



POLLINATOR PROUD PROJECTS: Wetland Mitigation



Janet Johnson Wetland Bank



PARTNERS: BWSR, Chisago County, Mn/DOT, DNR, Chisago SWCD,

PROJECT SITE: The Janet Johnson project is a 430 acre wet meadow restoration

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE: The project site was originally a tamarack wetland, and was converted to agricultural uses during the 1930s and 40s. Restoration work for the Janet Johnson Wetland Bank project began in 2006. Restoration involved filling drainage ditches, blocking tile, rerouting some upland tile flow to the natural outlet, and seeding with wetland and upland seed mixes. The project was developed by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources through the state Wetland Banking Program. As the project is surrounded by natural landscapes and is part of a large habitat complex of wetlands and forest it is buffered from pesticides and other disturbances and provides good foraging, clean water sources and nesting sites for bees and other pollinators.

The site was in agricultural production but still contained diverse native seedbank in some areas; less diverse seed mixes were used in these areas to allow the seedbank to establish. Highly diverse mixes were used in other areas where the seedbank had been depleted from agriculture. The seed mixes had a high diversity of forbs including culver's root, sneezeweed, blue lobelia, asters, giant goldenrod, saw-tooth sunflower, grass-leaved goldenrod and mountain mint being some of the most successful flowers that provide pollinator habitat.

The seedbed was prepared by light disking following agricultural production. The soil was then allowed to settle for about a week prior to broadcast seeding of the grasses, sedges, rushes and forbs on the soil surface in late October. The site was maintained through spot mowing the first two years and spot herbicide treatment of weed species such as reed canary grass through the first five years. Prescribed burning will also be part of site maintenance in the future.

WHAT WORKED: We've found that wet meadow restorations can provide high quality pollinator habitat, as there was a high density of bees at the site (and other similar sites) in the summer months. Wet meadow restoration projects seem to effectively promote pollinators since they are often part of larger protected landscapes and tend to have a high

percentage of forbs. The broadcast seeding of forbs was an important step to help ensure that the forb seed was not buried too deep at the site, and fall seeding allowed the forbs to be stratified over winter and have a high germination rate. Spot herbicide treatment of reed canary grass was an important step as part of project maintenance to ensure that the species did not overtake areas of high forb diversity.

Written by: Dan Shaw