

RARE FLORA REDISCOVERY PROJECT: **A Proposal to the Virginia Native Plant Society**

Purpose

This proposed Virginia Native Plant Society fundraising effort for 2014 would support botanists from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage (DNH) to conduct a targeted search for rare plant populations in Virginia that haven't been relocated in the last 25 or more years.

The conservation efforts of DNH depend primarily on an accurate database of significant plants, animals, and communities. This database has its roots in the long tradition of biological exploration in Virginia and contains a large body of information on plant distribution and abundance. In recent decades, botanists from DNH have contributed significantly to this knowledge base.

Unfortunately, long periods of time have sometimes elapsed since a particular species or population has been seen in Virginia, leaving the status of that species open to conjecture and lessening the likelihood that its habitat will become a conservation target. Given inevitable land use changes and lack of proper management, even species occurrences discovered by DCR botanists in the early days of the program have been found to be either eliminated or their whereabouts unknown.

Reliable, up-to-date information on botanical rarities in Virginia is key to what we do as an agency. Since this data is also used by many other organizations and individuals at the state and national level, top quality data is essential.

Methods

1) Collect old plant records from herbarium specimens, publications, old field survey records, maps, etc.

THIS STEP IS DONE

For the proposed project, DNH botanists have identified close to 100 globally rare and/or state rare plant populations in need of survey. DNH botanists have produced a spreadsheet that currently contains historic occurrences of rare taxa grouped by VNPS chapter region. At this point the document does not contain plant occurrences outside of chapter regions but these may be added if logistics and significance of the targets dictate.

Methods, cont.

2) Map location as accurately as possible based on information, topographic maps, and modern aerial photographs

THIS STEP IS DONE

Geographic information is maintained within the DNH database.

3) Gather land-owner information

THIS STEP IS PARTLY DONE

All publicly owned or accessible lands in Virginia are mapped by DNH. For private lands, much of the necessary landowner information is now available online but courthouse work will be required in some counties.

4) Contact land-owners for permission to enter site

NEEDS TO BE DONE

5) Initiate field surveys

NEEDS TO BE DONE.

6) Enter findings into DNH data base and notify land-owner of findings

NEEDS TO BE DONE.

Cost of Project

Based on similar contracts and experience with the 2010 VNPS-sponsored effort to locate historical plant occurrences, the following estimates per plant target were derived:

Phase	Cost
Gather land-owner information:	\$20.00-\$40.00
Contact land-owner:	\$0-\$40.00
Search for plant:	\$400.00-\$450.00
Report findings:	\$80.00
Estimated total cost per plant target:	\$500.00-\$610.00

Obviously, the costs incurred per target may vary widely depending on factors such as the strength of the available data, inaccessibility of terrain, distance of travel, property ownership, and landowner negotiations.

Proposed Historical Plant EOs Project: Species Examples:

Rare plant: **Three Birds Orchid** *Triphora trianthophora* ssp.
trianthophora

Last seen: 8/22/1982
Last known location: Botetourt County

VNPS Chapter: Blue Ridge Wildflower Society



Rare plant: **Sensitive joint-vetch** *Aeschynomene virginica*

Last seen: 9/3/1939
Last known location: Stafford County

VNPS Chapter: Former Fredericksburg Area



Rare plant:

Speckled Alder *Alnus incana* ssp. *rugosa*

Last seen:

11/13/1950

Last known location:

Albemarle County

VNPS Chapter: Jefferson



Rare plant:

Mountain Camellia *Stewartia ovata*

Last seen:

9/21/1989

Last known location:

York County

VNPS Chapter: John Clayton



Rare plant: Large-leaved grass-of-parnassus *Parnassia grandifolia*
Last seen: 8/30/1972
Last known location: Bland County

VNPS Chapter: New River



Rare plant: Sea-beach knotweed *Polygonum glaucum*
Last seen: 9/16/1951
Last known location: Lancaster County

VNPS Chapter: Northern Neck



Rare plant:

Nodding Trillium *Trillium cernuum*

Last seen:

4/30/1977

Last known location:

Bull Run Mountains, Fauquier County

VNPS Chapter: Piedmont



Rare plant:

Slim-leaf Tick-trefoil *Desmodium tenuifolium*

Last seen:

9/13/1978

Last known location:

Hanover County

VNPS Chapter: Pocahontas



Rare plant:

Last seen:

Last known location:

Carolina fanwort *Cabomba caroliniana*

7/28/1975

Fairfax County

VNPS Chapter: Potowmack



Rare plant:

Last seen:

Last known location:

Hard-stem Bulrush *Schoenoplectus acutus* var.
acutus

7/29/1947

Prince William County

VNPS Chapter: Prince William Wildflower Society



Rare plant:

Mountain Paper Birch *Betula cordifolia*

Last seen:

4/20/1968

Last known location:

Rockingham County

VNPS Chapter: Shenandoah



Rare plant:

Purple Bladderwort *Utricularia purpurea*

Last seen:

6/29/1975

Last known location:

City of Chesapeake

VNPS Chapter: South Hampton Roads



Rare plant:

Millboro Leatherflower *Clemtis viticaulis*

Last seen:

6/9/1986

Last known location:

Bath County

VNPS Chapter: Upper James River

