

## **Benefits of a Low Mow or No Mow Zone**

### **What is a No Mow/Low Mow Zone?**

- Many species depend on grasslands for food, cover, and breeding. In Georgia, grassland habitats have steadily declined.
- One way to fix this problem is to create areas that have restricted mowing. This is called a **Low Mow Zone**. This area is only mowed one to two times a year and allows native plants and grasses to grow.
- A **No Mow Zone** is a designated area that is allowed to progress through succession to return to a natural state. Succession is a process over many years and eventually a forest will return to the area.

### **Benefits for Wildlife and Pollinators**

- These types of habitats provide a sheltered area where various species can use camouflage to protect themselves from predators.
- They provide a breeding ground for many species. For instance, the Eastern Meadowlark uses open fields and meadows for nesting and feeding. Their coloring enables them to camouflage. Their populations have been steadily declining.
- Monarch butterflies have taken a significant decline due to cutting down fields that naturally grow milkweed. Milkweed is essential for the survival of the Monarch because they lay their eggs on the milkweed, and it is their only source of food.
- These areas provide an excellent habitat for pollinators such as native bumble bees. These zones allow plants to flower which in turn provides a place for pollinators to stop and have a meal.
- Many bee species use the undisturbed soil in these zones because they are ground nesters.

### **Benefits to Water**

- Improves water quality by filtering pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides that would have otherwise entered the water
- Shrubs and trees provide shade to cool streams

- Stabilizes the soil to reduce erosion
- Slows storm water runoff

### **Benefits for Fiscal Savings**

- Fewer hours of labor
- Less expense of fuel
- Requires less water
- No fertilizer needed

### **Benefits of Lower Emissions**

- Did you know that one gas mower running for an hour emits the same amount of pollutants as driving 100 miles?
- By reducing your use of a lawn mower, you are reducing the carbon dioxide that is put into the atmosphere.

**REDUCED MOWING = A REDUCTION IN YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT!**

### **How can you create a No Mow Zone at your school campus or home?**

- Select an open, sunny area that you will designate for restricted mowing. There should be approximately 6 hours of sun a day.
- Check for regulations or needed approval for your area.
- It is a good idea to post signage so observers understand the natural appearance of the area.

- If you choose to mow in cycles, mow outside of the nesting and brooding seasons. Maryland wildlife species mostly nest and rear broods between April and mid-August. Therefore, mowing in late winter or early fall would be best.

- As the area begins to grow, you can have fun identifying all of the native grasses, flowers, and new species that this area will attract!

Harford County Public Schools, Maryland