

UTC Project Information – Project 2.15

Project Title	Incorporation of Pollinator Plantings to Enhance Ecosystem Functions and Durability of Transportation Right-of-Way Infrastructure
University	University of Rhode Island
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Funding Source(s) and Amounts Provided (by each agency or organization)	Federal: \$162,382 URI: \$126,943 RIDOT: \$35,440
Total Project Cost	\$324,765
Agency ID or Contract Number	69A3551847101
Start and End Dates	Oct. 1, 2021 to Aug.30, 2023
Brief Description of Research Project	Highway right-of-ways (ROWs) provide numerous ecosystem services beyond erosion control. Incorporation of native grasses and flowering plants into ROW plantings can further increase the services by providing habitat for endangered native pollinators while improving aesthetics, erosion control, and stormwater filtration. However, highway ROWs are not natural habitats. The roadway itself alters the micro-climate of the roadside, and safety considerations require much of the ROW to be maintained as grassland or scrubland. In New England these are early succession ecosystems and must be regularly mowed or otherwise disturbed. Many New England wildflowers are not adapted to the roadside environment, while wildflowers used on roadsides in other regions are not native in New England and may not be adapted to the soils or climate. This project will use vegetation surveys and adaptation trials to identify native and naturalized flowering plants adapted to the highway ROW environment, and will create trial plantings in the highway ROW to identify best practices for establishing native grasses and forbs from seed on the roadside. Roadsides have been successfully maintained as habitat for native plants, pollinators, small animals and birds in other regions but very little management of roadside for habitat has occurred in New England. Best practices from other regions need to be tested to determine whether they are appropriate in New England since soils, climate, and native species differ. Trial plantings will be established in partnership with RIDOT Maintenance to ensure that the establishment methods used are possible with the equipment and employee skills available.
Describe Implementation of Research Outcomes (or why not implemented)	This project is in its initial research phase. Implementation of Research outcomes will be reported upon completion of initial research.
Place Any Photos Here	
Impacts/Benefits of Implementation (actual, not anticipated)	This project is in its initial research phase. Impacts and benefits of the research will be reported after the implementation phase.
Web Links	Coming soon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Project website 	