**** **ASSESSING & PRIORITIZING PROJECT SITES**

**Urban Pollinator & Ecological Health Assessment**

**This calculator is intended to provide a rough estimation of habitat value standards**

1. **SIZE OF PLANTED AREA PROVIDING HABITAT**

**<1 acres 5 points**

**.11 - .29 acres 10 points**

**.3 - .5 acres 15 points**

**> .5 acres 20 points Total Points**

1. **HABITAT TYPE (check all that apply)**

**Prairie/Grassland/Filter Strip 3 points**

**Wetland/Swales/Biofiltration 3 points**

**Lake/River/Emergent Vegetation 3 points**

**Savanna/Woodland 3 points**

**Deciduous/Coniferous Forest 3 points Total Points**

1. **NATIVE COVER DIVERSITY (# of plant species)**

**1-10 species 2 points**

**11-29 species 5 points**

**20-39 species 10 points**

**>40 species 15 points Total Points**

1. **SEASONS WITH 3 BLOMING SPECIES PRESENT**

**1 seasons 4 points**

**2 seasons 8 points**

**3 seasons 12 points Total Points**

1. **HABITAT CONNECTIONS**

**Isolated project 5 points**

**Connected to other habitat 15 points**

**Part of a habitat complex/corridor 20 points Total Points**

**BWSR** [**pollinator toolbox**](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/pollinator-toolbox) **about bloom season**

1. **AVAILABL HABITAT COMPONENTS (check all that apply)**

**Trees and shrubs for nesting 5 points**

**Installed habitat structures such as bee boxes 5 points**

**At least .5% milkweed species cover 5 points Total Points**

1. **PESTICIDE RISK (% of project perimeter adjacent to pesticide use)**

**1-25% -4 points**

**26-25% -8 points**

**51-75% -12 points**

**76-100% -16 points Total Points**

1. **PERCENT COVER OF NATIVE VEGETATION IN PLANTED AREAS**

**60-69% 5 points**

**70-79% 10 points**

**80-100% 15 points Total Points**

1. **FREQUENCY OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TO MAINTAIN PALNT DIVERSITY**

**2 times per year 5 points**

**2 times per year 10 points**

**3 or more times per year 15 points Total Points**

**Exceptional Quality Habitat 86-100 Grand Total**

**High Quality Habitat 71-85**

**Medium Quality Habitat 50-70 Project Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Low Quality Habitat 0-49 Evaluation Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**See notes related to the questions on the back side of this form**

** ASSESSING & PRIORITIZING PROJECT SITES**

**Rural Pollinator & Ecological Health Assessment**

**This calculator is intended to provide a rough estimation of habitat value standards**

1. **SIZE OF PLANTED AREA PROVIDING HABITAT**

**1-10 acres 5 points**

**11-40 acres 10 points**

**41-79 acres 15 points**

**>80 acres 20 points Total Points**

1. **HABITAT TYPE (check all that apply)**

**Prairie/Grassland 3 points**

**Wetland 3 points**

**Lake/River 3 points**

**Savanna/Woodland 3 points**

**Deciduous/Coniferous Forest 3 points Total Points**

1. **NATIVE COVER DIVERSITY (# of plant species)**

**1-10 species 1 points**

**11-29 species 3 points**

**20-39 species 7 points**

**>40 species 10 points Total Points**

1. **SEASONS WITH 3 BLOMING SPECIES PRESENT**

**1 seasons 3 points**

**2 seasons 7 points**

**3 seasons 10 points Total Points**

1. **HABITAT CONNECTIONS**

**Isolated project 5 points**

**Connected to other habitat 15 points**

**Part of a habitat complex/corridor 20 points Total Points**

**BWSR** [**pollinator toolbox**](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/pollinator-toolbox) **about bloom season**

1. **AVAILABLE HABITAT COMPONENTS (check all that apply)**

**Exposed Soil for Nesting 5 points**

**Plants with hollow stems for nesting 5 points**

**At least .5% milkweed species cover 5 points Total Points**

1. **PESTICIDE RISK (% of project perimeter adjacent to pesticide use)**

**1-25% -4 points**

**26-25% -8 points**

**51-75% -12 points**

**76-100% -16 points Total Points**

1. **PERCENT COVER OF NATIVE VEGETATION IN PLANTED AREAS**

**60-69% 5 points**

**70-79% 10 points**

**80-100% 15 points Total Points**

1. **FREQUENCY OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TO MAINTAIN PLANT DIVERSITY**

**2 times per year 5 points**

**2 times per year 10 points**

**3 or more times per year 15 points Total Points**

**Exceptional Quality Habitat 86-100 Grand Total**

**High Quality Habitat 71-85**

**Medium Quality Habitat 50-70 Project Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Low Quality Habitat 0-49 Evaluation Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**See notes related to the questions on the back side of this form**

***Notes for both the urban and rural assessment forms:***

***Question 1* –** *The size of habitat plays and important role in supporting a wide range of wildlife species in both urban and rural landscapes. For question one the assessment should be based on the areas of the site dominated by native vegetation.*

***Question 2****- Having different types of habitat at a site can support a wider range of insects and other wildlife species. When assessing urban pollinator habitat individual types of habitat can be relatively small and still provide unique benefits. Reviewers will need to decide when a portion of a site should be counted as a unique habitat and in most cases an area should be at least one acre in size to be counted as a separate habitat in rural areas but could be smaller in urban areas.*

***Question 3****- Plant diversity adds to wildlife benefits as well as the resiliency of projects. For this question native species that establish at the site can be included for the total.*

***Question 4****- For assessing seasons with three blooming species see BWSR’s* [*Pollinator Toolbox*](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/pollinator-toolbox) *for a listing of bloom seasons for species. Non-native species that provide pollinator benefits can be included in the total. Non-native clovers can be counted as either spring or summer species but not both.*

***Question 5****- For question five a project is considered “isolated” when it does not have a direct connection to another project or to a naturalized area that provide pollinator forage or nesting benfits. A project would be considered “connected to other habitat” when it is planted directly adjacent to another habitat planting or to a naturalized area. A site would be considered part of a habitat complex or corridor when it is part of an existing area or added onto a complex or corridor. A habitat complex is defined as an area with native plant communities at least 40 acres in size. The following website provides information about the value of habitat corridors:* <https://conservationcorridor.org/the-science-of-corridors/>

***Question 6****- The planting of native bunch forming prairie grasses, as well as native flowering shrubs is promoted as part of projects to increase nesting opportunities for native bees. Some native bees nest in bare soil between plants or in the stems of native plants. It is important that planted bunch grasses are not mowed lower than four inches as part of maintenance activities to prevent damaging the plants. Estimates of milkweed percent cover should be based on milkweed present across the entire site.*

***Question 7****- It is important that seeds treated with insecticides are not used at project sites, or that sites are not sprayed with insecticides. For question seven the area surrounding the site where pesticides which include herbicides (such as for lawn maintenance or insecticides are used should be estimates. These areas could be lawns that are treated with chemicals or agricultural production areas.*

***Question 8****- For question eight the percent cover of native vegetation in planted areas should be estimated.* Estimates of percent “cover” should be based on “absolute cover” (the percent of the ground surface that is covered by a vertical projection of foliage as viewed from above). When the cover of individual species are totaled they can cover more than 100 percent.

***Question 9*** *Yearly monitoring of projects is important to identify any weed management needs and steps that can be taken to promote plant diversity. A variety of management methods can be used at sites to promote diversity including spot mowing, spot herbicide application, conservation grazing and hand weeding. It is important that flowing native plants are not mowed and that mowing is only done as needed when it will not have an impact on native plant diversity. In most cases, management activities should be conducted at least twice a year.*