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(Disponible en anglais seulement)

## **Protecting Pollinators Through Community Collaboration Edmonton and Area Land Trust**

### **Project Summary Part I. Description**

#### Participating organizations

#### Pollinator Awareness - Presentations and Information booths

- Greater Edmonton Teacher's Convention
- Master Naturalists
- Edmonton Public Library
- Wildbird General Store
- Edmonton Public Schools
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
- Edmonton Horticultural Society
- Southwest Farmers' Market
- City Market Downtown
- Bonnie Doon Community League

#### Bee Hotel Installations

- John Janzen Nature Centre
- Grant MacEwan University
- Muttart Conservatory
- Edmonton Valley Zoo
- Whitemud Equine Centre
- Reclaim Urban Farm
- Radisson Convention Centre
- Sustainable Food Edmonton and 17 local community gardens

#### Bee Hotel Workshops

- Strathcona County Library
- Edmonton Resilience Festival
- City of Edmonton
- Northern Alberta Permaculture Convergence
- Nature Alberta Family Nature Nights
- Prairie Urban Farm
- Bright Paths Daycare

#### Native Plants

- Edmonton Community Foundation
- Edmonton Native Plant Group

### **Background or problem statement**

Pollinators include bats and birds, but the majority of pollinators in North America are insects - butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, and bees. These species pollinate about 3/4 of all the flowering plants in the world, including many of the plants and crops that we need for food. Because there are fewer pollinators, food producing plants are pollinated less. We need pollinators like solitary bees to pollinate our plants, including our vegetable plots, flower gardens, and agricultural crops.

### **General description of the project**

This project included three main goals: 1) increase awareness about pollinator importance, declines and conservation through dedicated webpages and brochures, plus raising awareness about these issues and solutions through mainstream, community and social media; 2) increase nest sites for bees and other solitary pollinators by building and installing Bee Hotels, and encouraging community groups, businesses and public to do the same; and 3) increase pollinator habitat by creating an urban native flower garden, and distributing native seed packets to encourage the public to plant native plants in their gardens.

### **Description of outcomes and follow-up**

As a result of this project, several brochures, handouts and instructions for building bee hotels were created. These are all available online on our main webpage about the project:

<http://www.ealt.ca/protecting-pollinators>

## **Project Summary**

### **Part II. Analysis**

#### **Successes**

The success of this project hinged in large part on volunteers, who contributed approximately 300 hours to the project (for an approximate value of \$4,500). We received excellent feedback about the project and its uniqueness, with many inquiries about when future workshops will be held.

In addition to what we set out to do, we also tied a bee hotel into another program we have ongoing, with geocaches on our conservation lands. We created a pollinator themed geocache on one of our conservation lands, to appeal to this distinct audience

([https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6NVF6\\_protectingpollinators](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC6NVF6_protectingpollinators))

#### **Challenges**

While we were very careful to explain the difference between solitary and social bees, and that solitary bees aren't aggressive, some people remained quite apprehensive about the safety of being around bees. For some groups, members were interested in receiving one of our bee hotels, but faced push back from other members of their group and therefore were not able to participate in our project.

Other groups, while interested in receiving one of our bee hotels, were simply not ready for one, due to their own internal approval processes. These two partners in particular are very important to EALT, and so we will keep the bee hotels designated for them until they are ready to install them, even though that will occur after the project period.

Coordination and communication with one of our partnering organizations proved to be difficult, with two workshops cancelled by that group without our input. Nevertheless, we were still able to get bee hotels to that group's audience (community gardens), by putting in more work on our end. Another organization invited us to hold three workshops at a fall festival, but then cancelled that festival with only 2 weeks notice; however, they do plan to hold this festival in 2017, and we plan to participate then.

## **Lessons Learned**

We learned that some processes for outside organizations, particularly large institutions or municipalities, take much longer than we thought. We had hoped to install a few bee hotels at a university, local Aboriginal school and at a city natural area, but because of their own internal processes, this did not take place during the project period. We will however keep the bee hotels for these groups until a time that they are ready to receive them.

We also learned that staff time for the project was higher than anticipated, to coordinate volunteers, create bee hotels and packages, and do significant outreach efforts. Travel expenses were also higher than anticipated, as there were 2 staff members and 2 summer interns working on the project.

## **What Next? What will you do and what should others do?**

Even though this project is wrapped up, we will continue to use bee hotels as a way to draw attention to pollinator conservation. We have 10 medium and large bee hotels waiting to be installed and 40 kits waiting to be built by workshop participants in 2017. We have a supply of several of our brochures and booklets created during this project (bee identification brochure, pollinator brochure, kids activity booklet), and will distribute them at appropriate venues, information booths or to specific audiences over the next year or more. The webpages created for this project will remain on our website, and we will continue to monitor the bee hotels installed throughout the community to examine their success, with the help of the organization at which the hotel is located (e.g. individual community gardens). The pollinator garden created for this project will require maintenance, which we will continue to do in cooperation with the Edmonton Native Plant Group and Edmonton Community Foundation. The pollinator themed geocache, located at our Boisvert's GreenWoods Conservation Lands, will also remain at the site, drawing that audience to that audience and educating them on the message of pollinator and habitat conservation.

For more information about the project please contact:

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