



# CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM – POLLINATOR HABITAT MANAGEMENT

3/11

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Minnesota

### WHAT IS POLLINATOR HABITAT MANAGEMENT?

Active management is used to develop and maintain predominantly grassland habitats established to benefit pollinator species. Consider the effects of grassland management on at risk species, including state and federally listed species.



### REQUIREMENTS

CRP pollinator management recommendations apply to practice CP-42. Management actions shall occur outside of the CRP primary nesting season.

Knowing what you have, what you want, and developing a plan to improve your habitat is the essence of a successful project. Refer to your CRP Conservation Plan for practice schedule.

### MANAGEMENT

Pollinator habitat may be managed by one or a combination of the following methods: Mechanical or Prescribed Fire.

#### Recommended frequency of management for all methods:

Managing the entire pollinator patch can severely impact pollinators and leave them with limited opportunities to recolonize the site.

Manage no more than 1/3 of the pollinator habitat each year over a three year period. Application in years 4-6 is recommended.

#### Mechanical

Mechanical management includes mowing or light disking.

#### **Recommended Timing:**

Mechanical disturbance shall occur in the fall (October – early November) when flowers have died back or are dormant. Disturbance at this time will also minimize disruption to nesting bumble bees.

#### Mowing

- Use a rotary or flail mower to evenly distribute grass clippings. Do not swath, as the windrows will smother seeding. Clippings may also be baled, removed from the field and destroyed according to FSA requirements.
- Mow no shorter than 12-16 inches.
- Reduce mower speed to 8 mph or less.
- Avoid mowing at night

#### Light Disking/Harrowing

Light disking or harrowing (2-4” deep) of existing stands can increase the amount of open ground and encourage pollinator nesting areas and a diverse plant community of annuals and perennials.

#### Prescribed Burning

If the area is not disked, pollinator habitat may need to be managed through periodic burning to remove excess litter which may reduce the quality of larval or nesting habitat.

Low intensity prescribed burns can allow germination of seed bearing annuals, increase plant species diversity, control unwanted woody vegetation, and open up the stand for pollinator nest sites.

