

Why Pollinators Matter....

Local Monarch Waystations Addressing the President's Pollinator-Health Strategy

President Obama's Strategy to Promote Pollinator Health

In 2015, under the direction of President Obama, the Pollinator Health Task Force released its report "*Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and other Pollinators*".¹ The Strategy lays out current and planned Federal actions to achieve the goals associated with protection of Monarch Butterflies, Honey Bees and Pollinator Habitat Acreage.



The Importance of Pollinators

Roughly three-fourths of all native plants in the world require pollination by an animal, most often an insect, and typically the native bee. Pollinators such as honey bees are responsible for one in every three bites of food we take, and increase our nation's crop values each year by more than \$15 billion dollars. The losses of our pollinators threaten agricultural production, the maintenance of natural plant communities, and the important services provided by those ecosystems, such as carbon cycling, flood and erosion control, and recreation.

Butterflies: A National Concern

While the monarch butterfly is regarded a minor pollinator, it represents a major indicator of biodiversity and ecosystem health. Honey bees and monarch butterflies have seen marked-population declines in recent years, by nearly 90%. The Eastern migration of monarchs, from the North East/Canada to Mexico, has become less successful for many monarchs because of losses in nectar-producing plants that provide sustenance to the adult butterflies, as well as in the availability of milkweed plants on which developing monarch larvae feed exclusively.



Local Solutions: Creating Monarch Waystation Habitats

Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall. Likewise, without nectar from flowers these fall migratory monarch butterflies would be unable to make their long journey to overwintering grounds in Mexico. The need for host plants for larvae and energy sources for adults applies to all monarch (and other butterfly) populations around the world.

¹ National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and other Pollinators, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/Pollinator%20Health%20Strategy%202015.pdf>