

## CNPS Rare Plant Program 2004-2005 Planning Process: Project Proposal

Working Group (WG): Data Dissemination

Proposal Name: Dissemination Plan for CNPS Inventory Data

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**PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION:** This proposal provides a description of the dissemination methods that are recommended based on discussions by the WG and a broad survey that addressed CNPS Inventory user needs. The goal of the WG was to determine the methods of disseminating Inventory data that would best serve the majority of user needs while analyzing costs and technology limitations. The WG recommends that the online and hardcopy formats of the Inventory continue to be supported, with modifications. We recommend discontinuation of the Electronic Inventory (CD format). The following items are proposed to effect timely distribution of future data in a user-friendly manner:

- Revision of the current Rare Plant Program (RPP) Access database (outside the scope of this proposal but a prerequisite to other parts of this proposal). The current database structure does not lend itself to quickly and easily producing a hardcopy document. For this reason and to extend the life of the database, the RPP must remedy its technical limitations in a separate redesign project.
- Online Inventory. Several modifications to increase the ease of use have been suggested during the user survey. Meetings of the Online Inventory (OI) manager and RPP staff will serve to evaluate these and determine additional modifications. Production of a user manual for the Online Inventory is suggested, if funding allows.
- Publication of an interim list of changes since the 6<sup>th</sup> edition. This list will be produced by comparing the current and past databases. The list of changes will be posted to the website as a PDF and distributed in a hardcopy version by the state office (users will be charged only for postage).
- Publication of the Inventory in an alternative hardcopy format following revision of the RPP database. The WG recommends that an alternative, simplified hardcopy version of the Inventory be developed that would allow for lower printing costs, yearly updates and on-demand printing for book orders. For example, users could purchase the alternative hardcopy through a print-on demand service. Pricing options include at cost or at a profit, the latter providing funding for the RPP. The WG recommends that an Inventory Publication committee be created to determine the best format for a new printed edition.

**RATIONALE:** Due to the constantly changing nature of the data, a hardcopy version that is updated every 5-7 years (as we have done in the past) is no longer sufficient to deliver timely updates, and thus other methods of distribution are needed. Due to printing costs and other constraints, it is not possible to print updated editions of the book in its current format on a more frequent basis. Based on the Inventory user survey administered by the WG, it was determined that all formats of the Inventory are being used, with different frequencies. The majority of people surveyed use the online format. Coming in just behind the OI in usage was the printed book, which most people indicated they still wanted and/or needed. The CD format was used the least. The WG decided that the CD format should be discontinued due to low usage and very few sales in the last year, with the recognized disadvantage that some existing users will be

inconvenienced. The potential future revenue lost as a result of discontinuing the CD was not considered significant enough to warrant the continuation of this format for financial reasons, and the WG agreed that the funds that would be needed to update this format could go toward improving the online format and publishing yearly updates of an alternative hardcopy. This proposal is of value to CNPS and the many users of Inventory data because it will enable updates to rare plant data to be disseminated in a more timely fashion. This project will likely interact with and draw on the expertise of the CNPS Publications Program.

**TIMEFRAME:**

FY '05-'06

- Revise the RPP Access database
- Work on improvements to OI
- Publish interim list of all changes since the 6<sup>th</sup> edition Inventory
- Write OI user manual

FY '06-'07

- Form Inventory Publication committee and work on hardcopy format/distribution details
- Publish alternative hardcopy (recommended annually for subsequent years)

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

**Rare Plant Program Director:** 15 hours OI meetings, 8 hours editorial review of user manual, 8 hours to review interim list of changes, 12 hours for Inventory Publication committee meetings, 80 hours to review/provide guidance on alternative hardcopy (20 hours per quarter during year of publication), \$200 travel/phone expenses

**Rare Plant Botanist:** 15 hours OI meetings, 8 hours editorial review of user manual, 16 hours to work on database comparison and interim list of changes, 12 hours for Inventory Publication committee meetings, 280 hours to work on alternative hardcopy, set up committee, database comparison (70 hours per quarter during year of hardcopy publication; based on averages from 2000-1 Tibor work plans minus hours for Introduction articles)

**OI Manager:** 15 hours OI meetings, \$200 travel, 20 hours to make OI revisions, \$1,000-2,000 (20-40 hours) to write user manual

**Database Consultant:** Comparison of databases to produce interim list of changes (figure from John), consultation on new database's output format for alternative hardcopy (estimated 5 hours, \$250)

**CNPS Volunteers:** 10 hours for editorial review of user manual, 36 hours (3 volunteers at 12 hours each) for Inventory Publication committee meetings

**CNPS Office Staff:** Time as needed to mail out list of interim changes; depends on demand, but estimated at 30 hours

**Other Expenses:** \$150 for conference call meetings

Totals:

Paid staff – 361 hours

Contract work - (Database XX + \$250, User manual \$1000-2000)

Volunteers - 204 hours

Expenses - \$550

**Summary for Group Prioritization**

### **Dissemination Plan for CNPS Inventory Data**

- FY '05-'06: RPP and Online Inventory (OI) manager work on improvements to OI
- FY '05-'06: Produce user manual for OI
- FY '05-'06: Publish interim list of all changes since the 6<sup>th</sup> edition Inventory
- FY '06-'07: Form Inventory Publication committee and work on hardcopy format/distribution details
- FY '06-'07: Publish alternative hardcopy (recommended annually for subsequent years)
- Resources needed: RPP director 123 hrs, RP botanist 331 hrs, Online Inventory manager 35 hrs, other volunteers 46 hrs, office staff 30 hrs, contract work (put range XX- 250 + 1-2,000), expenses \$550