

MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Montana Native Plant Society Activities Report Summer 2021



The Montana Native Plant Society is a volunteer non-profit organization of more than 800 members, formed in 1988, with the mission to “conserve, preserve and study Montana’s native plants and plant communities.” Despite the pandemic, MNPS has been very active during the period Spring 2020 - Summer 2021.

Conservation

MNPS provided partial funding for a conservation lobbyist employed by Montana Audubon, at the 2021 Montana Legislature.

MNPS submitted comments to the Bureau of Land Management concerning the Joint Management Area Plan (JMAP) for the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range.

MNPS board members continue to participate in the development of the Montana Plant Conservation Strategy, which was initiated by a seed grant from MNPS.

In collaboration with the Center for Biological Diversity, we petitioned the Secretary of Interior for threatened status listing and designation of Critical Habitat for thistleleaf bladderpod *Physaria pachyphylla* in the Pryor Mountains, threatened by the potential development of a gypsum mine.

MNPS commented on the proposed US Fish & Wildlife Service(USFWS) listing of

the whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) under the Endangered Species Act.

MNPS commented on USFWS proposed administrative changes to implementation of the Endangered Species Act, that would have weakened the Act.

We submitted comments to the Forest Service concerning the updated Shoshone National Forest Travel Management Plan, as it would affect the Research Natural Area on the Line Creek Plateau in the Beartooth Range.

MNPS awarded funds through its Small Grant Program to reseed a site in the Centennial Valley that had undergone herbicide application, to reestablish a healthy and intact native plant community.

Clark Fork Chapter members monitored cushion plant communities and weeds in three locations on City land in the hills north of Missoula.

Valley of Flowers Chapter members pulled knapweed from the Kagy Hill roadcut in Bozeman, which they have maintained for more than 20 years.

Clark Fork Chapter helped Missoula employees map the occurrence of the rare Missoula phlox (*Phlox missoulensis*) on city land north of town.

The Valley of Flowers Chapter commented on the revision of the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan.

Because of the COVID pandemic, the biennial Montana Plant Conservation Conference *Monitoring for the Effects of Climate Change* had to be postponed until 2022.

Education

MNPS made a grant to Hopa Mountain for 300 books about Montana's prairie ecosystem, to be distributed to families with few reading resources.

MNPS awarded a grant supporting the Montana Native Plants and Pollinators programs at State Parks.

We granted funds to community organizations revitalizing the native-plant Polliwog Park in Ronan, for the purchase, planting, and establishment of native seeds, starters, and shrubs, as well as restoring and updating the walkways and signage.

Several chapter-organized field trips took place in summer 2020. In summer 2021, 31 field trips are taking place across the state, along with a number of native-garden maintenance projects.

This past winter-spring we conducted 12 evening programs via Zoom, with attendance statewide (and beyond) ranging from 50 to 300.

MNPS published four editions of the *Kelseya* newsletter, with articles about native-plant landscaping, plant ecology, conservation and other topics.

MNPS maintained a website with information about activities, archived *Kelseya* articles, a portal for native-plant questions to pose to experts, and native-plant information links. We also maintained one statewide and three chapter Facebook pages.

Valley of Flowers Chapter continued its long-term upkeep of the native-plant Pollinator Garden on the Langhor Trail in Bozeman.

Research

MNPS sponsored the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem's 2nd *Conference on the Research and Management of High-Elevation Five Needle Pines*, that was re-scheduled to Fall 2021.

Contact

To find out more about the Montana Native Plant Society, visit the website mtnativeplants.org.

