



Ken Elowe, USFWS
North Atlantic LCC
Chair -Steering Committee
Northeast Regional Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

February 28, 2011

Dear Dr. Elowe:

On behalf of the New England Wild Flower Society, I applaud and support the work of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives across the US and in the North Atlantic Region specifically. Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing conservation, one that will require the application of best available science to conservation and management decision-making to ensure long-term protection of valued natural resources. The core functions and approaches of the LCCs - science-based, collaborative, and cross-cutting - are exactly the strategies that are needed to meet the most important conservation challenge of our time.

I am writing to request membership on the Steering Committee of the NALCC. I have participated in the last several meetings and would like the Committee to officially consider my membership. As Director of Conservation for the New England Wild Flower Society, I believe the Society is in a unique position to provide information on plants and their conservation to the Steering Committee.

The mission of New England Wild Flower Society is to conserve and promote the region's native plants to ensure healthy, biologically diverse landscapes. Founded in 1900, the Society is the oldest organization in the country devoted to plant conservation and a recognized leader in native plant conservation, horticulture, and education.

The Society has its headquarters at Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden and accredited museum in Framingham, Massachusetts, that attracts visitors from all over the world. The 45-acre garden displays the largest landscaped collection of native wildflowers and woody plants in the Northeast, many of which were grown onsite from seeds collected by the gardens founder.

The Society offers the acclaimed Certificate in Native Plant Studies, with a focus in either horticulture or field botany, and nearly 200 classes and field trips each year in all six New England states, which makes it the largest, most comprehensive such program in the nation. We also have eight sanctuaries in four states that protect areas with exceptional botanic value, and all but one, which hosts a long-term research project, are open to the public. Our nursery in western Massachusetts propagates plants native to the ecoregions of New England for use

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in restoration projects, commercial landscaping, and residential gardens.

Recent achievements in core programs include:

- Publication of the definitive *Flora Novae Angliae: A Manual for the Identification of Native and Naturalized Vascular Plants of New England*, by our research botanist Arthur Haines (Yale University Press, 2011), which is the latest of the Society's field manuals and research publications in botany and horticulture.
- Development of Go Botany, an online, interactive tool for teaching and learning botany. This four-year project, funded by the National Science Foundation, was completed in 2012.
- Publication in early 2013 of the first update in 15 years to *Flora Conservanda*, the list of approximately 600 regionally rare and endangered taxa needing conservation action, which is developed by our New England Plant Conservation Program, which convenes 150 professionals from 68 organizations and agencies. .

The Society has 35 staff and 700 volunteers working throughout New England to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, and conduct research. We have collaborated on the conservation of a number of federally listed taxa including *Agalinis acuta* (sandplain gerardia), *Isotria medeoloides* (small whorled pogonia), and *Potentilla robbinsiana* (Robbin's cinquefoil). This last taxon was removed from the federal list of Endangered Species due to the recovery of both the native and introduced populations. Importantly, the Society is banking seed of the region's rare and common plant taxa. In the face of an uncertain future due to climate change, part of our role is to save as much of the genetic diversity of the region as we can in order to have as many conservation options as possible for future restoration of plant communities, whatever their composition.

The Society, through its two targeted plant conservation programs, New England Plant Conservation Program (NEPCoP) and its public corollary, the Plant Conservation Volunteer Corp (PCVs), has received many awards, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Special Commendation Award for outstanding contributions in endangered plant conservation, U.S. Department of Interior Conservation Award, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Directors Conservation Award, U.S. Forest Service Honor Award for Maintaining Natural Resources, and, most recently, the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta award for Conservation Program Excellence.

I humbly ask you to consider my membership on the Steering Committee so that the Society (and myself personally) can contribute to the conservation goals of the North Atlantic LCC.

Sincerely,

William E. Brumback
Director of Conservation