

San Juan National Forest Native Plant Materials Program

FY2011 Accomplishments: *Pioneering Plants Project*

Project Goal:

Severely degraded lands often support only weedy, usually non-native plant species. We believe it is plausible to begin restoring self-sustaining native plant communities on these lands by reseeding with "pioneer" native species. The goal of this project is researching and developing economically viable techniques to produce seed from pioneering early- and mid- successional native species. This project will help make it profitable for commercial seed companies to produce these seeds for restoration and reclamation projects.

Seed Collections:

In FY2009 and FY2010, with USFS and BLM funds, we inventoried 30 wildland collection sites, studied phenology, and collected seeds from 21 species. In FY2011, with USFS, BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife funds, we monitored our collection sites and collected seeds from twelve additional species. Species suitable for Gunnison sage grouse habitat restoration were the focus of our 2011 collections. All seeds were sent through the BLM *Seeds of Success* Program to the USFS, Bend Seed Extractory. All seedlots were cleaned and tested, then a portion of each collection preserved in a long-term storage facility and a portion sent back for research and increase.

Seed Increase and Research:

USFS has an agreement with Colorado State University (CSU). BLM contracted Southwest Seed, Inc., a local seed grower. Both projects involve research and increase plots of pioneer species. Planting at CSU occurred in Fall 2010. Two acres of seed increase plots comprised of five species were successfully established in 2011. Small research plots of eight species also had good establishment. Southwest Seed is growing 24 small research plots. Seed yields on fields and small plots are expected in 2012. Data collection on propagation, cultivation, harvesting and reclamation potential continues.

Native Plant Garden:

A half-acre native garden was planted at the Dolores Public Lands Office in Fall 2010. Fencing and irrigation were installed in Spring 2011. The 2011 growing season focused on weed eradication. The garden will eventually reclaim a degraded site and serve as a learning tool for agencies, researchers, and the community. Colorado Habitat Partnership Program donated fence materials.

Outreach:

Three articles on our program were published in FY 2011; one in the Cortez Journal, one in the Four Corners Free Press, and one in BLM's E-Notes. We gave a presentation about our program at the Colorado Plateau Native Plant Program Annual Meeting. A presentation abstract regarding provisional seed zones was accepted by the 11th Biennial Conference of Research on the Colorado Plateau.



Townsendia annua



Seeding the Native Plant Garden, woolly locoweed pods, annual Townsend daisy flower. Both species collected this year.
Plant photos by Al Schneider.

Year Awarded: 2009

Project Completion: 2012

Report Number: 3 of 4

Expenditures:

•FY09 NFN3 funds received \$58,000.

•Non USFS funds and in-kind support received \$71,000.

•TOTAL funds and in-kind support received \$129,000.

•FY09 NFN3 funds obligated \$42,000.

•NFN3 total expenditures to date \$28,500.

•Total Non USS expenditures to date \$60,000.

Partners/Contractors/Cooperators:

•Colorado State University

•Uncompaghre Partnership

•BLM Seeds of Success Program

•Southwest Seed, Inc.

•Colorado Habitat Partnership Program

•Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Contact Person & phone number:

• Cara MacMillan (970) 882-6854



San Juan National Forest
Dolores Public Lands Office
29211 Highway 145
Dolores, CO 81323