

Botanical Society of America
Conservation Committee
August 2004 Report

The Conservation Committee has focused its attention on developing a plan and strategy for a BSA Information Resources Website. Such a website, which would contain lists of and/or links to the best sources of information on the flora of each state and region. Such a website could also be used to assess the state of knowledge of the plants of a state or region, and to help identify areas or taxa for which research is particularly needed.

This activity is one way that the BSA membership can help achieve the target goals of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which has now been adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity. Further, the Conference of Parties earlier this year agreed to integrate the GSPC target goals into all aspects of the Convention. Details of the GSPC can be found at www.biodiv.org. The website could provide a framework for identifying high priority projects—perhaps encouraging graduate students to take on the work, and it can be a way to show progress.

Scott Russell sent a message to the BSA EC on July 22, 2004, suggesting that BSA should consider our approach to broad scientific problems and issues. His message was stimulated by an attempt that had been made to rewrite the Endangered Species Act. Protection of the ESA (keeping it from being gutted, for instance) is perhaps one of the most important issues to which BSA can provide its wealth of expertise and for which it should mobilize its forces.

Scott brings up a number of other issues that are important but not related to the Conservation Committee per se.

The Conservation Committee has been asked to bring conservation issues that might be important to BSA to the council's attention. I would like to suggest that the council may wish to identify conservation issues for which it would like position papers prepared (which is what Scott recommends), and that the Conservation Committee could be a vehicle for achieving that. We can use our efforts to populate the Resources Website as a way to identify people with relevant interests and expertise who could be asked to draft position papers for consideration.

Two of the members of this committee are completing their term, so we look forward to adding two new members and energizing this committee around this project, if the council agrees.

--respectfully submitted, Nancy Morin, chair