

I am writing representing Wellington Wildlands Council (WWC) in support of House Bill 3173 that will establish OregonFlora in statute and create an initial appropriation of \$400,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to Oregon State University for OregonFlora.

OregonFlora maintains an enormous database and website about plant diversity on behalf of Oregon. Since 1994, the resource has expanded to serve diverse users seeking plant knowledge. Given the program's significant growth, benefits to statewide agencies and institutions, and its value to Oregon's natural resource-based economy, long-term and sustainable funding is needed to ensure that OregonFlora can continue to provide this service.

As a conservation based nonprofit in Applegate, OR, the WWC is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of our native plants and wildlands. Our region is among the most biodiverse in the country, and we often rely on the database of OregonFlora - it is an invaluable tool for our advocacy work and environmental education programming. If you study native plants, support Oregon's biodiversity, or just want to learn some basic information about the native plants, OregonFlora is an indispensable resource. According to the Native Plant Society of Oregon -

Oregon has 4,886 unique plant species that grow without cultivation. Of these, 70% are native species, and 120 are endemic and grow only in Oregon.

The oregonflora.org website offers sophisticated search and plant identification tools, 1.48 million mappable plant occurrence records, 63,000+ color field photos, and fact sheets for every plant taxon.

Oregon's economy depends upon its botanical resources. Healthy forests, productive rangelands, agricultural operations, outdoor recreation sites, and native plant horticultural businesses all need reliable data which OregonFlora provides.

The requested support will leverage 30 years of research, volunteer effort, and citizen science contributions to develop the OregonFlora resources.

The WWC strongly supports passage of

House Bill 3173. Please help OregonFlora continue to provide their valuable services for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. Sincerely,

Jeanette LeTourneux

President, Wellington Wildlands Council