

# USDA Forest Service Botany in the News

## Payette National Forest partnership with Red Butte Garden helps conserve imperiled plant, Tobias Saxifrage, in Idaho.

**Who (partners):** Payette NF. Red Butte Botanical Gardens.

**What (species):** *Saxifrage bryophora* var. *tobiasiae*, Tobias saxifrage.

**When:** 2005 to current.

**Where:** Region 4, Idaho.

**How:** This rare endemic to the subalpine region of the West Salmon River Mountains is found only on the Payette National Forest (NF). Named after a local conservationist, Nell Tobias, the plant produces few seeds and relies on small plantlets or bulbils for reproduction. Bulbils of Tobias saxifrage were collected this spring from remaining populations at Pearl Creek and sent to Red Butte Gardens in Utah for propagation. These plantlets will receive expert care from the staff at Red Butte until they can be planted back into national forest lands that were "burned-over" by wild fires.

**Why:** Following recent fires, known sites of *Saxifrage bryophora* var. *tobiasiae* in the Pearl Creek drainage were destroyed. Since only six populations of *Saxifrage bryophora* var. *tobiasiae* are known to occur on Payette NF, it is important to propagate local genetic material for restoration. Past reproductive biology research done by Kim Pierson, the Forest botanist on the Sawtooth NF, contributed to our understanding of the plants ecological and biological characteristics, allowing for successful reintroduction.

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*Saxifraga bryophora* var. *tobiasiae*, Tobias saxifrage, Payette NF



Nell Tobias with Kim Pierson at saxifrage site.



Young Tobias saxifrage plant at Red Butte Gardens.