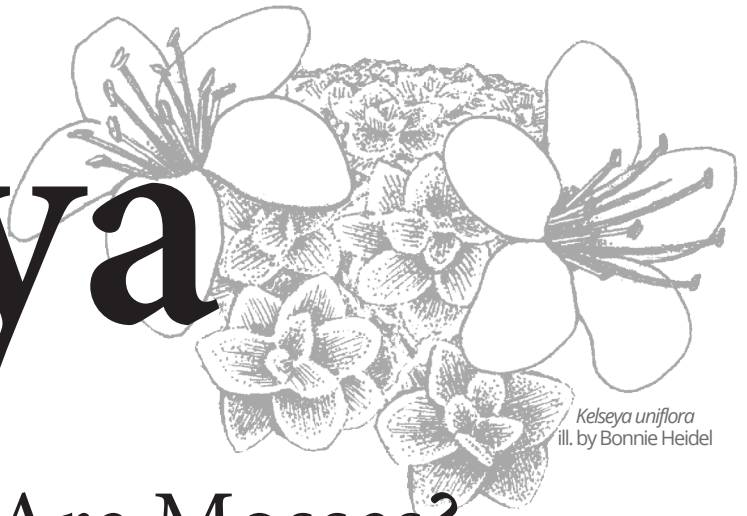


Kelseya

Newsletter of the Montana Native Plant Society



Kelseya uniflora
ill. by Bonnie Heidel

What Good Are Mosses?

By Joe Elliot, Clark Fork Chapter



Polytrichum juniperinum, photo by Joe Elliot

Recently, a friend asked, “What good are mosses”. My initial reaction was to counter with “What good are giraffes and mountains”, but on introspection, I realized that many people, including botanists, often are not aware that bryophytes are ecologically and aesthetically valuable components of the flora. After a bit of thought I compiled the following discussion of the ecological relationships among mosses, vascular plants, animals, and gardeners.

Bryophytes (i.e., mosses, liverworts and hornworts), the earliest land plants, have no vascular tissue (i.e., xylem and phloem) and reproduce by spores and asexually from vegetative parts of the plant. Mosses provide the majority of bryophyte biomass in plant communities and interact ecologically with understory and forest vegetation. Mosses receive all of their nutrients and moisture from

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Chapter Events

Artemisia Chapter

Info: Jessica Callahan at 507-696-5467; artemisiamnps@gmail.com.

Calypso Chapter

Info: Catherine Cain at 406-498-6198; nativeplants@montana.com or Karen Porter at 406-498-9728; karenwporter44@gmail.com.

Wednesday, July 9, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. How to Collect Native Plant Seed (Butte). Krystal Weilage, Native Plant Specialist at Montana Tech, will engage a small, hands-on group in specific collection techniques for individual native plant species. Please bring your own collecting envelopes. Limit: 5 - 7. For details and to register, contact Karen Porter at 406-498-9728 or karenwporter44@gmail.com.

Thursday, July 24. A Night of Fun with Moths (Location TBA).

Evening or overnight. It's not just the bees ... Montana's native moths have an outsized role in pollinating our native plants. Join moth expert Nick Tucci at a campground location (TBD) to observe the spectacular numbers and diversity of our native moths during evening and nighttime hours. Late into the night and early morning, Nick will employ various light traps and screens for attracting and observing, with no harm to the moths. Come for the evening only, or plan to camp. All are welcome. For details and to register contact Karen Porter at 406-498-9728; karenwporter44@gmail.com.



White-lined Sphinx Moth - *Hyles lineata* on golden currant (*Ribes aureum*), photo by USFS

Sunday, October 19, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Dyeing with Native Plants – A Hands-on Educational Workshop (Divide).

Co-hosted with the U.S. Forest Service, this workshop will guide participants in developing a dye notebook using various plant dye materials including lichens, bark, flowers and berries. Participants may purchase a silk scarf (a small fee paid at the workshop) to dye, or bring small samples of their own fabrics. For details and to register contact Jessie at 406-660-0011 or jessica.salix@usda.gov.

Sunday, December 7, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Calypso Chapter Annual Potluck and Planning Brunch at the Divide Grange.

We will gather to celebrate the season, enjoy a meal together, and plan the trips and events we will offer in 2026. For more information contact Karen at 406-498-9728; karenwporter44@gmail.com.

Clark Fork Chapter

Info: Teagan Hayes at 920-979-9009; teagan.hayes@gmail.com or Paul Buck at 970-901-2418; paul7703@gmail.com.

Thursday, July 10, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Montana Native Seed Network Tour at the DNRC Seedling Nursery (Missoula). Join

Ashley Mattson and Kylie Brown for a walk through the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery's native seed fields, greenhouses, seed bank and more. This tour will showcase the progress of the Nursery's newly expanded operation as the ecoregional native seed production hub for the Montana Native Seed Network. To sign up and for more information contact the nursery at mtnursery@mt.gov or 406-542-4244.

Sunday, July 13, 9:00 a.m. St. Regis Citizen Botany field trip - Rare orchid: Clustered Lady Slipper. The Citizen Botany Program is a collaborative project between the Montana Native Plant Society and Natural Heritage Program. It's designed to involve volunteers (our "citizen botanists") in searching for and documenting rare native plants across the state. Participants help update important records by surveying sites that haven't been visited in 20 years or more. The information they collect supports plant conservation efforts and helps scientists and land managers better understand where these rare species still exist. Are you curious about becoming a Citizen Botanist? Or already participating but want more? Join botanists Erynn McNeill and Teagan Hayes on a rare plant site revisit looking for Clustered Lady Slipper (*Cypripedium fasciculatum*) near St. Regis, MT on July 13, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to approximately 2:00 p.m. Please bring snacks and water and be prepared for inclement weather and bushwacking on various terrain. This field trip is limited to 10 participants - please RSVP to erynnmcneill@gmail.com to get on the list and for information on meeting location.

Eastern At-Large

Info: Kelsey Molloy at 406-654-4566; kelsey88@gmail.com.

Flathead Chapter

Info: Tara Carolin at 406-607-7670; mnps.flathead@gmail.com.

Monday, July 7, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Education to Develop All Senses - What Is It? (Eureka). Join Julia Higgins for a day of sensory-sharpening techniques. Julia is a German nature educator with a master's degree in outdoor education and is the owner of "Waldlife" - a center for nature-based learning. We will focus on each of our senses separately with the help of different activities like forest meditation, walking barefoot on paths and much more. Limit of 10 people. Please email waldlife@proton.me to sign up and to receive exact location.

Saturday, July 12th, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. North Fork Forests & Fire. Join Steve Wirt, retired USFS forester and fire manager, where he will discuss fire history in this area for the third consecutive trip! The emphasis will be on plant response, identification, and forest succession before and after fires. There may be an opportunity to view the Hay Creek fire of 2021. Hiking the Hornet Lookout trail will be the highlight of the day. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a sack lunch and plenty of water. Meet at Super One parking lot in Columbia Falls at 9:00 a.m., to carpool up the Northfork of the Flathead River. The trip is limited to 15 people. To sign up contact Steve at 406-261-2542.

Saturday, July 19, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Bluebird

Lake Loop. **Eve Wills**, retired Forest Service and professional naturalist guide, will lead this hike which starts just above Little Therriault Lake, in the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area. The drive to the trailhead takes about 1.5 hours from the Grave Creek turnoff 10 miles south of Eureka, with approximately 12 miles paved. The remaining 17 miles is gravel, but easily passible for most vehicles. Carpooling will be strongly encouraged. This moderately strenuous loop hike encompasses a wide variety of terrain ranging from cold, moist forest to an alpine lake basin, and scree habitats with stunning views on the Highline Trail. Many showy blooms will be seen, such as yellow columbine, paintbrush, mountain heath, asters, arnica, penstemon and many other species. Distance: 7.2 mile loop; elevation gain: 1650 feet. Limit of 12 people. Text Eve Wills at 406-925-0655 or email veinmontana@gmail.com.



Phyllodoce empetriformis (pink Mountain-heath),
photo by Matt Lavin

Saturday, August 2, 8:00 a.m. Standard Peak. We'll look for late season alpine flowers and observe senescence on this beautiful but challenging hike. Strenuous, 6-mile round trip hike with 2,000 ft. of elevation gain. Contact **Andrew Smith** at andrew.p.smith95@gmail.com to sign up and to learn the meeting location. Limited to 10 people.

Saturday, August 16. Huckleberry Ecology with Maria Mantas (Swan Valley). Take a hike in the Swan Range to observe and discuss the ecology of *Vaccinium globulare* (or is it *V. membranaceum*?) We can talk about taxonomy too! Bring a container. Location to be announced. Call Maria for details at 406-407-2045.

Thursday, August 21, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Converting Lawns using Native Plants. Join **Center for Native Plants & Kareen Erbe of Broken Ground** where we'll take you through the steps to establish your drought tolerant native-scape all while removing your lawn! Learn the tips and tricks from tried-and-true methods, species to consider, layout, maintenance and everything in between. Registration required at www.centerfornativeplants.com.

Kelsey Chapter

Info: Elena Johnson (president) or Jane Fournier (secretary) at kelseychaptermnps@gmail.com.

Sunday, July 13, August 10, September 14, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Prairie Peace Garden Self-Guided Garden Tour. You are invited to Bryan Flynn's site at Private Stock Peonies (AKA Prairie Peace Garden), located a few miles southeast of Townsend. Bryan has created an ever-expanding number of native grass and forb strips in various stages of development, as well as

a 500-square-foot xeriscape rock garden he would like to share with MNPS members. There will be a series of self-guided tours on the following Sundays from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m.: July 13, August 10, and September 14. The three dates are offered to showcase a broad variety of native plants at different stages of their seasonal development. You are certainly welcome to come on all days if you wish. Bryan will, of course, be on hand to chat with visitors, and some handouts describing various aspects of native gardening will be available. Picnickers are welcome as there are numerous comfortable garden benches with backs as well as tables on the premises. This year he will have plants for sale, contingent on remaining availability, on those dates. You will be asked to sign a liability waiver as you enter the premises. Directions to the site can be found on Bryan's website privatstockpeonies.com.

Maka Flora Chapter

Info: Libby Knotts at 406-774-3778; libbyknotts@gmail.com.

Valley of Flowers Chapter

Info: Contact Gretchen Rupp for program details or to be added to the Valley of Flowers Chapter "Friends" e-mail list, at 406-586-8363; beesgrmt@gmail.com.

Saturday, July 12, 11:00 a.m. Adventure to Balanced Rock.

Tucked away on the west side of the Tobacco Roots and on a somewhat challenging road (no trailers), we'll meet at Balanced Rock Campground for an exploration of trails in the area. We're going sight unseen, but we know there will be flowers! Plan for a long drive (estimated two hours from Bozeman). We'll meet at 11:00 a.m. at the Balanced Rock Campground: from Sheridan, MT, head east on Mill Creek Road. If you like, camp out the night before at Mill Creek or Balanced Rock campgrounds. Led by **Robyn Klein**, who will be especially focused on medicinal and edible plant species. Come and adventure with us! For more information, contact Robyn Klein at herbrobin@gmail.com.

Saturday, July 19, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. O'Dell Creek

Wetland Restoration, Granger Ranch. View the largest wetland restoration effort in Montana along privately owned O'Dell Creek, a tributary to the Madison River. Through the efforts of Jeff Laszlo and his family, fifth-generation owners of the Granger Ranch just outside Ennis, the ambitious restoration project has transformed miles of heavily-grazed lands and drainage ditches back to the stream's original meandering path. Since the transformation during the early 2000s, the wetlands now provide important habitat for native vegetation, waterfowl, migratory birds, and fish. Wetland plant specialists will help us identify plants in the riparian areas. Additionally, we will visit the drier, upland river benches to view wildflowers and native grasses. Please bring lunch. For more information on carpooling and navigation guidance, contact Vicki Saab at victoriaannsaab@gmail.com.

Sunday, July 20, 9:00 a.m. Glories of the Gallatin Range. Join us for this moderately strenuous all-day, 11-mile hike, climbing 2,200 feet in elevation on a good trail. Starting in lodgepole pine forest, we'll

(continued on page 4)



pass by spectacular waterfalls and enjoy coralroots, pipsissewas, twinflowers, and the unique plants across the numerous wetland seeps we traverse. But, we won't want to linger long as the real treat is the wildflowers and sedges that occupy the subalpine around Emerald Lakes! Here we'll spend most of our time enjoying this unique environment's wetland plants, high up in the Gallatin Range. Make sure to bring lunch, snacks, and gear for all weather conditions. Meet at the Hyalite welcome center (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r01/custergallatin/recreation>) at just above the mouth of the canyon at 9:00 a.m. For more information, contact Jared Trilling at jaredtrilling@gmail.com.

Western At-Large

Info: Jon Reny at 406-334-0459; jreny@kvis.net.

Friday to Thursday, July 11 to 17. Second Botanical Foray for Kootenai National Forest Floristics Camping Trip.

Spend several days (exact dates and location flexible, pending participant interest) camping and botanizing as part of a two-summer floristic inventory of the Kootenai National Forest with graduate student Marguerite Trost and other researchers from the Rocky Mountain Herbarium. Please bring your own camping and hiking gear; floristic fieldwork gear and training provided. We will spread out each morning in groups of 5 - 6 people according to expertise and fieldwork capacity. At the campground we will regroup in the afternoon to press plant collections and exchange field stories. Foray participants will help collect and press specimens to document the diversity and distribution of plants on the Kootenai. These collaboratively generated data will be added to the flora in Trost's thesis, with specimens held in the Rocky Mountain Herbarium and its publicly accessible database. For more details and to RSVP, contact Marguerite Trost at etrost@uwyo.edu or 615-925-9497.

Saturday, July 12, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Miller Creek Wetland and Open Hillsides. Join **Peter Lesica** for his annual plant hike in NW Montana. The wetland is on private property and the owners have granted us permission to visit the site. Waders are a good thing to bring along, but are not required. After walking the wetland area, we will drive to a trailhead and hike up to south-facing openings that are at 5,000 feet in elevation. Bring lunch and water. Meeting place to be determined. For questions and to sign up, contact Jon Reny at 406-334-0459 or jreny@kvis.net.

Saturday, August 9, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30+ p.m. Northwest Peak Scenic Area. Hike to Northwest Peak in Lincoln County to visit whitebark pine and subalpine larch habitats. **Chris Reichert** and **Betty Kuropat**, retired Forest Service silviculturists, will lead this moderate 3-4 mile round trip hike. This will be a good time to visit the beautiful Northwest Peak Scenic area, find blooming wildflowers in the subalpine zone, and discuss efforts to conserve whitebark pine. Please wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring raingear, a lunch and plenty of water. Meet at the parking area at the junction

of Pete Creek Rd #338 and Yaak Hwy 508 at 9:30 a.m. or at the Troy Museum parking area at 8:30 a.m. to carpool from Troy. The drive to the trailhead is about 60 miles from Troy. Sign up with Chris at 406-291-8324 or reichert.chris9@gmail.com.

(What Good Are Mosses?, continued from page 1)

atmospheric deposition and intercept and retain water. Unlike vascular plants they do not conduct moisture and nutrients from the substrate to the aerial portions of the plant. Nutrients, water, and other airborne elements are absorbed through the leaves of mosses.

Mosses are colonizers of disturbed habitats and provide microhabitats for the germination and growth of early successional vascular plants. Some species of vascular plants only germinate in the presence of mosses. Some rare species of the fern, *Botrychium*, are closely associated with moss carpets in northwestern Montana. In the coal mining areas of the eastern United States, mosses have been a component in the reestablishment of stable cover of vegetation following mining.

Moss carpets in conifer forests accumulate phosphorous and nitrogen from atmospheric dust and precipitation. Studies of black spruce communities have found that mosses account for 75 percent of the phosphorous accumulation in aboveground vegetation. Mycorrhizal hyphae of fungi are thought to provide a pathway for phosphorous movement from the moss carpet to the roots of the overstory forest.

The large forest mosses (e.g., *Pleurozium*, *Hylocomium*, *Dicranum*, and *Rhytidiadelphus*), common in western Montana, harbor bacteria in their leaf axils that fix atmospheric nitrogen and make it available to associated vegetation when plants die or it is leached by rainwater.

Mosses, especially the genus, *Orthotrichum*, which colonize rocks, roofs, and trees, are used as bioindicators of air pollution, on the West Coast. Because mosses collect their nutrients from atmospheric sources, they are effective at accumulating airborne



Hylocomium splendens, photo by Joe Elliot

pollutants (e.g., sulfur, fluoride, and lead), and are excellent tools to assess air quality.

Mosses are also a habitat component for wildlife. Although few animals eat mosses, one exception in Montana is the rare bog lemming, an inhabitant of bogs and fens. I have analyzed the stomach contents of bog lemmings from Montana fens and found that a large proportion of their diet is mosses.

Another fen species, the caddis fly, weaves *Scorpidium scorpioides*, a rare aquatic moss, into its larval casing. The Rattlebone Fen population of caddis flies, in northwest Montana, harvests sprigs of living *Scorpidium* and weaves it into a casing that resembles a furry, green marshmallow. During the daylight hours the living sprigs of moss, through photosynthesis, release oxygen, which is trapped in the woven moss casing, causing the larval caddis fly to float to the surface of the pond that is several feet deep. I do not know how the use of a living moss affects the ecology and life history of the caddis flies in Rattlebone Fen. I deposited a specimen of the *Scorpidium* casing from Rattlebone Fen in the University of Montana Herbarium.

The semiaquatic bird, the dipper, a common resident of Rattlesnake Creek, uses mosses in nest construction and gleans aquatic insects from the dense growths of the mosses, *Fontinalis*, *Scleropodium*, and *Brachythecium*, that grow on submerged rocks in the stream. The trout in Rattlesnake Creek are also dependent on the aquatic insects that inhabit the underwater moss forest. Red squirrels have collected mosses from my yard and made nests in the nooks and crannies of my woodpile, which has contributed to cleaner air in Missoula. Not wanting to disturb their nests, I have burned very little wood in my fireplace, which has reduced the emission of carbon dioxide and particulates.



Scleropodium obtusifolium, photo by Joe Elliot

When identifying mosses with the aid of a microscope, I often am captivated by the tiny critters that skitter across the slide, suspended in a few drops of water. Even after moss specimens

have been residing for years in dry herbarium cabinets, upon rehydrating, microscopic animals miraculously appear, especially tardigrades, also known as water bears. A Missoula scientist studying tardigrades found them to be especially abundant in a common Montana moss, *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*, the electric-cat-tail moss.

I am not the only aficionado of mosses of the natural and cultivated landscapes. Mosses are widely used in Japanese gardens, among rocks, and manicured shrubs and trees. Mosses in Japanese gardens are transplanted from natural sites or are propagated from mosses that have been macerated in a blender with yogurt and spread on the area to be colonized. Apparently, the moss particles regenerate asexually and establish aesthetically pleasing green spaces. I do not know the function of the yogurt and I have not tried this technique.

Another aspect of moss ecology that is often overlooked is that there are no mosses classified as noxious weeds. Noxious weeds cause billions of dollars in lost agricultural production, reduced biodiversity, and cause the introduction of harmful pesticides into the environment. Typically, a noxious weed is a species that is introduced into an alien environment that proliferates largely unchecked by natural controls present in its native habitat. Many mosses have worldwide distributional ranges and few are narrowly endemic. It is rare that a moss endemic to another part of the country or world becomes established in Montana. There are only a couple of mosses that I know of that have been found in Montana, established outside of their typical ranges or habitats as a result of human activities. One example is *Calliergonella cuspidata*, a wetland species that has become a common component of lawns in the Pacific Northwest and rare member of Missoula lawns. Apparently, a watered lawn approximates the growing conditions of a fen or other natural wetland.

Historically, *Sphagnum* moss has been used as a dressing for wounds during wars and as an absorbent in baby's diapers. The prodigious absorption capacity and antibacterial properties of *Sphagnum* render it especially suitable for health and hygiene uses. Unfortunately, *Sphagnum* peat has also been extensively used as a soil amendment for gardening, which has caused the destruction of the distinctive and rare vegetation of many fens and bogs across the boreal region of North America. It takes thousands of years to build up a few inches of peat. Eschew peat in gardening!



Sphagnum magellanicum, photo by Joe Elliot



“Hot Town, Summer in the City”

By Mark Majerus, Co-Chair MNPS Landscaping and Revegetation Committee

Many of us are old enough to remember the song and some of the lyrics of the Lovin’ Spoonful 1966 release of “Summer in the City”. This song may come to mind when considering the phenomenon known as Urban Heat Island (UHI). Although the major Montana urban areas are small in comparison to the large U.S. metropolises, they are just miniature urban versions, with paved, often treeless downtown and business districts with large parking lots. Daytime ambient air temperatures in urban areas are usually 1 - 6° F higher than nearby rural areas, but nighttime temperatures can be as much as 22° F higher, as pavement and buildings continue to radiate heat captured during the daylight hours. Two on-campus studies that exhibit the relative heat radiation from various surfaces are as follows:

McCarty & Miller 2024	Clemson University
ambient air	94° F
pond surface	94° F
lawn turf	104° F
bare sand	132° F
asphalt	136° F
artificial turf	165° F
K. Guan 2011	UC-Berkeley
ambient air	75-77° F
grass turf	77° F
concrete	93° F
pavers	99° F
asphalt	104° F

The EPA illustration (Figure 1) is an excellent display of Urban Heat Islands and some of the cooling effects within urban areas. Open water (ponds and lakes) and flowing water create the greatest degree of cooling as water is little affected by diurnal and nocturnal temperature fluctuation.

However, the greatest overall cooling is from mature trees (tree lined streets and residential landscaping) in the older residential areas of the city. Through combined effects of evapotranspiration and shading, trees can cool an area by 4 - 14° F. Urban trees additionally capture CO₂ and sequester carbon, give off O₂, reduce storm runoff, provide habitat for wildlife (particularly birds) and are aesthetically pleasing.

Next on list of cooling factors are Parks and Urban Green Spaces (often remnant native ecosystems). The more forested these sites are, the greater the cooling.

Manicured turf has a good cooling effect, captures CO₂ and sequesters carbon; however, these monocultures require considerable maintenance (supplemental irrigation, mowing, fertilization and chemical weed control). They do not provide a desirable habitat for pollinators and other insects, which are so important to birds. Landscaping with native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees can

provide the same amount of cooling and carbon capture as turf but also provide excellent habitat for wildlife and the creatures they rely on for food; all with less maintenance and limited supplemental irrigation.

Xeriscaping efforts often involve the use of weed barrier and mulching. Organic mulch (bark, wood chips or shredded bark & wood) and rock mulch (all sizes and color of aggregate) are the most used materials. Rock, like concrete, will generate excess heat which may be harmful to some plants (especially young transplants and young trees). On the other hand, organic mulch keeps the soil cooler, has better soil moisture retention and decomposes over time, releasing nutrients to the soil.

A more comprehensive article on UHI will be posted on the landscape section of the MNPS website. So, plan now to PLANT MORE NATIVES!

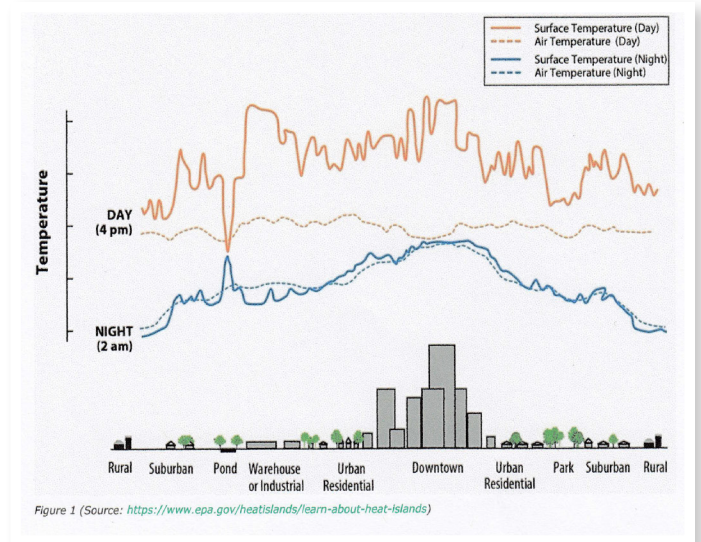


Figure 1. EPA illustration of Urban Heat Islands and some of the cooling effects within urban areas

Field Trips Through the Seasons - A Look Back at a Few Recent MNPS Field Trips

A Fall Walk in the Far Northwest

By Pat McLeod, Western-at-Large Chapter

On a foggy cold October morning, nine plant enthusiasts headed to the Yaak in far NW Montana. As we climbed from Troy, the town with the lowest elevation in Montana, the sun and autumn colors came into view. After an hour’s drive along the scenic Yaak River, we enjoyed a hot coffee from Yaak



Mercantile. Another 30 minutes got us to the Wood Creek Larch Scenic Area near the Canadian border. After signing in and an orientation talk from hike leader, Betty Kuropat, we were happy to get hiking to warm up. It was 27 degrees with sunshine beginning to peek through tree branches.

The recently established trail on the Kootenai National Forest is in an area planned for forest treatment. We

Betty highlighting a fire scar

passed some planned timber harvest areas with trees painted to designate them as “leave” or “cut”. Betty, a silviculturist, along with others on the hike, provided insight into ways the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) studies and prepares for forest treatment.

We discussed how to identify tree species including: western larch, white pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, lodgepole, hemlock and western redcedar, and the varying ways trees adapt to fire and reseeded. To our surprise we saw at least one flowering specimen of the following: spotted knapweed, strawberry, mullein, harebell, and bunchberry, plus grapefern (or moonwort).

We enjoyed lunch in the sunshine then measured a western larch with a 40-inch diameter. Betty had forest measurement data from the USFS silviculturist so we could compare tree sizes and ages. Betty shared with us the complicated metrics of how the USFS determines if a stand of trees is “old growth”. The definition and criteria for old growth is based on regional conditions. The definition for old growth on the Kootenai National Forest is not the same as for Florida, California, etc. Reviewing the definition enhanced our understanding of this old growth larch forest, with many trees 350 to over 500 years old. Reading tree scars, some of the trees have survived at least three fires.

It was a great hike to admire the golden larch and share knowledge with a friendly group of Native Plant Society enthusiasts.



Rita, Elaina, Pat, Jon, Ray, Roxie, Laura, Betty; photographer, Doug

Plant I.D. in Montana - in December

Photos by Tracy Sterling

The ground was snow-free on December 7 when Robyn Klein and Matt Lavin led a group to take a look at the sagebrush steppe of Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park. Nothing was in bloom, but there was plenty to discuss!





President's Platform

I'm so grateful that summer has finally arrived. Plants are out, and they're inviting us to get to know them better. That's exactly what we do as a society: advance education, conservation, and research centered on Montana's native plants.

If you joined us for the 2025 Annual Meeting in Ekalaka, you experienced all of these elements firsthand. I was reminded once again that people who love plants are, without exception, most kind and generous human beings. That sense of community and shared passion was apparent throughout our time together. Eastern



MNPS President, Robert Pal

Montana, though a long journey for many, truly showed its nicest face. It offered perfect weather, sweeping landscapes, and most importantly, fascinating native flora. We are deeply grateful to the Maka Flora Chapter, led by Libby Knotts, for hosting us and ensuring that Camp Needmore left us with unforgettable memories.

Our other chapters have also been incredibly active, organizing outstanding field trips, hands-on activities, and engaging presentations through "MNPS Presents!". I encourage you to take full advantage of the programs and events offered by your local chapter this year.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. I look forward to seeing many of you out in the field, exploring, learning, and celebrating the plants we care so deeply about.

Mark your calendars! The 2026 MNPS Annual Meeting will take place June 26-28, 2026 at Homestake Lodge, on Homestake Pass, atop the Continental Divide. The Valley of Flowers Chapter will be our host as we explore habitats ranging from montane wetlands to flower meadows to reclaimed riparian corridors. See you there!

The 2025 Annual Meeting: A Glimpse Through the Lens "Prairie Solstice Sojourns" Ekalaka, June 20 - 22



Field trip around Ekalaka, photo by Robert Pal



Studying among a patch of painted milkvetch (Astragalus ceramicus var. filifolius)



Peter Lesica guiding ID of a species of lupine



Bracted Spiderwort (Tradescantia bracteata) near Ekalaka



Wayne Phillips entertaining the crowd with Patrick Plantenberg



Steve Cooper and Scott Mincemoyer guiding plant ID

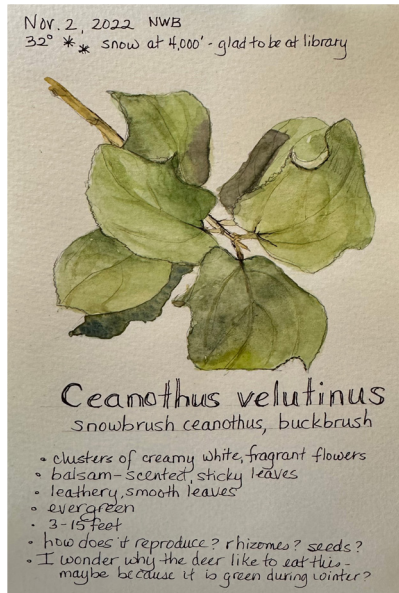


Nature Journaling Workshop

By Kathy Settevendemie, Clark Fork Chapter

On January 25, Lone Pine State Park hosted a group of intrepid nature enthusiasts who braved subzero temperatures to attend a class on the basics of nature journaling presented by Northern Rockies Nature Journaling (NRNJ).

Surrounded by an fascinating display of plant, bird, reptilian (including 'Camo' the friendly bull snake) and skeletal wildlife subjects, the group (including MNPS members) considered various methods of recording observations when studying specimens including:



Example page for inspiration



- Writing thoughts and feelings as you journal
- Creating poems about what you see - haiku, acrostic poems, etc.
- Recording senses - what you see, hear, smell and touch
- Measuring and counting parts of an object or scene
- Asking questions about a subject and noting those
- Sketching - objects, scenes, small details

Nature journals become records of observations, experiences, and memories.

NRNJ Executive Director Valerie Bayer, assisted by Kathy Settevendemie, explored ways to connect with nature through the practice of journaling, a practice that is educational, informative and relaxing. Participants were encouraged to engage with nature as they hike, recreate out-of-doors and as they plan summer adventures.

WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS!

The Montana Native Plant Society would like to welcome and thank new and returning members from the following chapters:

☞ **Artemisia Chapter**

Lou Hegwer & Jon Wright, Addison Sessions

☞ **Calypso Chapter**

Deborah Kelley, Cheryl Madison, Stephanie Reichhardt

☞ **Clark Fork Chapter**

Elise Anderson, Helen Atthowe, Jaimie Costa, Andrew Guschausky, Jena Hart, Brent Hildebrand, Hannah Hornyak, Daniel Johnson, Shannon McCoy,

Craig Odegard, Gabrielle Olscamp, Owen Palsic,

Michael Paterni, Keely Pattisall, Sarah Seibach, Karin Silverstein, Sonja & Jay Skovlin, Mollena Sydnor, Lauren Waski, Alden Whitney

☞ **Flathead Chapter**

Mary Alexine, Christie Bond, Lou Anne & Skyla Krantz, Renee Moseley, Kelsi Plante, Sabrina Shattles, Laurel & Adam Smart

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About Montana Native Plant Society

The Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation chartered for the purpose of preserving, conserving, and studying the native plants and plant communities of Montana, and educating the public about the value of our native flora. Contributions to MNPS are tax deductible.

Your yearly membership fee includes an electronic subscription to *Kelsey*, the quarterly newsletter of MNPS. We welcome your articles, field trip reports, book reviews, or anything that relates to native plants or the Society. Please include a line or two of "bio" information with each article. All items should be emailed to scottguse@yahoo.com and jenhintzguse@gmail.com, or mailed to: Scott and Jennifer Guse, *Kelsey* Editors, 725 Twin Lakes Road, Whitefish, MT 59937.

Fall issue submission deadline is September 10

(Upcoming deadlines: December 10, March 10, June 10)

Please send web items to our webmasters:

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Advertising space is available in each issue at \$5/column inch. Ads must be camera-ready and must meet the guidelines set by the Board of Directors for suitable subject matter; that is, be related in some way to native plants or the interests of MNPS members.

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