

Minnesota Honey Producers Association Habitat Hour with Tina Markeson

Our first MHPA Habitat Hour webinar was held on April 6, 2022. Tina Markeson is a roadside vegetation rockstar and a supervisor with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. She presented *Managing MN Roadsides & Exploring Partnership Opportunities with Bee Supporters*. We were happy to have 38 attendees online with us.

Here are some of the highlights of Tina's presentation:

MNDOT manages 175,000 acres of greenspace along 12,000 miles of Interstate, State and US Highways. MNDOT only manages 10% of the roads in Minnesota.

The 'whys' of roadside management include clear sightlines, stormwater management and safe spaces for cars to pull over for maintenance and other issues. Roadside vegetation is used to hold soil in place, control weeds, control of blowing snow as well as habitat, aesthetics and quality of life.

Based on site and the ecosystem, roadside management is performed via Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management and may include: mechanical/mowing, herbicides, prescribed fires, biological control and cultural methods. When using herbicides, MNDOT utilizes Driftwatch.

MNDOT has a goal of increasing native seed, plant and tree planting. They recognize the importance of early season nectar and pollen for pollinators.

MNDOT has an interest in expanding external partnerships. Currently there are three programs where they can collaborate: annual permits and maintenances agreements, the Community Landscape Partnership Program and the Highway Partnership Program.

Resources:

<https://driftwatch.org/>

MNDOT Programs

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/partners/index.html>

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/highway-sponsorship/index.html>