

EVALUATION FOR POTENTIAL HABITAT OF RARE PLANT SPECIES -
TNC PARCEL ALONG BIG AND LITTLE CASINO CREEKS AND
FOREST SERVICE PARCEL NEAR OBSIDIAN

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Background

Biologists from the Conservation Data Center (CDC) have been inventorying and monitoring rare plants and their habitats in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin since about 1986. During the summer of 1986 or 1987, when the patented mining claims in Big and Little Casino Creeks were offered to The Nature Conservancy as a trade land, I surveyed them for three plants that were known to be endemic to bluffs in the Stanley Basin and northern Sawtooth Valley. None were found. Beginning in 1987, CDC biologists began conducting intensive surveys for these "Stanley Basin endemics" in the Big Wood River drainage, Sawtooth Valley, Stanley Basin, and Bear Valley areas. Because two of the three species were found to be highly restricted in distribution and abundance, the CDC established a monitoring program in 1991, in conjunction with the Sawtooth National Forest. The monitoring lasted three years (1990-1992). Reports prepared by CDC biologists regarding the Stanley Basin endemics are listed below. All are available from the CDC in Boise.

Caicco, S.L. 1988. Status report for *Draba trichocarpa*. Unpublished report prepared for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation with Section 6 funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 21 p. plus appendices.

Fox, L., and R.K. Moseley. 1990. Taxonomic investigation of the genus *Draba* (Brassicaceae) in the White Cloud and Boulder Mountains, Idaho. Unpublished report submitted to the Challis National Forest. 11 p. plus appendices.

Moseley, R.K. 1988. Field investigations of three sensitive species endemic to the Stanley Basin area, Sawtooth National Forest: *Draba trichocarpa* Rollins, *Eriogonum meledonum* Reveal, and *Thlaspi aileeniae* Rollins. Unpublished report submitted to the Sawtooth National Forest. 17 p. plus appendices.

Moseley, R.K., and M. Mancuso. 1990. Long-term demographic monitoring of two Stanley Basin endemics, *Draba trichocarpa* and *Eriogonum meledonum*. I. Monitoring establishment and first year results. Unpublished report submitted to the Sawtooth National Forest. 12 p. plus appendices.

Moseley, R.K., and M. Mancuso. 1992. Long-term demographic monitoring of two Stanley Basin endemics, *Draba trichocarpa* and *Eriogonum meledonum*. II. Second year results. Unpublished report submitted to the Sawtooth National Forest. 11 p. plus appendices.

Moseley, R.K., and M. Mancuso. 1993. Demographic monitoring of two Stanley Basin endemics, *Draba trichocarpa* and *Eriogonum meledonum*. III. Third-year results. Unpublished report submitted to the Sawtooth National Forest. 26 p. plus appendices.

In addition to the Stanley Basin endemics, several rare plant species are known from a rare wetland community in the Sawtooth NRA that has deep, organic soils. This type of wetland is called a peatland, reflecting the organic substrate, and it differs markedly from the common willow riparian habitats in terms of flora and fauna. Beginning in 1994, CDC biologists have conducted inventory, monitoring, and research projects on these species and their peatland habitats. Reports listed below pertain to these species and habitats:

Moseley, R.K. 1994. Establishment Record for Sawtooth Valley Peatlands Research Natural Area within Sawtooth National Forest, Custer County, Idaho. Prepared for the Sawtooth National Forest. 32 p., plus appendices and maps.

Moseley, R.K., R.J. Bursik, F.W. Rabe, and L.D. Cazier. 1994. Peatlands of the Sawtooth Valley, Custer and Blaine Counties, Idaho. Unpublished report submitted to the Sawtooth National Forest. 66 p. plus appendices.

Moseley, R.K., R.J. Bursik, F.W. Rabe, and L.D. Cazier. 1996. Long-term ecological monitoring of peatlands: An example from the Sawtooth Valley, Idaho. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Rare plant habitat on the Forest Service exchange parcel near Obsidian

Considerable effort was been expended over the last decade by myself and other CDC biologists to locate rare plant populations in the Sawtooth Valley. The parcel of Forest Service land being considered for exchange near Obsidian was never considered to have very high potential.

On September 8, 1995, I visited the parcel to assess the wetlands (summarized in a previous report). Although primarily focused on evaluating the wetland communities, I was also looking for rare plants as I traversed the parcel. I saw no potential habitat for the Stanley Basin endemics on the upland or the peatland species in the wetlands.