

# **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:

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Cost</b>
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
<b>Estimated total cost per plant target:</b>	<b>\$500.00-\$610.00</b>

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**

