

# Bee City USA - Rapid City

Report on 2021

## Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

At least two pollinator habitats were created in 2021. A demonstration plot was created at City Hall, next to a public sidewalk. The Rapid City Sustainability Committee led this effort by coordinating with staff and the Mayor to secure the planting location, ensuring irrigation was functional, planting, and maintaining it throughout the summer. The species planted were aimed specifically to benefit Monarchs in conjunction with our participation in the NWF's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, but the garden most certainly benefits native pollinators as well. This plot included zinnias, basil, oregano, dill, catnip, verbena, calendula, gayfeather, purple coneflower, Dalea purpurea (Purple Prairie Clover), Solidago, bee balm, Black-eyed Susan, blue aster, Russian sage, butterfly milkweed, yarrow, beardtongue, and veronica. A second pollinator garden was planted at the main entrance of Central High School by their Environmental Club. The students had help from the Sustainability Committee as well as the Parks Division whose staff delivered better topsoil to replace the poor clayey soil that was there. A third pollinator habitat was enhanced in 2021. The Rapid City Garden Club added to their 25' x 45' pollinator garden behind the Canyon Lake Activity Center which had just been planted the year prior. Their members were in charge of this effort.



Pollinator demonstration plot planted outside City Hall in 2021



Students from Central High School's Environmental Club plant their pollinator garden



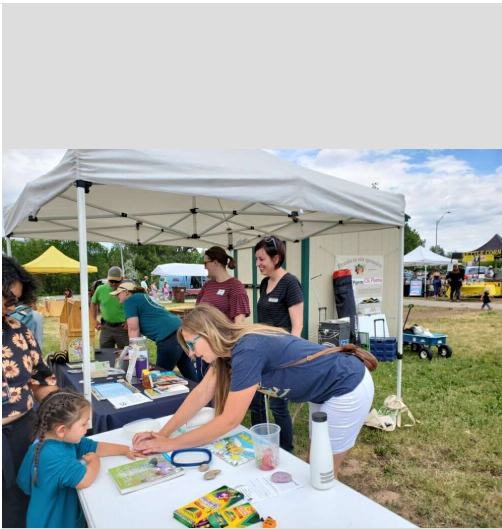
A Bee City USA street sign has been mounted at the perimeter of Rapid City's largest park. Rapid City's iconic Dinosaur Park is visible in the distance.

## Education & Outreach

Our main pollinator event was held during the celebration of Pollinator Week. On June 26, 2021, our committee hosted a pollinator education booth at the Black Hills Farmers Market. The booth featured an observation hive populated by a local beekeeper, a prize giveaway for those who stopped to talk with us, free packets of pollinator habitat and forage seeds, kids'



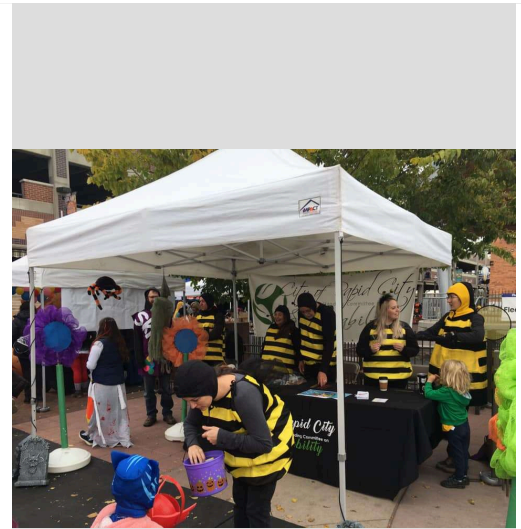
activities like pollinator-themed coloring sheets, rocks for painting, and temporary tattoos, and information on native plant species and the importance of pollinators. We saw really good turnout thanks to nice weather. We were encouraged to find many others in the community were interested in learning more and some who were aware and passionate about this issue already. Contact information was collected for those interested in participating in future listening sessions/meetings, volunteering on pollinator habitat projects, or otherwise being involved in future advocacy efforts. Also during Pollinator Week, the Rapid City Garden Club held a couple of events that were open to the public. They invited a touring Master Gardener to hold a talk on raised bed gardening at the local senior center. Later in the week, the club held an outdoor gathering at the Canyon Lake Park Butterfly Garden which they have maintained for several years. This event provided children a fun, educational opportunity to learn about pollinators and what habitat they need to thrive. Another pollinator event was held by the Rapid City Sustainability Committee at the annual Scare in the Square Halloween festival. Their committee hosted an educational booth with similar goals and activities as the farmers market booth, and their members dressed up as bees and a moth to bring a little extra fun to an event mostly attended by families with kids. They also emphasized the role of bats and creepy crawlies in pollination to follow a Halloween theme. This event was also well-attended and was a good place to reach a younger crowd.



Event volunteer helps apply a temporary tattoo of a monarch to a child's hand



Two event volunteers and a young child gaze into a teeming observation hive



Sustainability Committee members hand out candy, pollinator habitat seeds, and information at the annual Scare in the Square festival

## Policies & Practices

Our affiliate has created a basic integrated pest management plan that will be a framework for pollinator-friendly pest



management on city managed land, especially our parks system and greenway. We intend to develop it further with specific information on the pests we encounter, pesticides that we apply now and/or pesticides we'll use or avoid in the future, and a plan delineating which areas can receive pesticides, which will areas will be off-limits to pesticides, and which type of ground cover to maintain (i.e. mowed turf grass, native grasses, wildflower patches, etc.). Mosquito management is a hot topic in our city even though our dry climate doesn't facilitate as large a mosquito population as wetter parts of our state. However, since a majority of our parkland is located along Rapid Creek, our parks and recreation areas are where mosquito populations tend to concentrate. Our current practice of mosquito management has largely moved away spraying adulticide, focusing more on using brickettes in surface waters to prevent larvae from maturing in the first place. Our Parks Division has done a good job of communicating with the public about when mosquito spraying will be taking place (only on calm nights) and alerting the city's beekeepers to cover their hives when they'll be applying in their area. In drier years, we have avoided spraying adulticide completely. Another tenet of our IPM plan is to increase natural habitat areas in our parks, meaning taller native grasses, wildflowers, bare spots, snags, etc. that can become a safe haven for bees and other pollinators. The overall reduction of turf grasses allows our Department to cut back on mowing, should reduce pesticide application, and benefits pollinators all at the same time. Establishing new natural areas will inevitably invite the growth of toxic native plants or invasive species. We plan to be more proactive in manually removing such plants where feasible and targeting bee-safe pesticides at species which do not respond well to manual removal, such as Canada thistle.

#### **Integrated Pest Management Plan:**

#### **Recommended Native Plant List:**

<https://www.pollinator.org/pollinator.org/assets/generalFiles/BlackHills.2020.ver2.pdf>

**Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:** [Recommended Native Plant Supplier List for Rapid City.pdf](#)

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