**Conservation of Biodiversity**

**Spring 2021**

**Backyard Pollinators Research Assignment**

This semester, we will be contributing to a national research project led by Dr. Kaitlin Stack Whitney (Rochester Institute of Technology). We will observe insect pollinators in backyards, on campus, or anywhere you can find flowers, and describe plant-pollinator networks. Our class data will again contribute to a growing national database that will provide the largest non-agricultural pollination study available to date.

The learning outcomes for this project are to:

 Develop hypotheses about organisms, communities and ecosystem functions

 Identify plant and pollinator functional groups

 Record, enter, and organize qualitative and quantitative data

 Analyze data individually and collaboratively

 Compare results between sites and evaluate patterns

 Understand the importance of standardized ecological monitoring at scale

Working with a partner is **highly recommended** for this project, but not strictly required. Elements of this project require being outside (in a location of your choosing) and also online research. Particularly in this time of COVID, students periodically may have to quarantine, and having a partner increases the likelihood that you can divide the work responsibly (outdoors for one team member, online for the other, etc.) and still complete all required tasks. You will work your way through seven modules of site selection, data collection and compilation, and data analysis, culminating in a brief paper and presentation to the class on your findings.

**Assignment grading**

Phase 1 (due April 8 – note this is a change from the syllabus)

5% Background worksheet

10% Module 1: Identify and characterize your study sites

10% Module 2: Learn your insects

5% Module 3: Create your quadrat

20% Module 4: Floral observations and data collection

10% Module 5: Enter data in class google sheets

Final project (due April 20, 2pm)

15% Module 6: Data exploration

10% Module 7: Data comparisons

15% Report (two pages) and brief presentation