

VIRGINIA POLLINATOR-SMART/ BIRD HABITAT SCORECARD

Proposed or Retrofit Solar Sites



A successful Pollinator-Smart habitat will provide benefits to the environment and the solar site owner/operator in a number of key areas, including:

1. Pollinator services,
2. Biodiversity and habitat enhancement,
3. Carbon sequestration,
4. Erosion and sediment control, and;
5. Reduced vegetation maintenance over time.

The Virginia Solar Site Pollinator/Bird Habitat Scorecard is used to establish target conditions and/or evaluate the effectiveness of Pollinator-Smart measures once implemented. If the score thresholds are met, a site is deemed Pollinator-Smart provided the activities described herein are implemented **over at least 10% of the project area**.

DEFINITIONS

Open Area: Any area beyond the panel zone, within the property boundary.

Panel Zone: The area underneath the solar arrays, including inter-row spacing.

Project Area: Open Area + Panel Zone + Screening Zone.

Screening Zone: A vegetated visual barrier.

Solar Native Plant Finder: The Virginia Solar Site Native Plant Finder ([link](#)), an online research tool developed by the DCR Natural Heritage Program.

Virginia Pollinator-Smart Seed Mix: A seed mix that includes native local ecotypes and conforms with the Solar Native Plant Finder.

RESOURCES

[Virginia Solar Site Native Plant Finder](#)

[Virginia's Pollinator-Smart Solar Portal](#)

[Comprehensive Manual](#)

[Monitoring Plan](#)

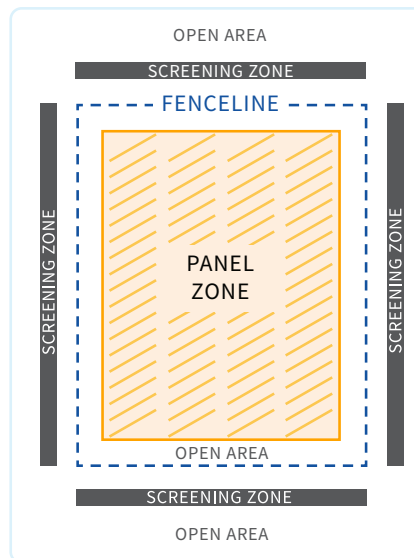
INSTRUCTIONS

For detailed instructions on how to implement the scorecard, please refer to the [Comprehensive Manual](#).

1. All questions and fields must be filled out.
2. Submit your scorecard and associated documents via email to: pollinator.smart@dcr.virginia.gov
3. A Proposed or Retrofit Solar Site Scorecard should be submitted during the initial planting year. To remain certified, an Established Sites Scorecard should be submitted in years 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. A long-term management plan should also be submitted with the Established Sites Scorecard during year 10. If all criteria are met during year 10, the site will be considered pollinator-friendly for the life of the project.

ATTACHMENTS PROVIDED

- Project Vicinity Map/Planting Plan
- Seed Mix and Seeding Rates
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Vegetation Monitoring Plan
- Invasive Species Mapping
- Research Collaboration Documentation
- Site Photos



PROJECT DETAILS & CONTACT INFORMATION

DATE: _____

SITE OWNER OR DESIGNEE:

PROJECT ADDRESS:

PROJECT SIZE (ACS AND MW):

POINT OF CONTACT:

EMAIL/PHONE:

VEGETATION CONSULTANT:

SEED SUPPLIER (IF KNOWN):

TARGET SEEDING DATE:

FINAL SCORE

Certified VA Pollinator-Smart: 80-99 pts

Gold Certified VA Pollinator-Smart: 100+ pts

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VEGETATION

PANEL ZONE

1. Percent of panel zone to be planted with a seed mix of native species developed using the Solar Native Plant Finder (**max 15 pts**)
 - a. <5 percent (0)
 - b. 5-25 percent (5)
 - c. 26-50 percent (8)
 - d. 51-75 percent (10)
 - e. greater than 75 percent (15)
2. Planned native grass diversity in panel zone (**max 5 pts**)
 - a. 1 or fewer species (0)
 - b. 2 species (2)
 - c. 3 or more species (5)

OPEN AREA

3. Percent of open area to be planted with Virginia Pollinator-Smart Seed Mix developed using the Solar Plant Finder (**max 15 pts**)
 - a. <5 percent (0)
 - b. 5-25 percent (5)
 - c. 26-50 percent (8)
 - d. 51-75 percent (10)
 - e. greater than 75 percent (15)
4. Total *number* of Solar Native Plant Finder species in the seed mix to be used within the open area (**max 15 pts**)
 - a. 4 or fewer species (0)
 - b. 5-9 species (5)
 - c. 10-14 species (8)
 - d. 15-19 species (10)
 - e. 20 or greater species (15)
5. For the seed mix to be used within the open area, seasons with at least three (3) Solar Native Plant Finder species in flower (**max 10 pts**) **[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]**
 - Spring (March-May) (2)
 - Early Summer (June-July 15) (2)
 - Late Summer (July 15-August) (4)
 - Fall (September-November) (2)

SCREENING ZONE

6. Within the screening zone, percent to be planted with Solar Native Plant Finder species (**max 15 pts**)
 - a. <5 percent (0)
 - b. 5-25 percent (5)
 - c. 26-50 percent (8)
 - d. 51-75 percent (10)
 - e. greater than 75 percent (15)

SITE MANAGEMENT

PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

7. **[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]** (max 25 pts)

- Site has an Approved¹ Vegetation Management Plan (15)
- Vegetation monitoring² is proposed annually (5)
- Invasive species mapping and control proposed annually (5)
- Planned on-site use of insecticide or pre-planting seed/plant insecticide treatment (excluding buildings/electrical boxes, etc.) (-40)

INVASIVE SPECIES RISK

8. **[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]** (-20 pts possible)

- Combined cover of tall fescue across all three zones planned to be >10 percent (-10)
- Combined cover of species on DNH Virginia Invasive Plant Species List across all three zones planned to be >10 percent (-10)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

9. **[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]** (max 10 pts)

- 2 or more legible and accessible signs identifying pollinator and bird habitat proposed on-site (2.5)
- Accessible bench and educational display proposed on-site (2.5)
- Research collaboration with college, university, school, or research institute (5)

POLLINATOR/BIRD NESTING HABITAT ON-SITE

10. **[CHECK ALL FEATURES THAT ARE PRESENT ON-SITE]** (20+ pts)

- Existing bare ground patches one square foot or larger, with undisturbed and well-drained soil (2)
- Preserved upland forested communities or forest edge habitat that includes native flowering shrubs and young trees (8)
- Cavity nesting sites (e.g. dead trees, snags, fallen logs, shrubs, plants with pithy-stemmed twigs such as native sumacs, roses, blackberries) (2)
- Created bee/bird nesting habitat features (e.g., boxes, tunnels, etc.) (0.2 pts per feature)³ # features: **x 0.2 = pts.**
- Preserved wetland communities/presence of clean water source(s) (8)

¹ See guidelines for development of a Vegetation Management Plan [here](#). Vegetation Management Plans for solar sites are approved by the Virginia Pollinator-Smart Solar Industry Review Board. Vegetation Management Plans may be submitted [here](#).

² Vegetation monitoring should be conducted in accordance with the methods described [here](#). For the purposes of compliance, monitoring is only required every two years; therefore, annual monitoring is incentivized with additional points in the Scorecard.

³ Up to a maximum of 10 points (50 features)