Seeking Research Involvement in Native Plant Program in East-Central Idaho

A collaborative native plants program in Salmon, Idaho is seeking interested researchers to engage with them to advance basic and applied knowledge of seed biology, ecology, and restoration of native forbs and shrubs. The Salmon Valley Stewardship Native Plants Program (NPP) collects seed from 90+ species, most of them forbs, for direct use in restoration. Gaps in basic and applied knowledge about many of these species remain, and seed is available to aid in closing these gaps.

Why engagement with researchers is critical

The goals of the NPP are to generate diverse local seed mixes, conduct restoration, encourage local growers to perform grow-outs and seed increase, and expand restoration capacity in the region. The NPP currently lacks capacity to perform basic and applied research and is requesting researchers to propose applied work that could produce immediately useful information. The NPP can then provide existing seeds and possibly perform custom collections to support accepted research proposals. All levels of research could benefit the program

Some examples of desired applied research:

- Establish germination and/or propagation protocols
- Screen species for polyploidy
- Identify best practices for maintaining high viability
- Develop species distribution models
- Screen native species for sensitivity to herbicides
- Diversify seed used in existing experiments that compare seeding techniques and strategies

How to get involved

Fill out a **Seed Request Form** (QR code above) if you are interested in obtaining seeds for use in applied research. Please share this opportunity with your network. We are also soliciting growers to increase the supply of seeds or seedlings.

See website for more details:
https://www.salmonvalley.org/nativeplants

Salmon Valley Stewardship

More about our program

The Salmon-Challis National Forest and Salmon Valley Stewardship (local nonprofit) have partnered together since 2022 to build a Native Plants Program to improve the plant diversity and methods used in regional restoration efforts. Our region encompasses a broad array of remote and rugged habitats from semi-arid sagebrush cold deserts and dry forest river canyons to montane bunchgrass and high-altitude mixed conifer communities.

With multi-year base funding and cross-boundary regional support, we collect a large diversity of native species seeds from public and private land. We follow a regional admixture provenance approach to collecting but can follow other protocols as needed. We employ a growing array of professional seed cleaning and storage equipment to process our collections. Most of our seed is used same-year in small hand-seeding restoration projects but we maintain small collections for many of these species in low-humidity cold storage. We are also experimenting with shared-risk seed increase contracts with local growers attempting new species for the first time. We wish to increase the quality, frequency, and scale of regional restoration efforts, but regularly run into barriers of knowledge about the species in our collections that limit our ability to use them most effectively.