

Creating Habitat for Maine's Pollinators

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From: KLT Spring 2021 Newsletter

It's no secret that pollinators help maintain healthy habitats, lead to greater biodiversity, and increase crop yields. According to scientists, one out of every three bites of food we eat worldwide and over 75% of flowering species depend on pollinators. However, pollinator populations are decreasing due to habitat loss, disease, parasites, and other environmental contaminants. The pollinator species in Maine are no exception.



Rusty patched bumblebee via Creative Commons

One Maine example is the rusty patched bumblebee. It's the first bumblebee to be listed as federally endangered, and although it was once abundant in Maine, it hasn't been seen here for over a decade.

One way landowners can aid declining native pollinator populations is by protecting, enhancing, or providing new pollinator habitat. KLT will be implementing pollinator habitat enhancement projects at two of our Fayette properties, Surry Hill and the Baldwin Hill Conservation Cemetery. Partnering with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Xerces Society, and Ag Allies for Grassland Bird Habitat at Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District, we will manage fifteen acres of field near the summit of our 337-acre Surry Hill property in Fayette. Over the next few years we will work with these partners to establish desirable pollinator and grassland bird habitat.

One acre of the Surry Hill hilltop will be planted with a seed mix of native wildflowers and grasses recommended by the Xerces Society specifically for this region. This wildflower meadow will increase the diversity of pollinators in the area, enhance pollination services for crops, and provide habitat for other beneficial insects, with likely positive effects on monarch butterflies, declining bumble bee species, and potentially even the rusty patched bumble bee if the population recovers. We'll be creating a similar half-acre pollinator meadow with additional native shrubs on the hillside at our Baldwin Hill Conservation Cemetery in Fayette. The remainder of the field will be managed for early successional habitat. These projects will be taking place over the next few years.



Surry Hill fields

Norm Rodrigue

The rest of the field at Surry Hill will be managed as habitat for both pollinators and grassland birds like bobolinks, grassland sparrows, and meadowlarks. We will work to minimize the disturbance to the fields during the grassland bird breeding season and maintain a dense variety of grasses and wildflowers, limiting woody vegetation growth and mowing regularly.