

HOSTED BY:



VIRTUAL APPALACHIAN FOREST POLLINATOR CONSERVATION CONFERENCE



TUESDAY, AUGUST 10TH
9 AM TO 11:45 AM

Stakeholders throughout the Appalachian Forest region will come together to present on the many facets of pollinator conservation including habitat restoration, policy and citizen science.

Click [here](https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/pollinator-initiative) to register or visit our website at <https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/pollinator-initiative>

CONFERENCE ITINERARY

- 9:00 AM - 9:10 AM ● Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 9:10 AM - 9:30 AM ● "Rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) recovery efforts in the Appalachian region" with **Mark Hepner**
- 9:30 AM - 9:50 AM ● "Conservation of Federally Endangered Pollinators in West Virginia - Where Science and Regulatory Process Meet" with **Alex Silvis**
- 9:50 AM - 10:10 AM ● "Pollinator Habitat Establishment on the Gauley District" with **Cheryl Tanner**
- 10:10 AM - 10:30 AM ● "Mineland Restoration and Opportunities for Pollinator Habitat" with **Anna Branduzzi**
- 10:30 AM - 10:50 PM ● "Roadsides in Bloom" - Operation Wildflower with **Kim Smith**
- 10:50 AM - 11:10 AM ● ""Introducing the Appalachian Headwaters Pollinator Center" with **Dr. Kristen Wickert** and **Kate Asquith**
- 11:10 AM - 11:30 PM ● "Pollinator Conservation Challenges in West Virginia" with **Lacey Smith**
- 11:30 AM - 11:45 PM ● Optional Discussion and Closing Remarks

SUMMIT SPEAKERS



Mark Hepner
**Rusty patched bumble
bee (*Bombus affinis*)
recovery efforts in the
Appalachian region.**

Mark has a degree in wildlife and fisheries from West Virginia University and has been working on a list of native bees of West Virginia for the past several years. He has conducted field surveys in all 55 West Virginia counties and successfully located several rare species, including the endangered rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*). He is a US Fish and Wildlife Service *Bombus affinis* Recovery Permit holder, focusing his efforts on finding new locations and the collection of non-lethal DNA, pollen, and pathogen samples. Mark is currently working with the US Geological Survey on *Bombus* monitoring survey methods and protocols for use in the development of conservation tools for *Bombus* of the eastern US and beyond.



Alex Silvis
**Conservation of Federally
Endangered Pollinators in
West Virginia - Where
Science and Regulatory
Process Meet**

Alex is the Endangered Species Coordinator for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR). His program at the WVDNR is responsible for monitoring the 30 federally threatened and endangered species in West Virginia, developing proactive conservation measures and plans for those species, and overseeing Endangered Species Act compliance. Prior to joining the WVDNR, Alex was a research scientist at Virginia Tech, where he specialized in assessing the impacts of land use and management activities on federally threatened and endangered species.

SUMMIT SPEAKERS



Anna Branduzzi
Mineland Restoration and Opportunities for Pollinator Habitat

Originally from Pittsburgh, Anna moved to WV in 2014 to serve as an AFNHA AmeriCorps Wildlife Tech on the Monongahela National Forest (MNF). After her service year she was hired by the MNF as a Biological Science Tech. In 2018 she began a Master's program at the University of Kentucky and did a Graduate Research Assistantship under the MNF's long-time mineland restoration partner, Dr. Chris Barton of Green Forests Work. The focus of her research was native plant restoration on minelands in the red spruce ecosystem. After graduating in December 2020, Anna was hired by Green Forests Work as Reforestation Coordinator for WV and PA.



Lacey Smith
Pollinator Conservation Challenges in West Virginia

Lacey Smith joined the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Diversity Program as a partner biologist with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in the fall of 2019. She earned her environmental geoscience degree (B.A.) and forestry degree (M.S.) from West Virginia University. Her past work includes monitoring a variety of plant populations, plant preservation, soil sampling, and providing plant identification for private landowners. Lacey is currently a partner employee with NRCS, providing technical assistance on creating pollinator habitats using the 2018 Farm Bill. Lacey also provides pollinator outreach events for WVU Extension, Garden Clubs, and Bee Keeping groups. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, camping, hiking, and photography. She lives in Morgantown, West Virginia with her husband and two adopted cats.

SUMMIT SPEAKERS



Kristen Wickert
Introducing the
Appalachian Headwaters
Pollinator Center

Dr. Kristen Wickert is the Native Pollinator Scientist for Appalachian Headwaters. She is professionally educated as a plant pathologist with hands-on research and field experience in the realms of botany, mycology, entomology, microbiology and forestry. Her bachelors in Forest Biology from Penn State and masters and PhD in Plant Pathology from West Virginia University exposed her to the wonderful diversity of the Appalachian Mountains. Kristen loves to travel to botanize and is passionate about sharing her knowledge of the ecological observations she has made during her adventures. Using her skills and knowledge to help the people of the Appalachian Mountains preserve their home and culture through her work with Appalachian Headwaters fulfills her professional passion.



Kate Asquith
Introducing the
Appalachian Headwaters
Pollinator Center

Kate Asquith has been on Headwaters' staff since its beginning as the Director of Programs and Outreach. Before joining Headwaters, Kate worked for conservation and community advocacy groups for more than a decade. Her past work includes several years with public interest environmental law firms including Appalachian Mountain Advocates and Southern Environmental Law Center. Kate earned her law degree from the University of Washington and her bachelor's degree in Biology from Maryville College in east Tennessee.

SUMMIT SPEAKERS



Cheryl Tanner
Pollinator Habitat
Establishment on the
Gauley District

Cheryl Tanner has a B.S. in Zoology from Marshall University and a M.S. in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology from Frostburg State University. She has been a wildlife technician on the Gauley District of the Monongahela National Forest for 14 years and has been doing pollinator work for about 10 years.



Kim Smith
Roadsides in Bloom with
Operation Wildflower

Kim Smith is the State Program Coordinator for Operation Wildflower and Adopt a Highway. She has her Master's in Biology from Marshall University and has been with the program for 6 years and with WVDEP for 18 years.



AFNHA's Pollinator Initiative is proud to be bringing awareness to pollinator conservation in the Appalachian Forest region via logistical support and educational outreach. Thank you for joining us in supporting native Appalachian pollinators and all of their hard work!