

September 24, 2005

Dear Resource Committee Members,

The South Carolina Native Plant Society strongly opposes the attempt by Congressman Pombo to alter or weaken NEPA. This law is one of our few tools to understand and participate in actions taken on our federal lands in South Carolina. As part of the NEPA process we routinely submit comments on forestry activities, prescribed fire programs, road construction projects, endangered species permitting, hiking and biking trail construction and numerous other projects. In many cases our comments are supportive of federal policies, including prescribed fire, mechanical fuels treatments, and timber stand thinning for plant community and wildlife habitat improvement. Sometimes these positions are not popular with other environmental groups. In other cases we have strongly opposed road and trail projects that would directly or indirectly impact rare plants and habitats.

Our group includes naturalists, natural resource managers, professional scientists, academics, nurseryman, horticulturalists, and lots of other folks who love plants. We are diverse politically as well as professionally. We are united in our passion to protect the native flora of the great state of SC. We consider ourselves informed and educated, and our positions are based on science and not emotion. NEPA allows us to participate in the process of informed decision making on our National Forests and National Wildlife Refuges, a fundamental right of democracy. We plead with you not to take the right away.

Sincerely,

John Brubaker, President
South Carolina Native Plant Society