

2-4-25

RE: Vote in Favor of HB 3173 & fund Oregon Flora!



Dear Representatives,

Applegate Siskiyou Alliance is a non-profit organization focused on protecting the biodiversity and wildland habitats of the Applegate River watershed and surrounding Siskiyou Crest region. Our organization works to sustain the integrity of the environment and human communities in the Applegate Valley and surrounding areas through education, collaboration, community activism, stewardship and science. We promote wildland conservation, ecological restoration, a sustainable rural economy, and community engagement in federal land management planning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3173 and thank you to Representative Marsh for introducing this legislation.

We strongly support the work of Oregon Flora and see it as a vital service to the people of Oregon. Documenting the flora of Oregon is important from a scientific and conservation perspective, and it is also important in building a sense of pride in place. Oregon contains a spectacular diversity of habitats and plant communities, and on a fundamental level the vegetation of the state is what gives the region (and each region within it) its unique character. To understand our flora is to understand our state.

Our organization works to protect the most biologically diverse portion of Oregon in the Siskiyou Mountains. Known for its ancient botanical diversity and its rare, unique, or endemic species, the Siskiyou Crest region is defined by the complexity of its habitats and the sheer volume of its native plant species. The work of Oregon Flora is vital to the conservation of our region and the appreciation of its unique biodiversity.

We are currently working with a group of volunteer botanist and the Siskiyou Crest Coalition to create a species list for the Siskiyou Crest region. To our knowledge such a list has never been prepared and Oregon Flora species location information has been essential in its preparation.

We are also currently working to document the region's botanical diversity in our Siskiyou Ecological Research Project and Siskiyou Crest White Paper Series. This citizen science program explores the unique biodiversity of the region and so far, we have published two white papers. One on the endemic Applegate stonecrop (*Sedum oblancoletum*) and another on disjunct populations of western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) in the Applegate Valley including the western most in Oregon.

While documenting these incredible plant species and working to contribute towards the appreciation, understanding, and protection of Oregon's spectacular flora, we have been blessed with the support of Oregon Flora. Who has provided excellent information on species distribution, identification, and other information helpful in our research and mapping efforts. Oregon Flora also provided a written description, or taxonomical "treatment" of Applegate

stonecrop for our publication free of charge and in support of our grassroots citizen science work.

Consistent funding for Oregon Flora is essential to conservation in Oregon and we regularly use their website, written flora, distribution maps, and other services in our non-profit conservation work in southwestern Oregon.

Please support HB 3173 and consider expanding this funding in the future. The study of Oregon's flora is important for the states conservation and we believe our state flora should be well funded in its mission to document the biodiversity and character of our region. If you love Oregon, you should support Oregon Flora!

Additional reasons to support Oregon Flora and vote in favor of HB 3173:

- Oregon has 4,886 unique plant species that grow without cultivation. Of these, 70% are native species, and 120 are endemic and grow only in Oregon.
- The oregonflora.org website offers sophisticated search and plant identification tools, 1.48 million mappable plant occurrence records, 63,000+ color field photos, and fact sheets for every plant taxon.
- Oregon's economy depends upon its botanical resources. Healthy forests, productive rangelands, agricultural operations, outdoor recreation sites, and native plant horticultural businesses all need reliable data which OregonFlora provides.
- The requested support will leverage 30 years of research, volunteer effort, and citizen science contributions to develop the OregonFlora resources. Sustainable support will help ensure it is maintained.

Sincerely,

Luke Ruediger, Executive Director
Applegate Siskiyou Alliance
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