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Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

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Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area Pollinator Resolution

Through partnerships and outreach, the AFNHA seeks to establish a network of existing and new pollinator habitats in order to support populations of pollinator species throughout the Appalachian forest region.

Due to the severity of declines in pollinator species abundance, it is critical to expand efforts and take new steps to reverse local pollinator losses, restore populations, and improve habitats. This is particularly important in the Appalachian forest region in part because of the following:

- Due to a lack of historical data on the abundance of pollinator species in the Appalachian Forest region, there are many species that may be in decline that scientists and researchers are unaware of. This is especially concerning because the unique topography and high number of ecotypes in the Appalachian Forest region mean that there is likely a high diversity of pollinator species in the area, many of which are undocumented.
- The rusty patched bumble bee, an endangered species, is currently only found in two states east of Illinois: West Virginia and Virginia. Scientists don't know the full extent of their habitat in West Virginia, making the region potentially very important for this species conservation;
- Degradation and fragmentation of habitat, complete loss of habitat, and pesticide use threaten pollinators and in turn native ecosystems;
- Monarch butterfly populations declined to the lowest recorded level in 2013-14, and there is an imminent risk of failed migration;

Given the importance of Appalachian forest habitat for pollinators, we resolve that it is our goal to collaboratively and strategically protect and enhance pollinators and their habitats on public and private lands throughout the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area by:

- Increasing and Improving Pollinator Habitat: This will be accomplished by providing resources and support for individuals and organizations that want to assist with developing a nectar corridor for migratory and non-migratory pollinator species on public and private lands utilizing native and appropriate flora;
- Facilitate Partnerships: Develop strategic partnerships to improve or create habitat for pollinators as well as provide educational opportunities;
- Promote Conservation: Encourage voluntary, collaborative and locally-led conservation efforts that have proven to be effective in maintaining and enhancing pollinator-supportive landscapes; these may include but are not limited to planting pollinator gardens, building bee blocks, eco-restoration or protection of natural areas, and avoiding or limiting pesticide use;
- Expand Pollinator Education: Provide educational opportunities (through both governmental and non-governmental parties) to those interested in enhancing pollinators and pollinator habitat opportunities, and raise public awareness and interest about pollinators and their key role within ecosystems;
- Produce Research: Develop and/or promote citizen science opportunities for tracking key populations of pollinator species and habitat;

We, the undersigned partner organizations within the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area, recognize the critical importance of restoring and maintaining pollinator habitat on public and private lands. In order to enhance pollinator habitat and increase pollinator health and viability in our area, we pledge to support pollinators by encouraging conservation projects and spreading awareness of these important organisms throughout the AFNHA.

Town of Cowan, WV

Appalachian Forest Discovery Center

Beverly Heritage Center

City of Elkins, WV

Green Forest Works

Appalachian Headwaters

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service