

SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF CONCERN IN MONTANA

Information for Family Forest Owners

One of the more alarming environmental issues of our time is the worldwide decline in forest habitat and the related loss of biodiversity. As a good land steward, it's important to be aware of plant and animal species and ecological communities of concern that are designated as "imperiled, critically imperiled, threatened, or endangered" and how forest management activities on your lands may affect these species. Critically imperiled (G1) or imperiled (G2) species or ecological communities are globally rare or, because of some factor(s), especially vulnerable to extinction. They are designated as imperiled or critically imperiled by non-government organizations such as NatureServe (and its constituent Natural Heritage programs) or the IUCN (The World Conservation Organization). Threatened and endangered species are listed by government agencies under the U.S. Endangered Species Act or the Canadian Species at Risk Act and may also be listed under state or provincial laws; yet they may or may not be listed as critically imperiled or imperiled, globally.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program can provide information on species of concern in your area. Log on to www.mtnhp.org, or call the **Montana Natural Heritage Program** office at (406) 444-5354. **NatureServe**, www.natureserve.org, has additional information on species and communities of concern. These organizations coordinate the management of inventories of biological diversity in the U.S. and Canada.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) program (www.aboutsfi.org) combines the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees with the long-term protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality. To meet the SFI Standard, program participants who procure wood from family forest owners provide outreach opportunities to family forest owners on conservation of biodiversity for imperiled species.

In Montana, the SFI program has partnered with Forests for Watersheds & Wildlife™ to provide you with a series of profiles on species of concern native to Montana's forests. The species and communities featured in this profile are examples of many that depend on family forest owners for protection. To view other profiles, visit www.forestedflyways.org.

Marbled jumping slug — *Hemphillia danielsi*



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A flattened shell on the top hump is an identifying characteristic.

The marbled jumping slug is an imperiled (G2G3) terrestrial snail. The name originates from the fact that it does a "jump" back by flipping its tail when threatened by other carnivorous snails. The only known populations of this slug in Montana are found on the eastern side of the Bitterroot Mountains at lower and mid elevations in Mineral and Ravalli counties. Within this range, the marbled jumping slug has been found in ponderosa pine stands with consistently moist conditions; however, it cannot tolerate catastrophic flooding. Threats to the slug include development, grazing, logging, and high-intensity wildfires which can disturb the litter layer of the forest floor.

Spalding's Campion — *Silene spaldingii*

Spalding's campion is an imperiled (G2) and federally threatened flowering plant. Plants range from 8" to 24" in height and usually have one main stem as seen in the photo. The flowers are white and bloom between July and August. It can be found where prairie grasslands meet areas with scattered ponderosa pines. Conversion of grassland to agricultural use is believed to have contributed to the plant's decline. Current threats include invasive plant species, herbicides, grazing, and development. It has been suggested that periodic fire is helpful to Spalding's campion, as it removes litter and provides new areas for recruitment. Known populations are found in the Palouse region of Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, and Sanders counties.



Steve Wirt,
U.S. Forest Service

Engelmann spruce/yellow skunk cabbage forest — *Picea engelmannii/Lysichiton americanus*



Henning Stabins,
Plum Creek

The Engelmann spruce / yellow skunk cabbage forest community is ranked as imperiled (G2). It is the wettest of the Engelmann spruce forest communities and is characterized by pools of standing water, permanently wet soils, and a high water table. Yellow skunk cabbage is an easy to identify member of this community. It is a perennial plant whose dramatic, aromatic yellow blooms indicate that spring is near. This forest community also has a healthy shrub layer, primarily comprised of speckled alder, water birch, and red osier dogwood. Known remaining stands are located in the valleys

of northwestern Montana near Whitefish and Flathead lakes. Drainage of sites for agriculture and timber harvesting led to the decline of this forest community.

Cost-share Assistance:

The Partners for Fish & Wildlife program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) offers technical and financial assistance to landowners for restoration of native habitat types. Contact: (406) 727-7400 or <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/pfw/montana/mt1.htm> to learn more.

To learn more about cost-share opportunities through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or for assistance on conservation-related projects, contact the Montana Department of Natural Resources at (406) 542-4300 or the Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service at (406) 587-6813.

Technical Assistance:

If you want to develop a conservation strategy for one of the species in this profile or want to find out if rare species might occur on your land, contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program at (406) 444-5354 or www.mtnhp.org.



Produced by Forests for Watersheds & Wildlife™ (FW²), a program of the American Forest Foundation.
FW² works with partners and family forest owners to conserve and create critical habitat for imperiled wildlife species.

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