

Keynote Presentation

Peggy Olwell

*National Seed Strategy:
The Power of Partnering*



Considering the serious drought conditions and altered fire regimes in the West, the unusual weather events in the East such as Hurricane Sandy and the increase in flash flooding nationwide, land managers need to be able to respond quickly to landscape-scale ecological changes with appropriate restoration resources for all land ownerships across the United States. The National Seed Strategy provides a coordinated approach for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration of public and private lands.

The Strategy outlines a plan that will help coordinate and focus diverse efforts toward achieving four major goals: (1) Identify seed needs and ensure the reliable availability of genetically appropriate seed reserves, (2) Identify research needs and conduct research to provide genetically appropriate seed reserves and to improve technology for seed production and ecological restoration (3) Develop tools that enable managers to make timely and informed seeding decisions for ecological restoration, and (4) Develop strategies for internal and external communication. The Strategy provides a framework for actively working between land managers and private industry to respond appropriately to disturbances and other stressors that threaten important native plant communities and ecosystem services in the US.

Success on a national scale will be achieved through a coordinated nationwide network of networks, including a network of native seed collectors, a network of seed researchers, a network of farmers and growers, a network of nurseries and seed storage facilities to supply adequate quantities of appropriate seed, and a network of restoration ecologists who know how to put the right seed in the right place at the right time.

BIOGRAPHY:

Peggy Olwell is the Plant Conservation Program Lead for the Bureau of Land Management in Washington, DC. Peggy built the BLM's nationally recognized Native Plant Materials Development Program, which promotes the use of native plants in habitat conservation and restoration projects. She was instrumental in developing the Plant Conservation Alliance in 1994, a partnership of 12 federal agencies and over 320 state and private organizations. Currently, she is chair of the PCA Federal Committee and led the effort on the recently published National Seed Strategy. Peggy co-edited an Island Press publication titled, *Restoring Diversity: Strategies for Reintroduction of Endangered Plants*. Peggy has worked on plant conservation and endangered species issues for more than 30 years in positions with National Park Service, Center for Plant Conservation and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Peggy received her undergraduate degree in Botany from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her M.S. in Biology from Southern Methodist University.