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Pollinator Project Guidance

Stakeholder Informed



Introduction



Pollinators – the animals that move pollen from flower to flower to accomplish fertilization – are vital to the health and economy of the world, propagating wild flowering plants as well as many crops. Pollinator species include bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, beetles, flies and, in some regions, bats. Across the globe pollinator species are in decline due to a decrease in habitat available to them, degradation of much of the remaining habitat, and a reduction in pollinator-friendly practices on both small, local scales and large, regional scales.

Pollinator projects are some of the easiest projects to implement on corporate lands. Pollinator projects can show immediate results, are often not cost-prohibitive, do not require specialized design or engineering skills, and can engage a wide cross-section of employees and community members in monitoring and managing, as well as through educational opportunities.

Where education is the primary driver, pollinator education programs can be implemented without extensive conservation investment. They can reach beyond the corporate landscape to focus on promoting pollinator-friendly practices at home, in schools and elsewhere.

Building Your Program

Projects are divided into four categories: **Habitat**, **Species Management**, **Education and Awareness** and **Other Options**. You can build a program with more than one of each category but you must associate your program with at least one habitat. This Pollinator Project Guidance is in the **Species Management** category. You must associate your pollinator project with your habitat; the most common association is with grasslands or landscaped habitats.



Habitat – Projects that focus on conservation actions to protect, restore and manage different habitats.



Species Management – Projects addressing the conservation needs of targeted wildlife species or groups of species.



Education and Awareness – Projects to improve awareness, understanding and skills relating to conservation and the environment.



Other Options – Specialized projects that add value to your conservation efforts.

Browse the Project Guidance library at wildlifehc.org/pg.

What Do Pollinator Projects Look Like?

Pollinator projects create or enhance habitat for pollinators and/or use existing pollinator habitat as a focus for conservation education.

Pollinator habitat should include the following:

- **Nectar and pollen sources**, which are provided by wildflowers, shrubs and trees
- **Larval host plants**, which are the plant species required by caterpillars for food and shelter during their growth and development
- **Shelter**, which is provided by tall grasses, vines, trees and shrubs, as well as by structural elements such as log piles and rock piles
- **A source of water/moisture**, such as a water feature, a hose left on a slow drip near the garden, or a nearby body of water

Additional features that can be incorporated into pollinator habitat to further increase its value to pollinators include:

- **Basking/sunning areas** for pollinating insects, such as rock piles or flat rocks in a sunny area

- **Nesting habitat** for bees, such as bee blocks, bee poles, reed bundles, patches of bare ground, etc.

Pollinator habitat can be provided by a variety of projects in a wide range of sizes, from pollinator gardens to pollinator meadows and grasslands. They can also be created to provide habitat for a variety of pollinators, or target specific pollinator species.

Considerations for Corporate Lands

Projects implemented on corporate-owned lands have different circumstances and challenges to those on public lands, protected lands or wild lands.

Which types of corporate lands are best suited for pollinator projects?

Pollinator projects are suitable for most types of corporate lands in urban, suburban and rural settings. They are especially useful on utility rights-of-way, pipelines, reclaimed lands and lands under remediation actions. Pollinator projects can also easily be incorporated into existing design plans in many contexts. The projects can be scaled appropriately to the land and resources available, and can range from small demonstration plots on lands with physical constraints to larger wildflower meadows in corporate campus settings or other locations with large footprints.

WHC does not support creating habitat to attract pollinators to areas where chemical applications or other site operations may harm individuals or populations. WHC recommends that Integrated Pest/Vegetation Management (IPM/IVM) be used in pollinator habitat to limit or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides that are harmful to pollinator populations.

Addressing challenges

The corporate context presents certain challenges for implementing pollinator projects. Understanding these concerns and potential ways to overcome them can help your pollinator project succeed in the long term.

Concern	Response
Some sites may encounter resistance to creating habitat for bees due to concerns about stinging insects.	<i>This resistance can be countered with education efforts, appropriate siting and signage.</i>
In some cases, aesthetic concerns may be expressed due to the unruly nature of wildflower meadows and the plain appearance of many native plants.	<i>WHC staff can work with such a site to help develop an aesthetically pleasing plant mixture with blooms across many seasons and help create a more structured design.</i>
Teams may receive some resistance from grounds crews who deploy chemicals as part of their grounds maintenance.	<i>Working with grounds crews to present guidelines for appropriate chemical use for pollinator-friendly practices and to illustrate the low-maintenance nature of native plants should result in a change of grounds management and translate into cost savings for the facilities management.</i>

Getting Started with Pollinator Projects

For a project to qualify toward Conservation Certification, you must be able to answer “yes” to five questions.

1. Is the project locally appropriate?
2. Does it have a stated conservation or education objective?
3. Does it provide value or benefit to the natural community?
4. Have outcomes been measured and is there supporting documentation?
5. Does it exceed any pertinent regulatory requirements?

Conservation and education objectives

It is a requirement of Conservation Certification that pollinator projects be designed to meet one or more conservation objectives. Objectives can guide the direction of the project, help motivate others to participate, and provide a basis for evaluation.

The following are suggested objectives for pollinator projects. Your team may choose one or more of these

objectives, or develop your own relevant objectives.

- Increase the quantity of pollinator habitat:
 - For general or common pollinators or specific or rare species
 - To be available across seasons and for different life cycle stages
 - To connect to other pollinator habitats – inside or outside the property boundaries, along migratory corridors and across international borders
- Increase the quality of pollinator habitat with pollinator-friendly techniques
- Use pollinator habitat projects to educate
- Contribute to a pollinator-focused citizen science project
- Address one or more scientific questions/ research topics related to pollinators

The following strategies are recommended to strengthen the conservation impact of your project:

- Manage the project according to pollinator-friendly practices
- Design the project to support the complete life cycle needs of specific pollinator species
- Focus on a specific native species or on the recovery of specific rare or protected species with a partner from the appropriate government agency or academic institution
- Integrate the pollinator project into operations already required at the facility
- Employ IPM/IVM to protect pollinating species
- Connect to larger local, regional and landscape-scale initiatives for pollinator conservation
- Implement the project as part of a scalable plan to establish pollinator habitat on various company properties. or establish projects outside the property on connected or community lands
- Collaborate with a respected pollinator-focused organization that furthers the stated objectives of the project
- Demonstrate for employees or community members the importance of pollinators, their functions in the ecosystem, and their needs
- Utilize an existing pollinator curriculum
- Include credible monitoring that contributes to citizen science projects
- Engage employees or community members in all aspects of the project
- Illustrate the connection between pollinators and their function in the ecosystem
- Integrate pollinator habitat as a part of another ecosystem enhancement project like the creation of wetland buffers or installation of rain gardens
- Connect pollinator habitat within or along migratory pathways and across international borders
- Incorporate pollinator habitat into existing practices including agricultural, rights-of-way maintenance, and other operational best management practices

- Establish a scientifically rigorous monitoring plan that establishes a baseline and monitors outcomes
- Answer an important research question about needs of pollinators that may include pollinator species, impact of different plants on different species, questions about topography
- Be in place for a minimum of three years, with a planned commitment of at least five years

Partnerships

Pollinator projects implemented on corporate lands can benefit from partnerships with groups that have established pollinator conservation or education objectives. A team can use such a partnership to help design, create or monitor its pollinator project and provide educational opportunities for employees and community members. Partners may also be able to connect the project to local, regional or national funding opportunities.

Resources

Your project may benefit from online or printed resources available for your region to support the design, delivery, maintenance and monitoring of pollinator projects.

A search for “pollinator” in the Conservation Registry returns over 300 projects implemented through WHC’s certification program. This is a great place to find inspiration for your project and see what others are doing in and around your location.

The following terms, in any combination, may be useful when searching online for items related to this theme:

pollination	native insect
flowering plants	vegetables
wildflowers	larvae
bee	monarch
butterfly	metamorphosis
pollen	caterpillar
butterfly	nectar
moth	chrysalis
agriculture	hummingbird
native plants	bat

Understanding the Application Process

Documentation

When applying for Conservation Certification, you will provide documentation of the planning, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of your pollinator project. The following is required documentation for pollinator projects; however, you may also submit additional supporting materials.

Design plans/planting lists that show the project has been designed for success. Recommended items to include in the design plan are:

- Planting list with information about function that includes:
 - Name of plant species (common and scientific names)
 - Blooming time
 - If the species is a larval host
 - If the species is a nectar source
 - If the species is native to the region
 - If the plant provides for other habitat/life cycle needs (e.g., cover, moisture)

- Plan that shows design consideration for siting, spacing and time of implementation
- Creation of structures for specific habitat needs such as:
 - Open nesting areas for bees
 - Bee nesting blocks for solitary bees
 - Puddling areas or other water features
- Any additional steps taken

Photographs that depict the progress of the project implementation and management.

Maintenance plans that demonstrate appropriate activities that meet the needs of the habitat to fully support the target species and support the conservation and education objectives.

Baseline data that provides a biological baseline upon which post-implementation monitoring can be based and used to evaluate the progress of the project and determine next steps.

Monitoring logs that show the frequency, type, and results of monitoring of the project, whether in an informal manner or a scientifically rigorous manner.

Examples of technical advice utilized in the project, such as consultants, guidebooks, websites, journal articles, etc.

Application questions

As you complete the application online, you will be asked the following questions about your pollinator project. These questions will help us understand and evaluate your project.

	Question	Why this question is important
Objective	What are the project's conservation objectives?	<i>Having a conservation objective is a requirement for certification.</i>
Overview	Does the project target a specific species or a group of species?	<i>This provides us with a description of your project to allow us to assess it.</i>
	Name the group of species being targeted and list several of the species in this group (common or scientific names).	
	Name the species being targeted (both common and scientific names).	
	What plants or structures have been added or maintained to benefit the species?	
	Briefly describe activities are taking place to address the targeted species?	
	Upload photos showing the pollinator project.	
	When did on the ground work for the project begin?	
Habitat and Life Cycle Needs	Which of the major habitat and/or life cycle needs does your project address for the targeted species? Artificial structures, basking areas, nesting habitat, seasonal blooming, shelter, water features, etc.	<i>Certain conservation actions are very valuable to the target species.</i>

	Question	Why this question is important
Habitat and Life Cycle Needs, continued	What plants or structures have been added or maintained to benefit the species?	<i>Certain conservation actions are very valuable to the target species.</i>
	Describe how the plants or structures address the habitat or life cycle needs of pollinators.	
	Upload a list of the larval host and/or nectar producing plants, including common and scientific names and whether the species is native to the region.	
Design of New Features	Have you added new plants or structures?	<i>Additions and expansions of your project since previous applications for recognition signify increased habitat value.</i>
	Did specific design or placement considerations maximize the benefit of the new plants and structures for the targeted species?	
	Upload documentation of the specific considerations.	
Species Management	List the steps taken to implement or maintain the pollinator project.	<i>Appropriate management policies and practices are also important to the target species.</i>
	Is a policy in place that minimizes or eliminates the use of pesticides and herbicides?	
	Is this policy integrated into overall site operations?	
	Upload documentation of pollinator friendly management policies and practices.	
	Provide a timeline of the completed activities such as implementation, maintenance, population management, etc.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Species Management, continued	Upload documentation of these activities.	<i>Appropriate management policies and practices are also important to the target species.</i>
Monitoring	Was baseline data collected for this project?	<i>Monitoring is essential to understand the impact of the project and to be able to adapt the project develops.</i>
	Explain the types of baseline data collected?	
	Upload the baseline data.	
	Select each type of monitoring that is being carried out - adult insects, bloom periods, larvae (caterpillars), plant establishment, species.	
	List each type of monitoring, including the frequency and list any plans or protocols used.	
	Upload the monitoring protocols, if applicable.	
	Upload the monitoring data and any analysis, if applicable.	
	Provide a brief summary of results from monitoring.	
	Evaluate the success of the project. If there were any concerns, what are the plans to address them in the future?	
Employee Participation	Do employees actively contribute to the pollinator project?	<i>Employee participation can strengthen a project and secure its future.</i>
	How many employees actively contribute to the project on a regular basis?	
	Describe how employees are involved in this project.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Employee Participation, continued	How many employee hours were spent on the following activities each year?	<i>Employee participation can strengthen a project and secure its future.</i>
Other Participants	Do any groups or individuals outside of your company actively contribute to the project on a regular basis?	<i>It is not always possible to recruit outside groups to a project. Conservation and education partners can strengthen a project and provide different audiences to use it for lessons or recreation, thus broadening its reach.</i>
	Select the types of groups: community members, consultants and contractors, government agencies, NGO partners, schools and universities, youth organizations, other companies.	
	List the names of the groups you work with.	
	Describe their involvement in this project.	
	How many hours were spent by the groups on the following activities each year? Implementation and Planning.	
	If you work with a pollinator specialist and have a current letter of support from them, upload it here.	
	List additional sources of technical advice (e.g. website, guide-book, etc.) and describe how they were used.	
Regulatory Requirements	Are any aspects of the project done in relation to regulatory requirements?	<i>Going beyond compliance is a requirement for certification.</i>
	Explain how the project exceeds requirements.	

	Question	Why this question is important
Connectivity	Does the project connect with other pollinator projects on neighboring land?	<i>Connectivity onsite and across fence lines helps to decrease fragmentation, one of the leading causes of habitat loss.</i>
	Describe how the project connects with the other pollinator projects on your lands.	
Alignments	Does the project align with any larger scale initiatives? (E.g. corporate strategy, regional conservation plan, migratory pathway, watershed plan, etc.).	<i>Aligning conservation efforts with large-scale conservation plans and other regional conservation initiatives allows a site-based activity to support a landscape-scale objective.</i>
	Is the project part of a corporate level commitment to pollinators?	
	Upload documentation of your corporate commitment to pollinators.	
	Does the project align with an existing conservation plan or other large scale initiative?	
	List the conservation plans or other large-scale initiatives the project aligns with and provide website links, if available.	
	How does your project align with these large-scale initiatives?	
Existing Certifications	Does this project have third party pollinator certification?	<i>Other certifications or recognitions illustrate strong efforts and commitments.</i>
	List the certifications and provide a website link if available.	

Content development for conservation certification

To inform the development of Conservation Certification, WHC analyzed the projects it was recognizing through its certification program to assess whether they were aligned with contemporary conservation and education priorities.

Following this assessment and using information from it, WHC convened Advisory Committees around conservation and education themes to develop the content that would guide practitioners and applicants in the future. This content is the basis for the Project Guidance and the online application process.

WHC used the pollinator project process as a pilot when building the content development process. WHC staff formed the first Advisory Committee and produced the initial draft of the Project Guidance, which was then sent for external review. The following provided feedback on the initial draft of the Pollinator Project Guidance:

Laurie Davies Adams, Pollinator Partnership

Mary Byrne, Pollinator Partnership

Dr. Larry Zaragoza, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

More information can be found about this process in the “Our Impact” section of wildlifehc.org under “Commitment to Transparency.”



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The WHC Strategy and Planning team can help you build a successful project by identifying needs, making connections with partners and resources, and providing strategies that meet business and conservation goals. Contact us today.

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Every act of conservation matters.

