

Comments on Pollinator Health document [A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario]

The Advisory Committee on the Environment for the City of London (ACE) lauds the provincial government for putting pollinator health so high on its agenda. Our members have been encouraged to submit detailed comments regarding the plan. Here we make a few big picture comments regarding pollinator health and how the province can help, especially with respect to cities.

Recommendation 1: In thinking about improving habitat for pollinators, the province should work out a strategy for increasing the size and connectivity of natural areas at different geographic scales from regional (e.g. Big Picture Carolinian Corridors; Green Belts) to neighbourhood Pollinator Pathways running through urban neighbourhoods. The province could organize this work through conservation authorities who could work together with local stakeholders such as municipalities and farmers to determine where renaturalization areas and the corridors that connect them should go.

Recommendation 2: The province should work out funding strategies to make this work happen and should work closely with Alternative Land Use System which is already working with farmers in Ontario to get them to also focus on preserving and enhancing ecosystem services. This work needs to be scaled up and be also brought into cities.

Recommendation 3: The province needs to set targets for different land covers that support the health of pollinators including meadows/prairies as well as wetlands and woodlands. These targets will change depending on the land use and also physiography but at the watershed scale (e.g. Upper Thames River watershed), they should add up to a substantial amount of land that can provide habitat and movement for pollinators.

Recommendation 4: The long range plan of the province must be the establishment of ecologically sound agricultural systems that minimizes outside inputs of pesticides, synthetic fertilizer and the use of monocultures. Nature does not do monocultures and in nature there are no weeds. Our agricultural system needs to change from a *monoculture of annuals* to a *polyculture of perennials*. In the future we need to do away with the idea of a noxious weed list. The province should do everything in its power to encourage the emergence of agro-ecological systems that work with the cycles of nature and not against it.

Recommendation 5: The province is encouraged to develop a comprehensive ecosystem services implementation plan (which of course would include a large section on pollination) and require all of its municipalities to develop such a plan.