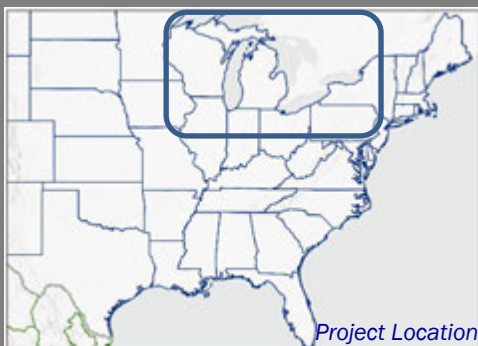


RESTORATION

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Pollinator Task Force



Pollinator populations in the Great Lakes Basin (GLB), and across the world, have been steadily declining. Threats to pollinators include parasites and pathogens, environmental contaminants, climate change, habitat loss/degradation, and invasive species. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding, through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), led to the creation of the Pollinator Task Force (PTF), an interagency collaborative that is led by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The PTF's mission is to "catalyze native bee conservation by coordinating funding actions that efficiently maximize native bee abundance, distribution, diversity, and resilience within the GLB." The PTF supports efforts that increase the acres of on-the-ground pollinator-specific habitat by funding projects, and by conducting surveys and research focused on native bees and their habitats in the GLB.



BUREAU OF
RECLAMATION



Native Habitat Restored Through GLRI PTF Initiatives/Gib King/FWS

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

Previously, conservation of native bees was not coordinated among the many conservation organizations in the GLB. This contributed to the lack of knowledge about native bee communities in the GLB and impeded efforts to enhance their populations. Without improved coordination and knowledge, actions such as determining priority areas for restoration across this vast area will remain inefficient.

The success of native bee and pollinator conservation depends upon broad support from the public and regional decision makers. Effective communication and public education are crucial factors in garnering public support to address the issues facing native bees and other pollinators within the GLB.

PROJECT GOALS

- Determine distribution, status of, and key threats to native bee species and habitats
- Identify and prioritize activities and focus areas for on-the-ground conservation of native bees and their habitats
- Implement habitat enhancement, restoration and protection; conserve or enhance existing habitats
- Educate the public and regional decision makers about the importance of native bees

RARE BEE DISCOVERY

During a GLRI Pollinator Task Force coordinated and funded survey, the Forest Service found a rare cuckoo bee (*Epeoloides pilosulus*), which had not been seen in Wisconsin since 1910!



Native Bee on Fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*)/Maria Salem/FWS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Finding Common Ground: Structured Decision Making Workshop (SDMW) yielded program effectiveness criteria and measurable objectives for funding and evaluating projects.

Pinpointing Knowledge Gaps: By consolidating information from a variety of sources the PTF was able to pinpoint knowledge gaps about native bees.

Standardized Surveys: The PTF is developing a standardized survey methodology that can be used across the GLB region by various agencies and organizations that participate in the PTF. The data gathered could be pooled with data from methodologies used by other partners.

Priority Focus Areas: Coordination among PTF agencies resulted in the establishment of priority focus areas for native bee habitat restoration across the GLB based on best available data and will be updated as better data becomes available.

Acres Restored: Partners completed over 100 acres of pollinator habitat restoration, with Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, private landowners and other partners.

Collaborators

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- See online for full list of collaborators

CCAST Author: Ariel Léger, CCAST Research Specialist, University of Arizona, June 2021. For more information on CCAST, contact Genevieve Johnson (gjohnson@usbr.gov) or Matt Grabau (matthew_grabau@fws.gov).

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LESSONS LEARNED

The Structured Decision Making Workshops allowed for an effective, equitable, and transparent process for enacting the PTF's strategy. This created group buy-in, ensured the concerns and needs of all participants were being met, and yielded key insights about communication and coordination among all partners.

Effective outreach is crucial, requiring persistence and the use of diverse communication channels. The PTF's outreach strategy was deployed in phases through existing partnership networks to reach new partners from federal, state, and local organizations. A dedicated FWS tribal liaison has helped identify appropriate communication channels and improve communication with tribal partners.

Dedicating resources to develop a communication strategy early on and regularly revising the communication strategy can help overcome communication challenges. Quarterly reports have helped increase internal communication and agency websites have provided some assistance with external communication. Despite these efforts, more external and internal communication and promotion is needed.

NEXT STEPS

- Expand communication strategy to reach more partners
- Expand bee surveys and refine survey objectives and protocols
- Implement >1800 acres of habitat restoration over the next three years

For more information on this project, contact Meredith Holm:

meredith_holm@fws.gov



Members of the Pollinator Task Force/Meredith Holm/FWS