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## **Bee habitat protections receive national buzz: College of San Mateo joins burgeoning pollinator preservation program**

Bee habitat protections receive national buzz: College of San Mateo joins burgeoning pollinator preservation program *March 05, 2016, 05:00 AM* By [Austin Walsh](#) Daily Journal

A new program is buzzing around College of San Mateo, as the community college gained recognition as the first state school to join a national initiative aiming to preserve bee habitats.

College of San Mateo was named as the third college in the nation, and the first in California, to join the Bee Campus USA program, under an announcement Monday, Feb. 29.

The program, an offshoot of the Bee City USA initiative, is designed to recognize schools willing to preserve bee habitat through sensitive landscaping techniques, reluctance to use harsh pesticides and other sustainable practices.

Paul Hankamp, a biology professor at the college, celebrated the willingness of school officials to join the program.

“CSM is really stepping up and saying we recognize the importance of bees, and we are going to do all we can to promote their health by providing habitat on our campus,” he said.

The program will emphasize a variety of efforts already in place on the campus, said Hankamp, as officials have long been conscious about managing the school grounds in a fashion which is attractive to pollinators.

College of San Mateo joins Southern Oregon University and Georgia Tech University as the first college campuses to join the program, since it began last year.

Phyllis Stiles, director of the program, expressed her appreciation for Hankamp and others at College of San Mateo for applying to join the bee protection movement.

“This is a brand new thing in the country, and somebody has to get it started,” she said. “We have to have those pioneers, and that takes some courage.”

The program targets universities in hopes of attracting young, involved students who could be molded into advocates for bee protections in the future, said Stiles.

“We are trying to harness the power of educational institutions,” she said.

Bee populations across the globe are declining, said Stiles, which stands to have potentially devastating ecological impacts, and heightens the importance of local protections.

“There is an awful lot we can do to reduce those declines,” said Stiles. “And that has to do with welcoming them into our environment.”

Landscaping techniques such as planting native species which are inviting to bees, being conscious of the types of pesticides that are sprayed and offering more pollen and nectar sources can be fruitful efforts in helping the bee population rebound, said Stiles.

Hankamp said he hopes to weave the program’s initiatives into the school’s science curriculum, in an effort to further educate students on the value of preserving bee habitats.

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