

Wild Bees of the St. Vrain Greenway

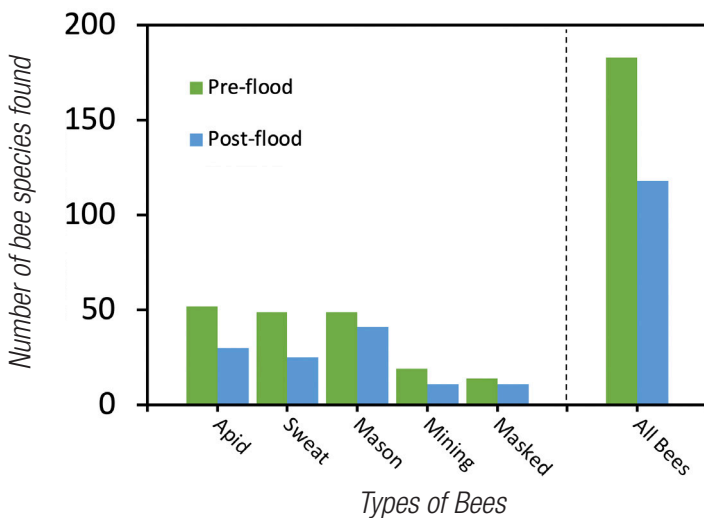
The University of Colorado Museum of Natural History

is re-surveying the St. Vrain Greenway to assess the wild bee diversity. We began these surveys in 2012, just before the 500-Year Flood. We resampled in 2014 to assess flood impacts. The results from our first two years of sampling are in the figure below. This year, we are resampling so we can assess whether the wild bee diversity has recovered following the flood after seeing declines between 2012 and 2014.

Did you know...

- There are more than 20,000 species of bees in the world and 946 in Colorado!
- 77% of bees are “solitary,” meaning they live alone and do not have a queen; 13% are parasites; 9% are social.
- 64% of non-parasitic bees nest in the ground.

Declines in bee species after flooding:



Common Bee Flowers



- 1. Curly Cup Gumweed**
Grindelia squarrosa
- 2. Rocky Mtn. Bee Plant**
Cleome serrulata
- 3. Rubber Rabbitbrush**
Ericameria nauseosa
- 4. Pony beebalm**
Monarda pectinata
- 5. Golden crownbeard**
Verbena encelioides
- 6. Bractless blazingstar**
Mentzelia nuda
- 7. Blue Vervain**
Verbena hastata
- 8. Scarlet globemallow**
Sphaeralcea coccinea
- 9. Common sunflower**
Helianthus annuus

Common Wild Bees



Mining bee

- 4-17 mm
- Active in early spring
- Nests in bare soil
- Solitary, but nests in groups
- Carries pollen on hind legs



Bumble bee

- 11-23 mm
- Active all summer
- Nests in old rodent holes
- Social with a queen and worker
- Carries pollen on hind legs



Masked bee

- 4-6 mm
- Active all summer
- Nests in hollow twigs
- Solitary
- Females carry pollen in gut



Sweat bee

- 9-15 mm
- Active all summer
- Nests in bare soil
- Semi-social
- Carries pollen on hind legs



Mason bee

- Active in early summer
- Nests made of mud in cavities
- Solitary
- Pollen carried on abdomen hairs



Cuckoo bee

- 5-22 mm
- Active all summer
- Nests in leaf-cutting bee nests
- Solitary parasites
- Do not collect pollen



Honeybees are not considered wild bees.

Honey bees are common in Colorado and along the St. Vrain Greenway. While they are important pollinators for agriculture, they are not considered wild bees. They were introduced to North America in the 1600s from Europe. Unlike most types of bees, honey bees are social and have a queen, workers, and drones with perennial colonies.

Photos courtesy of the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Masked bee photo by Steve Buchanan.

This work is supported by:

