

Botanical Sciences and Native Plant Issues

Habitat and landscape ecosystem restoration on public lands must include an intense focus on plants and the use of locally-adapted native plants.

For example, the Federal government is currently wrestling with the challenge presented by diminishing populations of sage grouse and the potentially catastrophic effects on a 12 state region of a listing of the grouse as an endangered species. Protection of this species requires it to have a supportive habitat and there will be no sage grouse recovery without sage brush recovery. This requires remediating environmental deterioration of sage brush habitat by using a multi-pronged strategy that includes employing native seed in restoration efforts and addressing the impact of invasive species.

Of critical importance is the preservation of appropriated funding for two important activities – the National Seed Strategy and the Native Plant Materials Development Program. Both funded in the Interior Appropriations bill. Congress needs to support these activities by approving the \$5 million in seed strategy funding included in the Senate FY17 Interior bill and the full funding for NPMDP as identified therein. Both items are found in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) appropriation.

Additionally, Representatives Quigley and Ros-Lehtinen have introduced H.R. 1054, the Botanical Sciences and Native Plant Materials Research, Restoration and Promotion Act. This legislation will:

- Promote critical plant materials and restoration-related research
- Enhance demand for botanical scientists
- Drive demand for native plant materials
- Support rare, endangered and native plants through federal programs

We are seeking cosponsors on this House bill and hoping to introduce companion legislation in the Senate.