The benefits of restoring pollinator habitat include enhancing crop pollination and yields. Even if your farm does not rely on pollinators, other beneficial insects may provide important benefits such as natural pest suppression. Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Conservation Plans identify field-level practices designed to improve pollinator foraging and nesting habitat. These practices may include installing hedgerows, wildflower meadows, incorporating beneficial cover crops, and adjusting pesticide practices.

In addition to enhanced crop pollination and pest control, conservation practices can provide additional benefits to farms, including:

- Improved water quality and soil health with native plant buffers.
- Replacement of weedy areas with high quality wildlife habitat.
- Farm beautification with wildflower meadows, hedgerows, and other plantings.
- Supports biodiversity conservation standards for various farm certification programs.

What’s included

Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Conservation Plans provide recommendations tailored to the individual farm. Conservation plans may include the following elements, based on farmer objectives:

- Assessment of existing pollinator habitat and opportunities for improvements.
- Maps and templates for pollinator habitat projects.
- Step-by-step implementation plans for installing wildflower meadows, cover crops, hedgerows, and more.
- Pesticide risk assessment and strategies for mitigating pesticide impacts.
- Recommendations for natural pest suppression and invasive species control.
EXAMPLE CONSERVATION PLAN

The following example demonstrates habitat features recommended in a Conservation Plan for a 60-acre organic vegetable farm in Oregon. Solarization was used as a herbicide-free method to successfully establish a wildflower field border with flowers that provide season-long forage. A beetle bank and hedgerow were installed to provide foraging and nesting habitat for native pollinators and beneficial insects.

THE PROCESS

To apply for a Plan through the NRCS, please follow the steps below.

1. Contact your local NRCS office to determine if you are eligible for a “Conservation Activity Plan” through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For more information on the application process—and to find your local office—visit http://tinyurl.com/nrcs-cap.

2. Once your application is approved, you may select the Xerces Society as your Technical Service Provider (TSP).

3. After confirming with the NRCS that the Xerces Society is your TSP, please contact our headquarters at (855) 232-6639. Our staff will help you with next steps.

Don't want to apply for NRCS programs? The Xerces Society also works directly with producers. Please contact us at (855) 232-6639 to get started.