

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

Greetings,

Please accept my strong support for the Oregon Flora program and associated actions needed to ensure access to this critical planning tool. Oregon Flora helps to identify, document, and share information about biodiversity, and to document threats such as invasive species which diminish the natural resources values of affected areas in our State.

Examples of types of works or programs that consulted the Oregon Flora's Plant Atlas are listed/linked below:

- Planning and consultation to limit impacts of development on irreplicable resources. (<https://www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/Facility%20Exhibits/MST/2024-08-09-MSTAMD13-RFA13-Exhibit-Q-TE-Species.pdf>)
- Tools for consultants who are working with industries to site projects or mitigate impacts. (<https://www.bpa.gov/-/media/Aep/efw/nepa/completed/marys-peak-communications-site/2018-maryspeakvegetationsurveyfinalreport-pii-redacted.pdf>)
- Inventory efforts by land managers who are interested in focal species (https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1202153.pdf)
- Education and outreach materials to support landowners and the public. (<https://weedwise.conservationdistrict.org/tag/best-management-practices/page/2>)
- ODA's Native Plant Conservation Program. (<https://appliedeco.org/report/patterns-of-rarity-in-the-oregon-flora-implications-for-conservation-and-management/>).
- Assessment or monitoring for post-fire restoration. (<https://rvco.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Bear-Creek-Post-Alameda-Fire-Vegetation-Assessment.pdf>)
- Regional plant guides for place-based recreation. (<https://www.npsoregon.org/kalmiopsis/kalmiopsis19/4maryspeak.pdf>)
- Generating outdoor recreation opportunities. (<https://oregonflora.org/ofn/OFNv18n1.pdf>)

Oregon Flora can also help habitat restoration practitioners by indicating what species historically occurred in an impacted area; providing information to nursery and cultivation industries about growing conditions for species of interest; supporting academic inquiry by botanists and related professions within the natural science fields; providing critical information about rare species needed to protect biodiversity in our state; supporting NEPA planning on BLM or USFS managed lands; and informing ESA Recovery Plans for federally listed plants.

As a wildlife biologist, I use Oregon Flora often in my work. Some plant species provide critical food and cover for wildlife. Other plants are food for pollinators, which themselves are food for birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Wildlife are a public trust-resource that provide huge economic and social benefit to Oregonians. Having access to distribution information about particular plant species that are important drivers of where wildlife occur is one way to help biologists make good decisions that benefit people and animals.

Knowing more about the species of plants that occur within an area creates a better understanding of how a system is functioning, and intact, functional systems provide the greatest value to people. Functional systems are often characterized by having high levels of biodiversity. These systems provide services such as crop pollination, water filtration, and carbon sequestration. Without tools such as Oregon Flora, biologists would have difficulty accessing information needed to make decisions that help us to recover, manage, or protect functional systems that needed and valued by the people of Oregon.

I am in strong support of efforts to secure the future of Oregon Flora. This tool has and will continue to support decisions that benefit all of us in Oregon.

(This testimony represents my personal opinions and is not representative of a position associated with an employer).