Partnership Project Success Story

State:	**Colorado**	**FS Funds Used:**	**$9,000.27**
National Forest/Grassland:	**Medicine Bow-Routt NF and Thunder Basin NG**	**Other Funds Used:**	**$**
		Partners:	**$3,886.16**
Project Name:	**Emperical Botanical Surveys of the Owl Mountain Geographic Area**	**Total Project Cost:**	**$12,886.43**

Project Purpose/Objectives: **Current and accurate data are needed by the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs and Thunder Basin NG (MBRTB) to properly manage rare plant resources. The primary objective of this project was to conduct empirical botanical surveys for select management status plants across a 300,000 acre study area (The Owl Mountain Geographic Area). To accomplish this survey the MBRTB entered into a Challenge Cost Share Agreement (CCS) with the Colorado Natural Heritage Project (CNHP). The overarching goal of this agreement is to facilitate a working relationship with CNHP to accomplish empirical surveys across the entire Routt NF planning unit within a 10 year period through slight modifications of annual work and financial plans.**

Work Performed: Within the study area we:

1) Relocated documented Element Occurrence Records (EOR) for select management status plant species and rare plant communities to keep existing records current including population numbers, distribution, habitat requirements, life history traits and potential threats.
2) A combination of on the ground knowledge and GIS exercises were utilized to stratify the study area into priority survey areas (fens, kettle lakes, drainages, alpine, existing EORs, etc). Projects (timber harvest, livestock allotment revision, fuels targets, trail construction) which were anticipated to occur within the study areas also played into selection and prioritization of survey areas.
3) Expanded surveys for select management status plant species and rare plant communities occurred in prioritized survey areas according to NRIS plants and natural heritage protocols.
4) Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) were identified in a GIS where rare and imperiled plant populations or rare plant communities were found.

Benefits:

- Data desired by both agencies were collected in a format which facilitated easy input into USFS and CNHP geo spatial databases and now serve as Institutional knowledge for both agencies to use in current and future planning, monitoring, analysis and management.
- Potential Conservation areas were identified within the study area.
- Existing EORs were updated and new EORs were found within the analysis area.
- A plant species (*Botrychium redbanks*) just being described to science was documented.
- Globally rare plant communities were described and mapped.

Additional Information

Partners: Challenge Cost Share Agreement (CCS) with the Colorado Natural Heritage Project (CNHP)

John Proctor (MBRTB forest botanist) and Denise Culver (CNHP botanist) co-lead volunteers from the Colorado Native Plant Society (CONPS) in an effort to relocate a historic occurrence of moonworts (*Botrychium* spp) within the Owl Mountain Geographic Area on the Routt NF. As a result of this partnership a plant species just being described to science (*Botrychium redbanks*) was documented (right) and historic EORs for several other moonwort species were updated.

John Proctor (MBRTB) and Denise Culver (CNHP) co-lead a floristic inventory of a basin fen (Lily Lake). As a result of this effort two R2 sensitive plant species and seven plant species of local concern to the MBRTB were documented including four that currently lack information to make a determination of their regional conservation status. We anticipated that data collected will help resolve regional status for those species of insufficient information.