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Community gathers to celebrate 10-year anniversary of Mono Pollinator Garden

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The patch of land that is now the home of the Mono Pollinator Garden started as a barren field originally used for farming ? fast forward 10 years, and it's now a thriving garden for pollinator species from across the region.

The Town of Mono held an afternoon celebration on June 21 to recognize the garden's 10-year anniversary, with Mono Mayor John Creelman in attendance to congratulate the volunteers on their work.

?I can't emphasize enough our appreciation we have as a town and as a town council for the work of the volunteers here today,? he said. ?The foresight of 10 years ago to start work on the results that you all can see here today is a labour of love.?

?It's just spectacular, and it's perhaps one of the biggest volunteer efforts in our town on an ongoing basis. For that, we thank you,? Mayor Creelman added.

The festivities included guided tours throughout the pollinator garden to learn about its ongoing mission, locally sourced food and drinks, with some sourced from the garden itself, informational booths, homemade crafts and a performance courtesy of the Ukuladies & Ukuladdies.

The garden has come a very long way in the last decade, according to volunteer and Mono Councillor Ralph Manktelow.

?This area is one acre, and it originally started as an abandoned hay field that was owned by the Town of Mono,? he said. ?A couple of councillors approached the town about 11 years ago, and asked if we could have the property to use it to create a pollinator garden. The reason for this was that pollinators, which are primarily bees, sometimes flies and butterflies and other birds, are in decline.?

Manktelow added, ?There's been a tremendous amount of growth here. All the trees here, the plants, were just very small. It was quite amazing seeing that change over time.?

After acquiring the land, the entirely volunteer team got to work in 2016, retilting the land, planting local pollinator-friendly species, and introducing pollinators to the area.

Now the pollinator garden serves two important community roles, the first is providing a healthy space for pollinator species to survive, including bees, butterflies, birds and more.

The second role, Manktelow said, is education.

?The value of pollinators is probably not well enough understood,? he said. ?I didn't understand it when I was a young person, so our goal is to educate all of our residents around here about the importance of pollinators, valuable plants that they can plant to support them, and the danger that pesticides present.?

The garden hosts educational programs with local schools, bringing in young students to explore the garden, learn more about the life that lives here, and how they can help protect natural ecosystems.

Supporting these conservation initiatives, maintaining the garden, and handling general operations is a purely volunteer team of local residents.

They are responsible for all garden upkeep, including weed control, maintenance, and plant care. The garden is always looking for new volunteers.

With a decade of dedicated care behind them, the team behind the Mono Pollinator Garden remains committed to seeing the next decade be just as successful.

For more information on the garden and to volunteer, go to: townofmono.com/mono-pollinator-garden