

**Bee City USA**  
**2021 Goal #2: APRC Landscape Options for Promoting Pollinators**

**Workgroup Meeting July 14, 2021**

**Present:** Lorrie Kaplan, Libby VanWyhe, Leslie Eldridge.

**Scribe:** Lorrie Kaplan

Discussion has been formatted below as a draft proposed project plan.

**Next steps:** see highlighted Action items; comment on this draft; prepare for September 2021 Bee City Ashland Committee meeting, then share with APRC. Once APRC is informed of project scope, we could begin requesting information (plans, policies, classification systems, etc.)

---

I. **Goal**

Evaluate the opportunities for and barriers to converting lawns on APRC-owned and -managed lands to other landscape approaches to ensure support of pollinators ~~as well as provide recreational resources for Ashland residents.~~

APRC Suggested alternative: Provide options, consultation and feedback for converting lawns. Come up with a list of principles that could be applied for evaluation of lawn areas. This information could be passed along, once compiled, to the Parks Maintenance Subcommittee.

II. **Project Deliverable**

A report of findings with recommendations will be completed. The deadline for this deliverable will be determined based on how best to coincide with and inform APRC's adopted 2021-2023 goal to perform a system-wide master plan (See III.B below.)

III. **Background**

**A. Bee City Certification.**

In December 2014, the City of Ashland **adopted a resolution** to become the fifth Bee City USA in the country. An initiative of the [Xerces Society](#), Bee City certification is "a program that recognizes, supports, and encourages pollinator conservation in cities, towns, and counties." ... "Thinking globally and acting locally, Bee City USA provides a framework for communities to work together to conserve native pollinators by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides."

[Bee City program commitments include:](#)

1. **Habitat:** Develop and implement a program to create or expand pollinator-friendly habitat on public and private land, which includes, but is not limited to, *Identifying and inventorying the City's real property that can be enhanced with pollinator-friendly plantings*; creating a

recommended locally native plant list to include wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees and a list of local suppliers for those species; and, *tracking (by square footage and/or acreage) annual area of pollinator habitat created or enhanced.*

2. **Pollinator-Friendly Pest Management:** Create and adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) plan designed to prevent pest problems, reduce pesticide use, and expand the use of non-chemical pest management methods.
3. **Policy & Plans:** *Establish, through the City a policy in the City's Comprehensive Plan to acknowledge and commit to the BEE CITY USA designation and review the Plan and other relevant documents to consider improvements to pest management policies and practices as they relate to pollinator conservation, identify appropriate locations for pollinator-friendly plantings, and consider other appropriate measures.*

#### **B. [APRC 2021-2023 Biennium Goals](#)**

Ten goals for the 2021-2023 Biennium were officially adopted at the May 12, 2021 APRC Regular Business Meeting. Goal 10 is: *"Perform a system-wide master plan for Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to include the following sections, at least (sections may be completed together or independently):*

1. *Vision and goals*
2. *Bicycle and pedestrian circulation and access to park properties*
3. *Park system maintenance and improvements*
4. *Fleet evaluation recommendations*
5. *Design and maintenance guidelines*
6. *Review and update of all APRC policies"*

#### **C. [The Nature Center at North Mountain Park](#)**

In addition to Bee City, APRC staff at North Mountain Park have expertise on pollinators and pollinator habitats which can inform APRC policies related to ecological management of park-managed lands.. NMP's mission is to *protect and enhance the ecology* of North Mountain Park while promoting greater community *enjoyment, understanding* and *stewardship* of the local environment.

#### **D. [Impact of Climate Change on Pollinators](#)**

It should be noted that warmer local temperatures associated with climate change are likely to increase the stress on our pollinator populations, providing additional urgency to the need to ensure we are taking sufficient measures to support pollinators.

March 6, 2019 Xerces Society blog, "[Mitigating the Effects of Heat on Urban Pollinators](#)," By Angela Laws notes that:

*“Climate change will continue to bring higher temperatures and greater extremes in weather, as well as increases in the frequency and intensity of heat waves. Thanks to the urban heat island effect, these variations will be exacerbated in cities in ways that may spell trouble for bees. Increasing temperatures can affect bee performance by changing phenology (the timing of biological events such as the rate of development or the date of emergence), and reducing survival rates, body mass, fat storage, and reproduction—and can ultimately result in fewer bees. Research by April Hamblin and colleagues at North Carolina State University, for example, showed that bee abundance in the city of Raleigh declined 41 percent with every 1°C increase in temperature.”*

*“Notwithstanding the potential for the effects of climate change to be amplified in cities, urban habitats can also present unique opportunities. Several years ago, I came across Michael Rosenzweig’s book *Win-Win Ecology*, in which he points out that nature preserves alone are not sufficient to safeguard the Earth’s biodiversity and suggests that we should change the way we design human habitats so that those areas serve to protect biodiversity as much as possible. In other words, we have to get better at sharing spaces. Urban environments provide a perfect opportunity to put this idea into practice.”*

*“What actions can we take to help urban pollinator communities become more climate-resilient? The first is to create and preserve habitat. Enhancing and restoring habitat is crucial to protecting biodiversity because high-quality patches, particularly when connected, have many benefits for wildlife. Connections enable individual insects to move among populations, increasing genetic diversity and perhaps helping to rescue declining populations. These patches also provide habitat for species to move to and through as they shift their ranges in response to climate change. Finally, increasing habitat and connectivity can allow populations to grow, which is important because small populations are more likely to disappear than are large ones. You can create habitat by adding a pollinator garden to your yard or balcony. If you don’t have a yard, consider talking to local park managers about installing pollinator gardens. Many schools, churches, and businesses are also planting gardens on their properties, and you can offer them encouragement and support.”*

#### IV. Project Objectives and Strategies

- A. **Time this project to coincide optimally to inform APRC Goal 10.** (Leslie to monitor the process and timelines and who is doing what and when. How can Bee City Ashland and NMP engage with the process? Will there be public comment opportunities?)
- B. **Determine the optimal collaborative role between Bee City Ashland, North Mountain Park, and APRC.** How can we best contribute ecological expertise to APRC? (Strategy: [Conversations with staff leadership and Commissioners](#))
1. **Define key elements and principles of native pollinator habitat.** (Strategy: [Look at Xerces model policies, checklists, and guidelines. Industry-wide best practices](#) [[--source?](#)])

Commented [1]: Advise on

**2. Provide Relevant Case Studies.**

- a. Applicability of case studies will also be judged by: the size of the municipality, the acreage of land being managed, and the number of FTE assigned to maintenance per acre of land. Determine key characteristics for case studies to ensure applicability to Ashland. I.e., drought-tolerant; deer tolerant; fire-resistant; natives; heat tolerant. (Mediterranean climate). Ensure that key questions are included such as how much irrigation is being used? How many staff hours are needed for maintenance? Mediterranean climate.
- b. Share case studies.

**3. Lexicon Development.** Define key terms to develop a shared language. For example, "biodiversity"; "other landscape approaches;" maintenance levels. Define levels of ecological management required in various zones.

**4. Understand current parks property, policy, factors that drive landscape design, including cost parameters, and classification systems. Core resources include:**

- a. [IPM Policy](#)
- b. **Map of parks w/classifications.** Check out the property categorizations in the current [Parks, Trails, and Open Space plan](#). In addition to these overall "types" of parks, it would be great to have a system of describing and ranking the different levels of maintenance we could ascribe to each property. These could include A) left untouched/unmanaged B) only managed to the extent that we remove fuels and try to mitigate fire danger. C) Managed for aesthetics and human recreation. C) Managed for ecological diversity, wildlife corridors, plant community resilience and ecosystem services. (Lorrie to contact Rick Landt; Leslie to talk to Mike Oxendine re history)
- c. Other relevant policies, maps and plans.
- d. Staff discussions (Jason M.-- Libby)

**5. Develop preliminary recommendations to be considered for the APRC plan and future Bee City Ashland projects.**

**Commented [2]:** Perhaps irrigation needs / costs could be listed as an item considering the probability of an ongoing drought situation, with a decision point around use of water for some types of landscape plants.

---

**Other Resources:**

[How to Maximize Benefits to Pollinators in Cities and Towns](#). By Sara Morris and Sarah Foltz Jordan on 24 April 2020

Xerces Society: [Checklist of Actions to Promote Pollinators in Yards, Gardens & Parks](#),

Xerces Society: [Pollinators and Climate Change: Climate Smart Urban Habitat](#)