MONARCH JOINT VENTURE

2019 Annual Report



The Monarch Joint Venture's Mission:
To protect monarchs and their migration by collaborating with partners to deliver habitat conservation, education, and science across the United States.

The Four Pillars of the MJV's Work


Photo by Giuseppina Croce

Increasing habitat. To reverse population declines, the MJV promotes protection, creation, and enhancement of breeding and migratory habitats that include diverse milkweed and nectar resources.


Photo by Wendy Caldwell

Monitoring monarchs and collecting data. The MJV leads research, which is vital to improving our understanding of monarch biology, distribution, and abundance, and to informing monarch conservation efforts.


Photo by Candace Fallon

Protecting western overwintering sites. In addition to protecting breeding areas across the U.S., the MJV partner network works to monitor and protect overwintering groves along the Pacific Coast of California.


Photo by Wendy Caldwell

Educating to inspire conservation action. We must engage "all hands on deck" to effectively conserve monarchs, and therefore, a primary pillar of the MJV's work is providing education to all audiences.

MONARCH JOINT VENTURE

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From the Executive Director



Following a year with both good and bad news for monarch populations, 2019-20 overwintering counts for both eastern and western monarchs reinforce the need for the mission that we serve and the work we have ahead of us. A boost for the eastern population in 2018-19 resulted from good conditions and good timing for monarchs throughout their annual cycle of breeding, migrating, and overwintering. In 2019-20, however, the population reduced to only half of what it was the year before, demonstrating that variability in weather and climate conditions may have significant influence on the success of the population (in both good and bad ways). For two years straight, the western population has seen direly low numbers, and action must be scaled-up immediately to help them recover. The best thing that we can do to help monarchs is to increase and improve the habitats that they have available to them across North America, supporting their needs at each link of their annual cycle. If we can improve their chances of finding good quality habitat by ensuring that it is everywhere, we will help to boost their reproductive success, and therefore the size and success of the population.

More Than Monarchs

The MJV partner network works diligently to engage an even broader network in doing their part to support monarchs, pollinators, and other plants and animals. We do this through direct habitat conservation, education, and research. Through building partnerships, promoting collaboration, and sharing information, we are working together to bring back monarchs alongside many other organisms that rely on the same habitats.

In the past year, the MJV transitioned from a 10-year history with the University of Minnesota to become a standalone nonprofit organization. While a daunting task, we continued to grow in our staff and activities through this transition. A full-time development director is making great progress to generate new leads and nurture our donor base. We are expanding geographically to serve the western population through a California-based position, and look forward to also adding capacity to coordinate agriculturally focused priorities.

Thank You

I would like to acknowledge our dedicated staff team, board of directors, and advisory committee for seeing the MJV through this phase of growth and change. Additionally, our passionate partners, volunteers, and donors are critical in driving forward this important work. Thank you to all who are on this journey with us to protect monarchs and their migration. Together, we will make a difference.



Wendy Caldwell

Wendy Caldwell
Monarch Joint Venture Executive Director

The best thing that we can do to help monarchs is to increase and improve the habitats that they have available to them across North America.

From the Board Chair

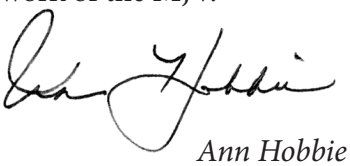


My love affair with monarchs began in the vacant lots at the end of the block where I grew up, where milkweed grew rampant amidst old trolley tracks, and recently reached perhaps what will be its zenith when I fulfilled a long-deferred wish to see the overwintering sites in central Mexico.

After meeting Karen Oberhauser, a monarch researcher, when I was a young classroom teacher, I embraced the charisma of this dynamic and beautiful creature as a tool for science and inquiry with children. Our connection led to my bumbling around with monarchs in my classroom, years of curriculum writing and revising, more than two decades of teaching other teachers about monarchs, a children's book, and now, to proudly serving as board chair of the MJV.

It was, therefore, only fitting that on New Year's Day I grabbed one of my best childhood friends and one of my best teaching pals to head to central Mexico to witness the confluence and profundity of the eastern migratory generation. The trip was nothing short of spectacular. We explored and delighted in the forest preserves, where monarchs were everywhere. We met amazing local people who guided and informed us, sharing the beauty of the land they work so hard to protect. We were well-hosted by the Butterfly B and B in Macheros, felt safe and welcome, and met so many others from around the globe who also delighted in the tremendous nature of this migratory insect.

The work of the board of the Monarch Joint Venture is pure privilege. Monarchs uniquely bring together people, nations, and conservation advocates not only to preserve this iconic species, but the many ecosystems along their route – an uncommon endeavor for the common good. I'm so proud to be part of the work of the MJV.



Ann Hobbie
Monarch Joint Venture Board Chair



I marveled at monarchs that had traveled so far to get to this "just right" place for winter, including these at Sierra Chincua.

Education and Events

Professional Development

The MJV co-hosted two professional development opportunities for educators in 2019. Participants were non-formal educators, community organizers, and preschool through high school classroom teachers. Collectively called NAMI (North American Monarch Institute), the two workshops were both funded by the U.S. Forest Service International Programs. The flagship course, NAMI, focuses on monarchs and invertebrate biology and ecology. Advanced Schoolyard Ecology Explorations (ASEE) focuses more broadly on schoolyard ecology and citizen science through the study of bees, birds, trees, phenology, and dragonflies. In total, 78 individuals participated in NAMI workshops.

- NAMI had **53 participants** from the U.S. (AZ, GA, IN, MN, OH, TX, WI, WV, Washington DC) and Mexico (Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Michoacan, Nuevo Leon, and the State of Mexico).
- ASEE had **25 participants** from the U.S. (IL, MD, MI, WI, Washington DC) and Mexico (Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Michoacan, and the State of Mexico).



Teachers gain hands-on experience in monarch identification by making observations of live eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises, and adults during the NAMI workshop.

Outreach and Events

- The MJV offered **11 webinars** in 2019, averaging 376 participant.
- The MJV participated in a number of local outreach events ranging in size and scope from classroom visits to local plant sales to the Minneapolis Monarch Festival.
- The MJV developed its first ever 'Monarch Short Course,' a seven-week class designed to teach participants about monarch biology, identification, habitat needs, threats, conservation status, current research, and citizen science opportunities.

The MJV reached **2,000** people through public outreach events



The MJV co-hosted with partner University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, two teacher workshops in July, the North American Monarch Institute and Advanced Schoolyard Ecology Explorations, supported by the U.S. Forest Service International Programs. Teachers from across North America came together to learn about monarch biology, ecology, conservation and citizen science, as well as gained hands-on experience in using monarchs and invertebrates as a tool for teaching the process of science and other topics, particularly in an outdoor classroom.

Research and Monitoring

The Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP)

The IMMP is a national program managed by the MJV to collect milkweed, nectar plant, and monarch data from a variety of land-use types. This information is vital to shaping our understanding of how monarchs interact with their environments, documenting conservation efforts, and tracking changes in monarch populations and habitats through time.

180 people collected IMMP data, including citizen scientists and people from conservation organizations and agencies.

In 2019:

- **225 sites** in **23 states** reported data on the number and diversity of milkweed and flowering plants, monarch eggs, larvae, and adults.
- Many partner organizations have **adopted IMMP protocols** to collect data that will drive local conservation decisions, while also contributing to IMMP's broader goals. Examples include Missourians for Monarchs, Pheasants Forever, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Defense, the National Guard, Arizona Monarch Collaborative, and national parks.
- The **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)** and **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**, separately, collaborated with the MJV on research projects using the IMMP. NFWF is assessing outcomes of their Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund, and NRCS is using IMMP and their own Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide to evaluate habitat management outcomes.





New rapid assessment for roadside habitat

The MJV, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, Oklahoma State University, Environmental Incentives, and the Xerces Society, and with funding from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, developed multiple tools to aid transportation managers in maintaining and enhancing monarch habitat in roadside corridors. For example, a rapid assessment protocol collects information about monarch habitat conditions along roadsides, and is then paired with a roadside habitat evaluator to compute monarch habitat quality scores. These tools help managers identify areas of existing and potential high-quality habitat and help them tailor management actions accordingly.

Peer-reviewed Publications

In 2019, the MJV staff, in collaboration with other partners in monarch research, proudly published three manuscripts:



The IMMP: From Design to Implementation, May 2019
The first peer-reviewed paper published by the MJV details the design and implementation of the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP). It outlines the program's robust design, how it aligns with existing protocols, and how program data can advance conservation goals for monarchs, pollinators, and their habitats. Access the paper here.

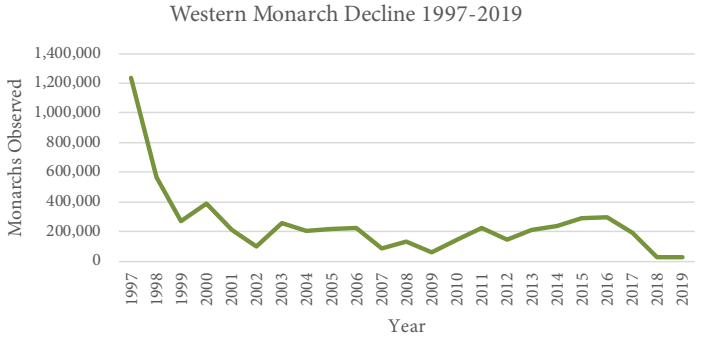
Rapid Assessment of Roadsides, October 2019
The MJV published a manuscript that presents a rapid assessment protocol for assessing monarch habitat in roadsides. Since roadside managers are often limited by time, funding, and expertise, this tool provides a way to assess their roadside habitat quickly. Software is available to managers for free, and their field data are automatically processed through a roadside habitat evaluator to generate habitat quality scores that can then inform management strategies. Access the paper here.

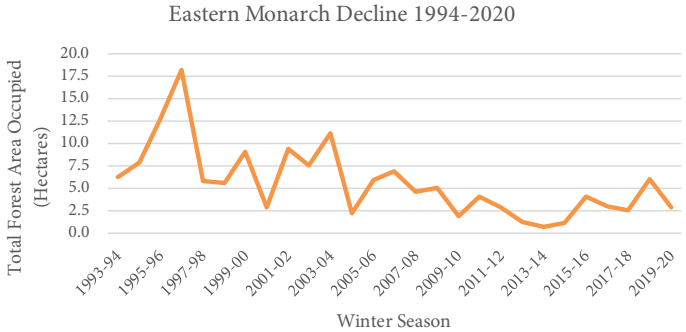
Conservation Grasslands, February 2020
A final published manuscript profiled monarch habitat and use of habitat by monarchs in midwestern conservation grasslands. Milkweed was observed at 60 of 61 sites and with a mean density of 1390 plants per hectare, a density much higher than previously estimated in conservation grasslands. Monarchs were observed at 57 of 61 sites. Nectar sources were least abundant in the early season (late May/early June), illustrating a need for increased planting of early-blooming species. Access the paper here.

Monarch Population Count

Annual counts indicate a continued, critical need for habitat

Each year, scientists in Mexico and Calfiornia conduct counts of the monarch population as the butterflies overwinter. In the winter of 2019-20 counts revealed that both the eastern population that overwinters in Mexico and the western population in California decreased. The western population shows numbers less than 1% of the population that was observed in the 1980s. While the eastern population has fared better, the overwintering population of 2019-20 showed a decrease of 53% from the previous year. Thus, our message remains the same - efforts to create, enhance, and protect habitat for monarchs and pollinators must be scaled up. Each and every person can make a difference for monarchs in some way. Creating habitat, educating others, contributing data to citizen science programs, and advocating for the protection of wild spaces are some of the important actions you can take to help the monarch population recover and sustain its remarkable migration.





Revenue and Expenses

From January through May 2019, the majority of the MJV operations occurred within the University of Minnesota. We acknowledge 2019 support from our primary funders at both the Universy of Minnesota and as a nonprofit. During 2019, the MJV was also fiscally sponsored by Propel Nonprofits. In its role as fiscal sponsor, Propel received certain grants and donations and re-granted them to the MJV. This included a government grant and individual contributions. These funds are included in nonprofit income, as they were intended for, but not given directly to, the MJV. The charts only reflect revenue and expenses of the nonprofit during 2019, but funders included all who have supported us in 2019 at the University, through Propel, or directly to the nonprofit.

Agencies:

Bureau of Land Management
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Transportation Research Board (National Cooperative Highway Research Program)
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey

Foundations and Other Grantors:

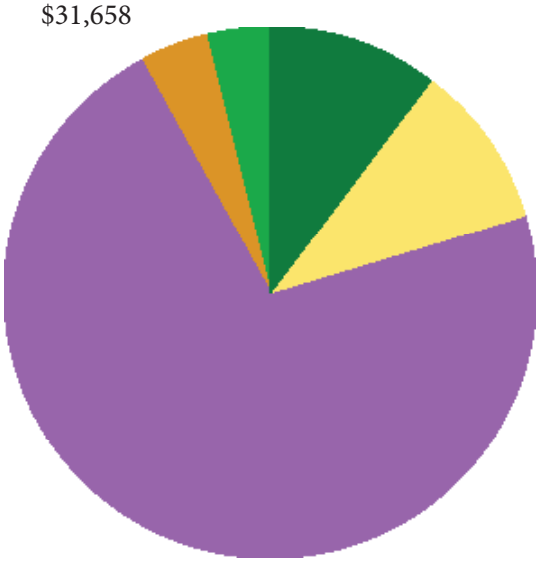
Biodiversity Works
Environmental Defense Fund
Monarch Butterfly Fund
Mortenson Family Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NextEra Energy
University of Illinois – Chicago
University of Minnesota

Businesses and Community Organizations:

Ameriprise Financial
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Blue Aster Studio
Clutch Brewing Company
Community Shares of Minnesota
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Southwest Monarch Study
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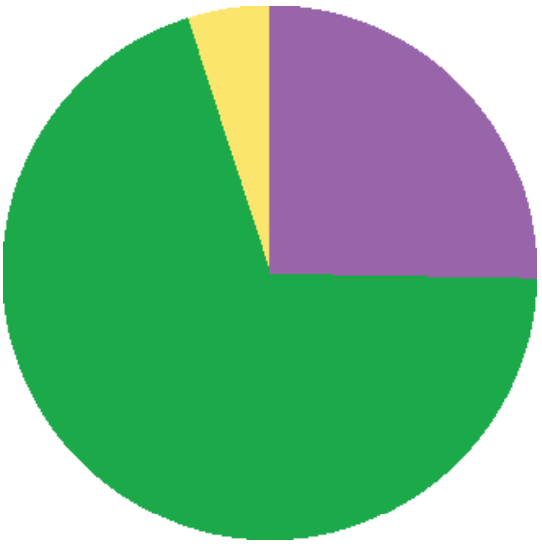
Revenue

NGO Support	$609,874
Individual Contributions	$88,658
Foundation Support	$84,989
Government Grants	$36,494
Earned Income	$31,658



Expenses

Programs	$413,110
General Operations	$150,835
Fundraising	$28,271



2019 Individual Donors

Individual donors play an important role in ensuring the success of the MJV and our partners. The MJV ended 2019 with nearly $85,000 in donations from individuals. Individuals contributed to Give to the Max Day, Giving Tuesday, Pints for Pollinators, and more. Thank you to the following individuals who helped make that possible.

$500-$999

Shelly Culea
Mary & Dave Hedenstrom
Kevin Little & Lynn Hobbie
Sue Lang
Sanford Sagalkin
Arne & Ruth Sorenson

$250-$499

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Wendy Wenger Dankey & Jeff Dankey

$100-$249

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Ruth Bowell
Sandra Bowman
Betty Bright
Lyndy Broder
Peg Brown
Selena Brownlee

Leadership Circle

The Monarch Joint Venture is especially grateful to these individuals who, in 2019, contributed ***$1,000 or more****:*

Anonymous
Mrs. Nancy & Dr. Roger Benjamin
Meredithe Hedenstrom
Ann Hobbie & Jeff Benjamin
Harry Kirk
Helen & Daniel Lindsay Family Fund
Crystal & David Moede
Gretchen Oberhauser Bell
Karen Oberhauser
Suzanne Oberhauser
Robert Reynolds
Therese Sexe & David Hage
Janice K. Sharp & Brian R. Bowman
Benida Solow
Sarah Thompson

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Shawn Willy
Maura Windlinger
Peggy Jean Zook
Jesus Zuniga

2020 Priorities and Work

Educator workshops. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in early 2020, the MJV will adapt its professional development for participants in the North American Monarch Institute and offer the trainings virtually. The U.S. Forest Service is the primary funder for this work, along with supporting the MJV's capacity and general operations.

Farmer and Rural Landowner Outreach. The MJV continues efforts to work with farmers and rural landowners to find win-win conservation practices on farms. In 2019, the MJV worked with the Environmental Defense Fund to provide technical assistance to help restore almost 20 acres of land around hog barns in Minnesota and Iowa. With support from the New York Community Trust, an agricultural coordinator will facilitate the development of tools and resources for the Farmers for Monarchs website and engage agricultural stakeholder groups. A new regional pollinator habitat specialist, with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, will provide habitat technical assistance to farmers in the central valley of California.

Research. A contract with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will support the MJV in evaluating their habitat investment locations along the central flyway of the U.S. The MJV also endeavors to expand participation in the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP) nationwide, consult with Department of Transportation to customize and apply our tools for roadside managers, and advance other monarch research priorities.

Fundraising. A new full-time development director will be building up our base of individual donors, assisting with securing increased institutional funding, and engaging broadly with our supporters. If you have questions about donations to the MJV or would like to share why you support the MJV, reach out to Ella Phillips at ephillips@monarchjointventure.org.



The MJV, in partnership with Sentera, Inc., is developing software that uses remote sensing technology to identify milkweed using drone-captured images. By using drones, we are able quickly survey large areas of habitat, and provide greater amounts of data than were possible using only on-the-ground monitoring. The MJV will continue to pilot this technology during the 2020 field season, and will be ready to share results in the near future.

How You Can Help

Create habitat. Plant milkweed and other native flowering plants. Visit www.plantmilkweed.org for recommendations on how to create a pollinator-friendly garden.

Report observations. Participate in citizen science projects, such as tagging monarchs and butterfly counts.

Educate others. The Monarch Joint Venture offers monthly webinars and a variety of free, educational resources for teachers and others on its website.

Share our work. Share the work of the Monarch Joint Venture with your friends and family. You can share a video that provides an overview of our work, a post on Facebook, a photo on Instagram, or news from Twitter.

Contribute financially. Invest today and help ensure that resources are available to help the Monarch Joint Venture and other conservation-focused organizations implement the science-based recommendations in the annually updated North American Monarch Conservation Plan.

Walk, run, hike, or paddle. As an individual, or with a team, participate in Miles for Monarchs to help raise funds and awareness for monarch conservation.

MILES FOR MONARCHS

Run, Walk, Bike, Hike, or Paddle the Migration!

Who We Are

The Monarch Joint Venture is a partnership of more than 90 federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and academic programs working together to protect the monarch migration across the United States. Our partners are experts in the fields of monarch conservation and education and are working to make colossal progress toward our ultimate goal of conserving the monarch migration, using the Monarch Conservation Implementation Plan as our guide.



About 100 representatives of partner organizations attended the annual meeting of the MJV at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix in November 2019. Priorities emerging from the meeting included focusing on:

- Leveraging the multiple benefits of monarch habitat for a variety of environmental concerns.
- Improving policies or legislation to improve monarch and habitat conservation efforts.
- Developing toolkits for monarch education and outreach activities and providing professional development.
- Increasing efforts to engage agricultural, energy and transportation, urban or municipal, and public sectors.
- Addressing research questions about habitat distribution and connectivity.
- Bringing western stakeholders together to coordinate and advance priorities of the Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan.

