

2011 Miles City Field Office Native Plant Materials Program

By Melissa Schroeder

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The Miles City Field Office (MCFO), located in eastern Montana, developed a native plant materials program this year. The program included two Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG)



Photo 1: *Echinacea angustifolia* (photo by M. Schroeder)

Conservation and Land Management Program interns, Therese Parys and Brooke Stallings. This year, Therese and Brooke collected seed for the Seeds of Success (SOS) program (<http://www.nps.gov/plants/sos/>) from 18 locations (13 species) in eastern Montana (see photos 2-4). They provided labor and seed to the BLM's nursery program at the Special K Ranch in Columbus (<http://www.specialkranch.org/>). They also collected and mounted about 60 specimens for an herbarium for the MCFO, which will be used as an educational tool for employees and the public.

Therese and Brooke both excelled in plant identification, quickly becoming familiar with the local flora; the majority of which, they had never seen before. They regularly used their skills in navigation, photography, GPS, and GIS. They conducted extensive population monitoring (e.g., occurrence, distribution, condition, and phenology). Therese and Brooke performed species specific research (scientific literature review) on phenology, habitat, population locations, collection methods, and propagation protocol. They also helped out with other BLM programs including, a rare plant survey, habitat restoration monitoring, and wildlife monitoring. Additionally, they participated in the Montana Native Plant Society's Annual Meeting, which took place at Camp Needmore, near Ekalaka, MT. Both Therese and Brooke were integral in developing the native plant materials program for the MCFO.



Photo 2: (from left to right) Therese Parys and Brooke Stallings collecting silver buffaloberry (photo by M. Schroeder)

The SOS program was established in 2001, by a partnership between the BLM and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, United Kingdom. Currently, there are multiple partners involved in the program, which aims to collect, conserve, and develop native plant materials for revegetation projects on public lands. Therese and Brooke were partially funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). They collected native seed primarily from

public lands, mostly BLM managed lands, with some collections on Agricultural Research Service (Ft. Keogh) and State of Montana managed lands. Seeds were sent to the Forest Service seed extractory in Bend, Oregon. A portion of the seeds collected (10,000 seeds) go to the SOS program for research (germination trials and viability monitoring), duplication and production, conservation (200 year germplasm storage), and distribution. Any seeds collected over the 10,000 seed minimum are returned to the BLM and will either be propagated for seedlings or production at the Special K Ranch nursery, or direct seeded for revegetation projects in our field office.



Photo 3: silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*) fruits (photo by M. Schroeder)



Photo 4: silver buffaloberry collection (photo by B. Stallings)