



5201 FEN OAK DRIVE STE 138
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Website: www.countyofdane.com/commissions/environmentalcouncil
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2019 Pollinator Protection Efforts in Dane County



Progress Report

The Dane County Environmental Council is charged with guiding the implementation of the report recommendations produced by the Dane County Pollinator Protection Task Force. The Council developed an implementation plan for 2019 that focused on three goals of the PP plan. The county funded these efforts.

The goals that were focused on are:

1. Expand education and outreach efforts
2. Maximize pollinator-friendly land use and management
3. Support long-term research to inform ongoing pollinator protection initiatives



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In 2019, the following was accomplished:

- Reviewed the Pollinator Protection Plan and developed a detailed 2019 work plan
- Worked with eleven local non-profit organizations or units of government to **plan, design, and install long-term pollinator educational gardens** in both rural and urban public spaces. This program will conclude in 2020 with a total of sixteen long-term gardens dedicated to pollinator education and supported by local Friends groups. The gardens are located geographically throughout the county with several in the Madison central area.

For every garden partnership agreements were developed and signed whereby the partner provides long-term garden maintenance and ongoing educational outreach commitment. In return, the gardens sites received plants, permanent educational outdoor signage (that has been researched and developed to accompany the gardens), plant signage and design assistance.

The final gardens are being established at: Henry Vilas Zoo (in two locations), Dane County Fen Oak Resource Center, City of Madison Washington Manor Park, Schumacher Farm Park, Village of Cross Plains – Zander Park, City of Sun Prairie near public library, Lakeview Hill County Park, Indian Lake Park, Stewart Lake Park (in wooded location), Prairie Moraine Park, and McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park.

Photo of planting pollinator garden at Schumacher Farm Park





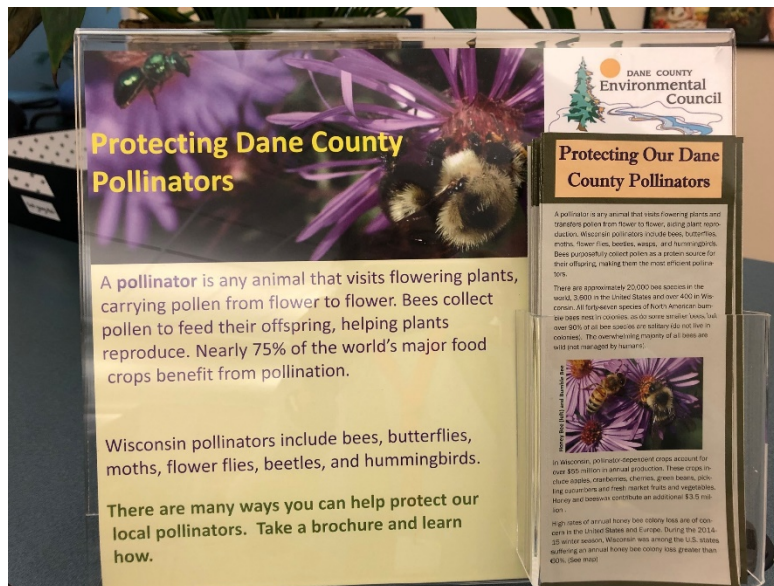
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- Met with and provided coaching and resources on establishing pollinator gardens and educational programming to the Village of Cambridge, Madison Gas and Electric, Madison Senior Center (worked to provide intergenerational programming and pollinator gardens), UW graduate student projects, and the City of Madison Demetrel Park.
- Trained the Master Gardeners speakers bureau volunteers to present on pollinators within Dane County and provided them with presentation materials
- Distributed over 100 pollinator brochure holder displays to every municipality, public library and community center in Dane County in an effort to get the word out on what people can do to protect pollinators. Offered follow up education and assistance to all we reached out to. Twelve public libraries offered pollinator educational programs following this outreach effort.

Display picture



- Provided pollinator education at many **events and workshops** including: 12 public library educational presentations throughout the county, Olbrich Botanical Gardens Butterfly Extravaganza, Monona Eco-Action Tuesdays, and UW community service projects. The pollinator educational materials and activities were additionally borrow by groups to support additional events including: Garden Expo, Harvest Moon Festival, Sustainability Fair in Monona, Master Naturalist training, Schumacher Farm Park Festival, Monona Healthy Yards Festival, and Maple Bluff Bird City event.



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- Presented on Dane County Environmental Council's Pollinator Protection work at the juried National Conference for Community Development Extension Professionals in Asheville, NC. Shared the multi-pronged approach with attention to efforts to be inclusive and reach diverse audiences.
- Worked with a UW Sustainability Class student team and to create a pollinator habitat assessment tool that evaluated the habitat friendliness of existing lands for pollinators (Both urban and rural lands) and provides recommendations on how to improve existing lands. Developed a technical guidance team with members from the City of Madison Pollinator Protection Task Force and Mayor's Office, UW Entomology, UW Extension, and UW Arboretum to help guide the student project. The guidance and student team met multiple times to refine the assessment tool, then the tool was presented by the student team to the entire class and guidance team members. This assessment tool has been revised, an introduction and instructions have been added and currently Council staff is working with UW Entomology to have staff turn it into an on-line assessment tool.

Photo of pollinator assessment tool team meeting





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- Developed and piloted a Community & School Pollinator Friendly Practices Program that has a goal of increasing the number of pollinator friendly practices in community gardens, public spaces, and school grounds to increase the visibility of pollinator practices. Developed a program where publically assessable sites can have signage (see photo of signs below), pollinator plants, and resource books in exchange for enhancing and maintaining pollinator habitat while using the area to educate others on pollinator friendly practices. The program is being piloted at the Woodland Montessori School in Madison in 2019-2020. The program will then be revised after learning from the pilot and integrated with the similar county environmental programs before being announced in late 2020.

Photo of signage for Community & School Program



- Drafted a progress report for County Board and presented progress to Dane County Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee - January 2020
- Communicated with other Dane County Departments, the following progress was made on pollinator protection by other departments in 2019.



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Dane County Regional Airport

Dane County Regional Airport has incorporated several BMP's from the initial DCPPTF report in 2015. The first step was to engage Airport staff and educate them of the concerns and issues with pollinators and brainstorm ideas where the Airport could implement DCPPTF BMP's.

Education:

- There have been several instances when relocating hives have transitioned through Airport property. Now if there is an issue the Noise Abatement/Environmental Officer is notified and monitors the situation. Local Bee Keepers will be notified if there are any safety issues requiring an expedited relocation process.

Land Use:

- The Prairie Plantings along International Lane (leading in and out of the Airport terminal), have been updated and rejuvenated since the original DCPPTF report in 2015. The area has received several seasons of prescribed burns and spot/spray herbicide treatments to reduce invasive plant species. This has also been coupled with an increased seeding of flowering plants and native grasses.
- There is not a lot of habitat modification that can be done inside the security fence at the Airport. The vegetation height is managed for wildlife mitigation, as directed by the FAA. The seed blend utilized on the airfield is a mix of tall fescue, to deter grazing by wildfowl. The seed mix has been updated and a short clover species has been included as a recommendation from the DCPPTF 2015 report.

Long Term:

- Dane County Regional Airport will continue to consider DCPPTF's BPM's in future projects, and implement them where applicable. The possibility of an apiary on Airport property is also under consideration.
- Note there are no pesticides used in airport operation areas.



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Dane County Public Works, Highway and Transportation

- Public Works is working on a resolution to prevent mowing of the Dane County Road side ditches until after the butterflies have moved on and the pollinators are finished with the flowers.
- Highways does not use any chemicals except stump treatment herbicides. No insecticides used

Department of Waste & Renewables

- The Department of Waste & Renewables is committed to protecting the environment and improving the health of Dane County communities through restoration of natural habitat. As of 2019, the Department of Waste & Renewables had planted over 100 acres of native pollinator seed mix as part of their restoration projects.
- With a 2018-2019 final cover project at the Rodefild Landfill, off of US Hwy 12, a pollinator friendly seed mixture consisting of native grasses, forbs, and legumes was planted across 35 acres of closed landfill space. It is the first native prairie planting to occur on top of a closed landfill in the state of Wisconsin. Although this native species seed mix takes longer than standard seed mixes to fully establish, the cover is coming in nicely and it will leave a habitat for pollinators and a potential place for recreation for generations to come.
- In 2018-2019, the Department of Waste & Renewables also planted additional pollinator friendly seed mixture at a clay borrow site in the town of Westport. This planting is adjacent to the childhood home of popular Wisconsin poetess, Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919). In 2014, the Department held a public participation archeological event where a number of interesting, historical artifacts were unearthed. Once the archeological survey was complete, the Department restored the site to its original ecosystem by planting native grasses, forbs, and legumes for pollinators, as well as present and future generations, to enjoy.



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Dane County Land & Water Resources Department.

- Parks Division held pollinator educational events at several of its larger events such as Prairie Moon Festival
- Parks also uses no insecticide except for emerald ash borer on county land.
- Initiating an effort to make Dane County a Monarch Butterfly Destination.
- In cooperation with the Dane County Parks Department, we are making Dane County a preferred destination for Monarch butterflies. We hope to build a corridor of gardens throughout the county park system that are designated as Monarch Waystations. Monarch butterflies are well known, easy to identify and loved by most people. They are ambassadors to further education about butterflies, birds, other pollinators and native plants in our parks.
- We plan to make Dane County a preferred destination for Monarch butterflies by developing a “Monarch Corridor” through the Dane County Parks. It is commonly known that Monarch habitat in North America has rapidly declined. A corridor of gardens in our county park system will be designated as Monarch Waystations.
- We want to develop gardens designated Monarch Waystations in as many Dane County Parks as possible. Some of your gardens probably already qualify. These waystation gardens will use consistent signage (Monarch Watch organization) throughout the Dane County Park system to educate all park users about Monarchs.
- We think the gardens will also promote learning about other pollinators and native plants in our Dane County Parks.

Progress Report Submitted by: Mindy Habecker, Dane County Environmental Council staff



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Background Information Pollinator Protection Efforts in Dane County

In Wisconsin, pollinator-dependent crops account for over \$55 million in annual production. These crops include apple, cranberry, cherry, green beans, pickling cucumber and fresh market fruits and vegetables. Honey and beeswax are also important commodities in Wisconsin, accounting for \$3.5 million in annual production.

Many people are concerned about the health and survival of bees, including honeybees, native bumblebees and the hundreds of lesser-known native and wild bees that call Wisconsin home. Bees are threatened by an assortment of factors such as pests, pathogens, pesticides, climate change and a lack of nesting habitat and forage plants.

While honeybee hive counts are not declining globally, high rates of annual colony loss are of concern in the United States and Europe. During the 2014-15 winter season, Wisconsin was among the U.S. states suffering an annual honeybee colony loss greater than 60%.

The UW-Madison Division of Extension Dane County (Dane County Extension) has been leading an effort to develop Pollinator Protection educational materials and outreach. Working in cooperation with the Dane County Environmental Council and the University of Wisconsin staff, Dane County Extension has secured funding to be able to develop various educational pieces including a display board, brochure, seed card insert, and youth activities. All the educational materials have been extensively reviewed by peers and University specialists and 10,000 of each piece printed for use at public events.

These materials can also be found at:

https://environmentalcouncil.countyofdane.com/pollinator_protection.aspx

For more information contact: Dane County Environmental Council, staff, Mindy Habecker at 608-224-3718 or Habecker@countyofdane.com