Good afternoon.
Let's get started.
Welcome to today's webinar about the New England Pollinator Partnership.
My name is Jen.
I'm a natural resource specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service support Center.
We will get started with the presentation in just a moment.
First a few logistics.
This webinar is being recorded.
All participants joining today's webinar are in listen only mode.
All audio is being broadcast through your device or speakers.
We want you to participate in today's webinar.
Please type your questions
or comments into the Q&A pod.
You can submit questions or comments throughout the presentation.
Questions will be answered at the end during the question and answer session.
If you have audio challenges, there is a closed captioning link provided in today's links pod.
A new browser window will open where you can follow along with our presenters comments.
Please note the status bar
indicator to the right of the help.
All green is usually an indicator that you are network connection a strong.
You should be able to join into today's webinar.
If you wish to make adjustments to your view into the webinar, you use the options in the share screen window.
If you choose to view the presentation in full-screen mode, hover your cursor at the top of the window to see the option to return to normal view.
You will need to be a normal view to see the Q&A pod to type in your questions.
You can download a PDF of the presentation slides in today's
handouts.
This webinar is being recorded.
It will be housed in the webinar archives.
The link to the webinar portal is in the today's links pod.
I'm pleased to turn the webinar over to Kelly.
She provides technical assistance on pollinator conservation in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast region.
Kelly, you may now begin.
Hello, everybody.
Can you hear me okay?
Yes.
All right.

I wanted to start with a couple of acknowledgment.
I want to give a special thanks to Jen Ryan for setting up this webinar.
She's done a lot of work to get us organized and ready to go.
I appreciate that.
Also we have Don Riley
who helps with moderating.
I would like to acknowledge today's speakers, Jeremy Markuson, the NRCS
state biologist in Maine.
He's been with NRCS for 3 years.
Prior to working with NRCS, Jeremy was an endangered species biologist for the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife services.
Also we have Mark McCollough, and endangered species biologist for the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife service
at the main field office.
He works on recovery programs for federally listed species in the state
of Maine and he's the lead biologist
in the Northeast.
We have Gary Casabona, the NRCS state biologist in Rhode Island.
He has a Masters degree in wildlife biology from Virginia Tech and has been
with NRCS for 24 years.
We're all working on this initiative or partnership along with many other
people, some who we will acknowledge at the end with a special shout out.
If I did not mention you and your part of the committee, please know that you
are acknowledged and we thank you for building this.
I would also like to introduce some partner biologists.
I am a partner biologist covering parts of the mid-Atlantic and Northeast and
southern Rhode Island in particular or Southern New England, Rhode Island, and
Connecticut, as well as state south of that.
But you also have support from Alina Harris, partner biologist in New
Hampshire who started at the beginning of the year in 2020, and we have Hannah
Mullally who just started last week.
Sheet is failing Eric's position in the state of Maine.
As we go through these slides today, what you know, beyond this webinar and
some follow-up webinars we are planning, you have support and people
to reach out to.
Your state biologist or FRC or whoever is your contact person in your state
for the New England pollinator partnership can help you reach out to
us for planning, support, question, anything you may need.
I would like to turn it over to Jeremy who will kick off the
presentation.
Go ahead.
All right.
Thank you.

I am Jeremy Markuson with the state of Maine NRCS and I am a state biologist.
I will give an overview of the New England pollinator partnership and I will touch on the geographic scope of NEPP, the goals, and also some of the funding opportunities.
So NEPP is a collaborative partnership that was recently finalized to help restore declining pollinators throughout New England.
The purpose of this partnership is to establish, maintain, and protect pollinator habitat while also providing endangered species act predictability to NRCS clients.
This is a 25 year conservation effort that targets 11 different species of pollinators, including Rusty patched bumblebee, yellow banded bumblebee, and the Monarch butterfly.
The effort is designed to be consistent with working lands for wildlife pick this is currently not a Working Lands For Wildlife effort at the time.
At this time, it might be in the future.
We will utilize NRCS programs, specifically EQIP and CSP, to conserve these pollinators.
There will be core supporting and supplemental practices associated with this effort.
We will also have the opportunity to provide financial and technical assistance through NEPP.
The three key partners that help lift this up off the ground is U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and also NRCS.
The geographic scope for NEPP, as I mentioned, is the New England area.
This includes New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.
If this project becomes a Working Lands For Wildlife effort, they may prioritize different areas in their state for conserving the pollinators.
At this point, we only have one priority area, that being the New England area and New England states.
The goals and framework involve incentivizing program participation through NRCS financial assistance being EQIP and CSP, engaging landowners with pollinator conservation work with outreach and education, and has a, establishing, and protecting pollinator habitats, implementing and following BMPs, which over time in a 25 year agreements, may be revised to better reflect conservation efforts.
Lastly, we will preclude the need to list the target species.
While we do this work, we will also track and report our conservation efforts.
We may utilize cards, protract, or other opportunities to track and monitor conservation work.

The key requirements for someone to participate in NEPP involves they have to complete one of the 16 core practices, they complete a pollinator wildlife habitat evaluation guide best management practices must be implemented, and maintain, after installing, maintain the conservation practices.
In today's webinar, their handouts and one really good one that can provide some background and give information to individuals who are interested in this effort that is a question and answer document and it can answer a lot of questions about NEPP.
We also have a website that provides different documents and information about NEPP as well.
Through NEPP, our efforts are to establish pollinator habitat, work with different landowners, agricultural producers, and also implement integrated pest management.
The six participating states have agreed to establish over 7000 acres of pollinator habitat or enhanced over 7000 acres of pollinator habitats, work with over 1000 different producers or landowners, and also implement IPM over 300 acres of land.
These are commitments that each state has made for up to 2025.
We have other partners that are interested in this effort.
We have a growing list of partners, 26 right now, that are interested in helping us with conserving pollinators.
The possible roles include assisting outreach, research and monitoring, providing integrated pollinator and pest management training, as well as other conservation efforts.
These partners include soil and water conservation districts, state wildlife agencies, academic institutions as well as others including commodity groups such as the wild blueberry
commission of Maine.
The funding associated with the effort utilizes existing funding pools through EQIP and CSP.
In the state of Maine, we had a pollinator initiative that may be utilized for future years.
But at this point, we will utilize EQIP and CSP funding pools to conserve the target species and to implement NEPP.
Here is the list of folks you can contact within the different states.
We have Nancy from Connecticut, Tom from Massachusetts, myself in the state of Maine, Kelly New Hampshire, Gary in Rhode Island, and Toby in Vermont.
All of these folks
are very involved with NEPP.
If you are in these states, they can help you answer a lot of questions about NEPP and other things.
Mark, I will toss this to you.

Okay.
Thank you.
It has been a pleasure to be part of the NEPP team.
Fish and Wildlife Service is anxious to work with NRCS and landowners on conservation projects.
There has been a growing public awareness about the kinds of pollinators and the benefits of creating and maintaining habitat to benefit bees, moths, and butterflies.
For example, I planted a pollinator habitat or wheeze to call the butterfly gardens in my yard for 30 years.
Our family has enjoyed the diversity of wildlife using these areas.
Both Fish and Wildlife Service and NRCS want to support projects so that pollinators can flourish and rare and endangered species begin to recover.
Sometimes landowners and agricultural producers are reluctant to create habitats that may attract the species and possibly create a regulatory burden under the federal Endangered Species Act.
In this webinar, we will describe how the NEPP freeze landowners for many regulatory concerns and encourages inviting pollinators to their lands using NRCS practices.
The NEPP focuses on three species, the Rusty patched will be, the Monarch butterfly, and the yellow banded bumblebee.
We acknowledge that other bumblebees are declining and could be listed in the future like in the lower left, the group of cuckoo bumblebees, bumblebees that are parasites and other bumblebee colonies and on the right, the confusing American and yellow bumblebees which are all rare and could be considered for listing in the future.
If any of these are federally listed and the landowner has enrolled by the NEPP program, they will be exempt from the prohibitions that are in the Endangered Species Act.
There are about 400 species of native visa New England but only about 15 species of bumblebees and our native bees come in all sizes, shapes, and colors as shown in this fantastic photograph.
These many species of native pollinators have a big job to do.
They do most of the pollinating of important crops in New England chances our native bees are out in your garden pollinating your tomatoes and squash this summer.
There are about 150 species of butterflies and several hundred species of mobs in New England.
Butterflies pollinate by day and mobs by night.
Together, they pollinate around the clock.
Having healthy populations of these species is not only important for pollination.

It's interesting to note that 96% of our songbirds raise their young on insects and mostly that is butterfly and moth caterpillars.
We can avoid listing additional native bees and butterflies on the endangered species list in the future.
It's really as simple as what is in this slide.
You are what you eat.
By creating high-quality habitats, especially super foods like milkweed and coneflower in this photograph, it resulted better health for the bees and science proves that if they have good resources like this throughout the summer, they produce
stronger immune systems.
This results in healthier populations
of butterflies, bees, moths,
and birds also.
In the 1980s, the Rusty patched bumblebee was among the most common bumblebee in New England.
It was last observed in 2009 in Central Maine and on Cape Cod and has not been relocated since.
Biologists are still looking for this to be in New England.
Several populations still occur
in the Midwest.
New populations have just been discovered in the southern Appalachian Mountains.
So that's good news for this endangered species.
The Rusty patched bumblebee was placed
on the federal endangered species
list in 2017.
We have new recovery plans.
The Fish and Wildlife Service even explores the possibility of captive rearing and possibly reintroducing this be to our region as a way to recover it here in New England.
The yellow banded bumblebee is closely related to the Rusty patched bumblebee.
It also underwent similar declines throughout its range in the 1990s and early 2000's.
It's believed to be caused by increasing use of pesticides, new
parasites and diseases, and a combination of these factors.
It is still among our rare bumblebees
in New England but seems to be
making a comeback.
In this slide, the yellow dots on the map our recent occurrences of the yellow banded bumblebee.
The black dots are places where there were surveys and it was not found.

New England plays an important role in the recovery of this rare bumblebee.
The yellow banded bumblebee was petitioned for listing in 2015.
But in 2019, the Fish and Wildlife Service found the listing was not warranted at this time.
The Monarch to fly population in North America has declined by 90% in the last 20 years.
They count on the wintering area New Mexico and in 2013 and 2014 and 2015 which were the lowest ever recorded.
Milkweed and very species are the host plant for this butterfly and are an excellent source of nectar for all bees, moths, and butterflies.
Loss of milkweed a pollinator habitat particular in the Midwest is believed to be the primary cause of decline for Monarch butterflies.
Fortunately, there has been rebounded numbers in the wintering area in Mexico during the last two winters.
The Fish and Wildlife Service received a petition to list the Monarch butterfly in 2014.
And we will be making a final determination on the status of the Monarch butterfly in December 2020.
As Jeremy describes, NRCS has many core and supporting practices that can help pollinators.
In addition to these practices, there are best management practices for NEPP participants that must be followed to avoid adverse effects to rare pollinator species.
These best management practices are based on guideline.
The BMPs requires things like buffering areas where pesticides are used from areas where there are pollinator habitats but there's also guidelines for mowing fields and management of cover crops.
The BMPs can be found at the NEPP website.
Finally, all landowners to enroll in the NEPP will receive a letter from the Fish and Wildlife Service that exempt them from liability of incidental take under the Endangered Species Act.
The wording in this slide comes from that letter.
We recognize that a few Rusty patched bumblebees are perhaps -- or perhaps other bees or moths might intentionally -- unintentionally be killed while carrying out conservation practices.
But we know there will be an overwhelming benefit from the NEPP for not only the Rusty patched bumblebee but hundreds of other pollinator species.
Exemptions from the Endangered Species Act remain as long as landowners

continue to implement the practices and the BMPs.
This is a unique opportunity for landowners and last for up to 25 years.
Protection and if a landowner leaves the program.
The exemption can be transferred to anyone or if they also agreed to
implement the NRCS practices and the BMPs.
Now I will turn the program over to Kelly.
Thank you.
I'm excited to see pictures of your butterfly garden.
It sounds wonderful.
You heard Jeremy and Mark refer to NEPP practices and how they are
categorized.
This is a summary.
I will go through a list of the practices with you as well.
Our core practices are just as they sound.
We've all heard the language before and other types of initiatives.
These core practices are prioritized for the greatest conservation benefit
to our target species pollinators, the at risk pollinators, but also have
benefits for other pollinator species as well.
One thing that was not mentioned is, while bumblebees and monarchs and a lot
of other butterflies are very well studied, there are some species of
pollinators among those 400 that exist
in New England
that we don't know much about.
And so we are trying to do the best we can for all of these different species.
So when I show you the core processes, I will explain that a little bit more
and it should be pretty obvious for those that are used to planning
pollinator habitats.
Our supporting practices are mostly used in association with those core
practices for this partnership.
But they can also be designed to target our species and we have associated
practices.
These may be the practices needed to ensure the effectiveness of the core
and supporting practices.
Let's look at those individually.
It is not necessary
to write is all down.
This information can be found at the NEPP webpage which is listed today and
handout and the links column, in particular, the document called the New
England Pollinator Partnership agreement, you will see tables much
like this one you see on the right.
This one explains the core practices.
Accor practice is at least one, hopefully more, they have to be
included in the contract to participate in this partnership.

It's a pretty long list.
It covers everything from conservation, wildfire plantings, wildlife habitat planting which can include wildflowers and shops, had replanted, tree and shrub, field border, and on down.
As you can see, most of these, we have the option to enhance or manage existing habitat and this can bring great if it pollinators as well that might not be as obvious.
Along with these core practices here, like tree and shrub establishment or field border planting where we are actually purposely targeting these habitat plantings for pollinators, we can also look at our supporting practices here which can be windbreak and shoulder belt.
Maybe this can shelter or prevent pesticide drift.
We can look at restoration of rare and declining habitat.
We don't always have to go to the most intensive practice which would be something like wildflower seating or Tricia planting where you are required to have site prep, planting, and management.
If you have an old field or a forest edge on your habitat, it might be simple as arresting the succession, keep it open through mowing, or doing some other type of low intensity practice.
Please do not exclude
managing existing habitat.
This can be, again, adjusting the mowing regime, forest edge feathering, invasive species control to encourage
native plant communities
that support these animals.
Integrated pest management program that includes practices that not only protect the farmers crops but that are also built to protect and reduce risks to pollinators and again reducing reliance on commercial bumblebees or managed honeybees which we know through research has been contributing to the spread of certain diseases to these at risk bumblebees that are not managed, that are living in our landscape, and that can be a very easy way to help introduce these declines.
For our resources and tools, we will have many documents on the NEPP webpage, Q&A for participating landowners, the agreement document, the WHEG which will have a follow-up webinar because it's a little different than our typical wildlife WHEG, promotional flyers, BMPs, the letter that goes out to landowners showing their involvement and agreement to these practices and to this partnership along with planner checklists that you could have access to and those for the process of planting and what to include in the folder, the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation webpage and the Fish and Wildlife Service webpage which also provides a lot of information.
With that, I would like to turn it over to Gary who will talk about some

key planning considerations and lessons learned and the do's and don'ts and things to be careful of when you talk to a landowner.
These are things we've learned, in particular, that I have learned since my time with Xerces and being a partner biologist and the mistakes I've made and that we've kind of perfected to field trials and work with land-grant universities.
So with that, Gary, I would like to turn it over to you.
Thank you.
Good afternoon, everyone.
Will take about 20 minutes.
I could have called this thinking like a planner, the pollinator version.
What you see on the screen is a bumblebee queen I photographed in late October in Rhode Island.
She is feeding on
[indiscernible word]
which is known as butter eggs.
This is kind of a nasty we'd you would want to address.
But I want to make the point starting right off the bat that when you do your assessments, keep in mind that some of the non-native plants do provide value.
I'm not saying that we should not treat those non-native plants, but you may want to consider that perhaps you will established native plants in the area before addressing the invasive species, especially if resources are scarce for pollinators.
There is an analogy that came out of our work with New England cottontail.
The rabbits utilizing multi-floral rows, especially for dense cover, and we decided early on that we did not want to treat that until we had established habitat, quality habitat for the rabbits that were on site.
I would take about 20 minutes and try to give as many of the big bullet points and lessons learned as I can.
Working with landowners is always a big deal.
Selection of practices is key.
Kelly started to touch on this.
And that goes back to the human dimension as part of what our landowners capable of, what kind of background and equipment do they have, and plant species, and I will mention a number of those, the ones that I will mention, I think all or certainly nearly all are needed throughout New England except in the far northern parts.
Something that our planners in Rhode Island know that I really harp on his the importance of learning to identify common plants of interest.
Kelly just mentioned that is going to be part of filling out the WHEG as well.
So I joke over and over again to emphasize certain key points for landowners, the key point number one, if the customer lacks proper equipment

or knowledge, in order to do site prep and feeding, which is, of course, one of the more popular things that people do want to do, you may want to steer them toward Woody plantings.
That could be tree and Strupp establishment, hedgerow, forest buffer, and there are a number of documents available to guide you on that.
Xerces has written a number of hedgerow documents for different states.
They did one for us here in Rhode Island which is great.
Migratory bird died, if you are thinking about cross species benefits, I will talk a little bit more about that later.
And of course, there are other documents for your state to help you choose the best plants.
Obviously planning principles, you will consider a [indiscernible word] site, how much moisture and sunlight is available.
As I said a moment ago, consider choosing plant species that will have benefits for other species.
For wetland areas, Elderberry is one of my favorites.
Jewel weed, but in Bush, swamp milkweed which recent evidence suggests may be somewhat preferred by female monarchs as a host plants, and one of my really big pet peeves is to educate the customer who want to do pollinator have a Tate.
Educate them to stop hating blackberry, raspberry, and Sue on their property which have a lot of value.
We will talk about that.
I took this from my yard in Rhode Island.
This is wing sumac.
Elderberry has three functions.
It provides food, for it for pollinators, but also it's a nesting site for tunnel listing bees.
In addition, it is a pretty high value fruit for migratory birds during fall migration.
Some other key points, native plants are typically suited for nutrient poor and moisture poor conditions.
Except in rare situations, you don't want to use lime or fertilize.
This will make the site more attractive to invasive species.
Many of us repeat this point over and over and over again.
If you are ceding, make sure that the seeds are not very too deep, just 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch.
I will talk a little bit more about that later.
A lot of folks think it's going to look like a magazine cover after a year.

Kelly taught me the little rhyme, the first year it sleeps, the second era creeps, and the third year it leaps.
So it could be a couple of years before perennials are established and flowering.
Kelly and I have been talking about sunflowers which recent evidence suggests contain a compound that help
to self medicate against
intestinal parasites.
And perhaps other annual in small amounts for earlier blooms, we would not pay for those.
What we are thinking is that these could be seated perhaps alongside the footprint of our project so that there is something there in the early years, not only in terms of forage but in terms of also meeting the landowners expectations from anesthetic expectation.
We typically include some Partridge P in the mix.
That is an annual legume.
That will come in relatively early.
Something that we see here in Rhode Island quite a bit, folks getting the idea that they want to cut down forest patches to plant and pull the stumps and plant the pollinator meadow.
I don't know why so many people want to do this.
We certainly do not want to encourage that.
Here is a photo of Partridge P, so named because [indiscernible name] will eat the snow pea like fruits.
Turkey will also eat those and a number of birds will make use of those.
This is a good nectar producer, very aesthetic and comes in relatively quickly on our sites.
Site prep is critical.
We have seen this in projects that have been less than perfectly successful.
You got have a good seedbed.
You've got to have good see to soil contact you will have the problems.
We have had some success here in Rhode Island with buckwheat.
I'm showing here on the cover page of the Xerces documents the organic site preparation methods for wildfire establishment that I believe there are nine different methods covered in this document and I think they did a really nice job on this.
Buckwheat mother cropping is covered, solar is Asian is covered, and so on.
So there's a number of techniques available besides an herbicide.
Here are more key points.
It's so important to get approval from
us before the customer
purchased the seed.

There can be so much variation between when a customer sends a template and it comes back and there are four or five substitutions, many of which might not be native to your state, some of which may have very poor pollinator value and so forth.
One of the things that Kelly and I talked about recently, some of the off-the-shelf mixes have tremendously high percentages of grass.
We want grass seed in the mix.
The native grasses can provide bumblebee nesting sites.
Grasses are eaten by the larval forms of many insects and butterflies.
But that is something you want to sort of control along with everything else.
So it would be great to have someone in your state who can review these.
There is broad consensus that fall dormant seating gives you the best percent chance for success.
In southern New England, that can be as late as October or early November.
You can include out
for some organic matter.
If you do that, that is typically in the range of about 20 pounds of oats per acre.
You want to seed a bit earlier, more like August or September.
That's so the oats will germinate, grow a bit, and then they will die back over winter.
Mowing our needed in years 1 and 2 to reduce weeds.
After establishment, ideally, it is best to mow no more than half of the area each year to get vertical diversity in the habitat.
Leave half complete
and disturb each year.
We know we don't want to mow lower than 6 inches because you could harm the rosettes of the perennial plants
that are coming in.
I tell landowners 8 inches out of an abundance of caution even though 6 inches is probably okay.
There's a cover shot of Pedro planting document that Xerces wrote for Rhode Island.
They created these for a number of states.
Besides the plant list and background on the practice, there is information for each plant species on the light requirements, moisture requirements, whether it has value as a host plant for certain species, and so forth.
So a good document, and I think Rhode Island document is probably useful to everyone in New England, again, as long as you are not too far north, we are, the plant species establish -- assemblage really changes.
Arrowood [indiscernible word],
that is my absolute favorite plant.
Full disclosure, my background and the love that brought me to wildlife

biology is songbirds.
Full disclosure.
This is an extraordinarily high value plant because of its nutritional value for migratory songbirds and fault migration as well as a native plant that benefits pollinators.
This is a list that I give to my planners were Songbird planning.
This was developed by Doctor McWilliams that you are I and his graduate students, Susan Smith.
You can see that they did so very extensive analysis of fats, carbs, and energy content, along with adding in antioxidants.
This list as you can easily imagine, has a lot of value for pollinators and tremendous value for migratory songbirds.
Besides my own bias toward birds, one of the other things that I like to think about is some of our customers may add birds and some of our customers may be interested in in game species.
So you can take that angle for people whose interest is outside of pollinators and work that way and get them interested in doing habitat work that may benefit a number.
For tree and shrub establishment, what I recommend, what we like to do here is to plant fairly close together.
You are not planting an orchard to maximize reproduction.
In addition to the foraging value, you want to plant three-foot, forefoot on centers close together because you want to maximize cover value as these plants mature.
And this page comes from our tree and shrub establishment for New England cottontail.
Some general principles, one of the things that Kelly taught me early on as I learned about pollinator conservation, it is not all about wildflowers.
When bumblebee queens are emerging from hibernation in the spring, there are no wild flowers blooming at the time.
So managing for maples and willows in particular is helpful.
On the other end of the calendar, New England Astor, New York Astor, Meadow suite, Goldenrod, these are all things that you will want to assess and include in your ranking on the WHEG in the pre-ranking to see what kind of resources are there, where are the holes in the calendar, do you need more late-season plans, more early-season, more midseason, and so forth.
So it's pretty straightforward planting principles.
Kelly covered a lot of ideas that it's not necessarily just planting and seating.
She mentioned feathering the edge of a forest to give resources there.

This is a shot from one of our New England cottontail projects in North Kingstown Rhode Island.
This is a fairly
[indiscernible word]
site where we get huckleberry,
blueberry, et cetera.
Early-season maple and willow forage, as I said, minute ago, the site, we've seen black airy, blueberry, huckleberry, and.
So early successional is another example of where you can benefit a number of vertebrate species and follow your producers, the forest management plan, as well as getting benefits for pollinators.
To comment about plant idea, I have noticed in my many years at the agency that a college curricula in many universities have changed.
A lot of our employees coming on, all the young planners, I say that be the person in your office that Excel at plant ID skills.
You will stand out in a crowd and certainly, if you ever want to advance on to a resourcing position, that is one of the single most important skills that you can bring.
Learn the species on the pollinator WHEG and we will follow up with another webinar that would roll deeper into that.
Other plant species and the value for declining wildlife and insect species, while you are learning plant ID, another thing, not that it relates necessarily to pollinators, but be aware of species in your region that are toxic to livestock.
Learn to recognize some of the more common, this plant,
[indiscernible name], it is grass leaved Goldenrod, also called flattopped Goldenrod and Golden top et cetera, it grows in large colonies and certainly this would be something important to note when you are looking at your before score for your WHEG.
Another example that is typically found in large colonies, something that is hard to miss when you are assessing habitat on your projects, that is jewel weed, an excellent source of forage for pollinators.
New England Astor, I've been told that the Xerces folks refer to certain plant is ice cream plant and this is one of them.
Pollinators and other insects are very much attracted to this plant.
It has beautiful aesthetic
as you can see from the photo.
It is very hearty.
So I highly recommend this.
Alongside that comments, as I am saying here, typically, in the fall, in old field, associated were not, you will see a lot of asters and Goldenrod's blooming late into the year so keep that in mind as you are assessing habitat.

Meadow suite is another great plant and pretty easy to recognize and it looks very much like this photo when it is in bloom.
When I do see it, I see clouds of insects.
This is a great one.
It's relative is Steeple Bush which is also very easy to recognize in the field.
Both of these are included in the plant least -- plant list on the WHEG.
Job I need -- Joe Pye Weed is on the plant list on the WHEG.
We will often see this in wet spots in larger fields.
You can consider leaving these areas out of your site prep and seating.
Use that idea or that principle to scout for other valuable plants on site and consider working around them.
You do not want to destroy resources that are there only to come in and put on seat where you are not going to have
forage resources,
perhaps, for a year or more.
So consider working around existing high-value plants and landscapes.
Don't associate milkweed's
only with Monarch conservation.
They attract many beneficial insects and pollinators.
This is called butterfly milkweed.
It has a very striking aesthetic.
For many landowners, aesthetics are important.
Than what color, beauty and the landscape.
That is one way to sell this particular milkweed species.
Coreopsis is the only one that we have allowed intermix that is not technically native.
It is naturalized and does not have a native habitat so there is no real issue there.
It has some value for pollinators, not superhigh.
But it helps to bring down
the overall seed cost.
This photo is from the very first project that I worked on.
There was a very high percentage of coreopsis and what was interesting is you could see how densely
this plant came in.
There certainly weren't in vases coming in alongside of it because they were really very few sites
for them to come in.
This stuck around for a while and eventually went out and other species came in and that is common
over the years.
One species may dominate for a while and later be overtaken by some of the

others.
Some of the newer ideas that are coming
out of research,
this is white turtle head.
This bumblebee is sticking its head inside there to get the reward.
Basically this is often used in landscape planting and all of these
have now been shown, along with common, annual sunflower, that have some
compounds where bees with a high load of intestinal parasites will
preferentially seek out the species.
So another thing to keep in mind, we will keep you open this research that
has been going on and we are starting to incorporate this into our plan.
So I just want to give a shout out to Fish and Wildlife Service and the
blueberry commission of Maine I want to thank Anna Harris, David Simmons,
Tony, and Richard all from the Fish and Wildlife Service who have been very
helpful in shepherding this project along.
With that, I will give it back to Jen.
Actually, I will take it.
This is Don Riley.
I want to go through a few questions that have been submitted throughout the
presentation.
First I would like to thank Jeremy, Mark, Kelly, Gary for your time in
preparing this presentation.
There's a lot of good information.
I was writing notes myself.
I look forward to going back and watching this again.
We have a few questions
before we wrap up.
We are running short on time but we want to grab a couple.
While you think about a few questions, a few questions that were raised have
been answered already, but in case you missed it, I will mention those.
One question was when it comes to establishments, can you use a
[indiscernible word] drill and yes.
That's actually one of the preferred methods, especially the larger sites.
As Kelly mentioned, it's always important to make sure it is properly
calibrated.
Another series of questions were related to technical service providers.
Do we need -- do any exist or are they available in a southern New England and
where can we find them?
Kelly answer that.
Yes.
Eddie TSP information, you can see that others have been the questions
that have an answer I have a couple of when we wanted it real quick before we
end today.

One is a little bit outside of what we talked about but I thought it was worthwhile to bring it up.
It was mentioned that bats can be pollinators.
If anybody wants to touch on that, I think Mark said he might be able to handle the question.
Bats can you pollinators.
Their species found in tropical or desert environments.
Northeast bats typically are not known as pollinators.
But they would greatly benefit by pollinator plantings because, over 90% of their diet consists of moths.
Those would be bolstered
by pollinator habitat.
A few questions are on the implementation side of things.
When we talk about core practices, can those be used in conjunction with solar projects?
This is Kelly.
Any planting practices can be eligible plantings.
There are different restrictions that need to be discussed.
I'm sure you might be aware of that.
I cannot answer the question as far as if solar plantings can be a part of a contract of a NEPP contract.
So technically, yes, on the habitat establishment end.
But if somebody can address solar plantings as far as EQIP or CSP, I would appreciate that.
This is Jeremy.
For solar projects, I would, I would say that the landowner, the entity that is applying for financial assistance, they would have to meet the eligibility requirements as a participating landowner in the land eligibility requirement to participate in NEPP.
But like I said, there are opportunities, if we provide the technical assistance, there are opportunities to increase pollinator habitat in those areas.
Right.
So you may not necessarily
qualify for the program.
There are a lot of variables.
We can provide you with some information at the bare minimum.
I will lump a few questions into one question because they hit on the same subject and it was really talking about those three categories of practices, the core and associated practices, and aligning it.
I will some the question up -- I will summarize the question.
Are the practices listed on the tables today, is that what folks are limited to when it comes to planning under this particular partnership?

This is Jeremy.
Yes.
The requirement is at least one of those core practices that were listed
and the other supporting associated practices could also be utilized for
conserving pollinators so yes, at least one core practice and those other
associated and other practices could be
used in an NRCS contract
or EQIP or CSP.
Great.
There were a couple of conversations going on and some specific plans and I
would just throw one out there for conversation.
Someone asked about specifically pleurisy for monarchs.
Does anyone have a thought on that or any other plant that you would want to
provide some insight on in addition to what Gary and others have talked about?
I'm not familiar with that.
I was having a connection issue.
That actually refers to specifically as
[indiscernible word]
which is our butterfly milkweed.
That is an excellent monarch plant in our region.
Common milkweed and Swamp milkweed are also good once.
What we try to stay away from, if we import this plant, the tropical
milkweed in particular which has orange flowers just like the pleurisy route or
[indiscernible word] which we also call butterfly milkweed, you know, the
tropical milkweed, by the name, does not sound like it should grow in doing
that but it also can, it has the ability to harbor more disease.
So importing it from other nurseries where were not sure how or where these
plants were grown and with what type of sanitary conditions, then you could
impact monarchs negatively.
So definitely pleurisy route or butterfly milkweed or
[indiscernible word] is certainly beneficial, just not the similar
looking tropical milkweed.
Thank you.
Think you again to all of the presenters.
Great job.
Rate information.
There are a lot of comments about it's good information and thank you and I
appreciated that I want to point out again that this presentation will be
available for future viewing along with the resources that you saw here.
If there are more questions, feel free to reach out to the presenters or your
local field office folks
or your Xerces partner biologist.
With that, thank you for your time and for everyone who dialed in, thank you

so much for taking time to listen and contribute.
With that, I will turn it over.
Thank you.
On the half of the USDA and the natural resource and conservation service, I want to say thank you to Kelly, Jeremy, Mark, Gary, Don, for taking time out of their busy schedules to provide an excellent presentation about the New England Pollinator Partnership.
Thank you again to everyone
for attending today's webinar.
Have a great afternoon.