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**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Cass Clay Food Partners  
Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG)  
**Date:** September 6, 2019  
**RE:** Cass Clay Food Commission Agenda and Correspondence

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### 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

September 11, 2019 10:30 am – 12:00 pm  
Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

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|----------|---|
| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Approve Order &amp; Contents of the Overall Agenda</li><li>b. Review &amp; Action on Minutes from May 8, 2019 (<b>Attachment 1</b>)</li></ul> |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Check-In – Chair Thorstad   |
| 10:40 am | 3. Single Use Packaging Materials Issue Brief & Snapshot – Noelle Harden ( <b>Attachment 2a &amp; 2b</b> )  |
| 10:45 am | 4. Metro Food Plan Update – Adam Altenburg  |
| 11:05 am | 5. Strengthening Ties between Cass Clay Food Commission & Action Network (First Fridays at B) – Abby Gold   |
| 11:15 am | 6. Approaches to Pollinator Conservation – Don Kinzler, Cass County Extension, Agriculture & Natural Resources  |
| 11:35 am | 7. Pollinator Habitat Issue Brief & Snapshot – Kim Lipetzky ( <b>Attachment 3</b> )   |
| 11:40 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Thorstad  |
| 11:50 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable – Chair Thorstad  |
| 11:55 am | 10. Commission Action Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Next First Fridays – October 4, 2019</li><li>b. Next Commission Meeting – November 13, 2019</li></ul>                        |
| 12:00 pm | 11. Adjournment   |

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Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Savanna Leach at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at [www.cassclayfoodpartners.org](http://www.cassclayfoodpartners.org) and Metro COG's website at [www.fmmetrocog.org](http://www.fmmetrocog.org).

# Attachment 1

**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Fargo Commission Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission, Chair  
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council  
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council  
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council  
Vern Bennett, Cass County Commission  
Bukola Bakare, At-Large Member  
Nancy Carriveau, At-Large Member  
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member  
Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission  
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member  
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

John Strand, Fargo City Commission

**Others Present:**

Margie Bailly, Cass Clay Food Partners  
Bob Bertsch, Graduate Student NDSU Extension  
Luke Champa, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments  
Abby Gold, NDSU Department of Public Health  
Gary Goreham, NDSU Department of Anthropology and Sociology  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Paula Selzler, Sodexo  
Hunter Tran, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Thorstad called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

**1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda**

Chair Thorstad noted that the agenda had been revised. He noted that item 5 would be grouped with item 7, and that Ms. Harden and Lipetzky would discuss the Metro Food Plan in Mr. Altenburg's absence.

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Ms. Carriveau. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 13, 2019**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Carriveau and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**2. Commission Check-In**

Chair Thorstad stated that Commission members and the steering committee had an opportunity to provide updates on news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Johnson indicated that she is working with a resident in Horace to get a farmer's market started and will be trying it out a few times this summer, with the goal of having a more permanent location in the summer of 2020.

Ms. Carriveau stated that letter carriers in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth would be picking up canned food items from homes on Saturday, May 11. She noted that the food would be going to the Great Plains Food Bank, Dorothy Day, and the Emergency Food Pantry. She stated that additional volunteers are welcome to help collect the food.

Ms. Carriveau added that with the end of school coming up, the food bank would be helping with the childhood hunger programs this summer. She explained that as kids will not be getting food provided at school through school breakfast and or lunch, the food bank and other partners would be holding a youth summer meals program. She said they will be set up at one location in Village West and one in West Fargo.

Mindy Grant arrived at 10:35 AM.

### **3. Single Use Packaging Materials Issue Brief and Snapshot**

Ms. Oxendahl gave a presentation regarding single use materials. She informed the commission that many communities are taking efforts to reduce plastic waste by eliminating the harmful single use items.

Ms. Oxendahl went on to talk about a couple things happening in the region. First, she said there is the FM Plastic Bag Task Force, who is working in the metro to educate the public on what they can do with plastic bags. Prairie Roots Food Coop has eliminated plastic bags for customers to carry groceries out of the store. They have also started a take-a-jar leave-a-jar program which cleans and sanitizes different containers for more sustainable use. She said Natural Grocers has also eliminated plastic bags. The Red River Market has also become a landfill free event. She said that the market sees 7,000 to 10,000 people a day, and would like to see a commercial composting option in the region, as they need more room to compost any waste produced by the market or its vendors. She said that Concordia and MSUM have a green-to-go program for students to take any leftovers from meals in a reusable container that they can bring back to the cafeteria to be cleaned. She added that there are several businesses and restaurants in our community that are working to reduce plastic waste. She informed the commission of a 2019 ND bill (HB1200) which puts a ban on the ban of single use plastics, which she believes may be a step in the wrong direction.

Ms. Oxendahl concluded with actions that our community should consider such as a high-heat commercial composting site, providing resources to small businesses on how to reduce their use of single use plastic materials, and supporting those businesses that have reduced their use of single use materials. She then pointed commissioners to the final page of her presentation which offers examples of what people can do to reduce single use materials in their day-to-day lives.

Ms. Mongeau suggested that awareness is key and even simple signage may go a long way in helping people recycle and reduce waste.

Mr. Utecht asked if there had been any consideration in helping new businesses with reducing single use materials, and if there were any resources out there to help new businesses. Ms. Oxendahl said there were not many resources but it could be a great partnership for local government to assist the business community.

Ms. Watson Curry reiterated that plastic bags are not quite as visible, but stressed that the plastic bags cannot be recycled in commingled recycling bins. She then asked if there was any discussion with local recycling businesses. Ms. Oxendahl said no but she will be updating the snapshot. Ms. Watson Curry suggested we reach out to recycling businesses in the region to make sure the recycling stream is working from household to sorting bin to the recycling business as a useable product.

Ms. Gold said it is important to include a zero waste mindset into business models and especially through resources provided to new businesses. She said it could help save money throughout the community.

Mr. Bennett asked if anyone had an opinion about incinerating some waste products. Ms. Oxendahl said there is an air quality issue related to incinerating waste but the option could always be explored further by local governments. Ms. Gold added that composting is the most environmentally friendly and cost effective way to take things out of the landfill.

Mr. Thorstad asked if it would be worthwhile to engage the chamber of commerce on this topic. Ms. Oxendahl said yes it would be very worthwhile to spread this information throughout the community. Ms. Watson Curry said that there is a group from the chamber of commerce that is interested in being more environmentally friendly when handling waste in our communities.

#### **4. Benefits for Businesses in Reducing Single Use Materials**

Paula Selzler introduced herself and her employer Sodexo, which is an international company that provides facilities management and food service to MSUM, Essentia Health, and Noridian. Ms. Selzler currently works at Essentia Health Hospital in Fargo. The Hospital opened in 2000 and has grown, with a café and kitchen remodel in 2015. Ms. Selzler said currently they serve 250-400 trays of food in room service, and 750-1,000 meals in retail everyday.

Ms. Selzler said that room service is 75% reusable products however the café is 95% single use products. She shared some images and statistics of how much single use plastic pollutes the earth. She added that Sodexo has a commitment for 2025 or sooner to train employees to reduce carbon emissions and work on food waste targets as well. In the short-term she said they will eliminate single use plastic take out bags and plastic stirrers and reduce plastic straw use by adopting a 'by request' policy. Long-term goals will take place by 2025.

Ms. Selzler shared an example of success at Essentia Health. She said they were looking for ways to reduce departmental costs and identified an opportunity in spending of disposable materials. She said staff would often use disposable 32oz styrofoam cups to fill with water however, they would often double them up for better insulation and add a plastic lid and straw. The costs were not recouped as this was for employees, and it resulted in more plastic waste. Ms. Selzler said that she offered Essentia Health mugs that could be purchased by employees and café customers. The stainless steel mugs were on sale for \$20 however, Ms. Selzler did not care about the cost of the mugs as much as the potential reduction in waste. She offered incentives for people to purchase them such as a free fill of coffee or soda and discounts when using any reusable mug. Ms. Selzler also said they began charging \$0.25 for each styrofoam cup without a beverage purchase. She said that they sold 125 of the 150 mugs they purchased.

Ms. Selzler then shared some results from the Essentia Health mug program. She said they reduced their spending on the styrofoam cups by \$1,000 a month. Since charging for the styrofoam cups without a beverage purchase, they earn \$75 a month. She went on to say that

in three months time, it reduced the usage of disposable cups by 23,000, which is a substantial number.

Ms. Selzler said their future goals include reducing straw use all around, and reducing single use plastic waste in the café. She shared that if they use a stainless steel fork five times, they break even on the cost of five disposable forks.

Ms. Selzler shared some other things that the community could look at including proper disposal of compostable single use items, community education, and strategies for reducing single use items such as charging for shopping bags. She shared an example of Davies High School in Fargo, explaining that they implemented reusable forks in the cafeteria; however, students were throwing them in the trash in hopes that the school would switch to disposables because reusable forks are seen as less clean. She shared this example because it is important to educate children and adults alike about this information.

Mr. Thorstad said that what Ms. Selzler shared is very important. He agreed with her that education is very important at every level, including what can and cannot be recycled.

Ms. Johnson said she was struck by the quantity of cups reduced in three months and what a difference that was.

## **6. Social Network Analysis**

Bob Bertsch explained what the social network analysis for the Cass Clay Food Commission is about, and how it will help guide food policy in the region. The analysis will also map the relationships between decision makers in Cass and Clay counties. Mr. Bertsch said that this will help shape food policy in the region by showing what relationships are strongest and who has the most interactions on the commission. He said the analysis will also help show where stronger connections can be made to improve decision making across the region. He added that it will be interesting to see how local government decision makers are connected with food policy.

Mr. Bertsch asked the Commission to please fill out the survey, whether online or with the envelope provided.

Ms. Bakare asked who would be taking the survey. Mr. Bertsch responded that the Cass Clay Food Commission, City Commissions, County Commissions, Cass Clay Food Commission Steering Committee, and some city staff such as administrators, community developers, and planners. She asked if there would be an interest in also seeing how the community engages with the policy makers. Mr. Bertsch said that yes, he would be really interested in that however it is a serious undertaking to get the response rate required to show informative results.

Ms. Harden said that names can be added to the survey too if they are not on the original list of 68.

Mr. Thorstad asked if they were required to select a single category that describes the relationship to other decision makers, or if multiple categories may apply. Mr. Bertsch said select the one category that best describes the relationship as it relates to food policy.

Ms. Watson Curry asked if there was an encouraged deadline for survey completion. Mr. Bertsch said that by the end of June they would like to have all the responses and dive into analysis mode.

Ms. Mongeau left at 11:23 AM.

## **7. Commission Update on Previous & Future Activities**

Ms. Harden gave a brief update on the Metro Food Systems Plan. She said that she, Ms. Lipetzky, and Metro COG would be coming to decision making bodies sometime in the summer to provide an update on the plan. Ms. Harden added that the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed several blueprints, which provide helpful information regarding key food related topics that impact the metropolitan area.

Ms. Lipetzky gave a recap about food systems topics that have been covered by the Cass Clay Food Partners. She added that the documents used to be called blueprints, however lately have been called issue briefs and community snapshots. She explained that the City of Fargo used the Backyard Chicken Keeping blueprint to help develop the city's ordinance on chicken keeping. She reminded the commission that these documents are at their disposal for any food system related issues that may come up in their communities.

Mr. Thorstad said it might be helpful to give municipalities printed copies of the food system blue prints and make it easier to get in their hands.

Ms. Harden asked each commissioner to share any food policy issues that are on their radar. Ms. Watson Curry highlighted that the Metro Food Plan is referenced in the City of Moorhead's Strategic planning document. Ms. Watson Curry then said some issues have come up regarding rain gardens, pollinator habitat, composting, community gardens, backyard bee keeping, and backyard chicken keeping.

## **8. Public Comment Opportunity**

Chair Thorstad informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments.

Barb Villella, Prairie Roots Community Fund, gave an update about what the Prairie Roots Community Fund is working on including the spring garden, double SNAP bucks program, and classes at Madison School. She added that she was also working on a double SNAP bucks program at the West Acres Farmers Market as well.

Ms. Villella also noted one issue she had come across in the metro is the limit of the amount of grocery bags that can be carried onto the bus. She said currently the limit is four, and that many people do not know there is a limit. Ms. Bakare asked why the limit would be four. Ms. Villella said that it is most likely a local level decision. Ms. Harden said that she would look into it more closely.

Ms. Harden said that there would be a University of Minnesota Extension workshop on backyard chicken keeping in Moorhead on Saturday, May 11. The reason the workshop is happening is because of demand of the local community. She said the workshop would be at the Courtyard Marriott from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM, and would include a discussion about the current policies regarding chickens.

## **9. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable**

Chair Thorstad asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates.

No additional comments were made.

#### **10. Commission Action Steps**

Chair Thorstad stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on September 11. He also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held on May 10 at 8:00 AM located at Theatre B in Moorhead.

Mr. Thorstad informed the commission that the Red River Market is moving to the Forum parking lot for a couple years due to construction downtown.

Chair Thorstad adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.

## Single Use Materials

When ordering takeout at a favorite restaurant, it is easy to see the amount of packaging surrounding a meal: polystyrene foam (commonly referred to by the brand name “Styrofoam”) containers, plastic bags, plastic cups, lids, and straws. Most of these **single use materials** (with plastics being the largest contributor) end up in the trash and are hauled to the landfill. The material that evades the landfill ends up littering the ground and getting into the water supply. These plastics and other single use materials will not be leaving our lives any time soon, so individuals, businesses, and governments have focused on reducing these materials in myriad ways.

Problems with single use materials:

- 40% of all plastic produced is used in packaging - most used only once
- Less than one-fifth of all plastic gets recycled
- Each year, 4 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide and just 1% are recycled
- 18 billion pounds of plastics annually enter the oceans from coastal regions, killing millions of marine animals

Tackling the issue:

- California, along with cities such as Seattle and Washington D.C., has banned plastic straws (replaced by washable or paper straws)
- San Diego recently banned polystyrene foam containers and single use plastics (food vendors may only supply plastic straws and utensils to customers upon request)
- European Union Parliament voted to reduce single use plastics across Europe
- Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle have banned retail plastic bags, while other cities and companies have instituted bag fees
- Companies like Starbucks and McDonalds (in the UK) are phasing out plastic straws
- This year, Sodexo, a large foodservice company, will remove plastic bags and stirrers from 13,000 schools, workplaces, and other sites. They will also phase out polystyrene foam by 2025

### Key Definitions

Single Use Materials: packaging that is used once and discarded or recycled (e.g. plastic bags, straws, and bottles)

Biodegradable Plastics: plastics made out of plant or raw materials that are able to decompose in weeks or months. A good option if a community has access to a commercial composting facility

Polystyrene Foam (“Styrofoam”): low-cost, lightweight plastic that easily breaks into miniscule pieces (microplastic) and is generally refused by recycling centers

*For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or [klipetzky@fargond.gov](mailto:klipetzky@fargond.gov)*

Axios. Kigt, S. By the numbers: How the world is banning single-use plastics (online). Published 2018 July 5. <https://www.axios.com/single-use-plastic-ban-states-world-31debb6d-a167-4370-bee5-19bff05f10f7.html>

Earth Day (online). Fact Sheet: Single Use Plastics. Accessed 2019 January 19. <https://www.earthday.org/2018/03/29/fact-sheet-single-use-plastics/>.

National Geographic. Howard B, et al. A running list of action on plastic pollution (online). Published 2019 January 17. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/07/ocean-plastic-pollution-solutions/>

## Single Use Materials

*Cass-Clay* Community Snapshot

September 2019

### Introduction

About 40 percent of all plastic produced is used in packaging and most of this packaging has been designed to be used only once.<sup>1</sup> Most of it ends up in our landfills, littered on the ground, or in our waterways. It can even break down into tiny pieces called microplastics and make its way into the soil or the stomachs of wildlife. Much of this plastic packaging is not biodegradable and will remain in the environment for hundreds of years.

With increasing consumer awareness of the downsides of single use plastics and other packaging material like polystyrene foam (commonly referred to by the brand name “Styrofoam”), has caused companies, governments, and individuals to take action to reduce these **single use materials**.

Various types of packaging exist, but this community snapshot will focus on those used to serve food and beverages. Restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, and other retailers in the Fargo-Moorhead area have initiated changes to reduce single use materials, but there are further actions the community can take to reduce our dependence on these materials and the effect they have on our environment.

### Initiatives in Cass-Clay Addressing Single Use Materials

#### Community Education

**F-M Plastic Bag Task Force:** This task force, initiated by Clay County, is a nonprofit organization focused on educating the public on plastic consumption and how to recycle different types of plastic. It implemented the Boomerang Bag Program which provides free reusable bags at stores where there are plastic bag recycling drop-offs. They have launched “A Day Without a Bag” campaign to start a conversation about plastic bag usage where individuals can recycle their plastic bags at specific grocery stores in exchange for a reusable bag. In February 2019, the task force challenged fifth graders in the area to collect plastic bags to recycle.

Contact: Darla Lewandowski, F-M Plastic Bag Task Force Coordinator, 218-299-7279

<https://www.facebook.com/ClayCoPlasticBagTaskForce/>

**MinnKota EnviroServices:** This local recycling center services commercial recycling pick-ups in the Fargo-Moorhead area and is the drop-off point for Fargo-Moorhead’s residential services. In 2017, the company switched to no-sort recycling, with all types of household or commercial recycling collected in one bin, which caused a threefold increase in recycling usage. MinnKota actively promotes recycling awareness projects such as Earth Day, Arbor Day, and America Recycles Day, tours of the MinnKota Recycling facility are available by appointment, and a MinnKota representative is available for schools or community organization presentations pertaining to the recycling industry and its benefits. Their representatives have spoken at the Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, and provided direct training for businesses, to name a few.

<https://www.minnkotarecycling.com/recycling>

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<sup>1</sup> National Geographic. Howard B, et al. A running list of action on plastic pollution (online). Published 2019 January 17.  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/07/ocean-plastic-pollution-solutions/>

**River Keepers:** Years ago, their staff noticed bags getting caught in trees along the river, so a board member started the T-shirt to Tote Project, where volunteers make grocery tote bags out of gently used or new t-shirts that have been donated. Shoppers go home with hundreds of these bags each year at grocery stores near downtown Fargo, such as Prairie Roots Food Co-op, Swanson Health Products and Tochi Products, and at local events that River Keepers attends, like Midwest Kid Fest and the Fargo Police community picnic. To learn more about volunteering or making tote bags, email [kimberly@riverkeepers.org](mailto:kimberly@riverkeepers.org) or visit their website at <https://www.riverkeepers.org/volunteer/>

## Food Retailers

**Coffee Shops:** Many coffee shops in the area provide a discount to customers who bring in their reusable coffee cups instead of taking disposable to-go cups, or conversely upcharge those who *do not* bring in a reusable cup. Disposable coffee cups are not recyclable due to the thin layer of plastic inside the cardboard cup that keeps the cup waterproof.

**Convenience Stores:** Many gas stations in the area, like Holiday Stationstores, will charge a lower price for coffee if a customer brings in their own travel mug.

**Grocery Retailers:** Most grocery stores contain shelves upon shelves of single use packaging, delis with to-go containers, and plastic bags at check-out.

- In Fargo, plastic shopping bags are accepted for recycling\* at Cashwise Foods, Walmart, Hornbacher's, Family Fare, and Lowe's Home Improvement.
- In Moorhead, Cashwise Foods, Family Fare, Hornbacher's, Lowe's Home Improvement, Target, and Walmart accept plastic bags for recycling.\*
- Many grocery stores offer shoppers an incentive for bringing in reusable bags, such as Hornbachers, which offers a 5-cent discount for every bag a shopper brings to use at checkout.
- *Prairie Roots Food Co-op:* this local food cooperative has recently gone bagless! They provide t-shirt totes from River Keepers and empty product boxes for customers who do not have reusable bags at checkout. Their deli has recyclable to-go containers as well as washable plates, glasses, and silverware for customers eating in their community room. They encourage customers to bring in their own containers to fill at their bulk section and offer small glass mason jars and spice jars for purchase. The store recently introduced a "Take a Jar, Leave a Jar" station in their Bulk Department where shoppers can drop off jars for others to use after being cleaned and sanitized by staff.
- *Natural Grocers:* this natural foods store in Fargo provides empty product boxes for customers at check-out - no plastic bags.

\*See section below called *What can I do?* for a list of additional plastic packaging materials that can be recycled at these grocery retailers and businesses

## Governments and Nonprofits

**North Dakota:** In March 2019, the State Legislature passed a bill (HB 1200) which the governor signed into law that placed a ban on the ban of certain plastics. It restricts cities and counties from, among other measures, banning plastic straws and banning or taxing plastic bags. The bill was introduced by a Minot lawmaker who owns waste-hauling and landfill businesses, and proponents of the bill want to stop a "potential patchwork of regulations across the state and undue burden on businesses." The city of Minot was considering a 5-cent plastic bag tax which they will no longer be able to implement. Opponents of the bill would rather have the issue remain under local control and not be regulated at the state level. (*Note:*

*this is the only instance in this Community Snapshot that would not reduce the use of single use materials.)*

<https://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government-and-politics/4587521-paper-or-plastic-north-dakota-senate-says-cities-cant-ban>

<https://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Senate-votes-to-ban-cities-from-banning-or-taxing-plastic-bags-straws-507426351.html>

<https://www.valleynewslive.com/content/news/Bill-prohibits-communities-from-restricting-plastic-bag-use-507454801.html>

**Red River Market:** This farmers market in downtown Fargo strives to be a landfill-free event where nothing enters the landfill. All disposable materials must be compostable or recyclable. With an estimated attendance of more than 7,000 people per Saturday throughout the summer, this event has an impact on that day's landfill contents. They also have booths to educate consumers on how to recycle materials.

The event lacks enough composting space for all its disposable materials, so some of it ends up in the landfill. A municipal composting site would fill this gap for the farmers market.

[www.redriver.market](http://www.redriver.market)

## **Businesses and Schools**

**Blackbird Pizza:** The owner's daughter noticed the number of plastic straws that get thrown away, which led this restaurant in downtown Fargo to provide straws to customers only if they request one. Further, they started using reusable plastic lids in the kitchen instead of disposable plastic wrap.

<https://www.kvrr.com/2018/03/22/plastic-straws-plastic-bags/>

**Concordia College:** This Moorhead university's Dining Services has single use materials in mind when creating policies. They have a "Green-to-Go" program where students can pay a refundable \$5 deposit to their dining hall and receive a card that can be traded for a to-go container. When the dirty container is returned, the dining hall will take it back to wash it and the student receives their card back in exchange. Students can get their \$5 back if they want to stop participating in the program.

The dining hall also has EcoTensil tasting spoons instead of small plastic spoons to reduce plastic waste.

<https://www.concordiacollege.edu/student-life/dining-services/sustainability-in-dining/>

**Essentia Health:** This area hospital experiences 1,000 transactions per day in its cafeteria along with 300-400 room service orders. Their new dining services manager has already begun reducing their polystyrene foam use by transitioning to plastic cups in their dining area as well as selling reusable mugs. This has reduced costs and disposable cup usage. They are looking for more ways to reduce their single use materials and would welcome the addition of a compost facility to accommodate compostable materials.

<https://www.essentiahealth.org/>

**Granite City Food and Brewery:** This Fargo restaurant is trying to get rid of plastic straws completely and transition to paper straws.

<https://www.gcfb.com/location/fargo-north-dakota/>

**Healthy Food Ingredients:** this Fargo company that sells specialty ingredient brands internationally has a mission to be stewards of the land, and this affects how they think of using single use materials in packaging. A large portion of their business is "bulk" business, meaning they package or sell products in bulk hopper, totes or 50 pound bags. By shipping bulk, they use much less packaging material. They recently added compactors at two facilities and are able to bale totes and cardboard to ship by the

truckload to recycling. They also have recently switched the workers' disposable gloves at their Valley City processing facility to the biodegradable version.

<https://www.hfifamily.com/our-stewardship/sustainability/>

**HoDo Restaurant and HoDo Lounge:** This Fargo eatery has tabletop signs stating "Plastic Straws Available Upon Request" and lists the following facts about plastic straw usage:

*Each day we use 500,000,000 straws. Enough straws to fill 46,400 large school buses per year! Straws are among the TOP 10 marine debris items. A massive island of garbage over two times the size of the state of Texas is floating in the Pacific Ocean. Plastic constitutes 90% of all trash floating in the world's oceans. Check out these websites to educate yourself more on this topic: StrawlessOcean.org / BeStrawFree.org / OneLessStraw.org*

<https://www.hoteldonaldson.com/>

**Microsoft:** Their local campus' dining center made the decision to have no straws on campus and all their cups and to-go containers are compostable. Similar to the Red River Market (see above), a municipal or commercial composting site would aid in keeping these compostable materials out of the landfill.

**Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM):** This university has a similar Dining Services program to Concordia College (see above). The Green Box Program allows students to purchase a to-go container that can be returned to be washed by Dining Services and students take a clean to-go container in return.

<https://www.mnstate.edu/student-life/dining/>

**Nichole's Fine Pastry:** This bakery near downtown Fargo has moved to using paper bags for carry out orders instead of plastic bags.

<https://www.nicholesfinepastry.com/>

**Sanford Health:** One and a half years ago, the hospital's two largest medical centers moved to compostable to-go containers. These two campuses use no polystyrene foam. The South University campus is upgrading its dining services and will move to these products as well. Additionally, staff members have put up signs in a few dining areas asking customers to refrain from plastic straw use.

<https://www.sanfordhealth.org/>

**US Foods:** This national foodservice distributor has made a commitment to sustainability with their Serve Good program. Two initiatives within the program, Responsible Disposables and Packaging Standards, focus on responsible sourcing of packaging materials along with waste reduction. Their line of Responsible Disposables contains a minimum of 35% post-consumer content along with other compostable and renewable materials. For example, they offer clients a plant-based straw that composts in 90 days and a fiber-flax towel. To learn more, visit their website: <https://www.usfoods.com/why-us-foods/serve-good.html>

## Community Actions

- Local governments can:
  - Create policies for their jurisdictions that limit single use materials at city or county functions.
  - Push for a local municipal or commercial composting site so biodegradable materials can be composted locally. Without a composting site, these materials end up in the landfill since they cannot be recycled. (*Note: **compostable plastics** are only compostable in commercial high heat facilities while unbleached plant fiber, bamboo, and wood materials are compostable without the high heat.*)
  - Provide resources to consumers and businesses on how to reduce their single use materials. This serves the local governments by reducing the load on local landfills and recycling services.
  - Provide consumers with additional recycling education to lessen recycling contamination.
  - Assist local businesses to start as a waste-free, low-waste business or work with existing businesses to move toward that goal. Working with the Chamber of Commerce or the Small Business Association might help in growing such programs.
  - Provide incentives for businesses to reduce these materials or ban certain single use materials (like a plastic bag or a plastic straw ban).
  - Recognize businesses for their voluntary efforts to reduce single use materials.
- Businesses can educate consumers about single use materials or create financial incentives for reductions, like reducing grocery bills when consumers bring reusable bags or charging less for a cup of coffee in a reusable cup
- Food retailers can request large providers like Sodexo, Sam's Club, or Costco carry containers and to-go packaging that is recyclable or biodegradable

### *What can I do?*

- Eliminate plastic straws. Decline straws at restaurants and purchase a washable metal or silicone straw for home if you cannot do without
- Bring your own reusable to-go containers when eating out
- Encourage your favorite restaurants to ditch the polystyrene foam and move to recyclable plastic or washable materials
- Use reusable produce bags and shopping bags at the grocery store
- Buy from bulk bins whenever possible and bring in your own containers to fill
- Reduce your purchases of convenience foods that are wrapped in plastic
- Buy meat and cheese from the deli and have them wrapped in paper
- Carry a reusable water bottle wherever you go so you can avoid using plastic water bottles
- Purchase drinks in glass bottles instead of plastic
- Pack your lunch or leftovers in reusable wrappers made of beeswax or cloth
- Bring washable silverware in your lunch to work or school to cut down on plasticware
- Recycle as much plastic packaging material as possible. Acceptable items you can drop off at grocery retailer recycling locations (see above)::
  - Carryout bags / plastic shopping bags, produce bags, bread bags, product overwrap, shrink wrap
  - Dry cleaning bags, case wrap, air pillows, newspaper bags, bubble wrap
  - Any #4 plastic film or packaging

## Resources

Cass County Plastics Recycling <http://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/solid-waste/residential-recycling/plastic-bags-other-items>

Clay County Plastics Recycling  
<https://claycountymn.gov/1457/Plastic-Bags-Film-Packaging>

Single Use Plastics - A roadmap to sustainability (UN Environment Program 2018)  
[https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic\\_sustainability.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic_sustainability.pdf)

World Centric - Biocompostables  
<http://www.worldcentric.org/biocompostables/bioplastics>

*For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or [klipetzky@fargond.gov](mailto:klipetzky@fargond.gov)*



## Pollinator Habitats

### Overview

A pollinator habitat is an area of permanent vegetation which is located in an agricultural landscape and can be placed on field edges, field middles, odd corners, or any location which is suitable. It is meant to provide wildlife food and cover, reduce soil erosion from water, and protect the quality of the water and soil. Pollinator habitats support pollinators including birds, bats, bees, butterflies and beetles, which carry pollen on their bodies from plant to plant which results in the transfer of genetic material for the reproduction of most flowering plant.

### Why It Matters

- Animals pollinate over 75% of all flowering plants, including human food sources such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, squash and almonds.
- They play a vital role pollinating around 70-80 percent of flowering plants in the Midwest region, which contributes to seed production and environmental functions such as filtering storm water, providing wildlife habitat, and improving soil quality.
- Habitat loss, pesticide use, and other factors have contributed to the decline in native bee populations in recent years.

### How to Provide Support

- Increase awareness about the issue among the community
- Protect and restore pollinator habitats



### Making a Plan

Key considerations for establishing a pollinator habitat include an area which is away from pesticide use or any other disturbances which may impact pollinators, adequate water, food, and nesting sources, and natural passageways. At least three flowering species should be included in each bloom period to provide sufficient food source throughout the season. The Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources' Pollinator Plan (2017) includes instructions and information to maximize your pollinator habitat.

### Pollinator Habitats in Solar Facilities

Pollinator habitats have potential to be established throughout solar facilities (i.e., under and around the solar panels), in undeveloped regions of the solar facility, or within adjacent off-site areas. Decisions regarding the type of pollinator habitat is dependent on the geographic region, which vary in abiotic processes, native vegetation, and insect pollinator communities.

Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources. (2017). Pollinator Plan.

Natural Resources Conservation Service. (2011). Pollinator Habitat: Conservation Reserve Program Job Sheet CP42. United States Department of Agriculture.

Pollinator Partnership. (2019, March 18). About Pollinators. Retrieved March 19, 2019, from <https://pollinator.org/pollinators>

Walston, L. J., Mishra, S. K., Hartmann, H. M., Hlohowskyj, I., McCall, J., & Macknick, J. (2018). Examining the Potential for Agricultural Benefits from Pollinator Habitat at Solar Facilities in the United States. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 52(13), 7566–7576. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.8b00020>

# Pollinator Habitats

Cass Clay Community Snapshot  
April 2019

## INTRODUCTION

Pollinators play a vital role pollinating around 70-80 percent of flowering plants in the Midwest region, which contributes to seed production and environmental functions such as filtering storm water, providing wildlife habitat, and improving soil quality. However, habitat loss, pesticide use, and other factors have contributed to the decline in native bee populations in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Understanding the vital role that pollinators play in our ecosystem has sparked efforts in Minnesota and North Dakota to support and protect pollinators. Additionally, there are several pollinator habitat funding programs available.

## INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT POLLINATORS IN MINNESOTA AND NORTH DAKOTA

**Public Art Saint Paul: Bee Real Bee Everywhere.** Promotes awareness and habitat for pollinating insects in Saint Paul's urban areas. The three sculptural pollinator sky rises act as a home and research site for native nesting bees, monitored by University of Minnesota's Bee Lab. The sites provide information and data on the patterns and preferences of wild, solitary pollinators in an urban environment.

[http://publicartstpaul.org/project/bee-real-bee-everywhere/#about\\_the\\_project](http://publicartstpaul.org/project/bee-real-bee-everywhere/#about_the_project)

**University of Minnesota Bee Lab.** The mission of Bee Lab is to promote the conservation, health, and diversity through research, education, and hands-on mentorship. They provide education on beekeeping, queen rearing, types of bees, plants for Minnesota bees, and much more. Research efforts focus on restoration ecology, pollination biology, and invasive plant management.

<https://www.beelab.umn.edu/>

**The Longspur Prairie Fund Annual Bee Hunt.** This event is one part research project and one part family prairie field trip bee scholar D. Bryan Bishop (Associate Professor, Concordia College). The bee hunt allows participants to photograph bees in their native environment on Ulen Prairie, and learn about pollinator ecology along with other aspects of the Red River Valley's natural history.

<https://www.longspurprairie.org/bee-hunt>

**Pesticide Action Network North America.** Works to replace hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives to ensure the transition to a viable society. The organization works to link local and international consumer, labor, healthy, environment and agriculture groups. Midwest office located in Minneapolis, MN.

<http://www.panna.org/>

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources. (2017). Pollinator Plan.

**Pollinator Garden at the Moorhead Country Club.** A group of Moorhead eighth-graders called the Hooting Wolves from Horizon Middle School is part of Destination Imagination working to plant a pollinator garden at the Moorhead Country Club. This project was developed as part of a service learning challenge with the intent to attract a variety of pollinators such as bees and hummingbirds.

<https://www.inforum.com/news/education/995153-Eighth-graders-heading-for-global-competition-with-plan-to-establish-pollinator-garden-at-Moorhead-Country-Club>

<https://youtu.be/2u4CFMgcQa0>

**Clay County Community Solar Gardens.** Clay County Renewable Energy Ordinance was discussed at the Clay County Planning Committee meeting in August 2018. Minnesota Statute (216B.1642 Solar Site Management) allows native perennial vegetation and foraging habitat beneficial to gamebirds, songbirds, and pollinators in ground-mounted solar sites with a generating capacity of more than 40 kilowatts. In January of 2019, five community solar gardens were discussed and approved at the Clay County Planning Commission meeting.

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/216B.1642>

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Pollinator Initiative.** Provides resources and guidance to conservation partners to incorporate pollinator habitats into their programs. This involves identifying programs and funding, working with BWSR programs, assessing and prioritizing project sites, selecting plants and seed mixes, preparing for planting, planting, maintenance, and community outreach.

<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/practices/pollinator/>

**Plains Art Museum Buzz Lab 6.0 Teen Internship.** This paid internship provides interns an opportunity to engage in learning, teaching, creating, sustaining, and advocating for the wellbeing of pollinators in a healthy ecosystem. Buzz Lab interns partner with scientists, artists, and teachers to discuss the importance of pollinators, participate in gardening and research in the Pollinator Garden at Plains Art Museum, and create works of public art.

<https://plainsart.org/buzz-lab-5-0-teen-intership/>

**NDSU Publication - Bee-utiful Landscapes: Building a Pollinator Garden (H1811).** This publication through North Dakota State University provides information for individuals regarding the importance of pollinators, bee identification, and the basics of planting a pollinator habitat. It provides guidance for implementing a pollinator garden, including wise pesticide use.

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/lawns-gardens-trees/bee-utiful-landscapes-building-a-pollinator-garden#section-12>

**NDSU Master Gardener Program.** In spring of 2016, NDSU Extension Master Gardener provided \$500 grants to 16 groups of Master Gardeners across the state for cultivating pollinator gardens. The Master Gardeners obtained permission from local entities to plant pollinator gardens across the state with the intent to teach through outreach, beautify communities, and create safe havens for pollinator insects.

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/mastergardener/demogardens>

## FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR POLLINATOR HABITATS

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).** The USDA offers technical support for farmers, ranchers, local USDA logo government, citizen groups, and others to develop pollinator habitats. Assistance may include maintaining and improving private lands and their management, protecting and improving water quality and quantity, and maintaining and improving the aesthetic appeal of private land, among other things.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/>

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.** Environmental Quality Incentives Program works to help agricultural producers confront challenges while conserving natural resources including soil, water, and air. USDA conservation programs work to address farming and ranching issues such as drinking water protection, reducing soil erosion, and wildlife habitat, forests, and wetlands preservation.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/index>

**Land Conservation Assistance Network.** Provides links to information about government and federal land grants that are available, loan programs, and other funding sources, which aim to restore or buy land.

<https://www.landcan.org/Grant-and-Assistance-Programs/>

**Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018.** The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334), known as the “2018 farm bill” will allocate seven percent (\$29 billion) to conservation efforts. All major conservation programs will continue, although some are modified. Two of the largest working land programs are reauthorized including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Land retirement and easement programs has increased enrollment from 24 million acres in FY2019 to 27 million by FY2023. These programs provide federal payments to private agricultural landowners for accepting permanent or long-term land-use restrictions.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45525>

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/agriculture-improvement-act-of-2018-highlights-and-implications/>

**Local USDA Resources.** Local USDA Service Centers for Cass County are located in Fargo and Valley City, along with Clay County in Moorhead and Detroit Lakes. The Fargo and Moorhead Service Centers include contacts for the farm service agency, natural resources conservation service, and conservation district. The Valley City and Detroit Lakes Service Centers include a contact for rural development.

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>