

SUPPORTING OREGON'S NATURAL RESOURCES



HOW ODOT HELPS PROTECT POLLINATOR HABITAT

Sustainability is one of ODOT's core values. To us, that means "We balance economic, environmental and community well-being in a manner that protects the needs of current and future generations."

Taking care of our environment is a requirement in our work. We continually look for opportunities on our state-owned lands to preserve and enhance the natural world. Sustainability is integral to our mission to provide a safe, efficient transportation system that supports economic opportunity and livable communities for Oregonians.

Our economy and the high quality of life we enjoy are intrinsically tied to protecting our environment.

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF POLLINATORS

Pollinators such as bees and butterflies are critically important:

- Over 75 percent of flowering plants rely on pollinators for reproduction.
- Approximately 35 percent of the world's crop production depends on pollination.

In the face of habitat loss pollinator populations are in decline worldwide. ODOT lands can provide important habitats for pollinators. In some cases, ODOT lands, specifically those that are located well off the state highway system, may be the only habitats available in intensely managed agricultural areas. Roadsides also serve as corridors that connect larger patches of habitat.

WHAT WE DO

Manage Roadside Vegetation

ODOT "rights of way" are managed and maintained for safety, infrastructure preservation, proper drainage and/or future expansion. This maintenance and the conservation of pollinator habitat often conflict with each other in these roadside areas. Some of the challenges we face in aligning habitat conservation and roadside maintenance include:



- **Mowing and controlling woody brush:** These actions can have a negative effect on pollinator habitat. But left unmanaged, plants along roadsides in western Oregon grow fast, creating safety hazards and increasing the cost of eventually cutting them back.
- **Oregon's 'window' for mowing:** We have limited opportunities to mow because problems occur if soils are too wet or vegetation too dry. Mid-summer mowing negatively impacts blooming wildflowers.
- **Requirements:** We're required under ORS 569 to manage noxious weeds such as blackberries, knapweeds and Scotch broom. These plants provide pollinator benefits, but their removal serves the public good.

Opportunities for Habitat: Locations for Pollinators

- Wetland and biology mitigation sites
- Rest areas and waysides
- Roadsides with wide rights of way
- Under-utilized property near ODOT buildings and stockpile sites

Create Success Stories



Along U.S. 26 in Washington County, a roadside reforestation project includes native seed mixes containing wildflowers. Maintenance practices there allow the plants and the insects that depend on them to run through their entire life cycles.



The Iowa Street Bridge project on I-5 in Portland includes wildflower plantings and no-mow maintenance that enables pollinators to nest and lay eggs in the vegetation.



The Witham-Gellatly Habitat Restoration area is a 20 acre non-highway restoration site in rural Benton County. ODOT converted a degraded agricultural meadow into a diverse community of native grasses and nectar producing wildflowers. Agency stewardship is

creating a diverse landscape supporting several rare plants including Kincaid's lupine and many species of pollinators including Fender's Blue Butterfly.

Dozens of ODOT projects include nectar producing wildflowers in their native seed mixes. Notable projects, include: Stringtown Rd. and the I-5 Beltline, Newberg-Dundee, Joe Creek and the Whale Cove culverts.

Work Together

- Partnerships help ODOT balance its safety efforts with habitat preservation. Here are a few examples:
- ODOT has partnered with the Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs to plant wildflowers along highway rights of way.
- ODOT is partnering with a central coast community to implement a pollinator pilot along 25 miles of U.S. 101 that supports wildflower plantings with pollinator-compatible maintenance practices.
- We seek input from experts with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and others to learn how our practices can be most effective in supporting pollinator needs.

Use Smart Practices

ODOT biologists have identified areas where state and federally-listed threatened and endangered plant and insect species are present. These Special Management Areas are maintained to protect the listed species. ODOT removes invasive noxious weeds as required under ORS 569 and thus makes room for native plants to recover and provide habitat. In addition, ODOT uses native plants when restoring areas disturbed during our construction of maintenance projects.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

At ODOT, we are committed to supporting pollinator habitat, but we need your help. There are many volunteer opportunities in communities throughout the state to remove invasive species, plant wildflower seeds and help native plants and animals thrive.

In addition, you can help us by:

- Informing ODOT Maintenance of special pollinator habitat locations along Oregon's highways – such as milkweed patches.
- Joining the Adopt-A-Highway program to help remove litter and noxious weeds.
- Joining the Adopt-A-Landscape program to help maintain areas where pollinating plants occur.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

ODOT Vegetation Management — 503-986-3010
ODOT Adopt-A-Highway — 503-986-3031

