

From: Board Members Notebook

Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Policies and Documents

Section on Marr Fund:

The John W. Marr Fund

An Endowment for the Support of Small Grants for Research

On March 24, 1990, the Board of Directors (the Board) of the Colorado Native Plant Society (the Society) established the John W. Marr Fund (the Fund) for the award of small grants in support of research in plant biology. The Fund honors the late Dr. John Marr, Professor at the University of Colorado, and the first president of the Society. Created by an appropriation from the Society's general treasury, the Fund originally consisted of \$1,000. It has since grown in size through the generous gifts and donations solicited from the membership at large. The following guidelines, adopted on January 30, 1999 by the Board, govern the management and use of the Fund.

Purpose: The Fund encourages, through the provision of small grants-in-aid, research on the biology and natural history of Colorado native plants. Within the confines of a research environment, the Fund will advance the Society's mission to promote the appreciation and conservation of Colorado's native flora, particularly when compatible research needs have been identified by organizations such as the Colorado Natural Heritage Program or Colorado Natural Areas Program. Funds may be awarded for field or laboratory studies.

Frequency of Awards: The Society makes awards on an annual basis for several reasons:

- an annual funding cycle is commonplace and helps researchers coordinate their grant solicitations with other funding opportunities for the upcoming year;
- most field research occurs during the active growing season, making a more frequent grant cycle less desirable;
- an annual cycle is frequent enough to generate regular publicity for the Society; and
- an annual cycle is infrequent enough to reduce the burden on the selection committee.

The Society strictly refuses to receive grant requests at any other time in order to fully evaluate each proposal fairly against the quality of other competing proposals, to prevent becoming the last source of hope for failing projects, and to limit the burden on the evaluation committee.

Solicitation of Appropriate Projects: The Society issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) each winter and also publicizes the grant process through the *Aquilegia*. The Society chooses to actively solicit proposals from the research community because:

- active solicitation may attract a number of higher quality proposals from which the Society may choose, rather than what trickles in from applicants who are “in-the-know;”
- active solicitation may help to publicize the Society which may in turn attract new members from Colorado’s research community; and
- greater knowledge of the Fund may result in greater contributions to the Fund.

Deadlines for receipt of grant proposals and final selections are made during the winter so that:

- recipients can receive funds in time to utilize them fully; and
- denied applicants have time to make other arrangements for the upcoming field season.

Management of the Fund: The Society strives to be fiscally responsible and finds that enlarging the real-dollar worth of the Fund is desirable. Consequently, the Society annually awards only a portion of the interest accrued on the principal of the Fund. The awarded portion is equal to the interest earned that year, minus a portion of interest equal to the annual rate of inflation for that year (this portion remains with the principal). This preserves the spending power of the Fund so that the Society will always have the opportunity to spend, in real dollars, an amount equal to or greater than that amount spent in previous years. In the event that sufficiently acceptable proposals are not submitted during a particular grant cycle, the Society capitalizes all remaining accrued interest.

The annual amount available to grantees depends largely upon the revenue generated by the Fund annually and the receipt of sufficiently acceptable proposals. Any contributions or donations to the Fund are immediately added to the principal rather than spent. While this may hamper the Society’s ability to fund proposals in the short-term, it allows the Fund to grow more rapidly so its funding capacity is enlarged in the long-term. Note that the Board may supplement the interest earned from the principal of the Fund with annual operating funds in order to enlarge the amount available for grants in any one year. The Board may also direct Society funds be used to increase the principal of the Fund at any time.

Project Selection: The Society annually develops an RFP that indicates the selection criteria that will be used to evaluate competing grant proposals. The criteria are simple

and submitted proposals should reflect this in their brevity. Among other things, an applicant is expected to address the question of how their research will promote the appreciation and conservation of Colorado's native flora. Furthermore, an explanation of how this work fits in with described or, as of yet, undescribed research needs in Colorado or the world is expected.

Requirements of Grant Recipients: Many grant programs require a progress update, a final report, and resulting published materials, and credit for any work performed toward which the organization has contributed (in presentations and written materials). These all seem like reasonable requests, but the Society weighs the burden imposed by such requirements against the (small) amount of the award. The Board requires awardees to submit an article for publication in the *Aquilegia* and assurances that appropriate credit will be given to the Society as a financial sponsor of the research. Additional requirements may include one public presentation at either the annual meeting or an appropriate chapter meeting as well as leading a field trip.

Administration of the Fund: The Board shall appoint a volunteer Marr Czar, a person without conflicts of interest, who performs the following duties on an annual basis:

- organizes an evaluation committee to prepare a preliminary review and rank all proposals;
- mails the recommendations of the evaluation committee as well as project abstracts to all members of the Board and elected officers;
- prepares and sends correspondence to all applicants as needed;
- ensures that all grantees fulfill their responsibilities (articles, field trips, etc.); and
- presents a report to the Board detailing the research and activities of the grantees.

Enlargement of the Fund: The Fund should be enlarged. The Board believes in the need for the Fund and the work it supports; therefore, it will identify ways to enlarge the Fund so as to strengthen its funding capabilities.

Reviewed, Updated, and Approved on March 13, 1999