

Shawano County Success from the Field

Providing Beauty with Pollinator Habitat



Background

Betley Farms LLC., operates a family run 5,000+ acre dairy farm in Maple Grove and Lessor Townships. The bulk of the dairy farm drains to the south, towards Seymour into Black Creek, which is a part of the Shioct River Watershed. Creeks within this watershed are known for their cold-water fishing. Conservation in this watershed is very important to Betley Farms.

Highlights

Jeff Betley and his family are now the third generation on the farm, which was started back in 1943 by Jeff's grandparents. He initially contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service back in 2016 with an interest in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Knowing how important pollination is to plant and insect communities and their declining numbers, Jeff became interested in establishing pollinator habitat on his 10.1-acre field as one of his CSP enhancements. Jeff was interested in providing adequate sources of food, shelter and nesting sites on this field. Conservation and good land stewardship has always been at the forefront of his farm. Moreover, Jeff thought it would be nice to beautify his farm for onlookers, since his farm is located near a county road intersection.

NRCS Acting District Conservationist, Sherrie Zenk-Reed, was able to bring to the table her technical expertise with the selection of the correct seed mix and her advice on site preparation.

The pollinator planting occurred in 2017, and by 2020, the project was in full bloom. Jeff partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for the use of their no-till drill which Jeff states, "was critical to the plantings success." Much of the planting progress was because Jeff worked hard to do good site prep up front and he continued with good weed control through mowing. Sherrie Zenk-Reed states, "this is one of the best pollinator plantings in the county. It appears as if every seed germinated!" Jeff is pleased with the planting as he has already seen the site heavily used by monarch butterflies and honey bees, as well as a variety of other pollinator species.

Future Plans

Jeff's main goal is to continue his dairy operation and maintain his newly established pollinator habitat. NRCS looks forward to continued conservation efforts through the partnership.



CSP pollinator habitat planted in June 2017 by Betley Farms, LLC., in Shawano County, Wisconsin.



No-till drill used for planting. (WDNR)

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