

Montana Natural Heritage Program Report April and May 2015

Prepared for the June 23, 2015 Commission meeting
By Allan Cox, Lead Program Manager

This report represents accomplishment of Montana Natural Heritage Program staff.

Goal One—Content

1. MSL acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library users.

- The Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center of the MTNHP has updated its status map, which can be found at http://mtnhp.org/nwi/images/wetland_status.jpg. To date, over 3 million acres of wetlands and riparian areas have been mapped by the center.
- In May, the Center was chosen for a Wetland Stewardship Award, which was presented by Lieutenant Governor Angela McLean in an award ceremony at the State Capitol. These awards are given biennially to recognize “individuals and teams who exemplify excellence and commitment in wetland conservation, protection, and restoration in Montana.”
- The Botany Program updated the Coefficient of Conservatism values for approximately 428 exotic plants and 447 native wetland plants. Known as C-values, agencies and consultants use these values in restoration projects when implementing Floristic Quality Methodology. Floristic Quality indices and C-values measure a project’s ability to restore disturbed land to a native condition. The C-value of a plant reflects its tolerance to disturbance and its affinity to a specialized habitat. The products of this work will be published on the MTNHP website and in an upcoming revision of the *Field Guide to Montana’s Wetland Vascular Plants*.

Goal Three—Training

3. MSL provides appropriate trainings and training resources so that the best use can be made of the resources offered.

- MTNHP Botanist, Andrea Pipp, taught several classes to elementary and middle-school students in Helena. Classes focused on learning how to identify a plant, developing a

field guide for Mount Ascension plants, and learning to draw plants. Educating students on how to see plants provides the foundation for future stewardship.

- Allan Cox, MTNHP Lead Program Manager, presented a training session June 4th to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation annual forestry training workshop at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch near Dupuyer. The presentation focused on the on-line MTNHP resources that are useful for foresters in the management of state lands.

Goal Four—Consultation and Leadership

4. MSL provides consultation and leadership to enable users to set and reach their goals.

- MTNHP Botanist, Andrea Pipp, provided identification expertise on several lichen and vascular plant species to agency resource professionals (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bitterroot National Forest) and private landowners for various projects.
- MTNHP Botanist, Andrea Pipp, completed a taxonomic review of a rare monkeyflower with 20 Montana occurrences. This review determined its species and provided recommendations to NatureServe, which had proposed name changes. The process involved collaborating with experts, researching literature, obtaining Idaho and Montana herbarium specimens, and examining Montana specimens.

Goal Six—Sustainable Success

6. MSL is efficient and effective (measured against user outcomes), and is engaged in fulfilling its mission.

- At the 2015 Biodiversity without Boundaries conference (the annual NatureServe/Heritage network conference) the Montana Natural Heritage Program was presented with the 2015 NatureServe **Scientific and Technological Achievement Award** “in recognition of outstanding and innovative efforts to provide the scientific basis for conservation decisions”. The award was primarily for our work in making our information more widely available, especially through our new web app: Species Snapshot. We were honored to receive this award. It is a fitting reflection of the creativity and dedication of all of the people who work at MTNHP.