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NATIVE SEED PARTNERSHIPS: COLLABORATIONS TO INCREASE REGIONAL SEED AVAILABILITY

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Title: Native Seed Partnerships: Collaborations to Increase Regional Seed Availability

Presentation Abstract: Successful restoration depends on an adequate supply of native plant materials. Lack of locally sourced, genetically diverse plant materials has been a key challenge to implementing successful habitat restoration across the West. This need has set in motion collaborative work toward this effort to increase the diversity of species and sources entering the native seed market. Seed and plant material partnerships are innovative and key groups that engage multiple perspectives, pool demand, and leverage efforts across regions. The Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) currently coordinates three partnerships, two in the Northwest and one in the Southwest region. These partnerships range from 2 to 10 years old and operate under various models but all with a similar vision to increase the availability of native plant materials and to provide a foundation for successful restoration, and healthy, thriving native ecosystems.



Thomas Kaye, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Institute for Applied Ecology

Dr. Tom Kaye is founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE), a nonprofit organization with a mission to conserve native habitats and species through research, restoration, and education. He is also a courtesy Associate Professor in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University. Tom conducts research on rare species reintroductions, habitat restoration, plant invasions, and plant population responses to climate change, and engages prison inmates in conservation through the Sagebrush in Prisons Project. Sourcing native plants for restoration is a key area of interest, research, and publication for Dr. Kaye. He serves as a Commission Member on the IUCN SSC Seed Conservation Specialist Group.



Alexis Larson
Plant Materials Program Director
Institute for Applied Ecology

Alexis is the Plant Materials Program Director at IAE's Northwest Office where she began working in 2019 as the NW seed partnership coordinator. She received her M.S. in Ecology from Oregon State University in 2013 and a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Kansas in 2008. She fell in love with native plants and restoration during an internship in Gunnison, Colorado planting trees along the Gunnison River. Her next step was to move to Oregon and work in IAE's Conservation Program for two seasons traveling throughout the state monitoring threatened and endangered plants. Post grad school, she worked for two watershed councils, one on the southern Oregon coast and one in the Rogue River Valley, taking on salmon habitat restoration projects including invasive species removal, dam removal, floodplain connectivity, riparian restoration, and large wood placement. Alexis brings her diverse skill set in project management and passion for Oregon's native plants to IAE.



Maria Mullins
Assistant Southwest Director
Institute for Applied Ecology

Maria is the Assistant Director at IAE's Southwest Office and has been coordinating the Southwest Seed Partnership since 2019. Maria has a diverse background in natural resources across the West, and after receiving an MS in Ecology in 2019, she was thrilled to have this opportunity to dive into the native plant materials world. Maria works with partners to identify seed needs and target species, coordinates crews collecting wild seed, and contracts with farmers to increase seed in production fields. Maria enjoys working with diverse stakeholders who share the common goal of wanting more species and local sources available for Southwest restoration.