

Documentary series explores urgent efforts to grow the native seed supply chain in the western United States

The International Network for Seed-based Restoration announces the release of a nine-part video series on native seed supply

UNITED STATES, June 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Network for Seed-based Restoration, a thematic section of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER-INSR) is releasing a nine-part video series this summer about the native seed supply chain in the western United States. Filmed over four seasons, the series explores the people working to increase the supply of native seeds to meet the growing restoration demand, weaving together footage of seed collectors, farmers, researchers, and land managers. Viewers will see the staggering scale of damage to vast landscapes and meet tenacious people who are finding creative, scrappy solutions to restore ecosystems.

"Plants and their seeds are chronically overlooked," said Nancy Shaw, U.S. Forest Service scientist emeritus and SER-INSR board member. "But plants underpin all life. They're essential for our survival, well-being, and inspiration."

The idea for the video series came as a follow-up to the [International Standards for Native Seeds in Ecological Restoration](#), published in 2020, a series of scientific articles examining key steps in the native seed supply chain and providing a framework for the "standards" that need to be applied to achieve strong and reliable native seed supply chains. The scientists behind the papers hope to use the film to make the findings more accessible and to broaden public understanding of the essential role native plants play in mitigating the effects of climate change and maintaining biodiversity. SER-INSR enlisted Holden Films, a West Coast-based production company, to transform the papers into a human-centered documentary series.

"Helping create this series gave me an appreciation for how the smallest of seeds can have the mightiest impact on the world around us," said McKenna Asakawa, series producer and co-director. "I hope viewers walk away with a bit of awe—both for seeds and the people who care so much about them."

The need for seed has never been greater, as climate-related disasters escalate in intensity and frequency. Land managers are going to need a lot of seed—specifically, locally adapted and genetically diverse native seed—to restore land damaged by wildfires, floods, and human

development.

“The UN has estimated that we need to restore 350 million hectares of land degraded by climate, weather, or just human use globally. We have estimated that we need 1.9 billion tons of seed to do that restoration,” said Peggy Olwell, Bureau of Land Management Plant Conservation and Restoration Program Lead, and one of the key contributors to the creation of the series. “The restoration need for locally adapted native seed is outpacing the supply that’s available for us to buy commercially.”

Creating a thriving seed supply chain is rife with challenges. Collectors must not damage the often-scarce populations of wild seed; farmers must learn how to mass produce native plants of all sizes, shapes, and harvest times; managers must find economical ways to successfully plant seeds on thousands of acres; and researchers must work across the seed supply chain to bring science-based solutions to tackle key challenges. At stake is not only the ecological integrity of our landscapes, but also people’s cultural connection to plants, including Indigenous land management practices and relationships with native flora.

“Native plants are also first foods, which goes back to the historical land management practice,” said Jeremiah Pinto, U.S. Forest Service Research Plant Physiologist and Tribal Nursery Specialist. “These are the plants that kept us alive on the landscape. They can be used for restoration, used for food, used for culture.”

Viewers can watch episodes for free on SER-INSR’s website (ser-insr.org/native-seed-film), with episodes posted weekly starting June 29. The summer series will culminate in the release of a feature-length film version of the series on August 24. SER-INSR is hosting a webinar on August 31, to launch the film series. In this webinar, representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, SER-INSR, The Nature Conservancy, and Holden Films will discuss the production of the nine-part video series from both a scientific and cinematographic perspective and share stories of this incredible journey. [Register for the webinar here.](#)

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International Network for Seed-based Restoration (INSR) operates as a thematic section of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) to foster understanding and advancement of seed ecology, conservation, and seed-based restoration of degraded systems. Consider becoming a member of INSR by joining SER and selecting INSR as one of the Chapters & Sections from the menu provided.

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