

# Army Corps of Engineers Pollinator Activities

Under the President's Executive  
Memorandum for Pollinator Health

Jeff Krause

USACE

Institute for Water Resources

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US Army Corps of Engineers  
**BUILDING STRONG**



# Presidential Memorandum

- Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators dated June 20, 2014 directs agencies to develop plans to enhance pollinator habitat.
  - ▶ *As per Section 3. Increasing and Improving Pollinator Habitat, subsection k, the Army Corps of Engineers shall incorporate conservation practices for pollinator habitat improvement on the 12 million acres of lands and waters at resource development projects across the country, as appropriate.*



# Task Force Member Agencies

- Department of Agriculture (Chair)
- Environmental Protection Agency (Chair)
- Department of State
- Department of Defense
- US Army Corps of Engineers**
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Energy
- Department of Education
- Council on Environmental Quality
- Domestic Policy Council
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- General Services Administration
- National Science Foundation
- Smithsonian Institution
- Delta Regional Authority
- National Security Council Staff
- Office of Management and Budget
- Office of Science and Technology Policy



# Components of the National Strategy

- Goals for Honey Bees; Habitat; Monarchs
- Pollinator Research Action Plan
- Public Education Plan
- Best Management Practices for Federal Lands
- National Seed Strategy
- Agency Chapters



# Draft Goals

- Draft Habitat Goal: **Restore or enhance 7 million** acres of land for pollinators over the next 5 years through federal actions and public/private partnerships (3.5 million for Federal lands).
- Draft Honey Bee Goal: The National Pollinator Task Force is committed to a ten year goal of improving honey bee population health by reducing honey bee winter losses by 50% from current levels, to a sustainable 15% loss rate by 2025.
- Draft Monarch Goal: The Task Force's goal is to increase the eastern population of the Monarch butterfly through Federal actions and public-private partnerships to 300 million butterflies by 2020.



# Pollinator-Friendly Best Management Practices for Federal Lands

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# USACE Pollinator Improvement Plan

- The Corps will work with others to promote education, awareness and management practices that provide for improved bee and pollinator populations and habitat through the following PM Implementation Actions:
  - ▶ Identify existing policy and/or guidance, and modify for pollinator health.
  - ▶ Incorporate pollinator work within budget guidance and budget tools to identify pollinator specific packages.
  - ▶ Increase awareness and education through information distribution, interpretive programs and web-based resources.
  - ▶ Implement conservation and best management practices for pollinator health.



# Editors comments on Corps Plan Summary in the Strategy

## Army Corps of Engineers

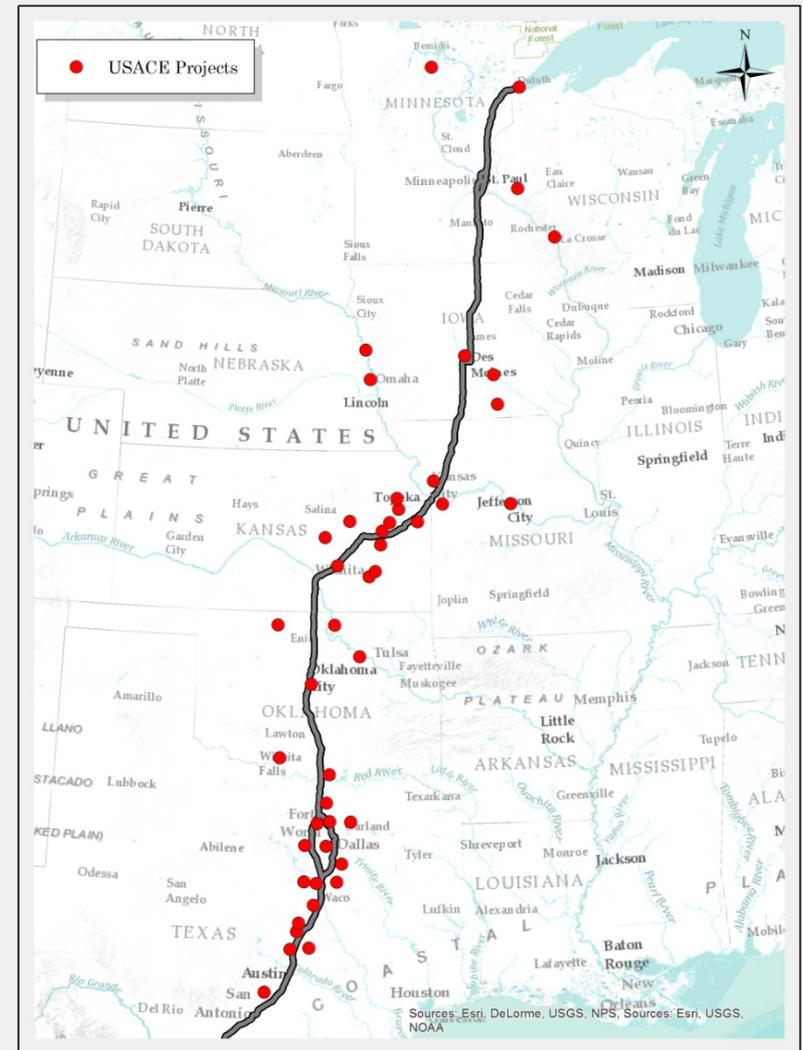
- Issued policy or similar guidance memo on Corps Pollinator Health in June 2014.
- Include internal pollinator web-based resources on the Corps Natural Resources Management Gateway.
- Incorporate pollinator management protocols into the draft ER 1130-2-540 by June 2015 for inclusion into final publication. .
- FY17 Budget identifiers established in ENS Business Line Budget Tool (ESBEST). Completed.
- Initial identification of partners through the Corps Partnership Advisory Committee by May 2015.
- Document by December 15, 2015 the number of pollinator gardens with displays to promote healthy pollinator habitat for visitor education at Corps facilities.
- Document by December 15, 2015, the pollinator managed acreage in Corps managed lands in priority regions.
- Inclusion of specific indicators to track work activities and accomplishments that target pollinator protections for the FY 17 budget development.]

- OMB - Addition of a acreage table (5 years) for each agency held as “internal”. 20,000 acres (0.5 percent of land base).



# Specific Efforts and Other Ideas

- I-35 Corridor Monarch Focus
  - ▶ 45 projects
  - ▶ 1.1 M total acres
  - ▶ Initial discussion with FWS/States



# Specific Efforts

- Ft. Worth District working on MOU on seed collection at Corps projects.
- Numerous milk weed plantings
- Prairie Restoration
- Numerous flower gardens
  - ▶ Excellent Handshake Submittals.



The Corps

## Environment

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### USACE partnering to protect pollinators

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Natural Resources Management Community of Practice*

Entering the visitor center at Rend Lake near Benton, Illinois, a visitor will notice a buzz in the air. The sounds come from a real life functioning honey bee hive that educates visitors on the importance of honey bees and pollinators.

Many people do not realize that commercial honey bees are responsible for one of every three bites of food we eat and annually contribute to the agricultural value of \$15 billion.

Native pollinators contribute to natural plant communities and other ecosystem functions. However, loss of habitat, improper use of insecticides and conditions such as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) have resulted in sharp reductions in honey bees and native pollinators during the past three decades.

The significance of this decline has not been lost by the current administration. In June 2014 President Barack Obama issued Presidential Memorandum, "Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators." As a federal land

management agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was specifically called out in the memorandum to "incorporate conservation practices for pollinator habitat improvement on the 12 million acres of lands and waters at resource development projects across the country, as appropriate."

More importantly the language invited the Corps of Engineers to participate in the White House Pollinator Task Force, which developed the April 2015 National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators, including agency specific pollinator plans and actions. Staff from Corps of Engineers Headquarters Natural Resources Management, the Institute for Water Resources and field representatives developed the Corps Pollinator Protection Plan to assist in the national

effort. This plan includes several initiatives to better track pollinator work on the ground, improve visibility of pollinator work packages in budget submittals, increase awareness and education of pollinators and utilize best management practices to improve pollinator health on Corps of Engineers lands.

Significant progress has already been made on several action items. On July 8, Mary Coulombe, chief of Natural Resources Management, announced a new Pollinator Website (<http://corpstakes.usace.army.mil/employees/pollinator/pollinator.ctm>) and identified the significant content

such as best management practices for federal agencies, the National Strategy and the Corps Pollinator Plan, which emphasize the role the Corps of Engineers can serve to protect and enhance pollinators.

Preliminary tracking data shows the Corps of Engineers maintains more than 293 flower gardens that benefit pollinators, manages more than 14,000 acres of habitat specifically for pollinator health and works with at least 21 different beekeepers managing 1,336 hives on Corps of Engineers property. Additionally, the data show the Corps of Engineers provided 154 interpretive pollinator programs in 2015, reaching nearly 7,000 contacts.

"The locations of Corps of Engineers lands and waters many times make them very important in the overall fabric of pollinator habitat," Coulombe said. "The undeveloped nature of many places are islands of habitat that are essential for breeding and migration. We take our responsibilities to protect and manage these lands very seriously."

One specific pollinator species that is gaining attention is the Monarch Butterfly, which the Corps of Engineers is well positioned to assist in the recovery of this iconic species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies and experts in the field have identified the Interstate 35 corridor, which extends from the Texas-Mexico border to Duluth, Minnesota, as a key pathway for Monarch migrations. Within 50 miles of this corridor, the Corps of Engineers manages 45 water resources projects and more than 1 million acres. On the southern end of the corridor the Fort Worth District personnel

*See Pollinator Plan, Page 20*



*A honey bee, with pollen attached to its hind leg, pollinating a watermelon flower. (Photo by Stephen Ausmus, U.S. Department of Agriculture)*



# Updating Regulations

- ER 1130-2-540

- ▶ Chapter 4 Pest and Invasive Species

- Non-target species and pollinators. The use of pesticides always presents a risk to other species that are not targeted for control or eradication. Pollinators including commercial honey bees, which are critically important to the natural community as well as the nation's food supply, have been in decline for more than a decade. Insecticides have been identified as a contributor to a decrease in pollinator health along with nutritional, habitat, disease and parasite stressors. The following best management practices may minimize impacts to pollinators and should be considered for all insecticide use including activities at outgrants, concessionaries and leases for agriculture and wildlife management:

- ▷ Unless necessary for treatment, do not treat flowering plants
- ▷ Spray early in the morning or late in the evening when bees are less active.
- ▷ Spray when temperatures are cooler when bees are less active.
- ▷ Select insecticides with less residual activity.
- ▷ Control drift, especially near flowering plants or hives.
- ▷ Inspect fields before spraying to determine pollinator foraging.
- ▷ Communicate with beekeepers on adjacent properties or when hives are maintained on Corps property.



# 2015 & 2016 Budget Work Packages

## Pollinators

Category	# of Packages	Capability	Package Focus
Pollinator Education	5	\$215,000	Packages include specific focus on pollinator interpretation and education.
Pollinator Gardens	7	\$183,000	Packages include a specific focus on developing or enhancing pollinator gardens.
Pollinator Plantings	50	\$1,579,000	Packages focus on pollinator plantings to include native seed, wildflowers, and milkweed.
Pollinator Habitat Maintenance	42	\$1,346,000	Packages focus on field/grassland/habitat plot maintenance which will support pollinator species and their habitat.
Habitat/Forest Management Which Support Pollinators	105	\$3,673,000	Packages include various habitat and forest management needs that will result in a benefit to pollinator species.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>\$6,996,000</b>	



# 2015 ES OMBIL Annual Update

## Pollinators

**NATIONAL POLLINATOR INITIATIVE**

Project Site: BARKLEY DAM AND LAKE BARKLEY  
Fiscal Year: 2015

Project Fee-Owned Area: 62526  
Total Area: 108963

	Previous Fiscal Year	Current Fiscal Year
Number of pollinator gardens at Corps Facilities		
Number of pollinator gardens with educational materials and signs		
Number of acres managed or maintained for pollinator specific habitat		
Number of acres improved or enhanced for pollinators during the fiscal year		
Number of acres restored to pollinator habitat during the fiscal year		
Number of acres of potential habitat that could be restored for pollinator specific habitat		
Number of beekeepers managing bees on Corps property		
Number of managed hives on Corps property		
Number of acres managed specifically for Monarch butterflies		
Number of interpretive programs during the fiscal year specifically for pollinators		
Number of contacts involved with interpretive pollinator programs during the fiscal year		

- Users have delete capabilities only during the current annual update period.
- Users should enter whole number values for all fields. No decimals should be allowed.
- The 'Previous Fiscal Year' fields are displayed but vacant as the FY2015 annual update period will be the first fiscal year using the form.



# 2015 ES OMBIL Annual Update

## Pollinators- Results

- Number of pollinator gardens at Corps Facilities 317
- Number of pollinator gardens with educational materials and signs 51
- Number of acres managed or maintained for pollinator specific habitat 16,301
- Number of acres improved or enhanced for pollinators during the fiscal year 4,234
  
- Number of acres restored to pollinator habitat during the fiscal year 896
- Number of acres of potential habitat that could be restored for pollinator specific habitat 99,678
- Number of beekeepers managing bees on Corps property 22
- Number of managed hives on Corps property 1,364
- Number of managed bees 6,571,200
- Number of acres managed specifically for Monarch Butterflies 292
- Number of interpretive programs during the fiscal year specifically for pollinators 174
- Number of contacts involved with interpretive pollinator programs during the fiscal year 9,818



# Summary

- Good process on actions related to National Strategy and Corps Plan
- Commitments are reasonable and not burdensome.
- Numerous opportunities for Partnerships and continued budget support.
  - ▶ Ties directly into the invasive species management on Corps lands.
  - ▶ Increases awareness of impacts to target species.

