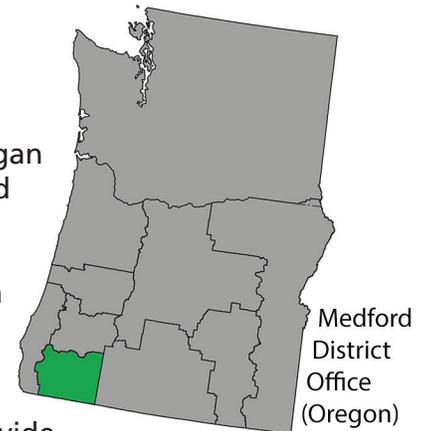


The Medford Native Plant Program

Building a Local Native Plant Program

Interest in a native plant program at the Bureau of Land Management's Medford District Office in southwest Oregon began following the 1994 wildfire season. The Medford District is located at the confluence of three major biomes, Great Basin shrub-steppe, California floristic province, and Pacific Northwest conifer forests, an area prone to frequent wildfires. A typical post-wildfire rehabilitation and emergency stabilization treatment included seeding with non-native grass species that adversely changed the native vegetation communities. A more ecologically-based approach consistent with BLM policy using native species led to the establishment of a program to provide seed from native plants for restoration projects.



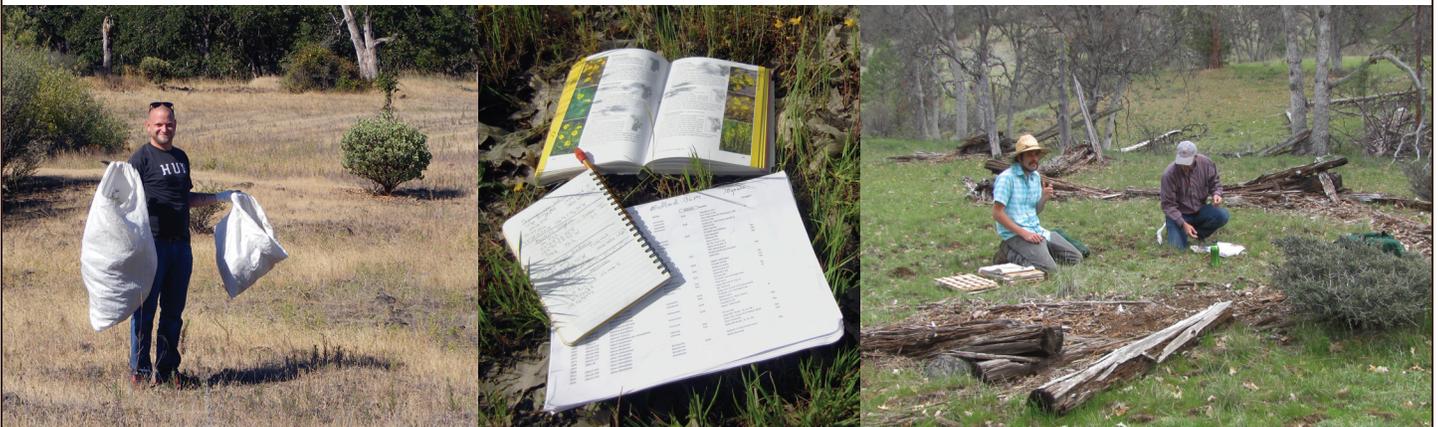
Progress towards a successful native plant program at the field level requires interest and support from management, time to develop the program, sustainable financial resources, and specialized partners with skills and equipment for certain key tasks. The Medford District Office, with the help of the Bureau of Land Management's Plant Conservation Program, has developed a comprehensive district-wide native plant program that dedicates resources to native seed collection; seed cleaning and testing; bulking wild-land seed collections into large quantities through agricultural production; and applying seed on disturbed lands to improve the condition of native plant communities.

Seed Collection: The Foundation for a Successful Program

The first step in creating the Medford Native Plant Program was to collect seed from native species that were easy to grow and showed reliable survival characteristics. The national native seed collection program, Seeds of Success, has provided substantial technical resources. An inventory of seed collections acts as a reserve for seed research, increase and development for high priority restoration projects on public lands.

Since those beginnings, each year Medford District Office has hosted two student Conservation and Land Management interns from the Chicago Botanic Garden to collect seed. The interns manage the details of the seed collection program including: daily field trips searching for and geo-locating collectable populations of native plant species; documenting the species with field data sheets; photography and herbarium vouchers; returning to the site and collecting the seed according to Seeds of Success protocols; and curing the seed prior to cleaning and seed tests. Interns are able to

Conservation and Land Management interns working for the BLM Medford District Office collecting seed.





Lupines are one of the targeted forb species of the Medford Native Plant Program.

make five collections on a good day and often refer to it as “the best job in the BLM.” Interns build technical, scientific, organizational, and work experience skills. Medford District Office benefits from the enthusiasm, interest, and work ethic of interns, while interns use the program as a career path and acquire job skills important for future employment.

In the past two years, interns with the Medford District Native Plant Program have contributed to the program and to public land management with:

- 278 wildland seed collections including 218 unique species
- Collections in the Cascades Siskiyou National Monument, Table Rocks and French Flat Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Oregon Gulch Research Natural Area
- Digitized plant specimens from the Medford BLM herbarium, including Seeds of Success vouchers, into an online database for the Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria and the Oregon Flora Project

The Medford Native Plant Program’s wildland seed collections provide seed and plant material for revegetation of disturbed areas for various District programs and projects. Seed is banked and maintained for immediate grow-out and seed increase to meet rehab efforts after catastrophic fires. Other supported projects include fuel reduction treatments, revegetation for soil stabilization from ground disturbing projects, timber-sale operations and road decommissioning, revegetation after weed control treatments, and wildlife habitat improvement projects.

Continuing to Build on Success in Medford

The Medford Native Plant Program has grown in size and complexity since 1994, primarily with support from the national Plant Conservation Program. The funds that are captured at the national level and dispersed to projects at the field level are an essential element sustaining and enhancing the Medford District’s Program. The Program has been successful in building collaborative efforts and personal relationships between Program staff, leads, management, and external partners. Through this Program, interns are given the opportunity to be stewards of the native plant communities that are the underlying foundation of our ecosystem. The Program continues to collect seed to add to the available germplasm inventory and foster ecologically based concepts of collecting and applying genetically appropriate native plant materials on Medford District.

For more information on the native plant work being done by the BLM Medford District Office or by the national Native Plant Materials Development Program, contact:

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