Message from our Board: Erin Rupp joins our team to serve as Interim Program Director

The Pollinator Stewardship Council has been hard at work this past year protecting pollinators through legal efforts, education and advocacy, all focused on reducing the adverse effects of pesticides on our native and managed bee species. Most notably, we garnered over 4000 signatories to Dr. Susan Kegley’s, Dr. Jonathan Lundgren’s and Dr. Jeff Pettis’ letters to the EPA calling for a ban of neonicotinoid insecticides. Flawed industry studies should not be allowed to confuse the simple truth that systemic neonicotinoid insecticides represent an unmitigated disaster for pollinators. The Pollinator Stewardship Council supports a total ban on the use of neonic, for all outdoor applications, including foliar, drench, and seed treatments.

For most of the past year we have searched for a Program Director. We’re excited to introduce Erin Rupp, our temporary Program Director. Erin will be catalyzing our letters into a campaign, increasing our communications, and preparing us to hire a permanent Director in 2021. Erin has been a hobby beekeeper for 13 years and is Founder and Executive Director of the Minnesota nonprofit, Pollinate Minnesota. Pollinate Minnesota is an education and advocacy organization, and Erin is a skilled nonprofit leader and professional pollinator educator—translating the specifics of pollination and pollinator decline to both 2nd graders and Minnesota State Legislators.

Her work with us couldn’t come at a more critical time. Beekeepers continue to lose an unsustainable number of colonies every year. We know loss numbers include 100% losses in many yards and operations and doesn’t capture the incredible increase in beekeeper labor and expense to keep the surviving hives alive. We know that pesticide exposure is driving these declines and we’re demanding change at the Federal, State and Local level. We’ve long been committed to federal change, and are working with Erin to expand our work at the state and local level.

We are grateful for the incredible leadership Michele Colopy provided in our first seven years and are excited to have Erin’s expertise and support as we work to hire a full time Executive Director.

As always, we’re also grateful for you, our members, donors and supporters. Thank you. We’re looking forward to working together to achieve our mission “to defend managed and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply, from the adverse impact of pesticides.”

The Pollinator Stewardship Council Board of Directors
Steve Ellis, President
Defending managed and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply from the adverse impact of pesticides

Dear friends and supporters,

Since 2012, the Pollinator Stewardship Council has been working to defend pollinators from the harmful effects of pesticides. As a small Minnesota beekeeper, I’ve experienced both the heartbreak of acute and delayed acute (sublethal) pesticide poisonings of my own hives, and the ongoing challenge of transforming this loss—and the scientific understanding of pesticide impacts on our health and ecosystems—into lasting policy reform. The organization I founded, Pollinate Minnesota, works for policy protection and also connects the public and K-12 audiences to this issue through hands-on educational experiences with live honey bees.

I’ve been leading, in community, pollinator policy change efforts in Minnesota. We’ve seen incredible investment in pollinator research and habitat programs at the state and local level in our state; we lead the nation in the amount of policy, both passed and authored, at both levels. Yet, pollinators in Minnesota continue to die: MN beekeepers lose around 50% of our hives annually, and our new state bee, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, once Minnesota’s most common, continues to be on the Endangered Species list. The reason is clear—we have yet to impactfully address pollinators’ exposure to pesticides.

It is incredibly exciting to translate my experience, both as an educator, and a state level organizer, to national work; I am humbled and honored to be able to support the growth and success of the Pollinator Stewardship Council’s mission over these next few months.

So looking forward to working with you all. Look for a PSC newsletter from me before the end of the year!

Thank you for your work and support,

Erin