

## **COMMUNIQUÉ**

### **THE CANADIAN POLLINATION PROTECTION INITIATIVE**

The first meeting of the Canadian Pollinator Protection Initiative (CPPI) was held in Ottawa from January 18-19, 2007 and was attended by over 80 delegates from the bee industries, federal and provincial governments, academia, museums, and environmental and agricultural NGOs. This Initiative represents an expansion of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) into Canada and serves to link Canadian pollinator conservation with similar activities in the USA and Mexico.

Speakers from universities, governments, NGOs, museums, and the private bee industries highlighted the historical roles that Canada has played, and continues to play, in developing the science and the application of pollination. The enormous importance of pollinators in sustaining seed and fruit production in our agriculture and horticulture was made clear. Because Canada has ratified the 1992 Biodiversity Convention, it is obligated to deliver on those provisions in the Treaty that deal specifically with pollinating species. Pollination by insects is directly responsible for generating one eighth to one third of Canadians' food and is, therefore, central to our national food security. Wild pollinators maintain natural food webs and generate the seeds and fruits upon which so many of our wild animal species depend. Pollination is the critical link between the specially co-evolved species of plants and animals, and their service role is central to maintaining biodiversity across Canada's landscapes.

However, there is a decline in insect pollinators and their services at the Continental and global levels due to the application of pesticides, diseases of bees, habitat fragmentation and urban expansion. The conference examined what needs to be done on different fronts to redress this situation and to enhance the conservation status of native and managed insect pollinators in Canada.

A strong synergy among the different representatives is apparent, and this can be capitalized on to deliver enhanced conservation of pollinating species under this Initiative.

Recognition by the federal government is needed to sanction this Canadian Initiative with its NAPPC partners. The US and Mexican governments have already done so. At the same time, a federal inter-departmental memorandum of understanding is required to assure cooperation, especially among Environment Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Natural resources Canada. Consistent with this, there should be a federal-provincial-territorial joint initiative that recognizes jurisdiction in pollinator/pollination issues, but allows for federal assistance in achieving conservation at the national level. The municipalities of Canada should be included in this Initiative because they have so much control over the local habitats of pollinating species.

In addition, funding mechanisms should be established to permit ongoing research in native pollinator ecology and systematics, the rehabilitation of pollinators in degraded

rural and urban landscapes, and public education. A plan that embraces the roles and participation of the private bee industries must be established from the beginning under this Initiative.

The ongoing analysis of existing federal and provincial government policy and law pertaining to conservation should be expanded, consistent with the goals of the Initiative. Policy changes in environmental and agriculture departments and minor amendments to some federal, provincial, and municipal acts would facilitate the conservation of pollinators.

The 2007 report of the U.S. Academy of Sciences on the Status of Pollinators in North America was presented at the conference, which discussed, briefly, its implications for insect pollinator conservation in Canada. The Canadian Initiative still has to determine whether, or not, to adopt its recommendations as the basis for pollinator conservation throughout Canada.

Strong representations to the appropriate Standing Committees of Parliament and the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development must be made as part of this Initiative to assist government in doing its part. This Canadian Initiative should be viewed as an investment by Canada in both its food security and environmental health. The Initiative is a win-win situation for all levels of Canadian governments and their parties that endorse it, for the food-producing sectors, and our national biodiversity.

The future role of the Canadian Initiative is to act as the node through which the different representatives at the conference can work together to combine research information, practices, education/outreach, and policy analyses into the components of a new Canada-wide venture into pollinator conservation. There is consensus that the CPPI should become a regular, yearly event but the question which still needs to be answered is how this initiative is to continue so as to plan and organize a meeting in January, 2008.