

Conservation of Native Pollinators on Golf Courses

Melody Allen
Xerces Society

Objectives:

1. To increase insect pollinator populations including native bees, wasps, moths, flies, and butterflies to offset the effects of habitat fragmentation.
2. To augment the species composition of native plants in the out-of-play areas to produce continuous flowering throughout the growing season..

Start Date: 1997

Project Duration: 3 years

Total Funding: \$136,500

The Conservation of Native Pollinators on Golf Courses project was begun in the summer of 1997. The aim of this project was to identify how to enrich insect pollinator populations and their habitat in out-of-play areas of golf courses.

The project was an outgrowth of the Forgotten Pollinators Campaign, a national conservation effort focused on native pollinators. The project was run by Xerces Society staff in partnership with scientists from the USDA Bee Biology and Systematics Laboratory in Logan, Utah.

The aim of the project is to foster and increase insect pollinator populations including native bees, wasps, moths, flies, and butterflies to offset the effects of habitat fragmentation, and to augment the species composition of native plants in the out-of-play areas to produce continuous flowering throughout the growing season.



The Xerces Society was supported to conduct studies on attracting native pollinators to golf course properties.



Native pollinators are in decline due to loss of natural habitat. Nesting boxes are one method to help populations rebound.

The project has three main components: (1) survey of insects and plants, (2) enrichment of habitat areas with foraging plants and nesting sites, and (3) information about pollinators and their management.

Project work was based in the Columbia Basin, east of the Cascade Mountains in northern Oregon and southern Washington. The major portion of the fieldwork was done on three golf courses. The three golf courses were Wildhorse Golf Course in Mission, OR, Veterans Memorial Golf Course in Walla Walla, WA, and Horn Rapids Golf Course in Richland, WA.

Close to each of these golf courses, a reference site was established that provided an area of natural vegetation in which pollinator populations could be compared with those on the courses. These sites also were used as donor sites, from which bees were transferred to enrich the golf course populations.

The cooperation, hard work, and good will of all the superintendents and their staff, and of the owners and managers of the reference sites (Mr. Jerry Baker, US Army Corps of Engineers, and US Fish and Wildlife Service), contributed greatly to the project. The work done during this project has engendered considerable interest within the golf profession, and there is a growing level of involvement by other courses. We have provided information for courses in Colorado and California, including Pebble Beach, and have been invited to help directly with pollinator conservation on a course at Fallbrook in southern California.

Summary Points

- The major portion of the fieldwork was done on three golf courses. The three golf courses were Wildhorse Golf Course in Mission, OR, Veterans Memorial Golf Course in Walla Walla, WA, and Horn Rapids Golf Course in Richland, WA.
- Golf courses are being compared with nearby reference sites for their ability to support natural pollinators.