

Submitter: Andrew Moldenke
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

From: Andrew Moldenke
To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Re: HB3173 (OregonFlora) SUPPORT

I am a retired ecological entomologist who has supported OregonFlora both with information and with monetary donations through the years.

To be direct, over the decades of teaching and research at OSU, I have used the resources provided by OregonFlora on countless occasions for assistance in identifying plants in my research plots and up-dating on changes in their scientific names. The current database on the web is absolutely wonderful and already is a model for the entire Pacific Northwest to emulate. OregonFlora is critical; it is not just "irrelevant natural history". OregonFlora is a crucial link in both the forestry and agriculture industries in Oregon. Plant science must be dynamic since both industries will be faced with pivotal challenges provided by climate change.

However, in terms of this House Bill 3173, I see the opportunity for continued outreach to the general public. For most of my career I have emphasized the crucial need to engage the general public in the actual collection of real data from real experiments and to embed them in the actual process of interpretation -- so that they begin to see what science is and why it is important. Regrettably during the "spotted owl wars" science lost all of its believability in the public eye.

I am currently part of just such an outreach sponsored by the Master Gardener Program at OSU. It involves more than 250 "volunteer scientists" from all over the entire state in basic research on the native bees of Oregon. In just a couple of years they have collected 30,000 specimens along with strict databasing and FLORAL IDENTIFICATION. We rely on OregonFlora resources to ensure that information about the plant half of plant-pollinator interactions is accurate. Volunteers are taught in 2 weekly laboratory sessions held throughout the state. By the second year some volunteers become teachers, ultimately most will graduate as officially recognized Master Gardeners. Many of our "volunteers" are movers-and-shakers in their own communities. Everybody has fun!! Science is fun!! And meanwhile, the Bee Atlas has now become the most responsive center in the country. It, too, is informed by OregonFlora's database of plant occurrences.

Our world is changing ever more quickly and our reference bases must remain

dynamic. We must support pivotal information centers such as the Bee Atlas and OregonFlora.

I strongly recommend your support of HB3173.