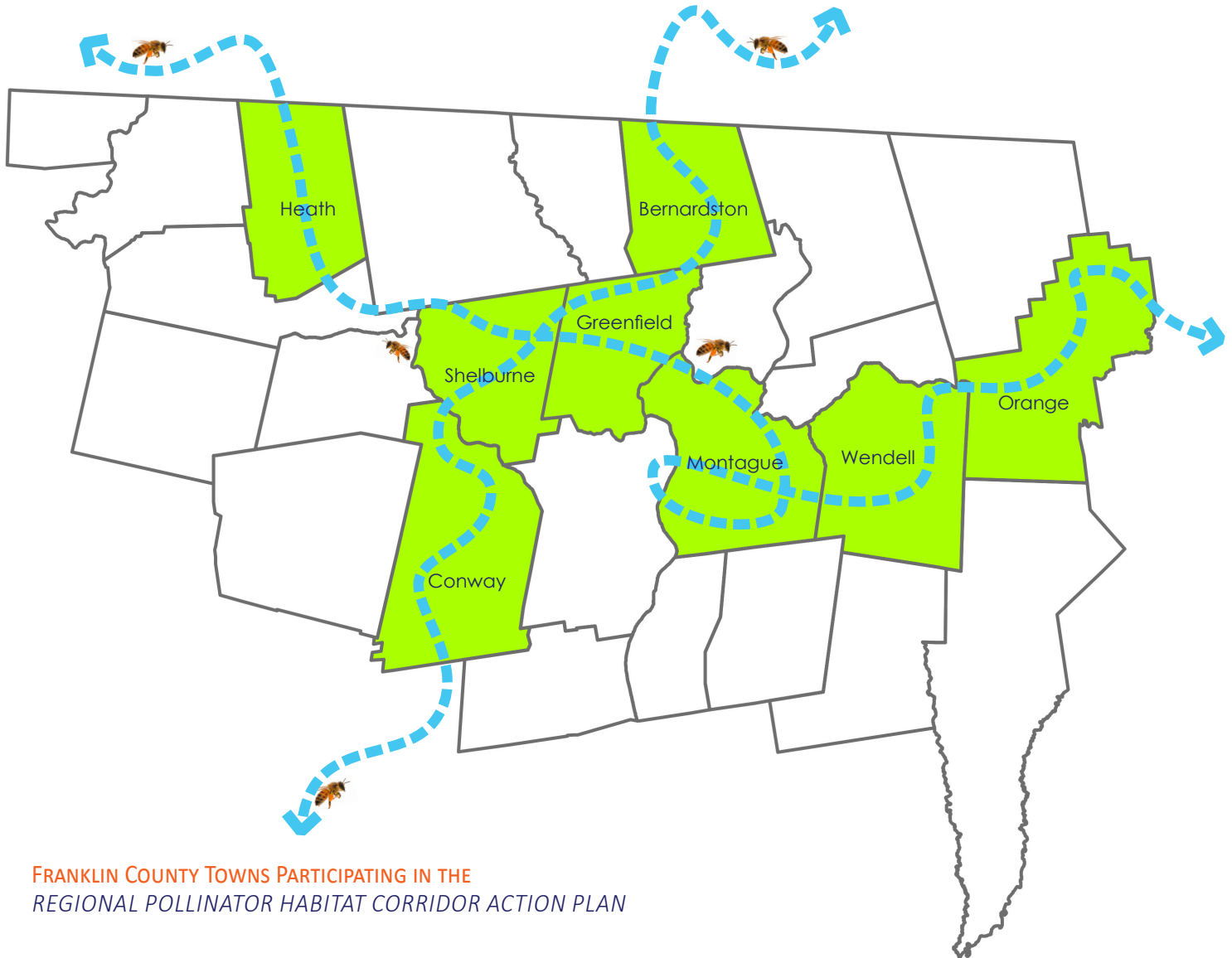


Regional Pollinator Habitat Corridor Action Plan for FRANKLIN COUNTY



FRANKLIN COUNTY TOWNS PARTICIPATING IN THE
REGIONAL POLLINATOR HABITAT CORRIDOR ACTION PLAN

PROJECT UPDATE

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) will collaborate with eight Franklin County towns to develop a Regional Pollinator Habitat Corridor Action Plan. With funding from an Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Planning Grant, this is the first plan of its kind in Massachusetts. Greenfield, Heath, Shelburne, Conway, Bernardston, Montague, Wendell, and Orange will work with FRCOG to map pollinator habitat and resource areas, update local land-use regulations to include requirements for native plantings for development and pollinator-friendly landscape management practices, and create a Pollinator Habitat Corridor Implementation Toolkit. The plan will be expandable, so that with additional funding and interest from other Franklin County towns, regional pollinator corridors can be expanded across the county.

Local level strategies such as these are critically needed to respond to climate change, habitat loss, and declining populations of wild, native pollinator species. The sustainability of our local ecosystems, farms, and food systems is linked to pollinators. A 2017 [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#) plan identified a critical need to evaluate, sustain, and enhance pollinator populations in the state. This effort is one of many initiatives led by state and national level organizations and local community groups to respond.

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Landscape-scale analysis driven by GIS data and stakeholder input will be integral to the Regional Pollinator Plan. Working maps will display current land use and land cover patterns, water and habitat resource areas, municipal parcels, infrastructure, and other essential data. FRCOG will work with stakeholders to identify locally known resources that support pollinators, areas of habitat fragmentation, and potential corridor pathways within each community. Stakeholders will play a key role in aligning local pollinator resources and opportunities with the regional scale pollinator corridor action plan that spans Franklin County as well as ensuring that long-term stewardship of pollinator resources in the county are community-engaged and community-driven.



The Regional Pollinator Plan will assess opportunities where towns can create “stepping stones” that restore habitat connectivity between existing pollinator habitat areas by implementing pollinator-friendly landscape management practices and land use regulations. Potential stepping stones will be identified between town-owned parcels and residential neighborhoods, commercial properties, civic centers and public gathering spaces, protected open space, farmland and wildlands. New recommendations for pollinator-friendly landscape management practices and land use regulations will help reshape stewardship approaches across different sectors to be safer and more beneficial for pollinators and to address some of the challenges of integrating pollinator resources within the community.

NEXT STEPS

FRCOG will utilize responsible stakeholder outreach and engagement methods in the current context of COVID 19. The process will rely on public meetings in a virtual format in which interested folks can join a working group in each town participating in the plan. Public meetings of the working group will be the place for stakeholders to help identify the locations and strategies for pollinator habitat implementation in the town, identify and address challenges, and help shape plan recommendations and other key deliverables.

FRCOG will utilize virtual public meetings of the working group to share draft maps and other working materials of the plan for stakeholder review. We look forward to the meaningful and inspiring discussions full of community-driven ideas for ways to establish pollinator habitats and corridors across Franklin County communities and to link corridors with neighboring towns.



“Our future flies with pollinators”, 2020 Pollinator Poster
Credit: Fiorella Ikeue

<https://www.fws.gov/pollinators/>

PROJECT OF

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