

Establishing Pollinator Habitat through a Pollinator Habitat Credit Program on Permanently Protected Farms in Michigan

ACES 2016
DECEMBER 9, 2016



- **This material is based upon work supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under number 69-3A75-16-004. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**

Partners

- Kieser & Associates
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Michigan State University
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Funding Habitat

- Because of the funding that AFT holds to help pay for easements in Michigan, the project is using these funds, CIG funds and Pollinator Habitat Credit Purchases to investigate and help stimulate the market, including:
 - Paying farmers who put new easements on their land an additional cost-share or PES for habitat practices.
 - Paying farmers who already have easements an additional cost-share or PES for installation of habitat practices on existing protected acreage.
- An important innovation of this project will be the opportunity to test the integration of public and private programs and funding sources for voluntary farmland protection and conservation efforts.

Pollinator Habitat Credit Program

- Pollinator Habitat Credit Program originally developed in Minnesota by CMM (funding from General Mills)
- Foundation is CRP CP-42 and CP-38E and enhanced with additional species and requirements
- Adapted for Michigan crops and conditions
 - Natives vs. managed honeybees
- Program details such as payment amounts, contract lengths, monitoring requirements unique to program
 - Competing with CRP but can also be complementary
- Transferability is desired

Project Deliverables

- Establish 40 acres of pollinator habitat on protected farms in Michigan.
- Complete an adapted pollinator habitat guidance package and train local conservation professionals.
- Develop factsheets, marketing and informational materials for outreach to potential buyers.
- Complete an economic analyses of pollinator habitat sites.
- Produce a pollinator habitat market framework for tracking projects.
- Develop credit buyer market and third-party certification requirements.
- Engage at least 15 private businesses and corporations in helping to fund the establishment of pollinator habitat on selected sites through Payment for Ecosystem Services.

Pollinator Habitat Guidance Package

- Specialized and targeted seed mix
 - Recommendation by MSU
 - 20 forbs including two milkweed species
 - 2 grasses
 - \$825 per acre with limited availability of some species
- Adapted implementation protocol
 - Options for farmer prep or trained contractors
 - Seeding done by expert contractor
 - Maintenance operations completed by landowner
 - Technical assistance provided by GTRLC

Pollinator Habitat Credit Requirements

- Keep it simple, efficient, cost effective and informative
- Pollinator Habitat Quality Assessment
 - Threats to habitat and pollinators
 - Plant species present/absent and density
 - Rating could drive timing of future monitoring
- Pollinator Assessment
 - Begin with “Streamlined Bee Monitoring Protocol for Assessing Pollinator Habitat” – Can we be more efficient?
 - Can we use other technologies ie., hive health monitoring technology

■ **What mechanisms create the market you are working in?**

- Increasing consumer interest in sustainability, accountability (metrics), transparency and environmental outcomes.
- Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) that complies with an accepted practice standard.
- An active and robust farmland preservation program.

■ **Why is your project going to be successful?**

- Location, location, location
- Industry and producer recognition of pollinator benefits
- An opportunity to integrate NRCS/FSA and PES investments.

■ **What potential obstacles are there to achieving success?**

- Varying habitat standards that potentially could confuse the public, investors and producers.
- Cost efficient PES program – Pollinator habitat is expensive and can you keep transaction costs down
- Pollinators is one of many ecosystem services
- Limited acreage through easement programs and entirely voluntary

■ **What are the conditions for scale or replication?**

- Determining regional habitat practice standards and the level of protection/enhancement provided may be variable by region or by industry
- Moving beyond protected farmland
- Administration infrastructure



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