

Sand County Foundation Conservation Brief

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Inspire future agriculture leaders with Pollinator Habitat Grants for schools



Sand County Foundation's school grants and curriculum guide encourage high school teachers to introduce students to conservation through hands-on native habitat plantings for insect pollinators on rural lands.

Pollinators are essential for crop pollination and ecological diversity, but the numbers of wild bees, honeybees and monarch butterflies have dropped in recent years, partly because of the loss of native wildflower habitat near farmland. By providing teachers with resources for classroom and in-field educational activities, Sand County Foundation is creating conservation opportunities that appeal to rural and urban students.

Pollinator Habitat Grants: Through our competitive Pollinator Habitat Grant Program, agriculture and science teachers apply for grants and partner with local landowners to create or enhance habitat for pollinators and monarch butterflies. Selected schools receive native wildflower seed and seedlings, a training webinar and consultation, and a \$1,000 grant for the school district or FFA chapter to offset project expenses.

To qualify for a grant, the school needs access to a greenhouse or suitable indoor growing areas to raise approximately 600 seedlings of native forb species appropriate for their location such as meadow blazing star, smooth blue aster, and whorled milkweed. Applicants must identify a rural area (preferably a farm) where they will create or enhance pollinator habitat in the spring. Students participate in raising native plants in the greenhouse, seeding and transplanting on the partnering property, and managing and monitoring the planting site through the summer and fall.

Since launching the grant program in the fall of 2017, we have awarded grants to 65 high schools across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, engaging more than 50 teachers and 4,000 students to plant over 39,000 wildflower plugs in rural areas.



Pollinator Curriculum Guide: To further support educators and students, we partnered with the University of Wisconsin's Earth Partnership to publish a Pollinator Habitat Curriculum Guide. This free guide provides middle and high school educators with activities that engage students in planning, establishing, managing and monitoring prairie habitat for insect pollinators and grassland birds.



In the first few months this guide was available it was downloaded by more than 400 educators across the Midwest and beyond. All activities are aligned with Common Core and Next Generation Science standards, as well as

state agriculture, food, and natural resources standards.

We also deliver workshops that build teachers' ability to use the curriculum guide activities effectively in the field and classroom. We have reached more than 90 instructors at agriculture educator conferences in Minnesota and Wisconsin.



Become a sponsor to help us bring this successful program to new states!

To learn more please contact:

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For more information visit:

Sand County Foundation

www.sandcountyfoundation.org/schoolgrants

Earth Partnership

<https://earthpartnership.wisc.edu/curriculum/>

Project partners and sponsors:



Sand County Foundation inspires and empowers a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support agriculture and forestry, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation. www.sandcountyfoundation.org