AIN'T NO SUNSHINE WHEN THEY'RE GONE:
POLLINATORS IN A SOLAR PRAIRIE

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- As the climate crisis continues, pollinators are decreasing in abundance and a need for renewable energy technology is increasing
- Solar prairies are a way to combine solar arrays with native, restorative prairies to utilize the space under the panels
- If solar panels prove not to disrupt pollinator habitats and the prairies under them continue to thrive, solar prairies will become a vital way of fighting climate change

HYPOTHESIS

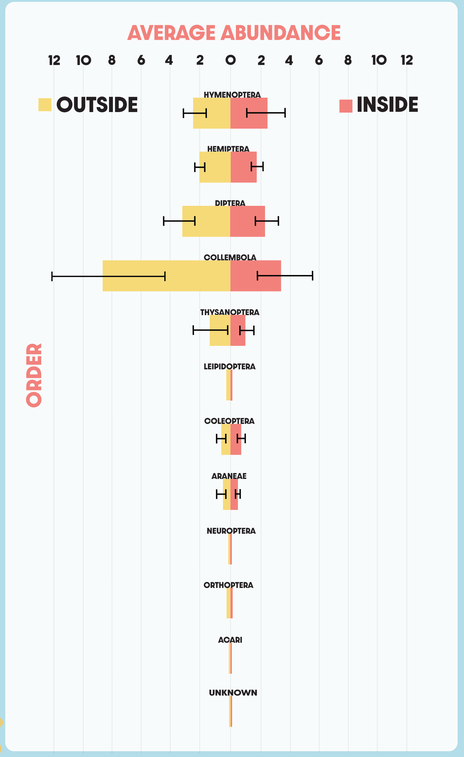
- Honey bees would be the most abundant instead of native pollinators because they are invasive
- Pollinators would be more abundant outside of the panels instead of inside, but inside the solar panels would still provide a habitat for pollinators

METHODS

- Collect insects using pan traps in UD's solar prairie
- Sort insects based on order
- Sort Hymenoptera and Lepidoptera to morphospecies
- Data analysis to determine significant differences

RESULTS

There is no significant difference between pollinators inside vs. outside of the solar panels



TOP POLLINATORS FOUND:

SWEAT BEE
FAMILY HALICTIDAE

BUMBLE BEE
FAMILY APIDAE, GENUS BOMBUS

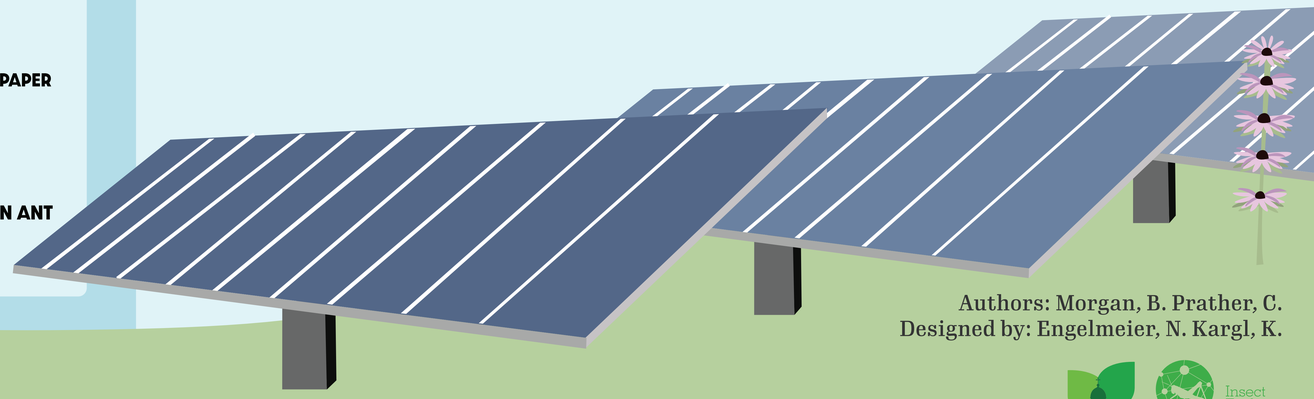
CARPENTER BEE
FAMILY APIDAE, MANY GENUS

EUROPEAN PAPER WASP
POLISTES DOMINULA

HIGH NOON ANT
FORELIUS PRUNOSUS

IMPORTANCE

- Solar prairies create an ecosystem to help native plants and pollinators while increasing use of renewable energy
- The solar panels don't take away deter pollinators from using the habitat
- Invasive species are impacting native pollinator abundance and by creating areas containing native flowering plants, it increases pollinator numbers
- Solar energy can help combat climate change
- The solar prairie is a much better use of the area outside of Curran Place



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