

2017 Pollinator Protection Efforts in Dane County

Progress Report

The Dane County Environmental Council was charged with guiding the implementation of the report recommendations produced by the Dane County Pollinator Protection Task Force. The Council developed a workgroup made up of three members of the Council plus its staff member to proceed with planning and undertaking the implementation. This workgroup has met after Environmental Council meetings and also held additional meetings as needed. The group developed an implementation plan for 2017 that focused on the first two goals of the PP plan. The county helped fund these efforts.

The goals were:

1. Expand education and outreach efforts
2. Maximize pollinator-friendly land use and management

In 2017 the following was accomplished:

- Reviewed the Pollinator Protection Plan and developed a 2017 work plan
- Developing a photo resource of pollinators, BMPs for pollinators and added these to a resource collection for use in websites and displays, brochures and other educational materials
- Developed a technical team (consisting of three members of the Pollinator Protection Task Force, Susan Carpenter, UW Arboretum; David Liebl, UW Extension and Mindy Habecker, Dane County UW-Extension), the chair of the Madison Pollinator Protection Task Force, Members of the Dane County Beekeepers Association, and UW Specialists in entomology and other related fields (Christy Stewart, Claudio Gratton, Hannah Gaines, and Olivia Bernauer) for educational materials development and review.
- Designed, had peer reviewed and developed the following materials:
 - Informational card to go in with pollinator seeds for use at events and as a potential activity and hand out – 10,000 printed in English. Also designed in Spanish and 3000 printed in Spanish. Have been used at a dozen public events in 2017.
 - Table Top Three Panel Educational Display with interactive game and carrying case – These three traveling display boards can be borrowed by groups in the county free of charge. Have been used at several events in 2017
 - Brochure on protecting pollinators –finalized and 10,000 printed in 2017. Also designed in Spanish and 3000 printed in Spanish.

- Permanent outdoor signage (2' x 3' educational interpretive signs) to accompany educational pollinator gardens. Developing signage in both English and Spanish.
 - Website information – all new resource materials posted and kept updated on both Environmental Council and Dane County UW-Extension sites
- Worked with five local non-profit organizations to plan, design, and install pollinator educational gardens in both rural and urban public spaces. Gardens are being established at: Centro Hispano, Bock Community Garden, a part of Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton, Anderson County Park, Silverwood County Park, and the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Partnership agreements were developed and signed for long-term maintenance and ongoing educational outreach commitment at each of the gardens. In return the gardens will receive plants, permanent educational outdoor signage (that has been researched and developed to accompany the gardens), plant signage and on-going educational support.
- Presented at several events and workshops with pollinator focus in Dane County.
- Presented at a juried national conference on the Dane County Pollinator work in Bloomington, MN at the National Urban Extension Conference.
- Sponsored and helped teach a workshop on Pollinator Protection in cooperation with Dane County Parks and the UW Arboretum. Twenty four naturalists learned how to identify and monitor bumblebees and habitat for them.
- Drafted a report for County Board and presented progress to Dane County Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee - January 2018 meeting

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 honey bees, native bumble bees 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 honey bee 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 honey bee colony loss greater than 60%.

The Dane County UW-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, Extension has secured funding to be able to develop various educational pieces including a display board, brochure, seed card insert, and youth activities. These materials were extensively reviewed by peers and University specialists and 10,000 of each piece printed for use at public events.

These materials can be found at:

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

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