Assessing and Prioritizing Project Site: Urban Pollinator & Ecological Health Assessment

Note: This calculator is intended to provide a rough estimation of habitat value standards.
See notes related to the questions on page 2 of this form

1. Size of planted area providing habitat

- ☐ <1 ac — 5 points
- ☐ .11-.29 ac — 10 points
- ☐ .3-.5 ac — 15 points
- ☐ >.5 ac — 20 points

TOTAL 0

2. 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 0

3. 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 0

4. Seasons with 3 blooming species present

- ☐ 1 season — 4 points
- ☐ 2 seasons — 8 points
- ☐ 3 seasons — 12 points

TOTAL 0

See BWSR pollinator toolbox about bloom season

5. Habitat connections

- ☐ Isolated project — 5 points
- ☐ Connected to other habitat — 15 points
- ☐ Part of habitat complex/corridor — 20 points

TOTAL 0

See BWSR Living Landscapes Initiative for information and map

6. Available habitat components (check all that apply)

- ☐ Trees and shrubs for nesting — 5 points
- ☐ Installed structures (e.g. bee box) — 15 points
- ☐ At least 0.5% milkweed cover — 20 points

TOTAL 0

7. Pesticide risk (% of project perimeter adjacent to pesticide use

- ☐ 1-25% — -4 points
- ☐ 26-50% — -8 points
- ☐ 51-75% — -12 points
- ☐ 76-100% — -16 points

TOTAL 0

8. Percent cover of native vegetation in planted areas

- ☐ 60-69% — 5 points
- ☐ 70-79% — 10 points
- ☐ 80-100% — 15 points

TOTAL 0

9. Frequency of vegetation management to maintain diversity

- ☐ 1 time per year — 5 points
- ☐ 2 times per year — 10 points
- ☐ 3+ times per year — 15 points

TOTAL 0

TOTAL SCORE 0

Exceptional Quality Habitat	86-100
High Quality Habitat	71-75
Medium Quality Habitat	50-70
Low Quality Habitat	0-49

Project Name: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Date: _____

Notes:

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).

All project plans must include detailed vegetation establishment and management specifications to ensure the success of projects (see sample specifications on BWSR's Habitat Friendly Solar Webpage).

Seed mixes provided for projects need to show seeds per square foot for each species in the mix.

Question 1 - Native plant species provide benefits to a wide range of pollinators and other wildlife species. The Minnesota DNR List should be used to determine if a species is native. Native species include wildflowers, graminoids (grasses, sedges rushes), shrubs and trees. The percent areal cover of native vs. non-native species should be estimated based on the seeds per square foot of all species to be used across all seed mixes. As non-native fescues tend to have a high seeding rate, but also small seeds with a lower germination success the number of fescue seeds per square foot in mixes can be decreased by half when calculating native species dominance of mixes. This should result in a more accurate representation of native dominance.

Question 2 - There is a focus on native forbs on this assessment form to maximize benefits to the approximately 500 species of native bees in Minnesota, honeybees and other pollinators. Forbs are (flowering plants that are not woody or graminoids such as grasses and sedges) and can include introduced clovers and other non-native species beneficial to pollinators. No noxious weeds or invasive plants can be included in the total.

Question 3 - Plant diversity adds to wildlife benefits, as well as the resiliency of projects. For this question, planned native and non-native species from all seed mixes can be combined for the total.

Question 4 - Having blooming species throughout the season helps support pollinator species. See BWSR's Pollinator Toolbox for a listing of bloom seasons for species.

Question 5 - To meet requirements for a long-term management plan projects must provide information about:

- Timing of yearly inspections,
- A detailed native vegetation establishment plan with detailed instructions for contractors.
- A detailed maintenance schedule for the first three years of the project (establishment period) listing timing of establishment mowing/ trimming, spot herbicide application, prescribed grazing or other management actions.
- Proposed maintenance schedule for year four and beyond.
- List of weed species that may become problematic at the site and how they will be managed if needed.

All mixes being used for the project must include at least 40 seeds per square foot to receive points for the first category. Using seeds with a genetic origin within200 miles helps ensure that species will be adapted to site conditions and decrease the risk of introducing invasive species in seed mixes. Please refer to page 7-8 of BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment Guidelines for more information about appropriate seed sources. To obtain points for including milkweed in projects mixes must contain at least .5% milkweed seed based on seeds per square foot, or a combination of seed and containerized plugs could be used with a plan to cover .5% of the ground surface with milkweed. Flower colors can include blue, pink, purple, yellow, white, orange, red, green and brown. The Minnesota Wildflowers website allows for searching species based on flower color Minnesota Wildflowers Categorized by Color.

Question 6 - It is important that seeds treated with insecticides are not used at project sites and that insecticides are not being sprayed at the site. To meet requirements for communication/registration with local landowners/applicators about the need to prevent drift from adjacent areas, information provided can be in the form of email communication or copies of letters.

Communication must be provided to all landowners adjacent to the property, including municipalities.

Send completed forms, project plans, seed mixes (showing seeds per square foot for each species) and any communications with pesticide applicators to BWSR at HFS@state.mn.us as well as any local government staff involved in reviewing the project.