

Endangered Species Act 40th Anniversary Success Stories Water Howellia

Water howellia (*Howellia aquatilis*) was listed as a threatened species in 1994. At the time of listing, only 107 populations were known in Montana, Idaho and Washington. It is now known to occur in Montana, Idaho, Washington, California, and Oregon. Currently, there are over 270 populations known from these states, and 216 of those populations occur in the Swan Valley of western Montana.

Since water howellia was listed, a recovery plan was drafted (1996), and the Flathead National Forest developed a conservation strategy (1997). The forest plan was amended to incorporate this strategy, which guides management activities around the ponds where the plants grow.

In 1997, the Flathead NF constructed fences or deposited slash around several howellia ponds in active grazing allotments to prevent cattle from damaging the habitat. The fences are still up today, and livestock use has also decreased.

An interpretive sign was installed along a trail at one of the ponds near Holland Lake in the Swan Valley in 2003. This was a cooperative project that was paid for by the Montana Native Plant Society, as well as through private donations.



Figure 1. Water howellia flower (2011). Swan Valley, Montana



Figure 3. Water howellia habitat (2012). Swan Valley, Montana



Figure 2. Fencing howellia ponds (1997). Swan Valley, Montana



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