



Partnering for Pollinators

October 2014 Snapshots

Bees, butterflies, beetles and birds: a diverse group of species that all have at least one thing in common – they play an important role as pollinators. Pollinators have been in the spotlight lately because their declining populations have been met with great concern by conservation professionals, legislators, and the public. While we sometimes think of bees and flies as a nuisance, the truth is the work they do provides the foundation for food production, food webs, and native plant populations. Simply put, we need pollinators for the continued health of our ecosystems.

In 2013, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Technical Services staff started to develop resources to assist local government partners in supporting pollinator habitat in their areas. A Pollinator Plan was developed in April of 2014 that detailed our agency’s efforts to date, and this month BWSR launched a pollinator initiative and webpage to provide additional pollinator resources for our conservation partners.

BWSR’s Landscape Ecologist, Dan Shaw, who led the development of the resource, says the tools are the part of the agency’s collaborative work with local partners. “The guidance and resources available through the website gives local conservation professionals another set of tools to help boost Minnesota’s native pollinator populations. We worked closely with local partners to identify the information that would be most useful as they incorporate pollinator habitat into their restoration and conservation projects.”

The new website provides guidance and support for incorporating native pollinator habitat into BWSR’s existing programs. A new pollinator “toolbox” has a wealth of resources for local government partners – and interested members of the public – so that they can incorporate pollinator-friendly practices in their local conservation projects. It includes peer-to-peer resources, examples of success stories, and how-tos covering everything from selecting seed resources to planting to maintaining these vital pollinator habitats.

“BWSR’s tools focus on the habitat needs of Minnesota’s vulnerable native pollinator populations, an incredibly helpful resource for



BWSR’s Pollinator Toolbox has a number of resources for those interested in developing pollinator-friendly habitats.

local conservation professionals,” Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District Urban Conservationist Carrie Raber said. “It’s the first of its kind to combine all of these different pieces of the pollinator puzzle in one easily accessible place.”

Incorporating pollinator-friendly habitat into new and existing conservation projects is an important step in helping to stabilize these populations. The webpage is a resource that will continue to expand and grow. Much like, we hope, Minnesota’s pollinators.

You can find the new webpage at: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/practices/pollinator/index.html>.