

## **Valley Crossing Pipeline Creates Pollinator Corridor**

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The installation of a new pipeline is associated with both positive and negative concerns for private landowners. Financial gain through payments for easements is one benefit. However, invasive species introduction and erosion issues may outweigh these benefits. Restoration using locally-adapted native plants may help reduce these concerns.

We worked with Kenedy County landowners and Enbridge Energy Partners to develop a locally-adapted native plant seed mix consisting of 19 species to restore wildlife and monarch/pollinator habitat on a 200-foot wide by 56-mile long section of easement for the newly constructed Valley Crossing Pipeline.

*South Texas Natives Project* (STNP) staff are collecting vegetation data on and off the right-of-way to evaluate how well the reseeding worked. Eighteen months after the seeding, vegetation cover on and off the right-of-way are nearly identical. These results indicate overall efforts to reestablish vegetative cover to the right-of-way have been successful, particularly since this area of South Texas has historically been difficult to establish vegetation in following soil disturbance.

Vegetation composition across most of the right-of-way has been affected more by the past or neighboring vegetation than by the seed mix, especially where invasive grasses occur. The seed mix has performed well in less sandy soils. However, some of these same areas have shown increases in invasive grasses in comparison with the surrounding landscape. We will continue to collect data to track long-term changes in vegetation communities over time and make management recommendations for this and other pipeline projects impacting the South Texas Sand Sheet.

*Cooperative funding provided by Enbridge Energy Partners L.P. and King Ranch, Inc.*