

Pollinator Working Group Meeting

Date: Thursday September 7, 2017

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: NRCS Conference Room

Minutes

Call to order at 4:05 PM

Attendees:

Working Group Members: Meg Kerr, Joel Tirrell, Shannon Brawley, David Brunetti, Sara Churgin, David Gregg, Rafael Nightingale, Keith Salisbury, Robert Mann, Henry Wright (absent), Ken Payne (absent), Lisa Tewksbury (absent), Ken Ayars, Howie Cook

Guest: Mark Hengen, Judie Sky, Nyssa Sky, Brianna O'Connor

Introduce new PWG members: Sara Churgin will take the seat that was filled by Gary Casabona, Sara is the Director of the Eastern RI Conservation District. Keith Salisbury will represent the RI Beekeepers Association this year.

Dates of next Working Group Meetings: The PWG is scheduled to meet on the following dates:

Thursday October 5, 2017 from 4 PM – 6 PM at the NRCS conference room

Thursday November 2, 2017 from 4 PM – 6 PM at the NRCS conference room

Thursday January 11, 2018 from 4 PM – 6 PM at the NRCS conference room

Thursday February 1, 2018 from 4 PM – 6 PM at the NRCS conference room

Year 2 report – Due February 15, 2018

Scheduled speakers:

Julia Bancroft and Peter August will present at the October 5 meeting. They will review the GIS analysis that was completed, evaluating pollinator habitats based on land use.

Allison Hamel (RIDOT) will attend the November 2 meeting and will discuss DOT's interest in pollinator habitat enhancement.

Recap of Accomplishments:

Shannon reviewed the findings from last year. The full report is on the PWG web site:

http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/agriculture/documents/pwg_executive_summary_report.pdf

The PWG had 3 priorities at the Legislature:

- 1) Use the funds that come from the pesticide registration for key DEM programs related to pesticides. The PWG met with Senator Sosnowski, Representatives Handy and Keable and presented this top recommendation. H 6264 was introduced by Rep Handy and referred to House Finance. We do not expect any further action on this bill.

<http://webservice.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText17/HouseText17/H6264.pdf>

- 2) Establish a study commission to review RI's pesticide laws and regulations. S 0982 was introduced by Senators Sosnowski, Coyne, Calkin, Kettle and Conley and passed. This creates a Special Legislative Commission to Study Pesticide Control Regulations.
<http://webservice.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText17/SenateText17/S0982.pdf>
- 3) Continue the PWG. Representative Handy introduced H 6256 which continues the PWG for another year.
<http://webservice.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText17/HouseText17/H6256.pdf>

Present Research by Caroline Jones (Meg Kerr)

Caroline Jones, a Brown student, worked for the summer as an intern at the Audubon Society of RI. Meg presented her findings on policy strategies for enhancing pollinator habitat and for controlling pesticides. Members received handouts summarizing the findings. The policy analysis with links to legislation can be found here:

<https://www.lucidchart.com/invitations/accept/acb087e6-bb61-4560-ab89-9597a452684d>

Discuss organization of PWG for Year 2

The group agreed that although a lot was accomplished, there is a lot more to do. Several members of the PWG will be serving on the Pesticide Study Commission and will act as a liaison between the two bodies. The PWG would like to spend meeting time focusing on the 3 topics – habitat, education, pesticides and work together to develop recommendations and next steps. Smaller working groups may emerge organically from this process.

David Gregg offered to coordinate/lead the work on inventory and monitoring. The work that Julia and Pete present on October 5 will help frame up the work.

Additional issues were identified:

- Distinguish honey bees from bumble bees and native bees. The PWG in year 1 focused recommendations on honey bees, acknowledging that all bees are of concern, but assuming that good practices for honey bees would benefit all the bees.
- RI needs a pollinator management plan. How can the group contribute to it?
- RI has a statute creating a Beekeeping advisory board. The board does not meet, but the PWG could work with DEM to re-energize.
- We know many beekeepers do not register with the state. How could we incentivize the registration?

How should the PWG interact with the **Pesticide Study Commission**? What would we like them to focus on?

- Howie said that he has several priorities including regulating mist blowers and adjusting the timing on licenses.

- Members of the PWG would like the Pesticide Commission to consider neonics and could start with Caroline's summary of options used by other states.
- Adding pollinators to the training modules.
- Pre-mix pesticides. Consider limiting distribution and sale to non-licensed applicators.

6:10 p.m.: Adjourn Meeting