

P&W Green Power Grant Application (4-20-2017)

Our Vital Pollinators: Birds, Bats, Bees, & Butterflies

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Birds, bats, bees, & butterflies are crucial pollinators. They pollinate over 200,000 of the world's flowering plants (including 80% of our food plants). In addition, they aid in insect control. They are essential to our existence.

Albert Einstein once said, "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."

This grant application complements the 2014 Presidential Memorandum – "Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators". Essentially, many species are at risk of extinction as a result of habitat loss and food source depletion. This grant would provide school & community education, as well as, support construction & placement of habitats and planting of native plant species.

In conjunction with DEEP (Belding Wildlife Management Area – Vernon) & Strong Family Farm (non-profit working farm – Vernon), P&W employees will work with Vernon's Center Road School Elementary to provide education, resources, and hands-on community activities supporting a positive co-habitation with birds, bats, bees, and butterflies.

Specifically, assemblies and in-class presenters will emphasize the importance of these animals as well as how to ensure their existence. One example will be working with White Memorial Conservation Center's Gerri Griswold, a.k.a. "The Bat Lady", to provide a phenomenal assembly directed to Grades 3-5. This presentation will make children more aware of how fascinating bats are and why they are necessary in the ecosystems they inhabit. In addition, other presenters will focus on birds and on the importance of native plant species as it relates to birds, bees, and butterflies. Finally, supplemental curriculum and library materials will round out the educational impact.

As an outreach event, students, family members, and community members will work together to identify, construct, and erect bird and bat houses at Strong Family Farm and Belding Wildlife Management Area. In addition, native plant species will be identified, procured, and planted for these locations to support food for local bird, bat, bee, and butterfly populations.

Ideally, these activities will impact community members to be more aware of their surroundings and what they can do to ensure sustainability. These activities would span over the 2017-2018 school calendar year.

Presenter fees, educational materials, bird/bat houses, native plant species

Highlights in local Hartford/Vernon newspapers, Facebook blogs, Vernon BOE newsletter

Vernon Center Road School Elementary

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<http://vernonpublicschools.org/crs-homepage>