MONARCH JOINT VENTURE

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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About Us

The Monarch Joint Venture (MJV) is a national nonprofit organization committed to conserving monarch butterflies, other pollinators, and overall biodiversity. Since 2008, MJV has brought together federal and state agencies, nonprofits, community groups, corporations, and academic institutions across the United States around the shared goal of protecting monarchs and their iconic migration.

As a leader in North American monarch conservation, MJV advances its mission through science-based education, habitat restoration, monitoring, and strategic partnerships. MJV's work spans the country—creating and enhancing high-quality habitat, disseminating knowledge, engaging both partners and the public in conservation action, and supporting scientific research to inform and strengthen conservation outcomes.

Mission

Our mission is to protect monarchs and their migration by collaborating with partners to deliver habitat conservation, education, and science across the monarch range.

Vision

Our vision is thriving monarch populations that sustain the monarch migration into perpetuity and serve as a flagship for the conservation of other plants and animals.

Values

- **Conservation:** The grassroots work we do for monarchs and their habitat fosters resilient ecosystems and sustainable actions for the long-term health of our planet.
- **Science:** The latest research guides our evolving conservation practices and leads our community engagement efforts.
- **Inspiration:** Educational efforts not only provide the latest scientific information but also inspire others to be curious and take conservation actions that fit the needs and resources of their communities.
- **Partnership:** Authentic, supportive, and mutually respectful engagement with stakeholders from across North America leads to scalable and sustainable solutions.
- **Leadership:** Bringing people together allows us all to work more effectively toward common goals while leveraging our various industries, backgrounds, and areas of expertise.
- **Broad Tent:** Broad collaboration with stakeholders from all backgrounds creates an environment for growth, sustained involvement, and innovation.

Learn more about the MJV at
monarchjointventure.org/about-us

A Letter from the Executive Director



This past year tested us.

Shifting funding landscapes and uncertainty around federal support required us to make quick decisions, adjust plans, and rethink how we approach our work. Our team met those challenges head-on, staying focused, flexible, and committed to moving the mission forward.

And despite that uncertainty, we made meaningful progress.

We convened partners from across the continent through the North American Monarch Summit, creating space for coordination at a critical time. We engaged people from all walks of life, both in person and online, expanding awareness and participation in monarch conservation. On the ground, we supported habitat restoration, improvement, and applied research across diverse sectors of the landscape. And we continued to grow our network, bringing new partners to the table to strengthen this collective effort.

What this year made clear is that our ability to adapt is one of our greatest strengths. It allows us to respond to change without losing momentum, and to keep building toward long-term impact even in uncertain conditions.

The need for this work remains urgent. Meeting it will require continued partnership, investment, and a shared commitment to progress. There will be challenges ahead, and not all of them are predictable. But we have shown that we are ready to navigate them, and to keep advancing solutions for monarchs and other pollinators.

This work depends on all of us. There are many ways to contribute, from creating habitat and volunteering time to sharing expertise or providing financial support. These collective efforts allow us to sustain our programs, support our partners, and respond when challenges arise. When individuals, communities, and organizations come together, the impact is stronger and more lasting. Your ongoing commitment makes this progress possible and helps ensure a future for monarchs and other pollinators.

Thank you for being an important part of our work.

Wendy Caldwell

Wendy Caldwell
Executive Director
Monarch Joint Venture

A Letter from the Board



What an extraordinary year for the Monarch Joint Venture, despite the uncertainties and challenges of government funding in 2025. Our mission to protect monarchs and their migration continued full force, driven by a responsive team and resilient staff who advanced work across all four pillars: habitat, education, science, and partnership.

We are encouraged by growth in the eastern monarch population, as measured by overwintering area in Mexico, and remain hopeful this trend continues toward a sustainable level. At the same time, western monarch numbers remain low and of concern. In response, we are strengthening efforts across both regions, with increased focus on community engagement and habitat development in the West.

MJV remains committed to an "all hands on deck" approach to expanding habitat across working lands, public spaces, and communities. This year, we advanced habitat work by leveraging state, corporate, and foundation partnerships. Prairie Oaks, our Minnesota farm campus, is emerging as a keystone site for habitat development and research, supporting continued expansion in the years ahead.

In education, funding challenges accelerated progress toward sustainable, revenue-generating programs. Public events at Prairie Oaks, expanded youth programming, webinars, and new educational products all contributed to greater reach and financial resilience.
In science, we strengthened the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP), continued rebuilding the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP) data portal, and acquired Journey North. Our team advanced monitoring across public and private lands, while translating research into practice through our annual research review and standardized methods supporting broader pollinator conservation.

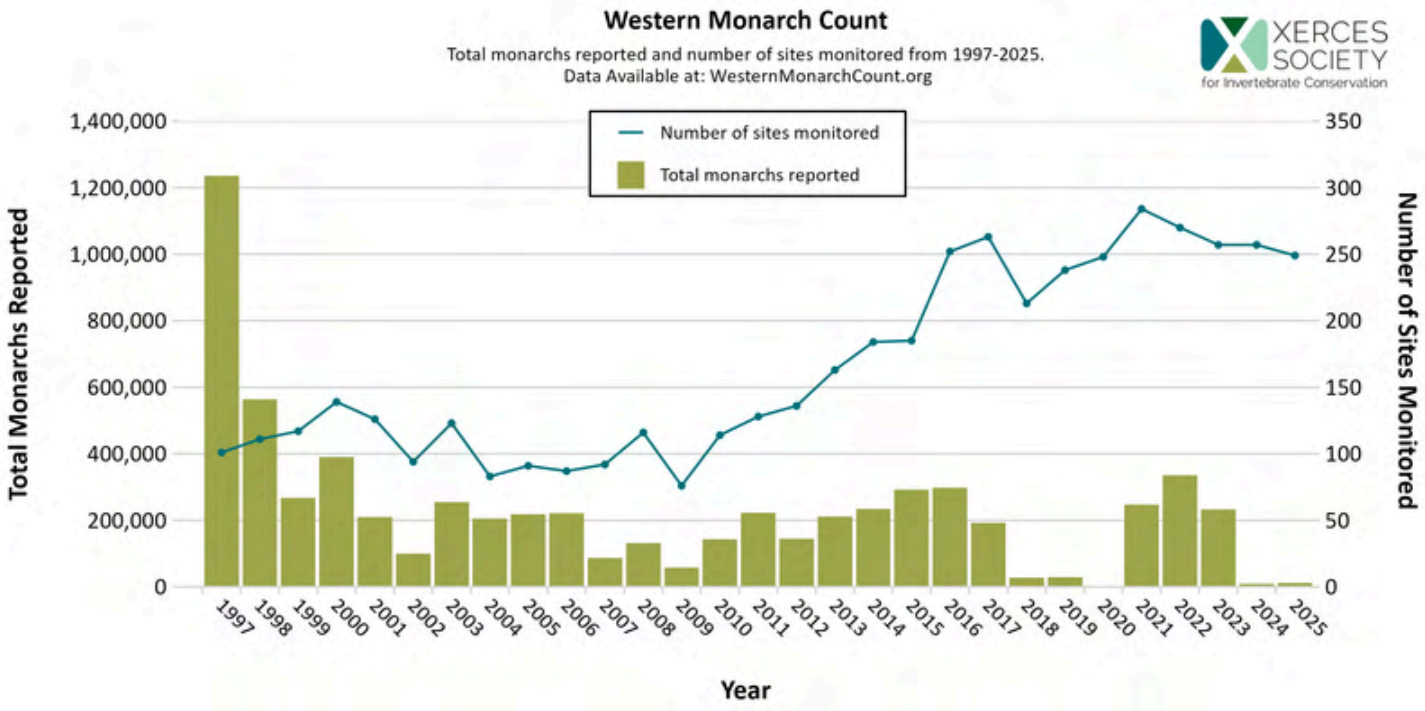
Our Partner Network continues to grow, reinforcing MJV's role as a central hub for monarch conservation. In 2025, we co-hosted the North American Monarch Summit in Minneapolis, convening 270 participants from 161 organizations, and enhanced collaboration through improvements to the Partner Portal.

Looking ahead, MJV is building on strong momentum to expand and sustain conservation efforts for monarchs and the ecosystems they depend on. We invite you to be part of this work by planting milkweed, engaging your community, and making a financial contribution to support monarch conservation.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Janice Sharp
Board Chair
Monarch Joint Venture

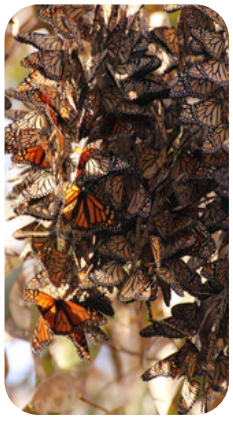
Western Monarch Population



Each year, volunteers and conservation organizations conduct surveys at overwintering sites along the California coast from Mendocino County to Northern Baja, Mexico, as well as known inland sites in California and Arizona. From late November through early December 2025, hundreds of volunteers and partners participated in the effort, surveying 249 overwintering sites and recording a peak population of just 12,260 monarchs. While this is an increase from last season's 9,119, it is the third-lowest tally since the count began in 1997.

Habitat availability, habitat quality, temperature, and rainfall patterns can affect the number of overwintering monarchs. For more details about the 2025 season count, read The Xerces Society's announcement by clicking here (read in Spanish here).

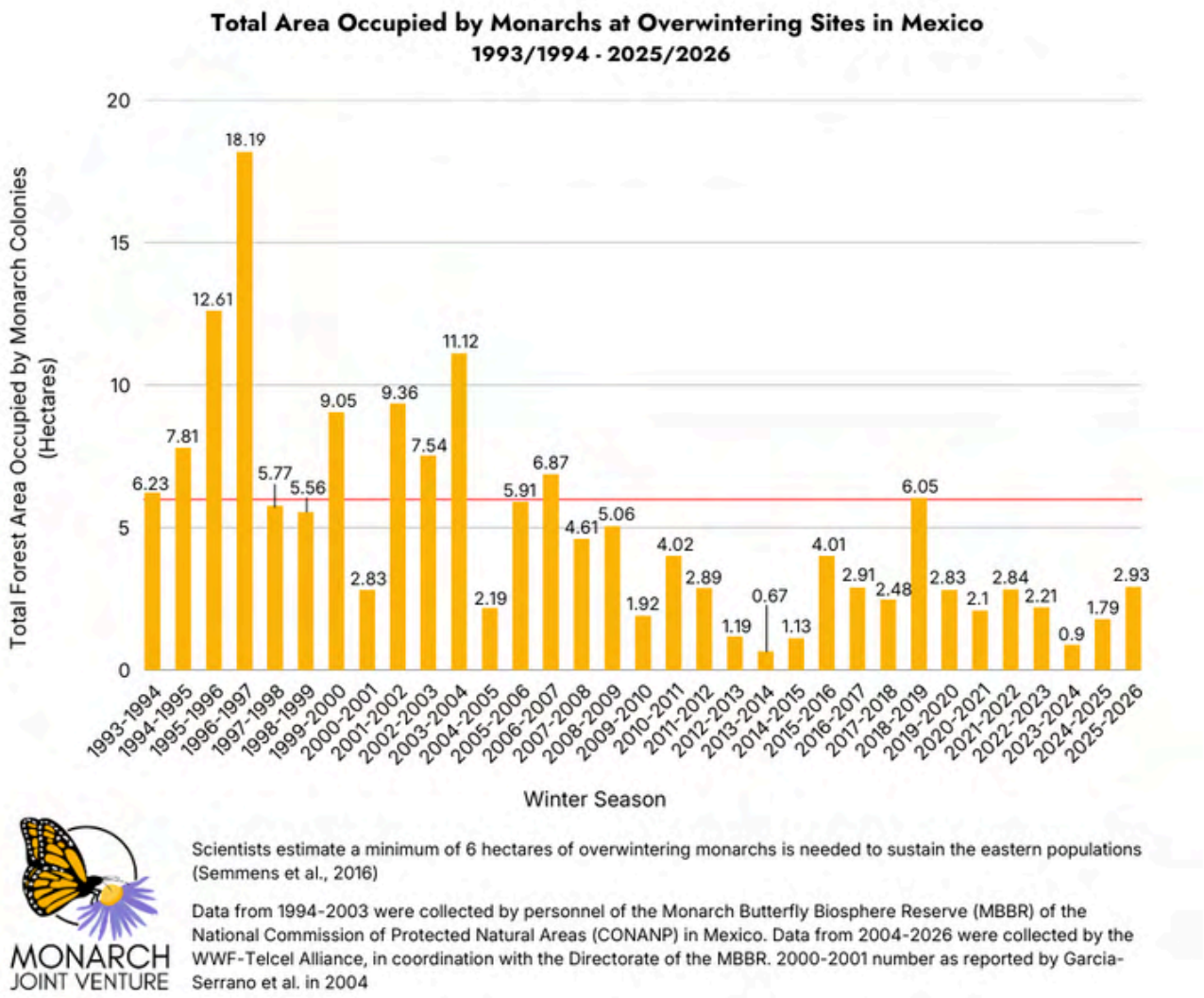
We acknowledge and thank the Xerces Society for coordinating the Western Monarch Count, volunteers who took part in this year's effort, MJV's Monarchs and More Western Habitat Program participants, and everyone else who made an effort to help monarchs and other pollinators this year.



Monarchs cluster in trees in California ©Wendy Caldwell

Learn more about monarch population trends at monarchjointventure.org/blog/population-trends

Eastern Monarch Population



MONARCH JOINT VENTURE

Scientists estimate a minimum of 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs is needed to sustain the eastern populations (Semmens et al., 2016)

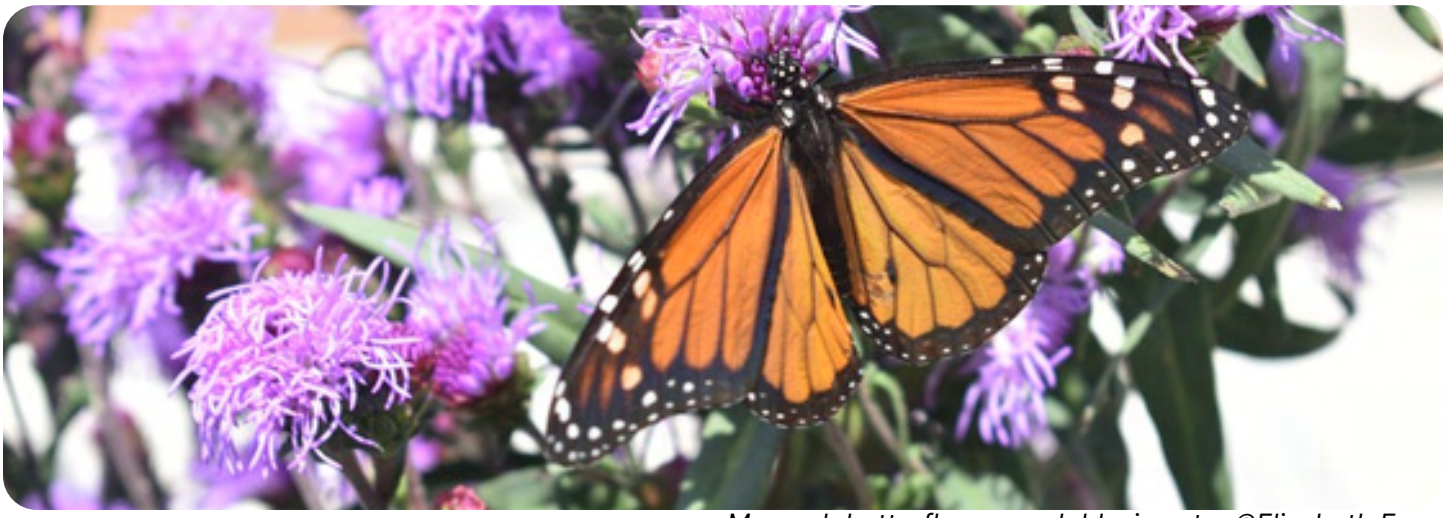
Data from 1994-2003 were collected by personnel of the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR) of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) in Mexico. Data from 2004-2026 were collected by the WWF-Telcel Alliance, in coordination with the Directorate of the MBBR. 2000-2001 number as reported by Garcia-Serrano et al. in 2004

The eastern monarch butterfly population overwintering in Mexico's oyamel fir forests occupied 2.93 hectares during the 2025-2026 overwintering season, according to the latest survey released by Mexico's National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). This represents about a 64% increase compared to last year's estimate of 1.79 hectares.

This winter, there were nine colonies of monarch butterflies – three in Michoacán and six in Estado de México. Five colonies were located inside the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR), occupying 5.61 acres of forest, and four were located outside the MBBR, occupying 1.63 acres. The colony of Atlautla, outside of the monarch region, occupied 0.005 acres of forest.

Learn more about monarch population trends at
monarchjointventure.org/blog/population-trends

Introduction to MJV Initiatives



Monarch butterfly on rough blazing star ©Elizabeth Egan

The Monarch Joint Venture's work spans habitat, education, science, and partnership. While these areas represent distinct activities, they are united by a common purpose: building the knowledge, relationships, and capacity needed to conserve monarchs and pollinators across North America.

In 2025, that work took many forms. We partnered with ranchers to improve grassland management, supported educators bringing monarch conservation into classrooms, engaged thousands of community scientists in monitoring efforts, and convened organizations working across the monarch range. Whether working with landowners, educators, researchers, community members, or conservation professionals, our approach remains the same: investing in people and relationships to create conservation outcomes that no single organization could achieve alone.

That approach was tested in 2025. The conservation funding landscape shifted rapidly as federal programs that many organizations had relied upon became uncertain, paused, restructured, or disappeared altogether. Across the conservation sector, organizations were forced to reassess priorities and adapt to changing conditions.

For MJV, these challenges reinforced the importance of what we were already building. Strong conservation depends on strong communities. In professional networks, that means creating shared capacity among partners working toward a common goal. In local communities, it means helping people connect with conservation in ways that are meaningful, accessible, and lasting. Across all of our work, we are investing in relationships, aligning around shared goals, and creating opportunities to accomplish more together than we could apart. The accomplishments highlighted throughout this report reflect that commitment. From habitat restoration and community engagement to scientific research and partner collaboration, each success represents a broader effort to strengthen the network of people and organizations working to conserve monarchs and pollinators for generations to come.

2025 Impact Highlights

The Monarch Joint Venture's work is strengthened by a network of partners, volunteers, educators, landowners, community scientists, and supporters across North America. The metrics below represent the Monarch Joint Venture's accomplishments during the past year, demonstrating our contributions to habitat conservation, education, science, and collaboration throughout the monarch range.

Conserving Habitat	Building Conservation Capacity	Advancing Science	Strengthening Partnerships
809 acres restored	1,595 learners enrolled in NECTAR Hub courses	1,890 IMMP surveys completed	145+ partner organizations engaged
3,885 acres under improved management	77 educators trained through NAMI	39,000 Journey North observations submitted	270 attendees at the North American Monarch Summit
161 conservation plans developed	2,944 webinar participants	345 MLMP sites monitored	161 organizations from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. represented at the Summit
26 habitat events hosted or co-hosted	8 self-paced online courses available	9,000+ participants in the International Monarch Blitz	Two new partner working groups launched
3,770 people reached through habitat initiatives	6,750+ people engaged through outreach events	622 IMMP monitoring sites across 23 states	20 organizations engaged through partner networking events
1,242 acres of rangeland restored or enhanced in California	5 early-career interns supported	4,300 acres surveyed through remote sensing efforts	115 institutions engaged through AZA SAFE Monarch

Habitat Initiatives



MJV's Midwest Habitat Manager Jake Koenig receives help from a special volunteer, his daughter, to plant monarch habitat at the Hamlow Elementary School Pollinator Garden ©MJV

Habitat conservation is one of the primary ways MJV translates relationships into on-the-ground impact. Across the monarch range, staff work alongside farmers, ranchers, agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and communities to restore habitat, improve land management, and create new opportunities for monarchs and other pollinators to thrive.

In 2025, these efforts spanned working lands, conservation easements, corporate lands, public lands, and community spaces. While the landscapes and partners varied, the goal remained the same: creating durable habitat outcomes while building the local capacity needed to sustain conservation over the long term.

Building Shared Capacity Through Partnerships

Lasting conservation is built through relationships, shared expertise, and a collective commitment to stewardship.

Throughout 2025, MJV invested in partnerships that expanded conservation capacity across the monarch range. In Minnesota, collaborative restoration planning advanced across the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District to improve habitat on permanently protected lands. In Kansas, planning began for a 1,126-acre public lands habitat project that will create new opportunities for pollinator conservation. In Northeast Indiana, new collaborations expanded technical assistance and habitat delivery across the region.

In California, partnerships connected ranchers and land managers with pollinator conservation resources while creating opportunities to integrate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge with contemporary rangeland management. Workshops, field learning opportunities, and technical assistance strengthened both habitat outcomes and the network of practitioners supporting them.

These partnerships are an investment in long-term conservation capacity. The relationships we build today strengthen the networks that will expand monarch conservation tomorrow.

Stewarding Working and Protected Landscapes

Easement Restoration: The Long Game

Some of the most important conservation opportunities exist on permanently protected lands. While conservation easements prevent development, achieving high-quality habitat requires planning, stewardship, and long-term restoration.

Across Minnesota's Prairie Pothole Region, MJV worked with landowners and conservation partners to develop restoration plans for protected properties ranging from complex wetland systems to actively managed grazing lands. Many of these landscapes contain dozens of restoration opportunities, each requiring careful planning to balance ecological outcomes with practical land management.

To support this growing effort, MJV expanded field capacity by adding restoration staff. These investments will help ensure habitat improvements continue benefiting monarchs, pollinators, and people for years to come.



Monarch butterfly visits a wetland restoration site while an excavator constructs a ditch plug ©Avery Pearson

Grazing Lands: An Opportunity at Scale

Some of the greatest opportunities for monarch conservation already exist on working lands.

Grasslands and rangelands provide essential habitat across much of the monarch's range. Because these landscapes are already in production, conservation often depends less on creating new habitat than on management practices that enhance the ecological value of existing acres.

In 2025, MJV worked with ranchers, land managers, and prescribed fire practitioners to promote stewardship that benefits both agricultural operations and pollinator habitat. Across the Great Plains, fire and grazing management improved habitat on more than 1,400 acres, while workshops and events connected hundreds of landowners and professionals with practical grassland stewardship tools.

In California, MJV strengthened partnerships across the ranching and conservation community while expanding technical expertise in regenerative agriculture and grazing management. On-the-ground restoration and enhancement projects improved more than 1,200 acres of pollinator habitat, benefiting monarchs and supporting broader ecosystem health.

Working Landscapes Conservation

Most of the monarch's range is privately owned and actively managed. Whether on farms, ranches, energy facilities, transportation corridors, corporate properties, or urban landscapes, creating habitat at scale depends on working directly with the people and organizations making decisions about those lands every day.



Nebraska Pocket Prairie Installations ©MJV

In 2025, MJV expanded its capacity to support conservation across working landscapes through new staff positions focused on working lands conservation and urban agriculture. These roles help connect pollinator habitat opportunities with priorities that matter to communities, including water quality, food systems, operational goals, and local stewardship.

Throughout the year, MJV also continued supporting habitat improvements across corporate and other managed landscapes, helping businesses and land managers identify opportunities to integrate pollinator conservation into existing operations. These efforts demonstrate that conservation can occur alongside agriculture, infrastructure, energy production, and other land uses, expanding the footprint of habitat across the monarch range.

Working Landscapes Conservation

Meanwhile, the Forage for Wildlife Cover Crop Pilot Program continued to evolve as a learning platform for both producers and conservation practitioners. Lessons emerging from participating farms are helping refine recommendations for species selection, planting timing, and management approaches that support both agricultural productivity and pollinator habitat.

By working alongside producers, businesses, and land managers rather than prescribing solutions, MJV is helping develop conservation approaches that are practical, scalable, and grounded in local experience.

Community-Led Habitat Conservation

Conservation is strongest when communities see themselves as part of the solution. Throughout 2025, MJV invested in local conservation efforts that connect people with the landscapes around them and create opportunities for participation in habitat stewardship.

In California, community needs assessments helped identify how historically underserved communities want to engage with conservation. Those conversations informed new investments in community-led habitat corridors that will help connect key migratory landscapes while creating opportunities for local leadership and stewardship.

In Nebraska, pocket prairie installations transformed highly visible community spaces into pollinator habitat and outdoor learning opportunities. Located in schools, sports complexes, trail corridors, and neighborhood developments, these projects reached thousands of residents while demonstrating how small habitat investments can create lasting community impact.

Across Minnesota's lakes region, local support helped launch new pollinator habitat efforts that connect communities with nearby conservation landscapes. Similar investments in urban agriculture and community conservation are expanding opportunities for engagement in the Twin Cities, helping strengthen both ecological connectivity and community connection to place.



California community partners participate in a native seed collection workshop at Audubon California's demonstration site ©Erin Arnsteen

Together, these efforts demonstrate that habitat conservation is about more than acres restored or enhanced. It is about building the relationships, knowledge, and local capacity needed to sustain conservation for the long term. When communities are empowered to participate in stewardship, habitat becomes more resilient, conservation becomes more durable, and the impact extends far beyond any single project.




Western Habitat Program field tour at Bobcat Ranch in Winters, CA ©Sarah Gomes Swanson (above left), Western Habitat Program habitat planting, Napa Valley Vine Trail in Napa, CA © Erin Arnsteen (above right)




Volunteer prescribed fire crew in Nebraska ©Bohemian Alps PBA Member, ©Jeff Micek (top left), Dormant-seeding a native pollinator seed mix with a no-till drill and tractor at Tri-County FWA ©Dericke Lavoine (top right)




Forage for Wildlife Cover Crop demonstration plot at 2025 MN Farmfest (above left), Hands on Habitat volunteer planting event (above right) ©Jake Koenig




Volunteer group at Hoosier Prairie Nature Preserve in Lake County, IN (above left), Native wildflower plug planting at Pisgah Marsh, IN (above right) ©Robert Seilheimer

Learn more about MJV's habitat initiatives at
monarchjointventure.org/habitat

Education Initiatives



MJV education booth at the Minneapolis Monarch Festival ©MJV

Conservation succeeds when people have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to take action.

MJV's education initiatives help build that capacity by connecting educators, community members, professionals, and emerging conservation leaders with science-based resources, training opportunities, and hands-on experiences. Through online learning, professional development, public engagement, and mentorship, we work to make monarch conservation accessible and actionable for people across North America.

In 2025, these efforts reached thousands of learners through workshops, webinars, online courses, outreach events, and internship opportunities, expanding the network of people equipped to support monarchs and pollinators in their classrooms, communities, and careers.

Building Conservation Capacity Through Learning

Educators play an important role in shaping how future generations understand and engage with conservation. Through the North American Monarch Institute (NAMI), MJV provides

Immersive professional development experiences that help educators build both content knowledge and confidence in teaching about monarchs, pollinators, and ecological systems.



North American Monarch Institute ©MJV

In 2025, MJV hosted four NAMI workshops, engaging 77 educators through virtual and in-person learning experiences. Workshops in San Diego, California, and Wood River, Nebraska combined hands-on instruction, field experiences, and inquiry-based teaching approaches that participants can bring directly into their classrooms, programs, and communities.

To further support conservation education, three schools received pollinator garden grants to establish or enhance outdoor learning spaces. These gardens provide both habitat for monarchs and opportunities for students to engage with science through direct observation, exploration, and stewardship.

By investing in educators, MJV helps expand the reach of monarch conservation far beyond any single workshop, creating opportunities for learning that continue for years to come.

Expanding Access Through the Monarch NECTAR Hub

Conservation learning should be accessible regardless of geography, schedule, or experience level. The Monarch NECTAR Hub continues to expand opportunities for people to engage with monarch conservation through self-paced and live online learning experiences. Now in its second full year, the platform grew to include nine self-paced courses, with new offerings focused on gardening for monarchs and pollinators, community science, and an online version of the North American Monarch Institute.

MJV also partnered with Monarchs Across Georgia to support the Symbolic Monarch Migration program, helping connect classrooms and communities to monarch conservation through a shared migratory journey.



Symbolic Monarch Migration artwork ©MJV

Interest in the platform continued to grow throughout 2025, with 1,595 learners participating in courses and training. Together, these offerings help remove barriers to participation and empower more people to contribute to conservation efforts in meaningful ways.

Connecting People to Conservation

Building support for monarch conservation requires meeting people where they are and creating opportunities for engagement. Throughout 2025, MJV staff connected with thousands of people through presentations, workshops, outreach events, and public programs. These efforts increase awareness of monarch conservation and provided practical ways for people to support pollinators in their own communities.



MJV staff member Cory Kragness hosting an MJV outreach booth ©Alex Carroll

The Monarch Conservation Webinar Series remained a cornerstone of these efforts. Fifteen webinars engaged nearly 3,000 participants through presentations focused on monarch biology, habitat conservation, pollinator ecology, and emerging research. New "Ask an Expert" sessions created opportunities for direct engagement with conservation professionals, while a Spanish-language webinar expanded access to broader audiences.

Whether participating in a webinar, attending a workshop, or connecting with staff at a community event, people across North America found opportunities to learn, engage, and become part of the growing monarch conservation community.

Supporting the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

The future of monarch conservation depends on the next generation of scientists, educators, communicators, and conservation practitioners.

In 2025, MJV supported five early-career interns who contributed to education projects, outreach events, and field-based conservation activities while gaining practical experience in nonprofit conservation work. These internships provided opportunities to develop professional skills, explore career pathways, and build connections within the conservation community. At the same time, interns brought fresh perspectives, new ideas, and additional capacity to MJV's work, demonstrating the mutual value of investing in emerging conservation leaders.

As monarch conservation continues to evolve, developing future leaders remains an important part of building the knowledge, skills, and capacity needed to sustain conservation efforts for years to come.








North American Monarch Institute Sessions ©MJV (above)





Minneapolis Monarch Festival ©MJV (above left and middle), Senior Habitat Program Manager Brittany Smith gives a presentation at the North American Monarch Summit ©Rebecca Slate (above right)





Butterfly Days event at Prairie Oaks Campus, MN ©John Harkness (above)

Learn more about MJV's education initiatives at
monarchjointventure.org/education

Science Initiatives



MJV Senior Science Manager Jennifer Thieme conducts remote sensing surveys with a drone ©MJV

Effective conservation depends on good information. From understanding where monarchs are breeding to evaluating the outcomes of habitat restoration, science helps ensure conservation investments are informed, strategic, and impactful.

MJV's science initiatives generate, synthesize, and share knowledge that supports conservation decision-making across North America. Through community science programs, applied research, monitoring, and collaboration with partners, MJV helps translate data into action for land managers, educators, researchers, agencies, and conservation practitioners.

In 2025, MJV expanded community science participation, advanced field research across diverse landscapes, strengthened monitoring partnerships, and continued supporting the development of innovative tools that improve our understanding of monarchs and their habitat.

Making Science Accessible and Actionable

Scientific knowledge is most valuable when it can be applied. Each year, MJV helps bridge the gap between research and practice through the Research Review, a collaborative effort that synthesizes the latest monarch science into an accessible resource for conservation practitioners, educators, researchers, and partners.

The 2025 Research Review summarized 85 peer-reviewed papers and technical reports, highlighting emerging findings and conservation priorities across the monarch annual cycle. Key themes emphasized the importance of supporting monarchs throughout their full life cycle; strategically targeting conservation efforts across landscapes; and prioritizing habitat quality across breeding, migratory, and overwintering regions.

By making new research more accessible, MJV helps ensure conservation decisions are informed by the best available science and that emerging knowledge can be translated into meaningful conservation action.

Expanding Knowledge Through Community Science

Understanding a species that migrates across an entire continent requires more observations than any single organization could collect. Community scientists continue to play a critical role in advancing monarch conservation by contributing observations, monitoring data, and field expertise that help build a more complete picture of monarch populations and habitat conditions across North America.

In 2025, Journey North became a program of the Monarch Joint Venture, bringing one of the longest-running migratory monitoring efforts under MJV stewardship. More than 10,000 participants contributed approximately 39,000 observations of monarchs and milkweed, generating valuable information while helping people connect with the monarch migration.

Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program

The Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP) achieved a record year, with 1,890 surveys completed across 622 monitoring sites in 23 states. MJV also collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to integrate their inaugural monitoring datasets into the broader IMMP framework, strengthening opportunities for large-scale habitat and population analyses.



IMMP training in California before the field season began ©MJV

Throughout the year, MJV worked closely with federal and international researchers to compile and analyze monitoring data that improve understanding of monarch distribution, habitat conditions, and conservation outcomes across the species' range.

Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program Continued

IMMP methodologies also continue to inform applied conservation research. In 2025, a multi-year study in Iowa used IMMP-inspired monitoring approaches to evaluate pollinator habitat establishment practices, including the effectiveness of winter versus spring seeding and intensive site preparation. The resulting publication, *Expanding the Value of the Conservation Reserve Program for Monarch Butterfly Recovery in the Upper Midwest* (Jackson and Meissen, 2025), provides valuable guidance for future habitat restoration efforts.

Monarch Larva Monitoring Project

The Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP) continued providing valuable information about monarch reproduction and habitat use across the breeding range.

In 2025, 220 community scientists monitored 345 sites across 34 U.S. states and territories, Canada, and New Zealand. Participants completed 2,951 monarch density surveys, collected 517 eggs and larvae to support survival and parasitism research, and more than 180 people participated in MLMP trainings that expanded monitoring capacity across the network.



A monarch larva found on a milkweed bloom
©Alex Carroll

MLMP data also contributed to three peer-reviewed publications that advanced understanding of monarch breeding ecology, habitat use, and migration patterns:

- *Monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus) oviposition preference on native milkweeds (Asclepias) of the northern Great Plains* (Damiano & Perkins, 2025), examining monarch egg-laying preferences among native milkweed species.
- *Mapping monarch seasonal breeding patterns in Eastern North America to inform mowing strategies for roadsides and other rights-of-way* (Fyson et al., 2025), exploring how breeding activity can inform habitat management.
- *Phenology and Abundance of Migratory and Breeding Populations of Monarch Butterflies in the Pacific Northwest*, 2012-2024 (James & James, 2025), examining long-term population patterns in the western United States.

Community science efforts culminated in the ninth annual International Monarch Blitz, engaging more than 9,000 participants across North America who documented over 33,000 monarch sightings and 71,000 milkweed plants. Together, MLMP and the Monarch Blitz demonstrate how community science advances research, informs conservation, and connects people directly with monarch recovery.

Understanding Conservation Outcomes

To implement conservation effectively, practitioners need evidence that management actions are working and guidance on how they can be improved. Throughout 2025, MJV conducted field research across diverse landscapes to evaluate restoration outcomes, improve understanding of monarch habitat, and inform future conservation investments.

In California, MJV partnered with organizations across the state to document habitat availability and restoration outcomes on public and private lands. Staff surveyed 109 locations over six months, documenting more than 9,000 milkweed plants and over 500 flowering plant species. These surveys help fill important data gaps and improve understanding of habitat conditions across the western monarch range.

Across the Midwest and Central United States, MJV continued evaluating pollinator habitat outcomes associated with conservation practices on agricultural lands, roadsides, energy-sector rights-of-way, and other public and private lands. This work helps practitioners identify the most effective approaches and where future investments can have the greatest impact. These efforts also contribute valuable data to broader monitoring initiatives, strengthening conservation planning across regions and scales.



Western habitat monitoring (above row), Midwest and Central United States monitoring (bottom row) ©MJV

Supporting Conservation on Military Lands

Military installations represent some of the largest and most diverse managed landscapes in the United States, creating unique opportunities for habitat conservation, monitoring, and stewardship.

In 2025, MJV supported monarch and pollinator conservation on military lands through monitoring, training, technical assistance, and partner coordination. Working with installation staff and conservation partners, MJV helped build local capacity to manage and evaluate habitat while contributing valuable data to broader conservation efforts.

During the year, MJV surveyed more than 700 Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program plots across 62 military installations. Additional work included remote sensing on sentinel lands, bumble bee surveys in seven states, workshops and trainings in 16 states, technical assistance to 83 installations, and support for habitat restoration projects covering more than 500 acres.

Together, these efforts demonstrate how conservation can be integrated into actively managed landscapes, benefiting both wildlife and the people who steward these lands.

Innovation Through Technology

As conservation challenges become increasingly complex, new technologies offer opportunities to improve how habitat is monitored, evaluated, and managed. In 2025, MJV expanded its remote sensing program into Ohio and Kentucky while continuing work in Minnesota and Iowa. Staff surveyed more than 4,300 acres using drone-based technologies to assess habitat conditions across agricultural lands, transportation corridors, energy-sector landscapes, and other managed environments.

MJV also continued collaborating with technology partners to refine habitat assessment tools and develop models that improve habitat evaluation and decision-making. These efforts help conservation practitioners identify opportunities, measure outcomes, and better understand habitat conditions across large and often difficult-to-access landscapes.

MJV also expanded migratory monitoring by deploying Monarch Watch tags and BluMorpho radio tags, improving our understanding of monarch movement and habitat use.

By combining emerging technologies with on-the-ground expertise, MJV is helping expand the tools available for conservation while improving our ability to monitor pollinator habitat and migration at scale.



BlūMorpho transmitter on a migrating monarch butterfly ©Mercy Manzanares





Remote sensing surveys using drones ©MJV (above)





Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program ©MJV (above)





Surveying a solar site ©Alex Carroll (above right)

Learn more about MJV's science initiatives at monarchjointventure.org/science

Partnership Initiatives



Group photo of the North American Monarch Summit attendees ©Rebecca Slater

Monarch conservation is inherently collaborative. No single organization, agency, researcher, land manager, or community can conserve a migratory species that spans an entire continent.

MJV's partnership initiatives focus on connecting people, organizations, and ideas to strengthen collective conservation impact. By convening diverse stakeholders, facilitating collaboration, and creating opportunities for shared learning, MJV helps build the relationships and networks that advance monarch conservation across North America.

In 2025, these efforts brought together hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals through convenings, working groups, collaborative initiatives, and network-building opportunities that strengthened conservation capacity throughout the monarch range.

Convening the Monarch Conservation Community

Strong conservation networks depend on opportunities for people to learn from one another, build relationships, and align around shared goals. In June, MJV hosted the North American Monarch Summit in Minneapolis, bringing together 270 participants from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Representatives from 161 organizations gathered for three days of presentations, discussions, workshops, and field experiences focused on advancing monarch and pollinator conservation.

The Summit marked the first trinational monarch conservation gathering of its kind since 2012, providing an important opportunity to strengthen relationships across sectors, geographies, and areas of expertise. Participants explored topics ranging from habitat restoration and community science to education, outreach, and emerging conservation challenges.

As part of the Summit, MJV also recognized outstanding partner contributions through the Monarch Joint Venture Partner Awards. These awards celebrate organizations whose leadership, innovation, and commitment have advanced monarch conservation and strengthened the broader conservation community.

The 2025 recipients included:

- Keen Collaborator Award: San Diego Wildlife Alliance, recognized for consistent cross-sector leadership and collaboration in advancing monarch education, outreach, and zoo-based conservation.
- Education Extraordinaire Award: Metro Blooms, recognized for hands-on, community-centered education that empowers communities to create pollinator habitat through native planting and sustainable landscaping.
- Habitat Hero Award: Apex Clean Energy, recognized for integrating habitat restoration into renewable energy development and supporting impactful conservation across thousands of acres.
- Data Champion Award: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, recognized for leadership in monarch monitoring, innovative data strategies, and advancing trinational collaboration in pollinator science.



From left to right: San Diego Wildlife Alliance, Metro Blooms, Apex Clean Energy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
©Rebecca Slater

Convening the Monarch Conservation Community

The week also included the Great Monarch Meetup, a public event that connected community members directly with conservation organizations, educational activities, and opportunities to engage in monarch conservation.

By creating spaces for connection and collaboration, and by celebrating the contributions of partners leading conservation efforts across sectors, MJV helps ensure that knowledge, resources, and innovation continue to strengthen the broader monarch conservation community.



Great Monarch Meetup ©Rebecca Slater

Strengthening Connections Across the Network

While large gatherings create important opportunities for collaboration, strong networks are built through ongoing engagement. Throughout 2025, MJV continued hosting virtual partner networking events that connected organizations working across habitat, education, science, and outreach. These sessions created opportunities for participants to share challenges, exchange ideas, identify resources, and develop new professional relationships.

MJV also launched two new working groups focused on Native Gardening Messaging and Social Science. These groups bring together practitioners and subject matter experts to share expertise, address emerging needs, and develop resources that benefit the broader conservation community. These efforts help create a more connected network where organizations can learn from one another, avoid duplication, and build on shared successes.

Measuring and Strengthening Collective Impact

Strong partnerships require active participation, shared purpose, and a commitment to continuous improvement. In 2025, MJV conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its partner network to understand better how collaboration contributes to conservation outcomes. Developed with support from a social scientist, the assessment examined key indicators including collaborative culture, connectivity, resource sharing, trust, and collective impact.

The evaluation achieved a strong response rate from partner organizations and established an important baseline for understanding network effectiveness. The findings will help guide future efforts to strengthen collaboration, improve partner experiences, and ensure the network continues to meet the evolving needs of the conservation community. By investing in evaluation and learning, MJV is helping ensure that partnerships remain effective, responsive, and capable of delivering lasting conservation impact.

Advancing Conservation Through Strategic Collaboration

In addition to convening and supporting its broader partner network, MJV continues to play leadership roles within collaborative initiatives that extend conservation impact far beyond the organization itself. One example is MJV's coordination of SAFE North American Monarch, part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program. This initiative brings together 115 accredited institutions and conservation partners working collectively to advance monarch conservation through habitat restoration, education, research, and public engagement.

In 2025, the SAFE Monarch Habitat Grant Program supported projects across the United States that expanded pollinator habitat, engaged communities, and strengthened institutional participation in conservation. The program also finalized a collective evaluation framework designed to help participating institutions better understand and improve the impact of their education and engagement efforts.






From left to right: North Carolina Aquarium, Mesker Park Zoo, Elmwood Park Zoo

Additionally, MJV's staff contributed to dozens of collaborative initiatives across the country at various scales, from the San Joaquin Valley Monarch Collaborative to the nationwide Farmers for Monarchs Collaborative. Through this participation, MJV acts as a conduit, bringing knowledge into these groups while also carrying insights from them out to other collaboratives and the public. These efforts demonstrate the power of coordinated action. When organizations share knowledge, align around common goals, and invest in one another's success, their collective impact extends far beyond what any one organization could achieve alone.

As conservation challenges continue to evolve, strong partnerships remain one of the most effective tools available for creating lasting change. MJV's role as a convener, connector, and facilitator helps ensure that organizations across North America can work together toward a shared vision for monarch conservation.





North American Monarch Summit panel and workshops ©Rebecca Slater (above)





North American Monarch Summit field trips ©Rebecca Slater (above)






SAFE Monarch Collective Evaluation Project:
John Ball Zoo (above left), LA Zoo (above middle), Brandywine Zoo (above right)

Learn more about MJV's partnership initiatives at
monarchjointventure.org/partnership

Prairie Oaks Campus

In 2024, MJV acquired Prairie Oaks, a 20-acre historic farm in Belle Plaine, Minnesota. More than a property, Prairie Oaks is becoming a living demonstration of MJV's approach to conservation, bringing together habitat restoration, education, science, and community engagement in one place. Throughout 2025, staff, volunteers, partners, and community members worked together to advance that vision.

Restoring and Demonstrating Habitat

Restoration efforts focused on improving the site's 13-acre oak savanna by removing invasive species and implementing long-term habitat management. Additional work transformed a former agricultural field into a diverse pollinator habitat, beginning with a cover crop planting and culminating in a 68-species native seed mix. New gardens, including a memorial garden, butterfly garden, and rain garden, further enhance the site's ecological value while demonstrating conservation practices that can be replicated elsewhere.

Creating Opportunities for Learning and Discovery

Prairie Oaks is increasingly serving as a place where people can experience conservation firsthand. Throughout 2025, the campus hosted workshops, tours, educator training, outreach events, and community science activities. More than 200 attendees participated in Butterfly Days, while partnerships with local organizations expanded youth engagement through summer camp programming. These experiences help connect people to conservation through hands-on learning, stewardship, and exploration.

Supporting Farm Infrastructure

Several infrastructure improvements strengthened Prairie Oaks as a long-term conservation and learning campus. Renovations to the Farm House created office space for local staff, while a relocated greenhouse will support native plant production and educational programming beginning in 2026. Additional improvements further expanded the site's capacity to support conservation, learning, and community engagement.



Monarch on coneflower ©MJV

Powered by Community

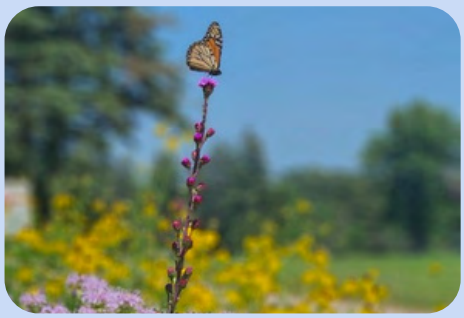
Volunteers played an essential role in nearly every aspect of Prairie Oaks throughout the year, contributing to restoration projects, infrastructure improvements, outreach events, and ongoing stewardship. As Prairie Oaks continues to evolve, it’s becoming more than a campus. It is a place where people can experience conservation in action and see how habitat restoration, education, science, and community engagement work together to create lasting impact.





Memorial garden one year after planting (above left), Rain garden planting (above middle and right) ©MJV





Butterfly garden planting during Butterfly Days 2024 (above left), Butterfly garden summer 2025 (above middle and right) ©MJV





Greenhouse deconstruction, relocation, and reconstruction ©MJV (above)





Butterfly Days 2025 (above left and middle) Moth Ball 2025 (above right) ©MJV

Learn more about MJV's Prairie Oaks Campus at monarchjointventure.org/prairie-oaks

Expanding Awareness and Engagement

Conservation depends not only on science, habitat, and partnerships, but also on people who understand and support the work. Through storytelling, education, and experiences, MJV connects people to conservation and opportunities for action. From engaging supporters online to connecting travelers with monarch overwintering sites, these efforts expand awareness and build support for monarchs and pollinators across North America. In 2025, MJV reached new audiences and strengthened the community committed to monarch conservation.

Inspiring Action Through Shared Experiences

Miles for Monarchs brought together individuals and teams from across North America to raise awareness and support for monarch conservation while encouraging participants to connect their own activities to the monarch migration story. By linking personal goals with conservation impact, participants helped demonstrate that everyone can play a role in supporting pollinators.

MJV also partnered with Natural Habitat Adventures to offer immersive travel experiences to the monarch overwintering sites in central Mexico. These journeys provided participants with the opportunity to witness one of nature's most remarkable migrations while learning firsthand about the conservation efforts that support monarch populations throughout their annual cycle. These experiences help transform curiosity into connection and connection into action, creating lasting advocates for monarch conservation.

Connecting People to the State of Monarch Conservation

For the second consecutive year, MJV hosted the State of Monarch Conservation Address, providing supporters, partners, and the public with an overview of current monarch conservation trends, challenges, and opportunities. Presented by Executive Director Wendy Caldwell, the annual address serves as an opportunity to reflect on progress, share emerging developments, and connect audiences to the broader conservation story. By helping people better understand the state of monarch conservation, MJV fosters informed engagement and strengthens the collective commitment needed to support conservation efforts into the future.



Monarch butterfly on milkweed ©Alex Carroll

Expanding Our Reach

Throughout 2025, MJV continued growing its ability to connect with audiences through digital communications, storytelling, and public outreach. Across social media platforms, including newly integrated Journey North audiences, MJV generated more than 15 million views, helping bring monarch and pollinator conservation to new audiences throughout North America and beyond. Facebook alone gained more than 17,000 new followers during the year, reflecting growing interest in conservation stories, resources, and opportunities for involvement.

MJV also published 36 blogs highlighting conservation projects, research findings, partnerships, and community stories. Together, these efforts helped connect audiences to the people and places advancing monarch conservation while demonstrating the many ways individuals can contribute to the work.

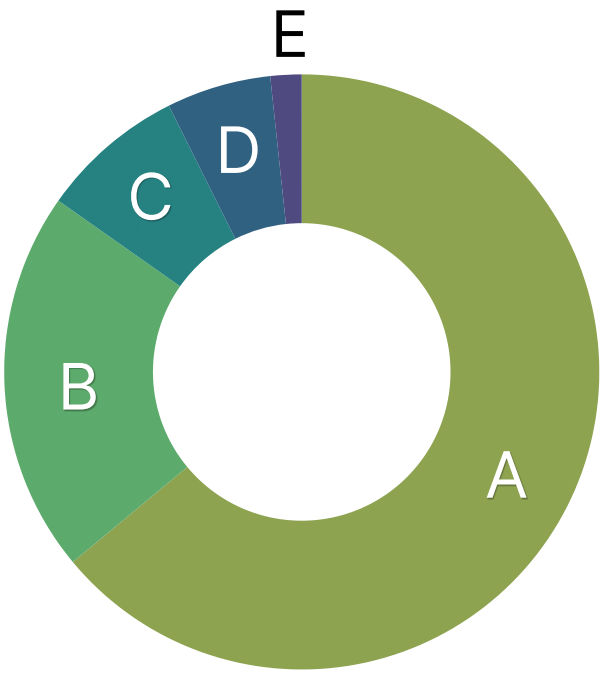
Every new follower, participant, supporter, volunteer, educator, landowner, and community scientist strengthens the broader monarch conservation movement. By expanding awareness and creating diverse opportunities for engagement, MJV is helping build a larger and more connected community of people committed to ensuring monarchs and pollinators thrive for generations to come.



Monarch Joint Venture trip to Mexico led by Natural Habitat Adventures ©Robert Seilheimer

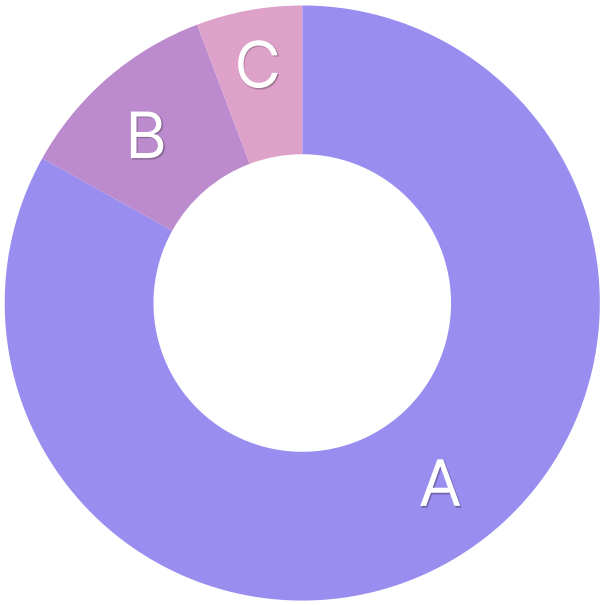
Revenue and Expenses

Total Revenue:
$3,994,828



A.) 64% Government Grants
B.) 20.8% Sponsorships and Other Grants
C.) 7.9 % Individual Donations
D.) 5.7% Earned Revenue
E.) 1.7% Investments & Other Income

Total Expenses:
$3,199,566



A.) 83% Programs
B.) 11% Management and General
C.) 6% Fundraising



Monarch butterflies cluster on a tree trunk in Mexico ©Court Whelan

Acknowledgements

Donations

$1,000+ Funding Organizations and Foundations

The Monarch Joint Venture is grateful to the organizations whose generous contributions of $1,000 or more in 2025 made a meaningful impact on monarch and pollinator conservation. Fueling our research, habitat restoration, education, and collaboration efforts across North America, these funders help build a future where monarchs and their habitats can thrive.

Abilene Zoo
Almond Board of California
Apex Clean Energy
BASF
Bayer Crop Science
Birmingham Zoo, Inc.
Blank Park Zoo Foundation
Blooming Prairie Foundation
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Minnesota Waldorf School
Monarch Butterfly Fund
Monarch Flyway
Moore Engineering, Inc.
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USDA Farm Service Agency
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Utah's Hogle Zoo
Virginia Zoological Society
WEC Energy Group
West Central Initiative
Western EcoSystems Technology Inc.

Leadership Circle (individuals contributing $1,000+)

Thank you to the generous members of the Leadership Circle who contributed $1,000 or more in 2025. Their support advances monarch conservation through science, education, habitat restoration, and partnerships. The Monarch Joint Venture is grateful for their commitment to protecting monarchs and the landscapes they depend on.

Anonymous
Ann Hobbie and Jeff Benjamin
Brian and Jill Reynolds
Carolyn Fritz
Chuck and Vonda Tiede
Dana Boyle
Gerald Axelbaum and Ellen Schapiro
Helen and Daniel Lindsay
Janice Sharp and Brian Bowman
Jeanine and Zach Holden
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Susan Sridharan
Thelma Redick
William H. Tyler III

Friends Level Donors, $500 - $999

We also gratefully recognize the following supporters who contributed $500-$999 in 2025. Their generosity helps advance the Monarch Joint Venture's mission and monarch conservation across North America.

Anonymous
Betsy Triplett-Hurt
Carol Mertesdorf
Chris J. Carvalho
Christopher Pipes
Court Whelan
Craig Duchossois
Deborah Kravik
DeWonna Jenson
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Linda and Mark Zaitlin
Lynn Hobbie and Kevin Little
R. Scott Radford
Richard Myers
Russell Ginns
Shelly Culea
Therese Sexe and David Hage
Tonya Crandall



Monarch butterflies take flight in Mexico ©Court Whelan

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Monarch caterpillars on milkweed in USS Fair Park Solar LLC, MN
©Alex Carroll

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Alejandra Medina

Advisors: Elizabeth Lebow, Craig Czarnecki

Looking Ahead

Throughout 2025, the conservation landscape continued to evolve. Shifting priorities, changing funding environments, and emerging challenges required organizations across North America to adapt and rethink how conservation work is carried out.

For the Monarch Joint Venture, these changes reinforced an important truth: lasting conservation is built through people, relationships, and shared commitment. Whether restoring habitat, engaging community scientists, supporting educators, convening partners, or inspiring new audiences, our work is rooted in the belief that meaningful conservation happens when people come together around a common purpose.

As we look ahead, MJV remains focused on strengthening habitat, expanding knowledge, building capacity, and connecting communities across the monarch range. The challenges facing monarchs and pollinators are significant, but so is the network of landowners, educators, researchers, businesses, community scientists, conservation professionals, volunteers, and supporters working together to address them.

Together, we are building a future where monarchs and pollinators thrive, conservation is strengthened through collaboration, and communities are empowered to play a meaningful role in stewarding the landscapes they call home.



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed in Steele County, MN ©Alex Carroll



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