



Rare Plant Reintroduction

Plant species may become extirpated or so endangered in Oregon that establishment of new populations by artificial means is desirable or necessary to preserve the species.

This policy statement addresses the issue of plant species reintroduction, and offers guidelines to those interested in establishing new rare plant populations in a responsible manner.

It is intended for people involved in applied plant conservation and restoration ecology.

This policy is not intended to encourage the reintroduction or establishment of new populations of all rare species, or artificial spread of rare plant seed on a casual basis, nor does it endorse creation of new populations to mitigate population losses or for commercial gain.

At this time, reintroductions are appropriate in only a few cases.

However, the need for reintroductions may increase in the future, and this document was drafted to anticipate that increase.

Adoption date: 27 January 1991.

Note:

See our list of agencies and organizations at the end of this document that should be contacted before a project of this type is undertaken.

Guidelines

1. Is it really native?

Confirm through valid records (such as herbarium specimens, discussion in a published flora, etc.) that the plant does or did occur in Oregon before a reintroduction is attempted.

2. Documentation

Document each reintroduction, and keep records regarding the seed or transplant source(s), and the subsequent fate of the new population(s). Publish this documentation in the NPSO Bulletin or other journal. The following specific points should be documented:

- Location and map of reintroduction site.
- Type of source material (seed, cutting, etc.)
- Justification of particular reintroduction.
- Monitoring plans and methods.
- Cost of project.
- Permits obtained.
- Names of individual(s) and group(s) involved

3. Site Selection

Reintroduce plants only into sites where the species was once known to occur, or into typical habitat within the documented range of the species. To avoid genetic contamination of a persisting population (such as one dormant in the soil or present at low density) confirm that the species to be reintroduced is actually absent from the proposed site.

4. Other Rare Organisms

Do not displace or reduce populations of other rare organisms by reintroducing a species.

5. Source of plant materials

The seed or transplant source should be as close to the reintroduction site as possible. All plant material for a reintroduced population should come from a broad sample of one population, unless genetic or other evidence suggests that collections from more than one population would be beneficial. Do not damage the population that supplies the source material.

6. Genetic variability

If information regarding the genetic variability of naturally occurring populations of the species of concern is available, make every effort to mimic this variability in the reintroduced population.

7. Permits

Obtain the necessary permits before working with legally protected species or on public lands. Request permits from the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the Oregon Department of Agriculture before working with species listed as threatened or endangered by those agencies. Also, request permits from the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management before taking material of species listed by those agencies from land managed by them.

8. Last materials

Plant materials (seeds, cutting, transplants, etc.) from extremely rare species are of inestimable biological value. Do not commit the last remaining materials (e.g. last seeds in a seed bank) of a species to any single reintroduction project, in case the project fails and the species is lost.

Note:

It might be argued that to reintroduce species into native or restored habitats is to create artificial populations with little resemblance to natural ones. However, it is the position of the Native Plant Society of Oregon that if the choice is truly between extinction and reestablishment of an endangered species, our duty is to make every effort to ensure the survival of the species.

Agencies & Organizations to Contact

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Boise Field Office
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