



COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION: LEVERAGING CITIZEN SCIENTISTS IN RIGHT-OF-WAY POLLINATOR MONITORING



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Program P51

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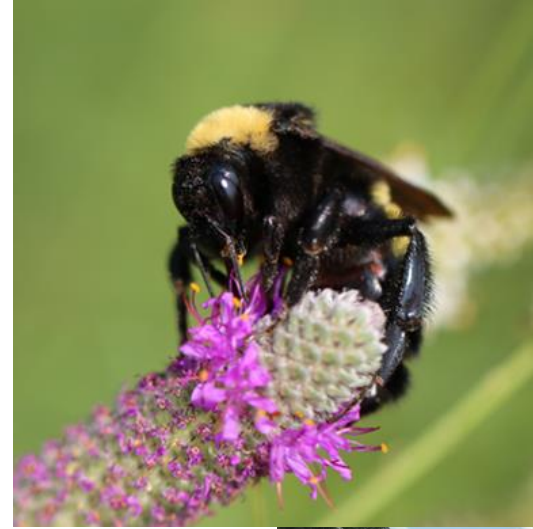


Photos: A. Bennett



Background

- Utilities increasing use of native seed mixes
 - Seed mixes are often designed to support pollinators
- Drivers for installing pollinator habitat
 - O&M cost savings
 - Environmental benefits
 - Conservation goals
 - Sustainability reporting
 - Improved aesthetics /community relations
- Many companies would like to document pollinator benefits
 - Value of native seed programs
 - Sustainability reporting
 - Monarch CCAA



Photos: A. Bennett

Background

- **Problem:** Difficult for utilities to put resources to pollinator monitoring

Monitoring Program Requires

- Training
 - Pollinator ID
 - Sampling methods
 - Data collection
- Travel
 - To sampling sites
- Time
 - Monitoring time in field
- Data entry & analysis
 - Track trends over time



Photo: AI generated image

Background

- **Solution:** Leverage citizen scientists in ROW monitoring

Benefits

- Improves understanding of ROW value to pollinators
- Develops a standardized sampling protocol
- Provides quantitative data tracking over time
 - Documents IVM program benefits
 - Contributes to sustainability reporting / company goals
- Allows companies across regions to collaboratively demonstrate ROW benefits
- Relieves staff or contactor time
- Facilitates community engagement
- Increases community outreach

Methods

➤ Step 1. Identify at least one right-of-way site

- Focus on urban or sub-urban locations
- Ideally within a park or natural area with public access and parking
- Easy access to right-of-way by volunteers



Photo: AI generated image



Photo: AI generated image

Methods

- **Step 2. Develop Training Materials**
 - Create a standardize sampling protocol all volunteers will follow
 - Some pollinator groups will be standardized
 - Data will be collected on these groups by all participants
 - Each utility can also tailor training to include other pollinators / key plants
 - Target regional pollinators
 - Target specific plants of interest (milkweed, lupin)
 - Monarch CCAA scorecard 1 or 2

Training Materials

- Lecture to citizen scientists
 - Pollinator identification
 - Key pollinator hosts to survey
 - Field sampling methods
 - Protocols for data entry
- Field guide of target pollinators / plants
 - Photo guide including key pollinators / plants
- Field methods protocol document
- Field datasheet
- Data entry protocol document

Methods

➤ Step 3. ID citizen scientist group

- Recommended – Master Gardeners
- US and Canada organization
- Have required volunteer hours
- Have previously trained Master Gardeners to participate in research
- Number of monitored ROW sites (1-3) will depend on:
 - Utility
 - Number of volunteers
 - Sites available

➤ Step 4. On-site training

- EPRI will coordinate with the Master Gardener program
- Will need to coordinate ROW locations in one county with an active and interested Master Gardener program
- EPRI will perform in person training
 - Lecture + handouts + data entry
 - In-field training
 - Pollinator ID practice
 - Implement protocol
 - Review data capture

Methods

➤ Step 6. Data Analysis

- EPRI will compile data for each utility
- EPRI will combine data across utilities for standardized pollinator groups

➤ Step 7. Reporting

- A report will be created for each utility
- Each report will also include an appendix of data summarized across utilities for standardized pollinator groups
- One results webinar will be provided to participants in the supplemental project

Data Metrics (*examples*)

- Total pollinator counts
- Counts by groups
 - Bumble bee, honey bee, green bees, carpenter bee, small bees, large bees, monarch, swallowtails, sulphur, white, other butterfly, ladybug, wasp, syrphid fly
- Counts of target taxa
 - *Example:* milkweed
 - *Example:* Lupin
 - *Example:* Karner Blue
- Group richness

Summary

Project Benefits

- Low-cost Monitoring
- Collaborative Data
- Standardized Methods
- Data Tracking
 - Utility specific
 - Collaborative across utilities
- Contributes to voluntary conservation efforts
 - Monarch CCAA
- Community Engagement

Deliverables

1. Training Materials
 - Lecture
 - Field Guide
 - Protocol Documents
2. On-site Training
 - MG program coordination
 - Volunteer Coordination
3. Technical Report
4. Webinar

Price of Project

- 2-year Study
 - Year 1 – Site selection, develop training materials
 - Year 2 – On-site training, data collection
- Total Cost = \$45,000
 - \$22,500 / year
 - Eligible for SDF
- Who can join?
 - EPRI members
 - Electric utilities
 - Other companies with urban assets



Questions





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