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Helping Native Pollinators and Prairies Thrive

New Program Brings Together Conservation Partners to Make a Difference

Prairies are the lifeblood for pollinators, but many people don't understand the critical role pollinators play in our lives. Native bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds and other pollinators do the important work of pollinating most species of flowering plants and crops, helping to grow our food and bring our native habitats to life. Pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites in our diets.

But many of these critical native species are declining as the prairie habitat they need to survive is lost to monoculture, development and other land uses. Researchers at Texas A&M have documented that Texas loses over 1,000 acres of land to development and fragmentation every day.

The good news is that it's not too late to help pollinators. From planting pocket prairies and using native plants in landscaping to restoring vast swaths of Texas' historic native prairies, there's something all of us can do to help native pollinators and prairies thrive.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) is excited to announce the launch of Pollinators & Prairies, a new program that will bring together a wide range of conservation partners to make a difference.

Pollinators & Prairies is conserving Texas' vital native pollinators and iconic grasslands through research, outreach, and on-the-ground conservation action. TPWF is working with dedicated conservation partners to increase healthy prairie habitat and pollinator populations, encouraging Texans to plant native grasses and wildflowers, and funding critical research to guide management strategies for native bees and other vital pollinators. The program is generously supported by presenting sponsor H-E-B, with additional support from Phillips 66.

“We are delighted to collaborate with our many partners to help pollinators thrive in Texas,” said TPWF Executive Director Anne Brown. “We are grateful to H-E-B for coming on board as presenting sponsor of the program through their commitment to Our Texas, Our Future, and thankful for the generosity of our supporting sponsor Phillips 66.”

Conservation partners include the [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#), [Native Plant Society of Texas](#), [Native Prairies Association of Texas](#), [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#), [Texas Wildlife Association](#) and [WHF](#).

The launch of the program coincides with Native Plant Week in Texas, and H-E-B is celebrating by featuring a diverse array of Texas native plants at 200+ stores between October 14-30, 2024. TPWF and the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) have teamed up to promote H-E-B’s Texas Native Plant Celebration. NPSOT will be passing out free native seed mix packets, compliments of TPWF and H-E-B, at [18 H-E-B Texas Backyard stores](#) from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm on Oct. 16 and 19.

TPWF’s Pollinators & Prairies program is also supporting scientific research. One research project currently underway is exploring the habitat requirements of a threatened native bee species, the American bumblebee. Conservation K-9s are specifically trained to locate difficult-to-find bumblebee nests in or on the ground. They also hope to detect the rarer variable cuckoo bumblebee, which also uses these nests. The goal of this research is to learn more about the habitat requirements for bumblebee nesting to inform conservation planning and understand potential threats to these iconic pollinator species in Texas.

On-the-ground prairie restoration is another important way the new program is having an impact. Pollinators & Prairies is working with prairie restoration partners, including Native Prairies Association of Texas, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Wildlife Association and WHF to support public and private landowners with native wildflower and grass seed for planting, brush control, and other prairie restoration strategies. These efforts will initiate prairie restoration on more than 400 acres in eight counties from Houston to the Texas Panhandle.

Presenting sponsor H-E-B, a longtime TPWF partner, helped make the program possible with initial funding through their commitment to [Our Texas Our Future](#).

“At H-E-B, we’re dedicated to protecting Texas wildlife, including pollinators, which play a crucial role in our food supply and environment. We are proud to partner with Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation to support pollinator research and conservation efforts,” said Leslie Sweet, H-E-B Managing Director of Sustainability & Environmental Affairs.

Phillips 66, another longtime TPWF partner, also provided generous support for the new program.

“Phillips 66 deeply values its partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, as we are committed to preserving wildlife and natural habitats in and around the communities where we work,” said Phillips 66 Social Impact Manager Courtney Meadows. “The Pollinators & Prairies program aligns with our environmental stewardship efforts, and we look forward to seeing this initiative’s future restoration achievements unfold.”

A new app will launch in 2025 for Texans interested in planting a pocket prairie or native plants. The app will make it easy to determine what native plants or seed mixes to purchase for your region and include a step-by-step guide to planting and maintaining a native pollinator area.

More information can be found online at PollinatorsandPrairies.org.

Since 1991, [Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation](https://www.tpwf.org) has raised and invested more than \$250 million to advance Texas' proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state's lands, waters, and wildlife. Our vision is for all Texans to have access to the wild things and wild places of our state, both now and for generations to come. For more information, please visit www.tpwf.org.

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Note to editors: Media Kit with video b-roll, soundbites and images available

