

Bee City USA - New Castle

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.

1) Cathy Paulsen (Head of Teen Services), Angela Morgan (member of the New Castle Conservation Board) and myself coordinated and agreed for the Library's seed bank, to harvest four 'bursting' seed pods from a naturally recruited Town Plaza common milkweed population (see attachment). The significance of this Plaza population is last year in spring 2023, the New Castle Recreation & Parks Department accidentally weed-whacked the area and the fallout from this event was citizens complaining through Facebook (Chappaqua Moms) and to the Town Board that this was a travesty, waste, irresponsible etc. As seen courtesy of this fall 2024 photo, when the plants emerged in spring I as the Environmental Coordinator inserted/hammered metal rods into the soil at the corners of the planting pit and tied yellow caution tape thereby ringing the area as a warning to our maintenance staff to leave alone.....guess it worked:)

2) The naturally recruited rock outcrop demonstration garden continued for a second season by allowing the naturally recruited plants to mature, (which was less of an issue now that Recreation & Parks staff were aware of this areas significance and therefore knew to avoid cutting, weed-whacking etc.) It continues to serve as an example of the Conservation's Boards efforts to advocate for reducing active landscaping and maintenance, promote native plants and being cognizant of native fauna/habitat. ALSO BY CHANCE WALKING OUT THE BUILDING DOOR, I OBSERVED THE FIRST MONARCH BUTTERFLY LANDING ON ONE OF THE MILKWEED PLANTS (SEE ATTACHED PHOTO SERIES). I didn't want to get too close for fear of scaring it away, but I'm hopeful you can make out the butterfly at the distance for this shot.

3) Our town was fortunate to receive 210 native trees and shrubs as part of a grant from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Trees for Tribs Program for planting in the Fall of 2022 at Jean Craighead Geroge Park (Town Park). The purpose of this statewide program is to reforest New York's tributaries in an effort to decrease erosion, reduce flood damage, improve wildlife and stream habitat, and most importantly, protect water quality. Protecting the water quality of our streams and tributaries also protects our drinking water. Continued through '23 & '24, during the growing season, weekend weed pulls have been completed by local residents to continue to remove invasive species (mugwort, phragmites), to not only support planted vegetation propagation, but which has also exposed native individuals thereby reducing competition and allowing them to grow.

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

3

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

15

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

2

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

29000

Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance in 2024 with pollinator benefit in mind.

- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement



Jean Craighead George Park Trees for tribes signage



Jean Craighead George Park: NYSDEC trees-for-tribes planting and phragmites removal

Education & Outreach

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

1) The Chappaqua Library operates a seed exchange program whereby they have organized folders which include the names of species and associated seeds available for the general public to both take and donate seeds. 2) At Community

Day, two dozen eastern redbud seedlings in pots were available for residents to take. In addition, we also had available copies of the field guide "Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, Jil M. Swearingen and Judith P. Fulton" to give to residents. Finally, we hung/displayed informational messaging regarding recent invader pest to the area "Spotted Lantern Fly" per the request of the Town Board to provide residents answers and resources to what evolved as concerns ('panic') over tree health, appearance of sooty molds and honeydew (their waste) staining and ruining their outdoor patios, decks, walkways etc. (see attached)

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

2

How many people attended those events (in total)?

750

Policies & Practices

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

As indicated, the Town does not permit the use of pesticides on Town lands and the weekend weed pulls under Item #3 above are accomplished using all manual removal techniques.

Are efforts underway in your community to further reduce pesticide use in residential or business areas? This may include neighborhood-led efforts, outreach to landscapers, etc. If so, please describe.

A number of members of New Castle Advisory and Regulatory Boards also are members of the local garden club and have their properties registered with pollinator pathways. (The New Castle Pollinator Pathways Coalition is a collaboration of New Castle landowners, local organizations, and Town boards and committees and other volunteers who are committed to the stewardship of privately-held and publicly-held land to establish pesticide-free corridors that provides native plant habitat and nutrition for pollinators). Pollinator pathways is a fixture at numerous Town events and actively reaches out to recruit additional members/properties by encouraging their approach and practices to property conservation.

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

The New Castle Conservation Board contributed to the language for a new local ordinance (Chapter 93 Property Maintenance Law) to promote pollinator friendly properties and differentiate them from non-maintained lawns of derelict and/or absentee property owners so the Town could be in compliance with the New York State Property Maintenance Law.

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

Not specifically as New Castle does not have an IPM

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

- Dropped pesticide use altogether on city or campus grounds
- Distributed educational materials to residents or students to encourage the reduction or elimination of pesticide use



We also use goats to remove invasive species

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Again, sometimes less is more meaning...it is worthwhile to review site conditions and look for native individuals/populations before actively removing/manipulating lands and ordering plants for restorative purposes.

Committee Photo

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [New Castle No IPMP or Recommendations Allowed.docx](#)

Recommended Native Plant List: [tree list appendix A.docx](#)

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [New Castle No IPMP or Recommendations Allowed.docx](#)

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