

Montana Citizen Botany Program
Data and Site Security Agreement for Rare Plant Monitoring Volunteers

version date March 12, 2025

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) maintains accurate, up-to-date information on the state's most imperiled botanical resources. Indiscriminate sharing of exact locations of Montana's rare plant species could compromise their protection. We ask that you read, understand, and sign this agreement to help hold this sensitive information in safe keeping and to fulfill our purpose of protecting Montana's rare plants.

- 1) Rare plant location information provided by the MTNHP or gathered during field surveys shall not be sold, released, shared, or discussed with outside individuals or organizations other than cooperating landowners and land managers. Field-based data may be collected in digital and/or hardcopy formats and includes any information recorded about the plant and its presence/absence, population, habitat, threats, location and population mapping, and photographs. All field-based data shall be directly submitted to the MTNHP. MTNHP will be responsible for making the data available to the appropriate landowner or land manager. Once the assignment has been completed, all previous field-based data and mapping provided by the MTNHP should be deleted if in digital/electronic format or shredded or returned to the MTNHP Botanist or Data Systems and Sciences Lead if in hard copy format.
- 2) Surveys will be conducted only on public lands and only public lands shall be accessed during survey efforts. If privately-owned lands need to be crossed to access public lands and those privately owned lands are not marked as a public trail, written permission of the private landowner needs to be obtained.
- 3) Public landowners or land managers will be notified prior to any site visit by anyone representing the Montana Citizen Botany Program. MTNHP will obtain the initial permission to monitor or collect on public lands. The MTNHP strives to provide the Citizen Botanist with contact information for a landowner or land management agency botanist, biologist, or manager relative to their rare plant assignment. Each volunteer is responsible for contacting the landowner or land manager at least one week in advance with details of their upcoming visit, including date, species, and location. A volunteer may represent the Montana Citizen Botany Program only when fulfilling a specific assignment.
- 4) MTNHP requires volunteers, students, and interns to submit original, completed field-based data, including any information recorded about the plant, and its presence/absence, population, habitat, threats, location and population mapping, and photographs on existing and new rare plant populations as soon as possible following a visit to a rare plant site, and no later than 6 weeks after you completed your final site visit.
- 5) If MTNHP volunteers become aware of an immediate threat to a rare plant population, they will notify, as soon as possible, the MTNHP Botanist, Andrea Pipp, through email at apipp@mt.gov, and she will inform the landowner or land manager.
- 6) Unless explicitly authorized by MTNHP staff, volunteers may not collect or destroy any plant or part thereof, including but not limited to seeds, propagules, flowers, stems, leaves, or roots. Acceptance into the rare plant monitoring program is not an authorization to collect. If volunteers question a plant's identity, then the plant's traits should be observed and described through writing, drawings, and photographs.
- 7) If plant or seed collection is assigned, a scientific collecting permit from the appropriate agency must be obtained. MTNHP and Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) staff and volunteers working on the Montana Citizen Botany Program shall adhere to the "MNPS Guidelines for Collecting Native Plants" found at: <https://www.mtnativeplants.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MNPS-Guidelines-for-Collecting-Native-Plants-.pdf>
- 8) If assigned to collect a plant specimen, then the Montana Citizen Botany Program volunteer should contact the MTNHP Botanist about obtaining proper supplies and following proper guidelines (refer to #7).

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- 9) Under no circumstance will volunteers, students, or interns collect a plant or seed for any purpose other than the purpose assigned by MTNHP to document the distribution and status of a species. Public resources may not be used for private gain. Any violation of this rule will result in the volunteer's dismissal from the program.
- 10) Photographs taken for the purposes of conducting the rare plant monitoring and submitted with the data become the copyright property of MTNHP, are archived in the MTNHP botany database, and are credited with the photographer's name. The MTNHP uses photographs to validate the submitted observation data. The MTNHP may also use plant and habitat photograph(s) for educational purposes on the Montana Field Guide and will credit the photo with the photographer's name. The MTNHP may share photographs with the MNPS for the purposes of education or for promoting the Society or the Montana Citizen Botany Program through presentations, brochures, website, or other formats. The MTNHP and MNPS will not share personal information (names, addresses, or phone numbers) or identify the names of people when using photographs that contain people. The MTNHP and MNPS value your privacy and understand that you may not wish to have photographs in which people (Citizen Botanist, field partners, or other participants) appear to be shared publicly. If you do **not** consent to the sharing of photographs that contain people, please opt out by checking the box below:

For the photographs that I have provided with the data, I do not consent to the sharing of photographs that include people (me, Citizen Botanist, field partners, or other participants).

- 11) The Montana Citizen Botany Program volunteer agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Montana Native Plant Society, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Montana State Library, and associated officials, agents, and employees, while acting within the scope of their duties, from and against all claims, demands, causes of action, liabilities, damages, judgments, expenses, or fees that may arise out of the volunteer's participation in the pilot study.

The skilled and thoughtful participation of individuals such as you are greatly valued.
Thank you for helping to monitor, manage, and protect Montana's rare plants.

Printed/Typed Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Postal Mailing Address

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Electronic Mail Address: _____

Best Contact Phone Number: _____

Please keep a copy of this agreement for your records and return a signed original or digital copy through postal or electronic mail to:

Andrea Pipp
Montana State Library
Montana Natural Heritage Program
PO Box 201800
Helena, MT 59620-1800

apipp@mt.gov