



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Improving Habitat for
Pollinators

Date: March 25, 2016

From: 
Gregory G. Nadeau
Administrator

In Reply Refer To:
HEPE

To: Directors of Field Services
Directors of Federal Lands Divisions
Director of Technical Services
Division Administrators

Thank you for your contributions to advancing regional and in-State efforts focused on expanding and improving pollinator habitat on transportation assets across the Nation. Your efforts have been critical in assisting the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in promoting pollinator-friendly practices and corridors. As directed in the White House Presidential Memorandum (PM) titled, "Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators," we have made strides in advancing this effort through the great work that happens with our State departments of transportation (SDOT) and transportation associations.

In December 2015, we had the opportunity to see some of the successes of this work when leaders from many States participated in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and U.S. Department of Transportation's "Transportation Leaders' Summit: Restoring the Nation's Pollinator Habitat." This event demonstrated the strides that we have made with restoring and improving pollinator habitat while also identifying opportunities to continue to advance efforts in this area. The event highlighted the wonderful work that is occurring across the Nation to improve habitat for pollinators including honey bees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies. Pollinators are critical contributors to our Nation's economy, food system, and environmental health, and with your continued support, the Nation will significantly benefit from the individual contributions that SDOTs and transportation associations make.

On December 4, 2015, the President signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. 114-94). The FAST Act includes new emphasis on efforts to support pollinators. Specifically, section 1415 of the FAST Act amends 23 U.S.C. 319 and directs FHWA, when carrying out any program under title 23, United States Code, to encourage:

- 1) Integrated vegetation management practices on roadsides and other transportation rights-of-way, including reduced mowing; and
- 2) The development of habitat and forage for Monarch butterflies, other native pollinators, and honey bees through plantings of native forbs (e.g., flowering plants) and grasses, including noninvasive, native milkweed species that can serve as migratory way stations for butterflies and facilitate migrations of other pollinators.

Section 1415 of the FAST Act also amends 23 U.S.C. 329(a)(1) and affirms that activities to establish and improve pollinator habitat, forage, and migratory way stations may be eligible for Federal funding if related to transportation projects funded under title 23, United States Code.

As we continue making progress in this area, FHWA has created a Web site (https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/ecosystems/vegmgmt_pollinators.asp) focused on providing a number of resources to assist SDOTs, transportation agencies, and roadside managers. We are excited to announce the availability of our latest FHWA publication titled, "Pollinators and Roadsides: Best Management Practices for Managers and Decision Makers." This document outlines best management practices for managing roadside vegetation to reduce harm to pollinators. Future publications will include a field practitioners' handbook, webinar recording, and other resources. I request that you share these resources with your State partners, and I strongly encourage you to work with them to advance these areas and to promote the great work that is ongoing.

Thank you again for your effort with this initiative. If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Ms. Deirdre Remley, Environmental Specialist, at (202) 366-0524 (deirdre.remley@dot.gov), of the Office of Project Development and Environmental Review.