

Alternatives to Commercial Beekeeping on Public Lands

Placing honeybees on public lands is not the best choice:
several alternatives are presented below.

[USDA Conservation Reserve Program](#)

The federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides [millions of acres](#) of rested agricultural lands for commercial honeybee habitat. The USDA offers excellent options for beekeepers in need by [incentivizing farmers](#) to rest their lands from intensive monocropping and instead plant cover crops for bees. Studies have shown that proximity to these CRP lands actually [improves honeybee health](#).

[USDA Honeybee Habitat Initiative](#)

This federal initiative provides additional compensation to farmers for planting flowers that provide nutrition to honeybees on Conservation Reserve Program lands.

Beekeepers can use several other programs to access honeybee habitat [on 140 million acres \(more area than CA and NY combined\)](#). These include:

[Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)

[Conservation Stewardship Program](#)

[Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#)

[American Bee Project](#)

The American Bee Project incentivizes private landowners to allow commercial beekeeping on their land. Most states have property tax write-offs for land designated as agricultural. In some states, cultivating bees on private land can allow for that land to merit an agricultural designation, lowering landowner taxes and helping beekeepers.

Long-term solutions also include [reducing honeybee exposure to pesticides](#) through [cautionary beekeeping](#) and [integrated pest management](#) (guides linked) and banning or reducing [neonicotinoid](#) pesticide use, which [endangers honeybees](#) and native bees.

Support a bill to address neonicotinoid usage [here](#).

While increasing honeybees on semi-agricultural landscapes may still affect local native pollinators, these alternatives avoid putting invasive honeybees on national forests and other public lands, where native pollinator diversity is typically highest and where honeybees pose the greatest threat to intact natural ecosystems.