

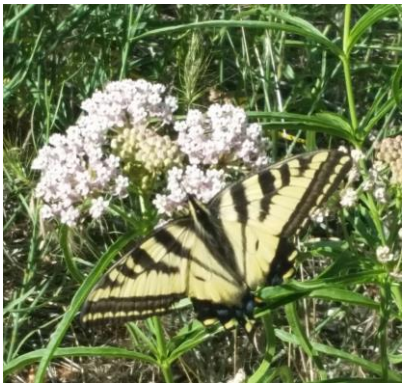

In June of 2014, the White House released a Presidential Memorandum creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators. The Memorandum directs U.S. government agencies to take additional steps to protect and restore domestic populations of pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies who are critical to our nation's economy, food system, and environmental health. The National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators released today. Pollinators are an essential part of both productive agriculture and a healthy environment and the White House's action places their protection squarely on the national stage. Protecting, restoring, and enhancing habitat for bees and butterflies, including the monarch, is a major focus of this national strategy.

Federal efforts take new steps to reverse pollinator losses and help restore populations to healthy levels. These steps should include the development of new public-private partnerships and increased citizen engagement. The following steps are directed by the President:

- Established the Pollinator Health Task Force (Task Force), to be co-chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency along with representatives from Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of Defense, Dept. of Interior, Dept. of State, Dept. of Energy, and many others.
- Task Force shall develop a National Pollinator Health Strategy (Strategy), which shall include explicit goals, milestones, and metrics to measure progress. The Strategy shall include the following components.
- Task Force member agencies shall develop and provide to the Task Force plans to enhance pollinator habitat, and subsequently implement, as appropriate, such plans on their managed lands and facilities, consistent with their missions and public safety.
- Task Force member agencies shall evaluate permit and management practices on power line, pipeline, utility, and other rights-of-way and easements, and, consistent with applicable law, make any necessary and appropriate changes to enhance pollinator habitat on Federal lands through the use of integrated vegetation and pest management and pollinator-friendly best management practices.
- Task Force member agencies shall incorporate pollinator health as a component of all future restoration and reclamation projects, as appropriate, including all annual restoration plans.
- The Department of Transportation shall evaluate its current guidance for grantees and informational resources to identify opportunities to increase pollinator habitat along roadways and implement improvements, as appropriate. The Department of Transportation shall work with State Departments of Transportation and transportation associations to promote pollinator-friendly practices and corridors. The Department of Transportation shall evaluate opportunities to make railways, pipelines, and transportation facilities that are privately owned and operated aware of the need to increase pollinator habitat.

The PM directs land management activities including restoration, rehabilitation, and revegetation projects, to consider the needs of pollinators. Federal and State employees are encouraged to become knowledgeable about pollinators and pollinator ecology and commit to providing a healthy, resilient pollinator habitat.

FHWA's approach to implementation of this Presidential Memorandum is to support native plantings and integrated vegetation management (IVM) practices to reduce pesticide use and mowing, and increase native plantings. An effective IVM plan can reduced long-term cost, and increased safety, while promoting native plantings that encourage ecological diversity and promote pollinator health and habitat.

WHY POLLINATORS MATTER?

Most native wildflowers depend on pollinators to promote plant reproduction and sustain plant populations. About one-third of our worldwide agricultural production depends to some extent on bee pollination, however less than 10 percent of the 100 most productive crop species depend entirely on bee pollination.

A majority of all flowering plants in the world reproduce with the help of pollinators. Pollinators pollinate over 180,000 different plant species and more than 1,200 crops. There are many types of pollinators including animals, insects, bees, bats, and birds; each has an important role in pollination and plant survival. Some of the most healthy and widely available foods such as berries, apples, nuts and squash would never be available without the help of pollinators. In addition to the food we eat, pollinators support healthy ecosystems that clean the air, stabilize soils, protect from severe weather, and support wildlife.

Over the past few decades, there has been a significant loss of pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies, from the environment. The number of migrating Monarch butterflies sank to the lowest recorded population level in 2013-14, and there is an imminent risk of failed migration. The continued loss of commercial honey bee colonies poses a threat to the economic stability of commercial beekeeping and pollination operations in the United States, which could have profound implications for agriculture and food.

The loss of native bees, which also play a key role in pollination of crops, is much less studied, but many native bee species are believed to be declining as well. Scientists believe that bee losses are likely caused by a combination of stressors, including poor bee nutrition, loss of forage lands, parasites, pathogens, lack of genetic diversity, and exposure to pesticides.

HOW IS ITD HELPING POLLINATORS?

Landscaping can be a powerful tool to our nation's pollinators. The PM states "future landscaping projects within all Federal Lands shall use plants beneficial to pollinators."

ITD promotes environmental stewardship and manages its roadsides with an integrated vegetation management program and cost efficient maintenance practices. ITD's integrated vegetation management program preserves biological diversity and natural habitats by protecting and improving air and water quality, preserving wetlands, minimizing adverse roadside visual impacts, preserving protected biological species, and promoting native plantings that encourage ecological diversity and promote pollinator health and habitat.

ITD is committed to find ways to minimize human activity and disturbance to the natural environment and ensure activities are conducted harmoniously with preserving natural diversity. This is achieved by promoting Best Management Practices (BMP's) for construction and maintenance projects, reintroducing more native vegetation and restoring native habitats, and complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws.