



# Pollinators at Risk

## March 2014 Snapshots

Larger wildlife species such as moose, wolves, deer and ducks have historically received much attention in conservation - but recently bees and other pollinators have been taking center stage. Conservation professionals, and many others, have become very aware of declining bee populations (as well as butterflies and aquatic insects) and are concerned due to the important role they play in pollinating crops and sustaining the integrity of native plant communities. Some experts are expressing concerns that these population declines may be an indicator of larger scale changes in landscape health due to habitat loss and pesticide use. Recent legislation has helped pull



In addition to introduced honey bees, declining native bee populations are raising concerns

- Continued establishment of diverse plantings
- Promoting floral rich areas of a few acres in size
- Carefully locating pollinator plantings where they will not be impacted by pesticides
- Planting flower groupings to aid navigation to pollen sources
- Using and promoting maintenance methods that sustain plant diversity

Unfortunately, there is still much we don't know about the complex factors affecting bees and other pollinators, but the coordinated efforts underway are creating a strong foundation for halting their decline, and restoring habitat that can help pollinator populations recover.

together a wide range of stakeholders and has led to an interagency report published by MDA on pollinators. DNR has also developed "Pollinator Habitat Guidelines" and BWSR has developed a "BWSR Pollinator Report" as well as a range of technical resources to guide the planting of projects to maximize benefits to pollinators.

Pollinators are at risk due to a number of factors including habitat loss, pesticides, poor nutrition, and disease. Neonicotinoid insecticides have been linked to bee deaths and are receiving significant attention regarding their effect on ecosystem health. As a result, MDA is conducting a special review of these insecticides and research studies are investigating their effects on the environment. While researchers work to better understand the reasons for pollinator decline, there are several actions BWSR will be focusing on for our programs and native vegetation guidance including:



Floral rich plantings such as this BWSR Wetland Bank project can benefit a wide range of pollinators