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**A Jennings County Community Supported Project providing habitat and education about Pollinators.**

***OUR MISSION*** IS TO EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLINATORS BY THROUGH INVOLVEMENT AND CREATION OF NEW HABITAT THROUGHOUT JENNINGS COUNTY.



**BACKGROUND:** On June 30, 2015, the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District decided to form a sub-committee to inform and educate the public about; 1) the importance of pollination, 2) the declining numbers of pollinators and 3) create new habitat throughout our community. Also, the Jennings County School Corporation has organized work teams to plant Monarch Butterfly areas on every school property and three other community sites. It will take individuals, groups, the media, businesses, parks, and organizations of the community to build this pollinator plan.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** DAN MEGEL, BOB STEINER, RICHARD WINEGARDEN, JOSEY HUFFMEYER, DONNA STANLEY, DON BIEHLE, AMBER FIELDS, KELLY KENT, RALPH COOLEY, ROB MCGRIFF, JENNY VOGEL, DENISE DAILEY, JOEL WAHLMAN, ROB CHAPMAN, AND ANDY ERTEL.

## OUR GOALS FOR THIS PROJECT

1. **Inform** the Community about the declining Populations of Pollinators (esp. Monarch Butterflies and Bees).
2. **Educate** the Community of the importance of Pollinators.
3. **Apply action** in the form of creating new habitats and enhancing existing habitats.

### Information about our concerns

Close to **75 percent** of the flowering plants on the earth rely to some degree on pollinators in order to set seed or fruit. From these plants comes **one-third of humankind's food and even greater proportions of the food for much of our wildlife**. Yet now, in many places, pollinators are at risk. We stand at a crossroad.

Research has shown large numbers of population decline of Honey bees and other native bees. Once common bumble bees are disappearing across North American.

The Monarch Butterfly is on the verge of being listed on the endangered species list. Their host plant, **common milkweed**, is needed for their survival, but often viewed as a weed to kill.



Heavily developed agricultural and urban landscapes lack the habitat to support a diversity and abundance of bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Did you know the number one irrigated crop in the United States is the lawn? Around 840 million acres are grassed down and sprayed to keep out those flowering weeds which to a pollinator, has the appearance of a desert.

Four factors – the loss and fragmentation of habitat, pesticide poisoning, and the spread of diseases and parasites – account for most of the decline in populations of bees and other pollinators.

Do we as consumers, recognize that the most nutritious and interesting parts of our diets – **apples, watermelons, blueberries, carrots, broccoli, almonds, orange juice, coffee, and chocolate**, to name a few – are the result of the insect pollination? Can you imagine having your blueberry patch or apple tree without any fruit to pick? That reality can be right here in our own back yards one day without those pollinators.

If this declining trend continues, the result will be disastrous not only for the insects but for humans as well.

## The importance of Pollinators

Several animals can pollinate, such as birds and bats, but the four major groups of pollinating insects are: bees and wasps, flies, butterflies and moths, and beetles.

Pollination is the process by which plants reproduce. Pollination is central to the life cycle of flowering plants. Pollen must move from male to female parts of the flower for the plant to develop seed and reproduce. There are two types of pollination (self-pollination and cross pollination) and several ways a plant achieves in getting pollen (wind, water, pollinators). Since flowering plants are literally rooted to one spot, close to 75 percent rely upon animal pollinators to move that pollen.



Let's look at how important the bee is to the world we live in. Bees are the most important group of pollinators. Bees exhibit a behavior called flower constancy, meaning they repeatedly visit one particular plant species on any given foraging trip. This is important because pollen is wasted if it is delivered to the wrong species of flower. On a single trip, a female bee may visit hundreds of flowers, transferring pollen along the

entire way.

The bottom line is, **without bees**, there would be **NO apples, pumpkins, strawberries and many other fruits and vegetables.**



We need all the groups of pollinator's present which provides more pollinating coverage from sun up to sun down. Some work in cooler temperatures and some have further travel ranges. Remember, we only have from spring to fall to grow all that food we need to eat.

## Apply Action as a Community

If you could do something to help a butterfly or bee, would you? The good news is, any action is better than no action. By the year 2018, we would like to identify and/or plant over 300 pollinator protection areas.

*If you live in town*..... Get some free seed from the SWCD and plant a small area to pollinating flowers. We need hundreds of small flowering areas for urban habitat.

*If you are a student* ..... Help out with the Monarch/pollinator projects at school.

*If you are a farmer*.....enroll in the USDA, CRP, filter strip program and plant flowers in your mix.

*If you own a factory*.....plant a small area of flowers around your picnic area.

*If you mow a large yard* .....Get some free seed from the SWCD and plant a small area to pollinating flowers.

*If you are a civil organization*.....see what activity over the period of this project you can assist with.

*If you have some idle space on your farm.....* create a small pollinator habitat

*If you own cropland along a creek or stream.....*sign up for a filter strip with flowering plants through the USDA – Conservation Reserve Program.

*If you have time volunteer to assist with.....*the Master Gardeners or with the SWCD to further promote pollinator habitat.

### 2015 – 2017 Pollinator Calendar of Action

September – Inform and educate public through media sources. Complete the Pollinator Plan. Provide Pollinator Display for Ag. Day.

October – All the Jennings County Public Schools, Vernon, Eco Park, and Muscatatuck Park will be planting Monarch/Pollinator plots.

November 2015 – 2017 - Identify areas where filter strips through USDA – CRP can be applied and add flowering plants as part of the mix for enhanced pollinator habitat.

### Join our growing project

As the plan mentioned above, we want to create new pollinator areas and identify some permanent existing areas (just general locations on a Jennings County map). We would like you to go on our website [www.jenningswcd.org](http://www.jenningswcd.org) , and under **Share Some Space** add your name if you have planted an area for pollinators (regardless of the size) and give us a general idea of where you planted and we want to pin it to our Pollinator Map. Or if you promoted the education of pollinators (teaching or workshops) you can add your name or organization. So join us and get started.....

Reference: Attracting Native Pollinators; The Xerces Society Guide