

Lanark County earns nod for efforts to support pollinators

Efforts by Lanark County to move elements of its Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Program forward have earned it an honourable mention for a 2018 Pollinator Advocate Award.

“We are thrilled that the county was nominated by the Canadian Wildlife Federation for the 2018 Pollinator Advocate Award presented by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign and the Pollinator Partnership,” explained Councillor Brian Campbell (Tay Valley Deputy Reeve), who chairs the county’s public works committee. “Lanark County received an honourable mention for demonstrating great efforts to support pollinators in the community.”

The IVM program includes several initiatives that benefit native pollinators, such as a public awareness campaign, alien invasive plant control, an Adopt-A-Road Program, the creation of pollinator habitat patches, developing a native seed mix for seeding disturbed roadside areas, and testing the effectiveness of monarch habitat restoration on roadsides.

The enhanced Adopt-A-Road Program aims to restore pollinator-friendly habitat. Participants spot and report invasive plants and noxious weeds, such as wild parsnip and phragmites, which helps to effectively control infestations and restore native habitats. Once infestations are removed, participants can choose to take part in road allowance rehabilitation by planting.

“Adopt-A-Road participants and volunteers are a great addition to the county’s IVM plan as they provide more resources to help us remove invasive species and plant, water and monitor pollinator patches,” explained Janet Tysick, public works business manager.

In 2018, the county allocated additional staff resources toward digging and mowing in many areas of county road allowances. They followed up by clipping and disposing of any flower heads to prevent wild parsnip from reseeding those sections. This supplemented the roadside spraying program and resulted in areas with very light to no wild parsnip, where infestations had been previously high.

In 2017, the county created “pollinator patches” in accessible locations to determine which plants were most successful for future planting. Plants were chosen based on the pollinators they attract and their bloom times, so that habitat for butterflies, bees, flies, wasps and hummingbirds is available from April to October.

“We purchased and planted more than 400 pollinator-friendly plants in 2017, and in 2018 added more than 500 to the roadside to try to reduce wild parsnip infestation and increase pollinator habitat,” explained Michelle Vala, vegetation management intern. “Staff identified key areas where wild parsnip had been reduced to minimal numbers and planted large patches with native plants. In the last two years, we’ve also provided pollinator-friendly plants to volunteers keen to help reduce re-infestation and provide new pollinator habitat.”

Following construction projects, seed and mulch (hydro-seeding) is applied to bare, disturbed areas.

In conjunction with vegetation experts, the county developed an improved, customized mix that includes 12 pollinator-supportive plants, including common milkweed, black-eyed Susan, wild bergamot, blue vervain, bonset, four aster species and three goldenrod species. "The goal is to continuously reseed those disturbed areas to improve pollinator habitat across the county," Ms. Vala said.

The county has also developed a seed mix without mulch to apply to test sections of roadside. This overseeding trial includes showy wildflowers that are naturally established in the road allowance and is based on their attractiveness to pollinators. "This provides the potential for seeding large areas with more pollinator-friendly plants in a cost-effective manner," Ms. Tysick said.

To further efforts related to the IVM program, the county will soon be engaging in a new program with the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF). Details to follow soon.

"All of these efforts demonstrate Lanark County's ongoing commitment towards the environment," said Warden John Fenik (Perth Mayor). "The integrated vegetation management program is a multi-year, multi-faceted plan, and we are starting to make great strides."

If you would like more information about Lanark County's IVM Plan, please visit the county's website at <http://www.lanarkcounty.ca/Page1875.aspx> or call 613-267-1353.

– 30 –

For more information, contact:

Michelle Vala
Vegetation Management Intern
Public Works, Lanark County
mvala@lanarkcounty.ca

Janet Tysick
Business Manager
Public Works, Lanark County
jtysick@lanarkcounty.ca

Photos available at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ljd43gs72q3q26w/AABCdT2suxkJCf1ECO_mj1rpa?dl=0

Photo cutlines:

Pollinator Honourable Mention: Vegetation Management Intern Michelle Vala (left) and Public Works Business Manager Janet Tysick (right) are congratulated by Lanark County Councillor Brian Campbell, who chairs the public works committee, for their efforts with the county's integrated vegetation management program that led to an honourable mention for the 2018 Pollinator Advocate Award. The county was nominated by the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the award is presented by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign and the Pollinator Partnership.

CR6 North Patch Pearly Everlasting and New England Aster: An example of work done on a county road allowance to encourage native wildflower growth with pearly everlasting (left) and New England aster.

LLP Dense Blazing Star-Bee: An example of one of the native plants, dense blazing star, used in one of the pollinator patches.

PWP Black Eyed Susan-Butterfly: Black-eyed Susans are a common wildflower that are popular with various pollinators.