



South-Central Monarch Project

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The recovery of the monarch butterfly and the goal to thus preclude the need for federal listing of the species has prompted immense effort and investment among government agencies, NGO's, universities, the private sector, and Texas landowners. However, species recovery is most effective when research, conservation efforts, and investments are comprehensive and coordinated across the range. Unlike the mid-western and northern part of the species range in the United States, rangelands and urban areas dominate the landscape supporting the spring and fall monarch migrations in Texas and Oklahoma. Texan by Nature will convene experts and organizations engaged in monarch research and conservation in the south-central portion of the butterfly's migratory pathway to ensure a more comprehensive partner conservation strategy, and to optimize the effectiveness of recovery efforts in this portion of the migratory pathway.

SOUTH-CENTRAL MONARCH SYMPOSIUM

May 31–June 1, 2017

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas

A symposium of monarch conservation partners and scientists will be held on May 31–June 1, 2017 at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. The outcomes of the symposium will lead to post-symposium work to further coordinate and implement a comprehensive conservation monitoring plan and identify key strategies for recovery of the monarch. These strategies will serve as a catalyst for additional and more strategic phases of work.

Post-symposium communication and workshops will be held through May 2018 to implement the outcomes of the symposium. In addition to partnership building, the symposium will have four areas of focus – research and monitoring, land management and private landowner initiatives, conservation strategy development, and communication and outreach.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Conservation practitioners from organizations and state and federal agencies, private landowners, and other scientists who are involved in research and conservation efforts benefitting the monarch butterfly, with an emphasis on the eastern migratory population.

PARTNERS

To more adequately address the conservation challenges facing the monarch in the south-central part of its range will require a collaborative effort among representatives from all agencies and organizations currently engaged in monarch conservation efforts. Partners (at time of printing) who will actively contribute to the proposed symposium and outcome deliverables are as follows:

- Environmental Defense Fund
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Monarch Joint Venture
- Monarch Watch
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Wildlife Federation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Noble Foundation
- Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture
- Oklahoma City Zoo
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Oklahoma Biological Survey
- Oklahoma Farm Bureau
- Oklahoma State University
- Texas Agricultural Land Trust
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Texas Farm Bureau
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
- Texas Wildlife Association
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Xerces Society

SYMPOSIUM GOALS AND OUTCOMES

- Develop a comprehensive overview of current conservation efforts and scientific research in Texas and Oklahoma
- Consolidate data on the monarch butterfly migration, associated habitat characteristics, and conservation efforts on the ground
- Facilitate efforts to consolidate information (especially data unique to Texas and Oklahoma) in a more central location where it can easily be accessed by the FWS Species Status Assessment (SSA) process, other government agencies, conservation partners, and the public
- Identify gaps in current scientific understanding and habitat management practices and develop approaches to fill those gaps
- Evaluate the success of existing conservation efforts
- Develop a framework to evaluate and measure the conservation benefit of these efforts in Texas and Oklahoma
- Identify definitive, usable knowledge on which management practices affects monarchs as well as other species
- Develop a collaborative plan to promote adaptive management and to ensure consistent monitoring efforts are in place to allow for the measurement of conservation gains in existing research or management protocols
- Develop a framework and process for establishing measurable conservation goals for the south-central region

POST SYMPOSIUM GOALS AND OUTCOMES

After the symposium, efforts will continue to facilitate the finalization and implementation of the strategies and plan developed by symposium participants. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Organize symposium outcomes into findings that can be used as a roadmap for conservation of the monarch butterfly by program partners
- Communicate symposium outcomes through various outreach mechanisms
- Coordinate partner efforts created during the symposium
- Create a set of measurable conservation goals that will inform progress toward recovery of the species
- Implement a monarch conservation monitoring plan and facilitate the workgroup to further refine and monitor progress towards conservation goals for the species.