for no more than 50% of the remaining eligible expenses (up to \$375). Reports submitted over twelve months late will result in forfeiture of further reimbursement. Awardees who fail to submit a final report within twelve months of the deadline, will be ineligible for further grants, unless an extension or exception is granted.
- 4) In some circumstances, it will be necessary to provide most or all of the funding up front. This would be the case for projects that require the funding to produce or print the product (e.g., brochure, educational trunk). Payment for these types of projects will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Final Report and Resulting Publications

- 1) Awardees will submit by e-mail a final report documenting the study or project accomplishments to the Montana Native Plant Society. This report should be suitable for publication in the *Kelsey* newsletter.
- 2) Research data are the property of the researcher and may not be published or distributed without written permission from the researcher.
- 3) The Montana Native Plant Society's support should be acknowledged in any publication resulting from the research.

Approximate Timetable of Events

DATE	ACTION
September 10	Article regarding up-coming request for grant proposals will occur in autumn issue of <i>Kelsey</i> .
October - December	Flyer inviting grant proposals will be posted on the MNPS website and sent to colleges, high schools, and relevant non-profit organizations (mailing list available).
December 10	Article inviting grant proposals and directing potential applicants to the MNPS website will be published in winter issue of <i>Kelsey</i> .
January 31	Proposals due. Final Reports from previous year's recipient(s) due.
March (spring) Board Meeting	Based on Committee's recommendation, BOD approves recipient(s) and grant funding level. New committee members appointed (if needed).
March 15	All applicants notified of Board's decision. First payment available to awardees at their request. Updated versions of "Small Grants Award History" and "Small Grants Policy" posted on website.
Spring or Summer Issue	Awards reported in <i>Kelsey</i> .
Annual Meeting	Awards announced at Annual Meeting.

Structure of Small Grants Committee (last updated 2/25/2017)

- 1) The Small Grants Committee Chairperson shall be appointed by the President.
- 2) The Small Grants Committee shall consist of 3 to 7 members including the Chairperson, all of who must be current MNPS members. The President and other members of the Executive Committee may serve as voting members of the Committee. At least one Committee member must also be on the Board. Individual committee member terms are two years.
- 3) Committee members may not receive grants during their committee appointment, and must waive their vote if involving their local chapter or other immediate affiliations.