

Bee Campus USA - Inver Hills Community College

Report on 2023

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Please describe pollinator habitat creation or enhancement projects in your community in 2023, and whether your committee hosted them or not.

1. For the college's annual Day of Service on October 6, 2023, thirty students, staff, and community members spent two hours removing buckthorn on the campus of Inver Hills Community College. Group leaders Tanya Smutka and Nat Hemstad presented information about buckthorn's impact on wildlife and pollinator habitats. Since buckthorn negatively impacts the habitat for pollinators, the group worked to remove overgrowth in order to give a chance of survival to native, pollinator friendly plants. Our committee did not host this. 2. Our campus is on year three of a three year contract with Minnesota Native Landscapes to replace under-utilized land with natural prairie restoration and pollinator-friendly plants. We have two large spaces on campus currently used for this purpose. Our committee had a hand in implementing this. We obtained grant funding for this project and were involved in the original planning. 3. We have made our greatest strides in new policies of diverse native habitats and less mowing. We added 15 acres between 2021-2023 and are projected to add 3.5 acres more starting in 2024.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance in 2023?

3

How many people (staff, volunteers, students, partners, etc.) helped with those projects?

36

How many projects benefit monarchs, milkweed, or nectar plantings?

3

How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

210734

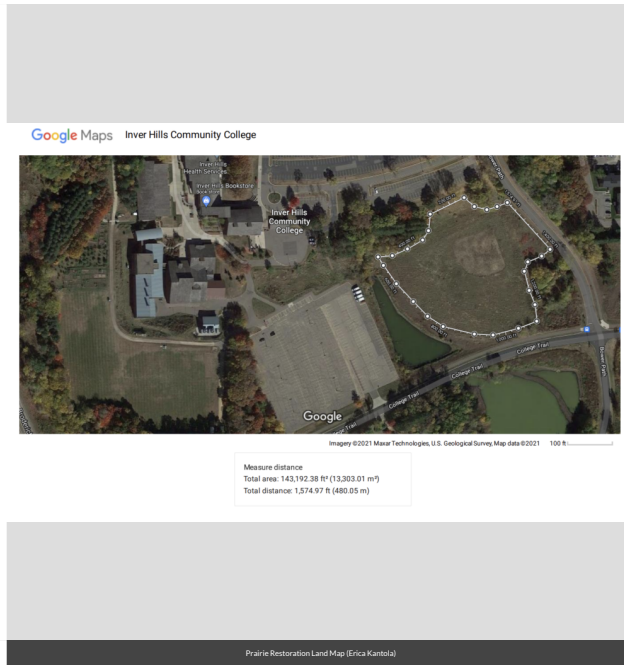
Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance last year with pollinator benefit in mind.

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Orchard

- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Meadow
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- School garden

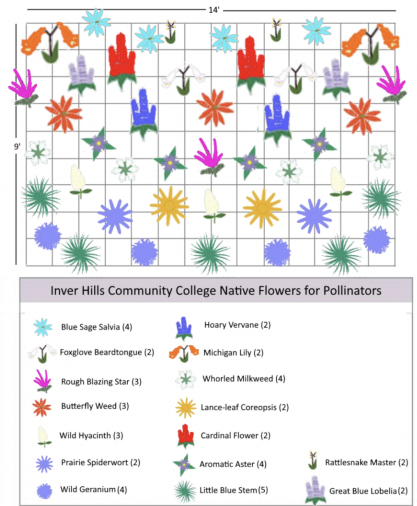


Pollinator Garden (Diane Thomas)



Prairie Restoration Land Map (Erica Kantola)

Inver Hills Community College Native Flowers for Pollinators



Pollinator Garden Plan (Diane Thomas)

Education & Outreach

Please describe pollinator conservation events or outreach activities in your community in 2023, indicating whether your committee hosted them or not.

1. In October 2023, the book club on campus began meeting to discuss *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This book focuses on the main argument that the ‘awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.’ In this book club, they dove into conversations on nature, botany, plants, animals and pollinators, environment, and spirituality. The book club has roughly 100-200 optional attendees and conversations around the environment and pollinators have taken place. Our committee did not host this. 2. In December the bee Restoration Land committee on campus tabled in the college center in efforts to

create awareness for the committee, its work, the state of our local pollinators, and recruit new members. Members hosted trivia and education sharing practices. Tabling reached roughly twenty people and resulted in five new prospective members. Our committee hosted this. 3. Faculty member Nat Hemstad 's for-credit class hosted a Curiosity Hour during the Annual Research Conference in April of 2023. This event is open to the campus and the public. Attendees participated in bird identification activities and went over information on rain garden seeds for some of those flowering plants native to Minnesota. Our committee did not host this. 4. Our campus voted on a new mascot in 2023. The winning design is a bee! The mascot roll out will occur in 2024, but some preliminary work was done in 2023 as the design was created and all faculty, staff, and students had a chance to vote for the winning mascot. We anticipate more collaboration between our bee committee and the larger campus as we align mascot marketing efforts with our campus-wide pollinator protection efforts. Our new slogan is "a place where all students bee-long" so we know bees will stay top of mind on our campus. Signage will go up next year with the bee and this slogan. It's use online has already begun on the website and some student life graphics. We are excited about this initiative!

How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2023 (in total)?

5

How many people attended those events (in total)?

60

Number of permanent interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed to date?

1

Number of temporary interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed in 2023?

4



Bees Knees Committee Co-Chairs Rachel Marzahn and Scott Klaehn tabling in the College Center 12/06/2023 (Shannon Williamms)



Our pollinator sign from Xerces (Rachel Marzahn)

Curriculum, Continuing Education, & Service Learning

Please describe the curriculum your campus engaged in 2023, indicating whether it was part of a for-credit course or continuing education.

Inver Hills Community College began a Climate Change certificate in the fall of 2022. A component of this program focuses on pollinators and food production in relation to climate change. Two courses this fall touched on pollinators: Environmental Sciences (Biology course BIOL 1117) and Intro to Climate Change (Natural Sciences course NSCI 1110).

How many of your for-credit courses included pollinator-related information in 2023?

2

How many students attended those for-credit courses?

259

How many service-learning projects did your campus host and/or support to enhance pollinator habitat on- and off- campus?

1

How many students participated in service-learning projects in 2023 to enhance pollinator habitat on or off-campus?

25

Please describe the service-learning projects your students were engaged in 2023, indicating which, if any, were associated with a course.

1. For the college's annual Day of Service on October 6, 2023, thirty students, staff, and community members spent two hours removing buckthorn on the campus of Inver Hills Community College. Since buckthorn negatively impacts the habitat for pollinators, the group worked to remove overgrowth in order to give a chance of survival to native, pollinator friendly plants. In addition, before starting the work, two campus faculty, Tanya Smutka and Nat Hemstad provided a mini lecture explaining what buckthorn is, how it effects pollinators, and the importance of its removal. This was associated with Nat Hemstad's class and their students were in attendance. 2. Tanya Smutka's class gave presentations covering a variety of topics – including deforestation, food webs, and water pollution – to a group of middle school students. 3. Nat Hemstad 's students did the Curiosity Hour during the Annual Research Conference in April of 2023. The students planted seeds and participated in bird identification activities. They also handed out rain garden seeds for some of those flowering plants native to Minnesota.



Buckthorn Removal 10/06/2023 (Matt Kruger)

Policies & Practices

Please describe actions taken to make pest management more pollinator-friendly.

1. (prior to 2018) Many acres of Inver Hills campus's routine mowable turf areas were targeted to become naturalized grassy habitat consistent with low maintenance native habitat initiatives. Intermittent brush cut mowing is used to reduce the encroachment impact of invasive woody species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. 2. (2018-present) In an effort to achieve special interest goals, Inver Hills abandoned all field sports participation in order to convert maintained "athletic playing fields" to additional naturalized pollinator friendly habitat. This initiative decreased the campus mowable turf areas by approximately 30%, while adding approximately 5 acres of pollinator friendly habitat. 3. Inver Hills actively avoids applying pesticides in designated pollinator friendly habitat as well as adjacent naturalized landscapes. Some mechanical controls are needed to combat buckthorn and other invasive species. 4. In consideration of industry IPM system protocols as well as recommended local Minnesota agricultural guidelines and horticultural best practices, Inver Hills occasionally uses targeted and selective weed control herbicides in landscape beds, hard surface cracks and crevices and a portion of mowable turf areas in order to maintain a minimum acceptable aesthetic

appearance. Additionally, the IHCC maintenance department must seasonally apply Wasp & Hornet Spray to nuisance nest often found in campus mechanical systems (ie: AC units, electrical and communication boxes, light fixtures, etc). 5. The communal garden is managed following soil conservation principles. Low/no till practices, cover crops and other techniques minimize soil disturbance, maximize soil biota and reduce erosion. Restorative agriculture improves soil, water and air. We partner with University of Minnesota Extension, and the Dakota County Master Gardener program maintains a plot trialing new seeds and techniques each year * One of our plots this year (2023) has been planted with a cover crop * Cover crops help to prevent soil erosion, provide food and habitat for pollinators and other animals, and break up the soil * The particular cover crop planted here is red clover, seen in the image above (*Trifolium pretense*) * Red clover is a legume, and can add nitrogen to the soil, partnering with bacteria associated with its roots * Cover crops make a great way to prevent weed growth and promote better growth next year in areas where you are not using a garden

In your city or campus, are any policy initiatives underway to further protect pollinators, people or waterways from pesticides?

While there is no written pollinator-friendly pest management policy (area of opportunity), we have worked with our grounds keeper and land maintenance staff to ensure there are no harsh pesticides, native grasses are left unaltered, if needed there are only spot sprays ad no blanket sprays.

Did your committee participate in any continuing education on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning?

Not that we are aware. We hope to work on this in the future.

Please check actions you have taken to make pest management practices more pollinator-friendly.

- Implemented or maintained a written IPM plan
- Only use pesticides as a last resort within the IPM plan
- Avoided use of pesticides in public sites containing designated pollinator habitat or other sensitive features (except when targeted use is deemed the best option for invasive or noxious weed, insect or disease management)
- Implemented non-chemical pest prevention and management methods on city or campus grounds
- Eliminated pesticide uses that are solely to maintain aesthetics on city or campus grounds
- Reduced the total area of city or campus-managed lands to which pesticides are applied

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Leadership turnover is hard.



Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List: [Native Plants and Resources.docx](#)

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [Native Plant Suppliers.docx](#)

<https://www.inverhills.edu/about/bee-campus-usa/>
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