



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

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Resolution No. 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Managing Roadside Mowing and Spraying for Wildlife Habitat Benefits

WHEREAS, habitat loss poses the greatest threat to species sustainability because the world's forests, swamps, plains, rivers, streams, and other habitats continue to disappear as they are harvested for human consumption and cleared to make way for agriculture, housing, roads, pipelines, and the other hallmarks of industrial development; and

WHEREAS, insects are the most important animal group in transferring energy stored in plants by photosynthesis to humans and other animals, and recent studies show a steep decline in insect populations worldwide, significantly among insect pollinators such as butterflies, moths, native bees, and beetles; and

WHEREAS, ecosystem services provided by pollinators are essential to human well-being, agricultural production, and ecosystem health and resilience; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 85% of the world's flowering plants, including 35% of the world's crops, depend on animals – mostly insects – for pollination, and pollinators sustain wildland plant communities that provide food and shelter for myriad other wildlife (FHA BMP); and

WHEREAS, mowing during spring and summer months may reduce or even kill nesting and young animals, such as eastern meadowlarks, bobwhite quail, rabbits, and deer; and

WHEREAS, mowing before the end of July is also detrimental to flowering plants that support insect pollinators because mowing earlier in the year prevents seed maturation and reduces viability at the end of their life cycles; and

WHEREAS, uncut areas protect young animals from predators and provide seasonal forage and thermal cover; and

WHEREAS, roadsides form an extensive network of linear habitat across all types of land and provide an opportunity for pollinators that are greatly in need of quality habitat in order to survive (FHA BMP); and

WHEREAS, roadsides with abundant wildflowers, especially native plants, managed by judicious mowing and other management tools, provide the best pollinator habitat with shrubs and trees adding important components of pollinator habitat, when compatible with the design of the roadsides (FHA BMP); and

WHEREAS, adjusting roadside mowing and spraying practices is one of the most cost effective and straightforward changes that can be made to benefit pollinators while also reducing maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, reduced mowing can also be conducted without increasing hazards to drivers or public disapproval because surveys indicate that drivers prefer wildflower meadows and natural habitat with blooming plants to regularly mown turfgrass roadsides (FHA BMP); and

WHEREAS, Federal Highway Administration *Roadside Best Management Practices that Benefit Pollinators* (FHA BMP) recommends that 1) reduced mowing of the roadside beyond the clear zone can benefit pollinators and help to reduce maintenance costs and does not need to compromise aesthetics or motorist safety, and 2) herbicides used to control noxious and invasive weeds or encroaching woody vegetation can benefit pollinators by suppressing the undesired plants that displace the valuable native plants which provide them with food and shelter.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) to enforce their “Policy of Roadside Vegetation Management” that encourages the growth, planning and preservation of wildflower areas and natural areas for the Louisiana highway system by reduced mowing and more protection of wildflower areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges LDOTD to work on an education campaign with the help of likeminded statewide organizations that would emphasize the importance of native habitat and fighting invasive species along roadsides in the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation requests that herbicides be selectively applied to noxious and invasive species, and broadcast herbicide applications be used only in severely impacted areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation requests that all equipment be pressure washed following mowing in invasive species areas because thoroughly washing mowing equipment to remove seeds and plant parts would prevent the spread of invasive species.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation encourages LDOTD to identify Interstate Interchanges where wildflower plantings could be installed and maintained.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled on March 15, 2025 in Woodworth, Louisiana.