**Bumble Bee Selectivity of Native and Non-Native Flowers in Northwest Montana

Rustin Bielski, Salish Kootenai College

*Indicates Presenter
**Indicates Student Presentation

Loss of native pollinators can have adverse effects on native plant communities. Likewise, the loss of native plant communities can have adverse effects on our native pollinator community. Non-native flowers have been known to detriment native ecosystems, but how does this affect our native pollinators? Bumble bees are a keystone pollinator in Northwest Montana, but bumble bee species have been declining globally in recent years. This study looks at the preference of bumble bees between native and non-native flowers throughout their foraging season. It incorporates two methods of observations, a focal survey of bumble bee activity, and a sweep net capture. Host plant selectivity is compared to the relative abundance of native and non-native flowers. In total, 133 bees were recorded, 59% seen on native flowers and 49% on non-native. The data shows a clear preference towards native flowers throughout the season.