Bee Campus USA - University of Idaho

Report on 2024

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Please describe pollinator habitat creation or enhancement projects in your community in 2024, and whether your committee hosted them or not.

The University of Idaho's commitment to enhancing pollinator habitats was exemplified through several key projects in 2024. Our inaugural endeavor, the Lot 64 Pollinator Planting, transformed two median beds at a bustling parking lot entrance into a 500-square-foot test site. This project evaluated the viability of native Palouse Prairie plants in urban settings, providing critical forage and nesting sites for pollinators. In partnership with the Paradise Audubon Society Campus Chapter, we established a 3,000-square-foot "Native Plants for Birds" garden. This space features a diverse array of native trees, shrubs, and a meadow seeded with wildflowers and grasses, including milkweed to support monarch butterflies. The garden serves as a sanctuary for both avian and pollinator species, promoting biodiversity on campus. The Gibb Courtyard Mason Bee Garden, another significant project, was developed in collaboration with Dr. Paul Rowley. This 300-square-foot garden comprises plant species specifically selected to support native mason bees. Complemented by the installation of mason bee houses for research purposes, the garden has already observed active nesting, contributing to both conservation and academic inquiry. Each of the above projects were hosted by the University of Idaho Bee Campus Committee. Other projects benefiting pollinators on campus not directly hosted by our committee include the revitalization of the Society for Conservation Biology Paradise Path Pollinator Garden, and assisting with native plant selection at the Vandal Healing garden. By integrating native plant species and fostering collaborative partnerships, we are actively contributing to the preservation and proliferation of essential pollinator populations.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance in 2024?

4

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

80

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

1

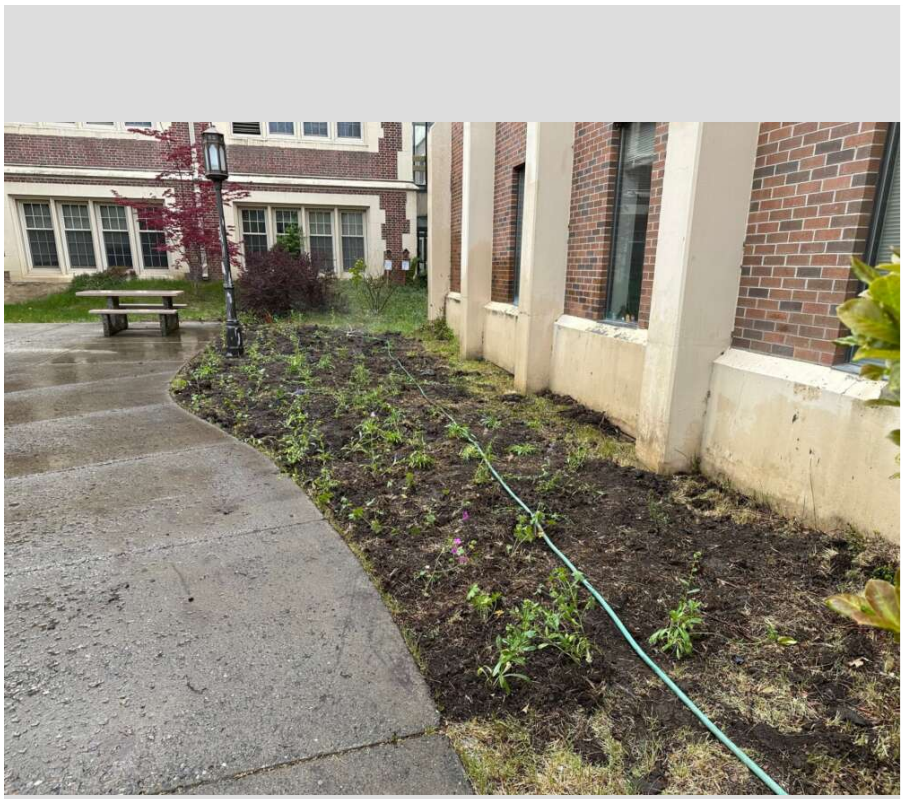
How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

3800

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

- Flower garden
- Meadow
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Roadside/rights of way planting

A bee enjoys this Gallardia aristata bloom in the Lot 64 Pollination Station. Credit: Karl Meyer



Freshly planted Mason Bee Garden in the Gibb Hall courtyard. Credit: Karl Meyer

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Education & Outreach

Please describe pollinator conservation events or outreach activities in your community in 2024, indicating whether your committee hosted them or not.

In 2024, the University of Idaho's Bee Campus Committee spearheaded several initiatives to promote pollinator conservation within our community. Our efforts commenced with the "BEE a Volunteer" service-learning event in early May, focusing on the establishment of the Gibb Hall Mason Bee Garden. This two-day event engaged 18 volunteers in site preparation and the planting of 120 native perennials, providing essential forage for native mason bees. Participants received hands-on education about the significance of native plants and the challenges facing Palouse Prairie pollinators. Concurrently, we collaborated with the Paradise Audubon Society Campus Chapter to transform roughly 3,000 square feet of lawn into a native plant haven. The "Get Dirty 2024" event, held on May 4th, attracted 14 volunteers who assisted in planting 45 native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. This initiative not only supports local bird and pollinator populations but also serves as a living laboratory for ecological education. Recognizing the importance of ongoing maintenance, our committee organized weeding sessions for both the Audubon Pollinator Garden and the Gibb Hall Mason Bee Garden during the university's SYNC event on August 17th. These sessions mobilized 23 students to manage invasive species and ensure the health of our pollinator habitats. Beyond these events, we provided advisory support to the Society for Conservation Biology's efforts to rejuvenate a pollinator garden along Paradise Path. Additionally, our expertise contributed to the development of the "Vandal Healing Garden," a memorial space incorporating native plant species to honor the lives of students. Through these collaborative efforts, the Bee Campus Committee has fostered a culture of conservation and community engagement, underscoring the vital role of pollinators in our ecosystem.

How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2024 (in total)?

6

How many people attended those events (in total)?

67

Number of temporary interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed in 2024?

3

Staff & volunteers pose with University of Idaho President Scott Green at the "Get Dirty 2024" community outreach event. Credit: Seanna Wittler

Environmental Horticulturist Karl Meyer poses in his fledgling Palouse Prairie garden. Credit: Garrett Britton

Curriculum, Continuing Education, & Service Learning

Please describe the curriculum your campus engaged in 2024, indicating whether it was part of a for-credit course or continuing education.

In 2024, the University of Idaho incorporated pollinator-related education into both for-credit courses and continuing education programs, ensuring that students and community members gained a deeper understanding of pollinators, ecosystem services, and sustainable management practices. Pollinator conservation and ecology were featured in multiple university courses across disciplines such as entomology, ecology, and natural resource management. Entomology courses covered insect biology, identification, pest management, and insect-plant interactions, while ecology and natural resource courses explored pollinators' roles in ecosystem restoration, biodiversity, and economic services. These courses provided students with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on learning experiences, including fieldwork and research projects that emphasized the importance of pollinators in agricultural and natural systems. Beyond for-credit courses, the university offered pollinator-focused continuing education through its Master Gardener programs. These included the Becoming an Idaho Master Gardener course, the Advanced Master Gardener Program, and the Continuing Master Gardener Program, all of which emphasized pollinator-friendly gardening, native plant landscaping, and ecological pest management. Additionally, the Idaho Master Gardeners' Pesticide Safety Education Course provided training on responsible pesticide use with a focus on pollinator protection. By incorporating pollinator conservation into both academic and community education, the University of Idaho is fostering greater awareness and action to support pollinator health and biodiversity.

How many of your for-credit courses included pollinator-related information in 2024?
9

How many students attended those for-credit courses?
240

How many of your continuing education courses included pollinator-related information in 2024?
5

How many participants attended those continuing education courses?
85

Please describe the service-learning projects your students were engaged in 2024, indicating which, if any, were associated with a course.
In 2024, University of Idaho students participated in several service-learning projects that supported pollinator conservation, habitat restoration, and ecological research. These projects provided hands-on opportunities for students to contribute to meaningful pollinator-friendly initiatives while reinforcing ecological and environmental stewardship concepts. One of the most impactful projects was the "BEE a Volunteer" event in May, which focused on establishing the Gibb Hall Mason Bee Garden. Over two days, students prepared the site by turning the soil and planting 120 native perennials selected specifically to support native mason bees and other pollinators. This garden was designed as a dedicated habitat for these solitary bees, providing essential forage and nesting opportunities. The event was associated with Dr. Paul Rowley's research lab, which studies antifungal proteins found on mason bee pollen stores. This collaboration allowed students to engage in both conservation and scientific research, learning about the ecological role of mason bees while contributing to a study on pollinator-associated microbes. Later in the year, students returned to the Gibb Hall Mason Bee Garden during a weeding and mulching event as part of the university's annual SYNC service day in August. This effort, also tied to Dr. Rowley's lab, ensured the garden remained a viable habitat by removing invasive weeds and supporting the establishment of native plants essential for mason bee foraging. Another major service-learning effort was "Get Dirty 2024," a partnership with the Paradise Audubon Society that replaced roughly 3,000 square feet of lawn with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. These plantings were selected specifically to provide habitat and forage for both pollinators and native bird species. Volunteers engaged in hands-on habitat restoration, gaining direct experience with ecological conservation techniques.Students also participated in the Audubon Pollinator Garden Weeding event in August. By removing invasive species, volunteers helped ensure that the space remained a high-quality habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Finally, one student assisted in the planting of the Lot 64 Pollinator Garden, a 500-square-foot median bed designed to test the viability of native Palouse Prairie plants in an urban setting. This project not only created additional pollinator-friendly habitat but also provided valuable insight into which native species can thrive in high-traffic areas. Each of these service-learning projects allowed students to gain hands-on experience in habitat creation, pollinator ecology, and sustainable landscape management. By participating, students directly contributed to pollinator conservation while deepening

their understanding of the importance of native plants and pollinator habitats.

How many service-learning projects did your campus host and/or support to enhance pollinator habitat on- and off- campus?
5

How many students participated in service-learning projects in 2024 to enhance pollinator habitat on or off-campus?
59

University student Jack Johnston helps plant inaugural Pollination Station at the entrance to Lot 64. Credit: Karl Meyer

Student Volunteers getting ready to plant the Gibb Hall Mason Bee Garden. Credit: Karl Meyer

Policies & Practices

Please describe actions taken to make pest management more pollinator-friendly.
In 2024, the University of Idaho took significant strides to make its pest management practices more pollinator-friendly. Foremost among these actions was the development and campus-wide implementation of a comprehensive Integrated Pest & Pollinator Management (IPPM) Plan. This plan formally weaves pollinator conservation into

everyday pest control decisions, embracing an approach where chemical treatments are truly a last resort and any necessary pesticides are selected and applied in ways that minimize risks to beneficial insects and the environment. As part of the IPPM rollout, the Bee Campus committee appointed a Landscape IPPM Administrator to ensure that the plan's guidelines are followed in campus landscape management. Additionally, the team leveraged technology to improve decision-making and transparency in pest management. Three custom ESRI Survey123 applications were created: one for campus community members to report pest sightings directly to the IPPM Administrator, another for the administrator to evaluate each report through an IPM decision-making framework, and a third for grounds staff to log all pest control actions and treatments in a centralized GIS database. These innovative tools replace old paper forms and allow for real-time tracking of pest issues and responses, ensuring that interventions are carefully considered and documented. Through these measures, the university has begun to shift its pest management culture – focusing on prevention, careful monitoring, and least-toxic solutions – all with the explicit goal of safeguarding pollinators while maintaining a healthy campus landscape.

In your city or campus, are any policy initiatives underway to further protect pollinators, people or waterways from pesticides?
In tandem with hands-on changes, the University of Idaho also pursued policy-level initiatives in 2024 aimed at safeguarding pollinators, people, and waterways from pesticide risks. The cornerstone of these efforts is the newly established Integrated Pest & Pollinator Management (IPPM) Plan, which effectively serves as a campus policy directing how pest control is handled with environmental and human health in mind. This plan mandates a preventative, least-toxic approach to pest managementfile-gvlqcvacwcaeffq2opdqnq, ensuring pesticides are used sparingly and only as a last resort after non-chemical methods have been considered. By explicitly integrating pollinator protection into the pest management strategy, U of I is reducing the likelihood of harmful chemical exposure to bees and other beneficial insects. Furthermore, the IPPM plan requires that any staff applying pesticides on campus be properly trained and hold a professional applicator's license – a step that not only promotes safer, more knowledgeable pesticide use but also protects personnel and the campus community. To complement this, the Bee Campus committee introduced a modern tracking system for all pest control activities via an online GIS database. This transparency and record-keeping initiative functions as a de facto accountability policy: it ensures every pest treatment decision is documented and reviewed for compliance with IPPM guidelines. Collectively, these initiatives – from formalizing IPM practices in a written plan to enforcing training requirements and thorough documentation – are strengthening how the university manages pests in ways that better protect pollinators, the campus community, and local waterways from pesticide impacts.

Did your committee participate in any continuing education on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning?
While there were no organized efforts for our entire committee to pursue continuing education on ecologically based Integrated Pest Management planning, our Environmental Horticulturist (who drafted our IPPM) conducted an enormous amount of research in order to draft an integrated pest management plan that works for our landscape management team.

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
- Reduced the total area of city or campus-managed lands to which pesticides are applied
- Sourced plants for city or campus grounds using "Buying Bee-Safe Plants" methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants)
- Sourced plants for city or campus grounds that were not treated with neonicotinoids
- Encouraged developers and private landscapers to source plants using "Buying Bee-Safe Plants" methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants)

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

The past year's efforts have provided valuable lessons that will inform and strengthen our pollinator program moving forward. One key lesson is the importance of planning for long-term maintenance of new pollinator habitats. Our ambitious native plantings, such as the Audubon "Native Plants for Birds" Garden, have thrived but also faced challenges with invasive weeds. We discovered that without a dedicated maintenance strategy or sufficient summer volunteers, even well-designed gardens can struggle aesthetically (though fortunately these weeds did not negate the benefits to pollinators). This highlighted the need to involve more volunteers and adjust maintenance scheduling to keep these spaces healthy. On a positive note, we learned how quickly nature rewards our efforts: the Mason Bee Garden we planted attracted nesting mason bees in its very first season, showing that creating habitat directly translates into real-world pollinator support. We also realized the power of partnerships and broad engagement. Collaborating with student clubs and tapping into orientation service days brought out more helping hands and raised awareness across diverse groups. Additionally, having visible support from campus leadership (even a brief visit from our President at a planting sent a strong message that encouraged wider participation. Finally, we learned that communication is crucial – both in setting expectations about more natural-looking, pesticide-reduced landscapes and in celebrating our successes. Interpretive signage and outreach will help the campus community understand the reasons for these changes, turning potential aesthetic concerns into teachable moments. Each challenge and triumph in 2024 has provided insights guiding us to refine our approach and sustain momentum for pollinator conservation on

campus.

Committee Photo

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University of Idaho Bee Campus Committee. Credit: Karl Meyer

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Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: UIdaho IPM 07232025.docx

Recommended Native Plant List: Native_Pollinator_Plants.xlsx
https://www.uidaho.edu/sustainability/bio-land/native-plant-guide
Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: Nursery_Info.xlsx

http://www.uidaho.edu/sustainability/bio-land
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