



Volunteer opportunity

Position Title:

Native Plant Center seed scout

Department/ Program/Team:

Parks and Nature/Conservation Program/Science

Purpose:

Native Plant Center seed scouts support Metro's conservation of uncommon, threatened and rare native herbaceous species by monitoring and tracking phenology and documenting population location. Seed scouts visit various Metro properties each year to locate, identify and document native populations of prioritized herbaceous species. This work supports Metro's commitment to enhance and increase biodiversity of regionally significant habitats.

Benefits:

Scouts visit Metro properties not open to the general public. They have the opportunity to observe rare and unique plants, some endemic to the Northern Willamette Valley, and learn about the ecosystems these species rely on to flourish. Scouts also become skilled at identifying rare species in all phenological stages: vegetative, flower and seed. Additionally, there will be an opportunity for some volunteers, based on experience and availability, to participate in the collection of voucher specimens for the Portland State University herbarium and seed for banking at the Rae Selling Berry Seed Bank at the university.

Essential position responsibilities:

- Attend two mandatory trainings held in mid-March and early June
- Become familiar with the prioritized species listed for monitoring
- Learn to identify said species in all phenological stages from vegetative through seed ripe and ready to collect
- Conduct site visits on two-week intervals, March through September (site dependent), to monitor phenological stages, collect and document all observations as presented in training, determine seed collection dates and collect seeds
- Visit established waypoints to collect current data, create additional waypoints as needed
- Enter field data into electronic format and send to NPC staff within one week of site visit (required)
- Arrange travel to assigned Metro site with team members and/or Native Plant Center staff
- Maintain and document volunteer hours using Volgistics
- Maintain regular communication with the Native Plant Center coordinator and team members to schedule and confirm collection dates and field kit needs

- Maintain good working relationships with Metro staff, volunteers and property neighbors
- Consider additional tasks to support seed scouting such as data entry, photographing phenological stages of select species, etc.

Qualifications, skills and abilities:

- Completion of the two required trainings
- Intermediate knowledge of PNW native herbaceous plant species
- Ability to identify native and herbaceous plants in the wild and to distinguish select species (rare, uncommon or otherwise)
- Ability to navigate, using a handheld Garmin GPS unit, maps and compass
- Methodical, organized and able to follow strict collection protocol
- Possess attention to detail
- Undeterred by weather, including hot, sunny days; rough terrain, including rocky or steep slopes and mucky edges of riparian strips or wetlands; and occasional bee and poison oak hazards
- Ability to meet at prearranged location to carpool (on site or at Metro office or field station)
- Willing and able to work as a team, ability to be flexible and cooperative
- Ability to take on a leadership role in the program as needed
- Experience using a dichotomous key is required
- Reliability, commitment and promptness in filing reports, posting pictures and sharing information

Time commitment:

Seed scouting begins in late March and often continues into September. Each site targeted for monitoring or collection will have a team of seed scouts. Scouts commit to visiting their site every two weeks (approximately 10 to 12 hours a month, not including travel time) throughout the season. Team members may divide large or complicated sites or allocate visits among members.

Receives guidance from / reports to:

Marsha Holt-Kingsley, Natural Resource Associate Scientist; Botanist

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Jennifer Wilson, Native Plant Center assistant, jennifer.wilson@oregonmetro.gov

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