

Submitter: Cynthia Roche
On Behalf Of: HB3173 OregonFlora
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Please fund HB 3173 to support the OregonFlora program at Oregon State University. This program is extremely valuable to resource managers of both public and private lands in the state of Oregon. It is also important for agriculture, transportation, and landscaping. It provides information needed for managing wetlands and floodplains and fish habitat.

I access the OregonFlora website on a daily basis, because I teach grass identification workshops and write resource management plans. As one of the authors of the Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon and Washington, I used the information from their site as the basis for our distribution maps for over 350 species of grasses in our state, both native and introduced, rare to weedy. The 3500 copies of this field guide printed in 2017 sold out in less than 5 years, indicating that it was an important resource for a wide array of people ranging from farmers to wetland ecologists and agency land managers. The OregonFlora also provided the data for distribution maps of sedges for the Field Guide to Sedges of the Pacific Northwest. A solid knowledge of our plant resources is essential for protecting Oregon's rare species, for raising agricultural crops, for providing wildlife habitat and fighting wildland fires.

A critical point to remember is that knowledge of our flora in Oregon is not a static topic. It doesn't end with the publication of a book. Plant names change. Knowledge evolves with newly published research. New weeds arrive. New species are discovered and described. Knowledge of the distribution of plants continues to grow with new surveys and reports. Continued disturbance from road and house construction, commercial development, solar and wind farms, and farming operations are reducing our native plant habitats necessary for maintaining insect populations and other ecological functions like hydrologic cycles.

Oregon needs to support the biological sciences that form the foundation for our natural resource base and quality of life. Our climate is changing; plants adapt, move, or die out. We need to know what is happening around us, so we can adapt as well. I personally contribute to the Flora information, both financially and by collecting herbarium specimens and iNaturalist data points. This is the sole source of this kind of information in the State of Oregon. It would be a great loss for it to disappear. Because it benefits all Oregonians, either directly or indirectly, it is worthy of this modest amount of funding from the State.

I urge you to fund HB 3173.

Cindy Roché