

## Natural Resources Conservation Service Maine



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Bee a pollinator protector in 2018

## *USDA offering landowners funds to protect pollinator habitats in Maine*

**BANGOR (Dec. 13, 2017)** – Bees are a keystone in agriculture globally, nationally, and in Maine—contributing billions of dollars by way of pollination to U.S. agricultural economies each year.

Here in Maine, they are instrumental. Bees pollinate Maine’s Wild Blueberries. As many as 100 different species of native wild bees move pollen from apple blossom to apple blossom, making fall apple picking, apple cider, and apple jack possible. Bees pollinate our pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, raspberries, blackberries, and a multitude of other crops. The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has committed \$80,000 for Fiscal Year 2018 to assist landowners and farmers in Maine with protecting our precious pollinator resources.

“Unfortunately, we now know that populations of some bee species are in decline,” Xerces Society Conservationist and NRCS Partner Biologist Eric Venturini said.

He noted that the rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) was listed as endangered earlier this year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the yellow banded bumble bee (*Bombus terricola*) could be similarly listed in 2018.

In response to these declines, and to meet this conservation need head-on, the NRCS is committing the \$80,000 in 2018 to the establishment, maintenance, and protection of pollinator habitat. This could include actions to increase floral diversity, undisturbed habitat, or nesting opportunities for bees on farms and woodlots in Maine.

Whether you are a farmer who relies on native bees for pollination, or a forestry producer interested in conservation, consider applying for funding through an NRCS cost-share program today. Simply contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) and ask for information on the pollinator program, or other pollinator-centric conservation plans available in your area.

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