



For Immediate Release
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**CENTER FOR PLANT CONSERVATION'S NATIONAL COLLECTION OF
ENDANGERED SPECIES REACHES A RECORD 700 SPECIES**

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (October 6, 2008) – We can all rest a little easier about the future of America's most endangered plants. The Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) reached a satisfying goal on Friday October 3. Furthering their work to combat the dwindling numbers of plant species, the Board of Trustees added six Colorado species to the National Collection of Endangered Plants. With these additions CPC has added 60 species this year, and the number of plant species safeguarded in seed banks and living collections has passed the 700 mark. The Collection has over nine million seed providing a working seed bank for restoration of the vulnerable native plants of the United States.

The Center's network of 36 participating institutions has been carefully and quietly working for the last 24 years to secure seed of the nation's most vulnerable and valuable native plants, learn about them, then grow and restore them in the wild. Many of these species have fallen to such low numbers in their habitats that active restoration work, using material from the CPC seed bank, is necessary to prevent their extinction. These native plant species are a priceless economic and ecological resource for the nation.

“Global climate change will increase threats to our native plants over the next decade or two in ways that may not even be clear to us today. The Center has challenged our organization, our institutions, and our partners to accelerate work to safeguard these

species and preserve our restoration options,” said Dr. Kathryn Kennedy, executive director. “We’re proud that our participating institutions have committed to working with more species. It renews our hope that we’ll reach our long-term goal, securing all of the nearly 3000 native plants in the United States that are now designated as imperiled.”

Securing enough seed to proceed with restoration work may take several seasons. Seed collections are made under CPC’s strict procedures, using techniques and limits to avoid aggravating decline in the wild. The Center’s work continues after the initial seed is secured. CPC institutions maintain the collections, as well as monitoring wild sites and working to restore the imperiled plants of their region to their habitats. They follow strict protocols developed by CPC’s conservation scientists and Science Advisory Council. CPC institution scientists plan and implement restoration in the wild with state, federal and private partners. “The goal is to return and sustain these plants in America’s landscape,” said Kennedy. Nearly 90 restoration projects are currently underway.

CPC is the only national organization dedicated solely to saving America’s most at-risk plants. It is a non-profit conservation organization with a network of 36 selected botanical institutions, coordinated by the national office in St. Louis. There is probably a CPC institution near you. CPC works to keep America’s at-risk plants from being lost forever by working with botanical gardens and other institutions in communities nationwide to build the National Collection, develop scientific best practices, and develop conservation and research programs in horticulture, restoration, and public awareness. For more information about CPC visit the website at www.centerforplantconservation.org.