

MONARCH  
JOINT VENTURE

**2022**

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# ANNUAL REPORT

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# ABOUT US

## Mission:

To protect monarchs and their migration by collaborating with partners to deliver habitat conservation, education, and science across the U.S.

## 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 that 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 effectively work toward common goals while leveraging our various industries, backgrounds, and areas of expertise.
- **Inclusiveness\*** – Broad collaboration with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds creates an equitable environment for growth, sustained involvement, and innovation.

\*Monarch Joint Venture's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
The conservation of monarchs and our environment requires all hands on deck. As a national leader in monarch conservation, we are committed to working to bridge the barriers across our society. We all deserve access to clean air, clean water, and safe outdoor environments in which to live, learn, play, and just be. To achieve our mission, we must foster diversity, equity, and inclusion for all to engage in this work and the enjoyment of nature. We will work to address the biases within ourselves and the inequities within our organization and the network of organizations committed to conservation. We commit to learning, listening, and taking action to build a healthier planet and a more just world for people, pollinators, and other living beings.



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Inclusive and authentic dialogue is of paramount importance to the work we do at the Monarch Joint Venture. We emphasize collaboration and cooperation among individuals, communities, and organizations, irrespective of their backgrounds, abilities, or perspectives. In our efforts to engage all hands on deck for monarch conservation, we strive to create an environment where everyone's voices are heard and valued. Inclusive partnerships allow for diverse ideas, experiences, and expertise to come together, leading to innovative solutions

that drive our mission forward. By bringing together diverse stakeholders around an issue like monarch and pollinator conservation, partnerships can identify and tackle complex challenges from multiple perspectives. Where tensions and disagreements arise, we embrace differences as a powerful catalyst for building bridges, fostering empathy, and cultivating a sense of shared responsibility towards achieving common goals.

We would like to thank our partner network for the unique strengths and perspectives they bring to our work. By harnessing the collective wisdom, skills, and experiences of individuals and organizations, we are proud to lead and serve an incredible network dedicated to our collective conservation mission.

2022 was a year of growth for the Monarch Joint Venture as our staff and programs expanded across the country. From leading new technology developments like remote sensing to continuing to expand our educator and landowner networks through our services, we are proud of the work of the MJV and are excited to share it. Thank you to our amazing staff, donors, volunteers, and followers that help to make our work possible.



*Wendy Caldwell*

*Wendy Caldwell  
Executive Director  
Monarch Joint Venture*



# FROM THE BOARD

What a dynamic year it was, as the Monarch Joint Venture (MJV) has grown dramatically in size and reach of its programs and partners – all focused on expanding the North American Monarch Conservation Plan. We are committed to doing all that we can to enable individuals, nonprofits, researchers, and other key stakeholders to maintain the focus on conserving this important species and protecting its iconic migration.



In early 2023, following an in-person hiatus due to the pandemic, I had the joy of attending MJV's Partner Meeting at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, which was co-hosted by the Rights-of-Way as Habitat Working Group. I was so impressed to see two networks join together to share vital research data and advance their collaborative efforts. Imagine State Department of Transportation leaders and energy companies discussing habitat enhancement while sharing a meal beside entomologists and elementary school educators. Picture taking a backstage tour of the botanical garden where environmental law students get the chance to chat with natural resource specialists and community engagement leaders from across the country. After hearing stimulating talks about creative projects aimed at educating the public in our role to protect monarchs, folks walked away from the 3-day partner meeting with a greater appreciation for the breadth of engagement, inspired to keep at this critical work.

All of these groups stay connected throughout the year, thanks to MJV. We are proud to welcome new partners and help them engage with one another to advance science and best practices. It's all a part of our "all hands on deck" approach and the only way we believe we can make a meaningful impact in conservation.

We thank our partners, donors, and other supporters for the trust they put in the MJV and for staying focused on conserving this beautiful species, knowing that what we do for monarchs reaches so many other important native species of fauna and flora.

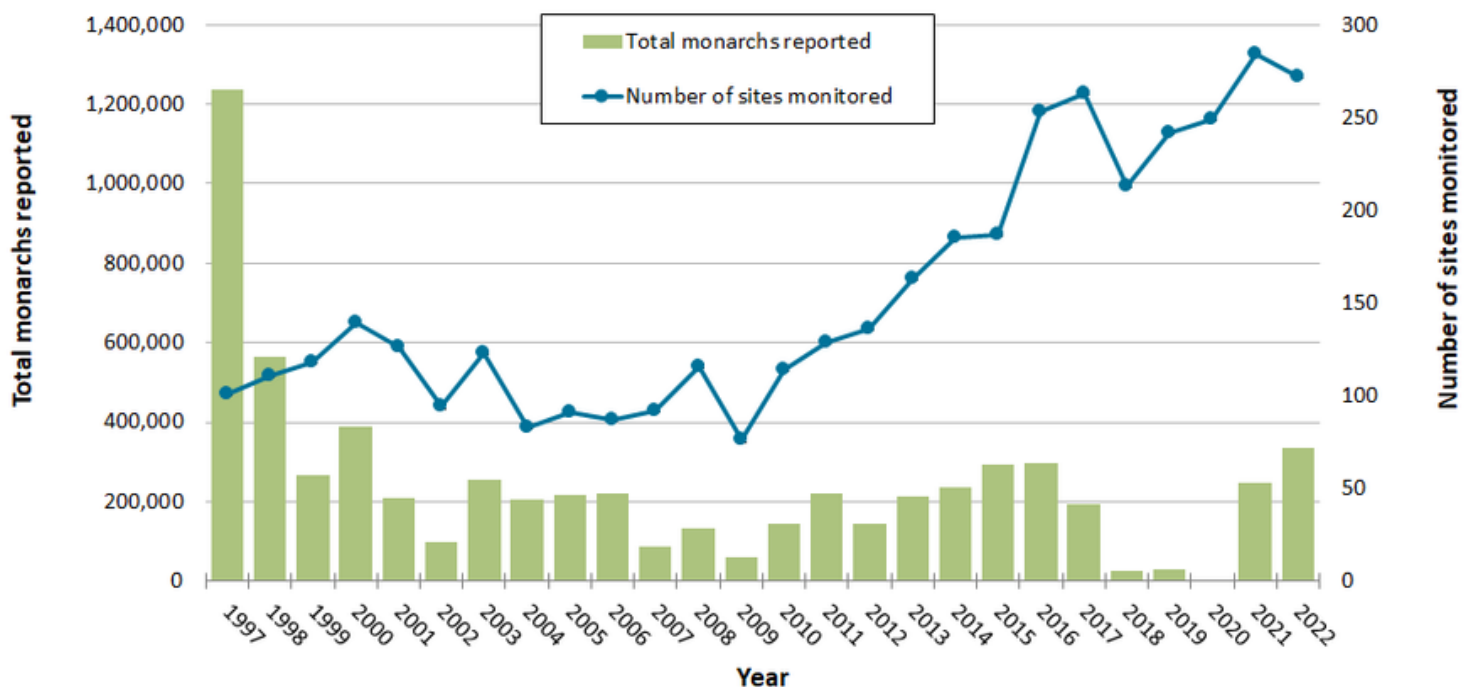
Dana Boyle  
Board Chair  
Monarch Joint Venture

# WESTERN MONARCH POPULATION COUNT

## Western:

For over two and a half decades, the Xerces Society, an MJV partner, has led the Western Monarch Thanksgiving count, cataloging the decline of the western monarch butterfly population. After a record low count in 2020--2021, the 2021-2022 overwintering season surprised the monarch community with an increase of over 100-fold in western monarch populations. The most recent 2022-2023 overwintering count calls for a similar cautious optimism, with another reported population increase. Over 250 volunteers surveyed 272 overwintering sites this past winter, tallying a total of 335,479 monarch butterflies observed across the western overwintering sites, an increase of 88,242 monarchs!

**Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count**  
Total monarchs reported and number of sites monitored from 1997-2022  
Data Available at: [WesternMonarchCount.org](https://WesternMonarchCount.org)

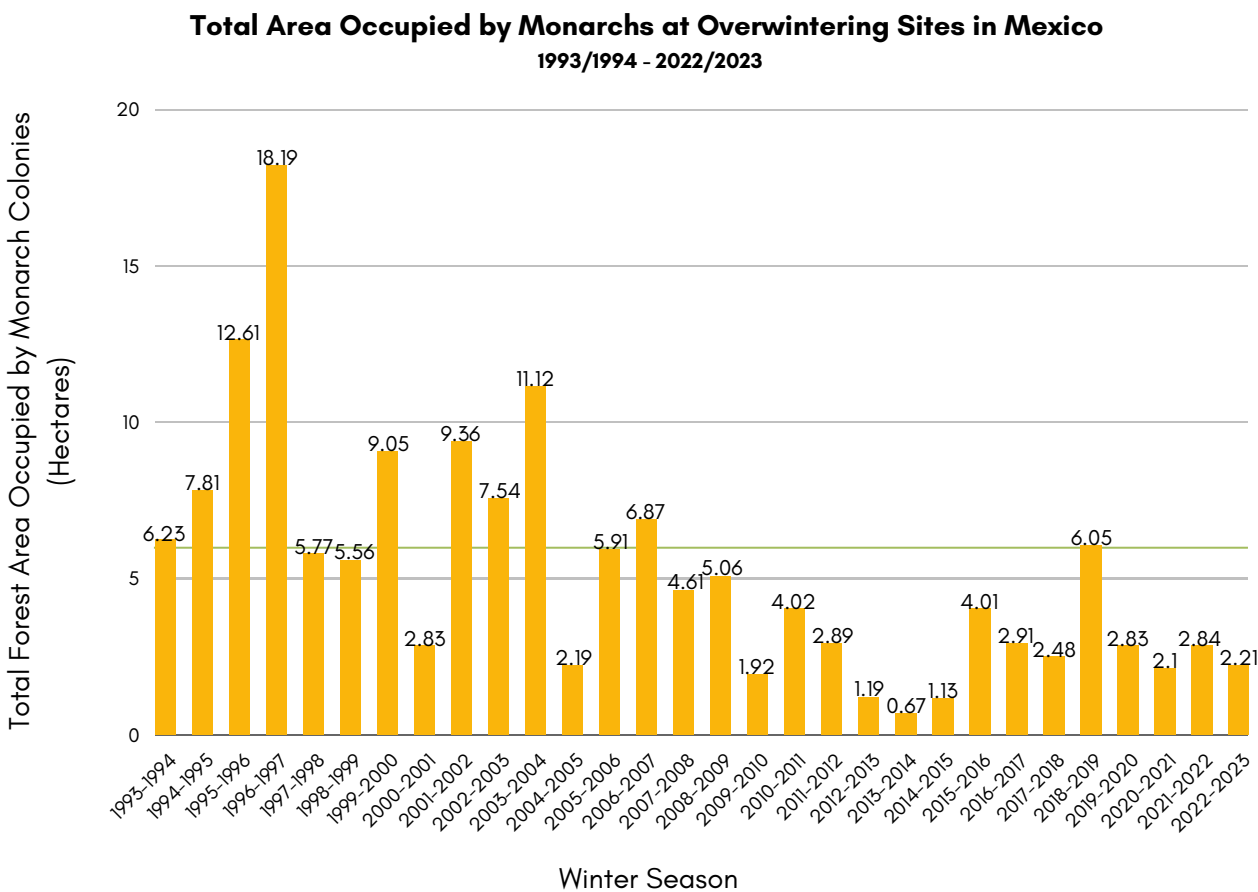




# EASTERN MONARCH POPULATION COUNT

## Eastern:

The presence of monarch butterflies in Mexico’s oyamel fir forests this past winter was 22% less than the previous year, according to the most recent survey led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Mexico. Monarch butterflies occupied 2.21 hectares, 0.63 less than the 2.84 hectares in the 2021-2022 overwintering season. Semmens et al., 2016 established a recommended threshold of at least 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs to sustain the eastern population and its migration. While populations fluctuate annually, the long-term decline continues to be of great concern and in need of conservation action.



Scientists estimate that 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 2004-2023 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.





# HABITAT CONSERVATION

The Monarch Joint Venture Habitat Program is dedicated to building, establishing, restoring, and enhancing monarch habitat throughout the country. The decline in the monarch butterfly population has been primarily attributed to the loss of breeding habitat, and the core purpose of the habitat program is to increase and improve the availability of habitat for monarchs throughout their migratory range.

## Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands

The MJV recognizes agricultural stakeholders as instrumental partners in reaching monarch habitat goals. Our habitat staff, located in Central California and the Midwest, are primarily focused on engaging the agricultural community and implementing pollinator habitat projects on private working lands. These positions are predominately funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund. MJV supported landowners with technical assistance and advice, helping them manage and create over 600 acres of monarch habitat throughout the eastern monarch's Central Flyway (in 2022). Additional acres of habitat were created by providing free pollinator seed to landowners through MJV's California Working Lands Free Seed Program.



## California Working Lands Free Seed Program

In 2022, the Monarch Joint Venture implemented the second year of our California Working Lands Free Seed Program in California's Central Valley. This program provides free technical assistance, native milkweed plugs, and a regionally specialized seed mix for pollinator plantings on private working lands. In this program's second year, we worked with 34 landowners and impacted 84 acres. This program is being expanded in 2023 to include broader western geography and support a variety of land use types and is now known as the "Monarchs and More Western Habitat Program."



## Habitat Help Desk

The MJV's Pollinator Habitat Help Desk is a free resource uniquely positioned to support owners and managers of private working lands. We work with our vast network of partner organizations to provide pointed and regionally appropriate guidance for habitat goals of any size. In 2022, our staff answered 169 calls and emails to the Habitat Help Desk.

Phone: 1-337-HABITAT (337-422-4828)

Email: [habitat@monarchjointventure.org](mailto:habitat@monarchjointventure.org)

# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Monarch Joint Venture's education program plays a significant role in helping the MJV achieve its mission to protect and conserve the monarch butterfly and its migration. In 2022, we offered our first in-person workshops since 2019 and continued to engage partners, stakeholders, and the public with online training resources and strategies developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The MJV used distance learning tools and educational platforms to offer hybrid and fully in-person versions of our teacher professional development workshop, continued hosting monthly webinars, provided three virtual monarch conservation courses to the general public, and attended virtual and in-person events and presentations throughout the country.

## Professional Development Workshops

The MJV offers two main professional development workshops for educators utilizing our Monarchs and More curriculum and promotes standards- and inquiry-based approaches to science. North American Monarch Institute (NAMI) workshop is a 2- to 3-day intensive workshop where participants learn about the monarch life cycle and migration, gain an introductory understanding of monarch conservation, and learn how to participate in multiple monarch community science programs. The Advanced Schoolyard Ecology Explorations (ASEE) workshop is a 3-day follow-up to NAMI, where participants delve more deeply into monarch conservation and community science and expand further into schoolyard ecology. The US Forest Service International Programs is a generous funder of many of these workshops. In 2022, the MJV co-hosted two workshops with the UW-Madison Arboretum and hosted three additional workshops in Ohio and Texas, impacting 98 educators.



## Public Education

The Complete Monarch Essentials Course (CMEC) continues to grow as an educational opportunity for the general public. CMEC was offered as a live online course three times in 2022: an abridged three-session course in January, a full course in February/March and another full course in the summer. Participants learned about the basics of monarch biology, ecology, research, and conservation from MJV staff, and heard from colleagues in Canada and Mexico who provide a more holistic picture of transnational monarch conservation. As of the end of 2022, this course has engaged a total of 551 people from across the U.S. and Canada.

Monarch Conservation  
Webinar Series

*Hosted **12 webinars**  
reaching **2,118 people***

Tabled and  
Presented at Events

*Attended **129 events**  
reaching **2,700+ people***

Guest  
Presentations

*Presented in **17 webinars**  
reaching **819 people***



# RESEARCH & MONITORING

Through scientific research and monitoring, we are able to better understand North American monarch population trends and the many factors influencing their decline. MJV staff coordinate two monarch monitoring programs, the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP) and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP). They also conduct additional primary research projects (often utilizing these protocols), maintain a library of monarch literature, and synthesize the latest science pertaining to monarchs and their habitat. In turn, these data and results directly inform MJV's conservation work as well as the collective actions of our partner network.

## Research Review

In February of 2022, the MJV published the [2021 Research Review](#), a review of academic literature published on monarchs and their habitat. Members of the MJV staff and network read 85 papers published between September 2020 and December 2021. During 2022, MJV staff and network also drafted the 2022 Research Review, including 69 papers (released in March of 2023).

## Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP)

The Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP) is a national program to collect milkweed, nectar plant, and monarch use data from multiple land-use types and regions. This information is vital to shaping our understanding of how monarchs interact with their environment, documenting conservation efforts, and tracking the population and its habitat as they change over time. In 2022, 490 sites were monitored by 203 participants. Many of these sites were surveyed various times during the growing season across 22 states. This is an increase from 429 sites across 16 states in 2021. This monitoring was completed by a mix of MJV field staff and other volunteers. Additionally, 95 people attended online IMMP training & refresher webinars, including targeted webinars for conservation staff.





# RESEARCH & MONITORING CONTINUED

## Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP)

The MJV co-manages the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP) with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum. Developed in 1997 by researchers at the University of Minnesota, the MLMP involves volunteers from across North America and New Zealand in monarch research. The project collects long-term data on larval monarch populations and milkweed habitat and focuses on monarch distribution and abundance during the breeding season.

In 2022, 209 volunteers contributed data from 35 states, provinces, and territories, completing 3,880 monarch density surveys (Activity 1) and collecting 303 larvae to study survival/parasitism (Activity 3). To continue to grow engagement in this long-standing program, we co-hosted four virtual and one in-person MLMP trainings in collaboration with the UW Madison Arboretum and Pollinator Posse. This is an increase from just two trainings in 2021. Training in 2022 was divided by regional focus based on relevant milkweeds, nectar plants, and the timing of their emergence in the spring.

## Field Research

Over the summer field season, the MJV team worked on two habitat monitoring projects using the IMMP.

- **Monitoring California Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lands:** One field crew of two technicians conducted 220 surveys on California BLM land across 24 counties between March-September 2022 using the IMMP. They identified more than 650 flowering plant species, including six milkweed species, and counted 1,932 milkweed plants across the state. Three adult monarchs and five larval monarchs were observed on BLM land during the field season. This concluded the second of two field seasons for this project.
- **Restored Habitat Monitoring:** The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) partnered with the MJV for a fourth year of IMMP surveys on private and public lands. After three years of monitoring throughout the eastern monarch's Central Flyway, the 2022 field season was completed in the West. One field crew of two technicians and some local conservation staff conducted 249 surveys across 80 sites restored or planned to be restored via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund (NFWF Pollinator Fund) in California, Oregon, and Arizona. This was the final year of a project to create monitoring and evaluation recommendations and assess the status of sites restored or improved via this fund source. These western sites averaged 1,426 stems of milkweed per acre, and monarch eggs or larvae were found on nearly 30% of the sites. The density of monarch eggs and larvae on these western sites was similar to sites impacted by the NFWF Pollinator Fund in the southern and northern US, demonstrating the success of restoring and enhancing monarch and pollinator habitat across a variety of western land use types and that monarchs can successfully find and reproduce on these improved sites.



# RESEARCH & MONITORING CONTINUED

## International Monarch Monitoring Blitz, July 29 – August 7, 2022

MJV collaborated with the Trinational Monarch Conservation Partnership to coordinate the 6th annual International Monarch Monitoring Blitz. MJV's participating volunteers through MLMP and IMMP collected data on summer breeding monarchs and their habitat. This year's Monarch Blitz saw the highest levels of participation across the programs involved. More than 2,600 volunteers across 75 states, provinces, and territories in North America shared nearly 6,000 observations of monarch butterflies and milkweed plants..

## Remote Sensing

The MJV made great strides in its nascent remote sensing program, currently designed to detect common milkweed stems using aerial imagery captured by drones. MJV staff and partners spent a week in the field gathering hundreds of photos of monarch habitat and used these photos to refine a machine learning algorithm to detect and count individual milkweed stems. MJV also secured two new project grants to begin in 2023 to apply and continue developing this technology. Staff will gather data from a variety of states and land use types and prepare for additional models, such as nectar resources, invasive species, or other milkweed species. Utilizing drones to count milkweed stems can dramatically increase the scale and efficiency of habitat monitoring.

Watch the webinar, [Remote Sensing Technology Development to Aid Conservation](#), presented by Wendy Caldwell, Monarch Joint Venture; Clint Otto, U.S. Geological Survey; Greg Emerick, Simple Business Automation.





# PARTNERSHIPS

The Monarch Joint Venture (MJV) is a partnership of over 120 federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and academic programs working together to protect the monarch migration across the United States. MJV 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.

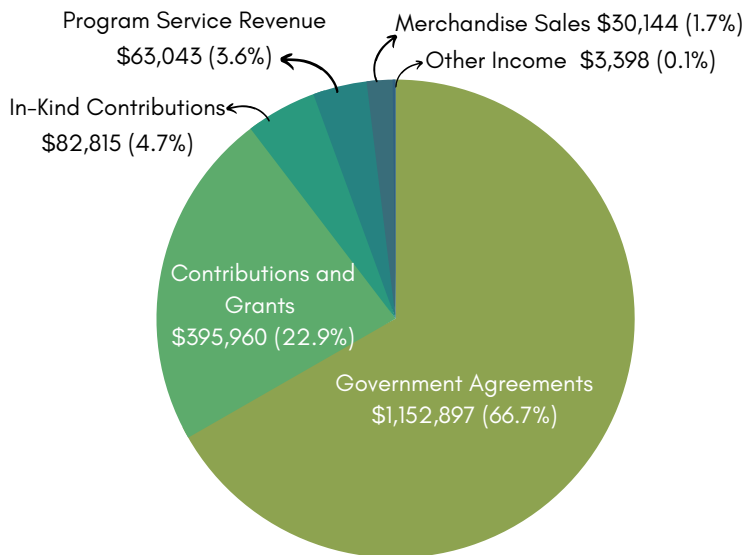
With MJV's first official Partnership Coordinator joining the team in the fall of 2021, 2022 was focused on developing a more robust partner engagement strategy and accompanying processes for the tracking and stewardship of the partner network. New tools and working groups were formed to increase partner engagement. Network tools such as the Partner Portal, a partner professional listserv, partner grants program, and partner relationship processes were improved. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service International Programs, the MJV awarded and continues to administer over \$400,000 in partner grants for conservation projects to be carried out between January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023. Currently, 18 projects are being funded that focus on education, habitat, science, and partnership actions outlined in the 2021 Monarch Conservation Implementation Plan. A full list of funded projects is available on the [Partnership page of our website](#).



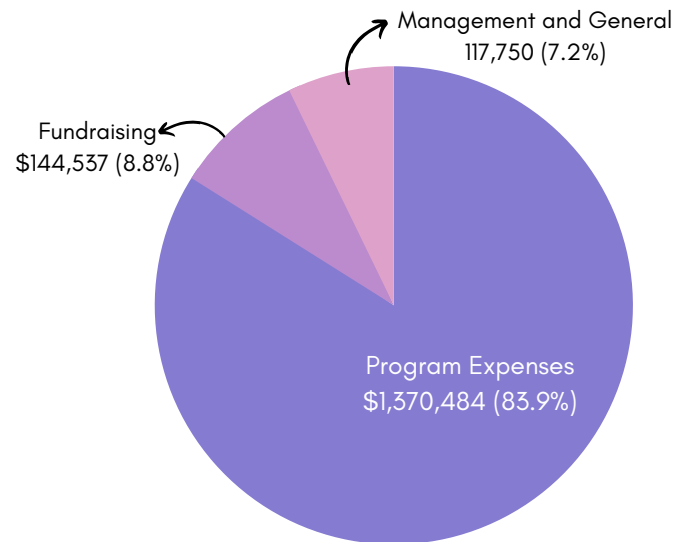


# REVENUE & EXPENSES

## Total Revenue: \$1,728,257



## Total Expenses: \$1,632,771



*End of Year Net Assets: \$661,302*

*\$10,000+ Funders*



Barton J. Ingraham & Gail G. Ingraham Foundation

# INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Individual donors play an essential role in ensuring the success of the MJV and our partners. Thank you to the following supporters who have become part of our movement to protect the monarch.

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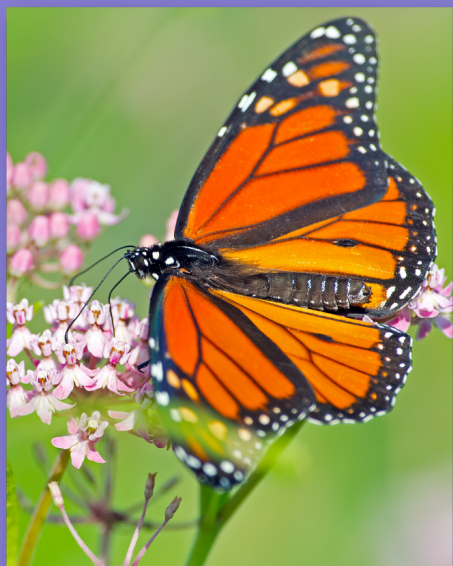
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## *Leadership Circle*

The Monarch Joint Venture is especially grateful to these individuals who, in 2022, contributed \$1,000 or more:



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# INDIVIDUAL DONORS \$100-\$249

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# 2022 STAFF AND BOARD

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Alex Aylard, Field Technician  
Eric Bastidas, Field Technician  
Julia Perez, Field Technician  
Ashley Soto, Field Technician  
Anette Zyszczyński, Field Technician



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St. Paul, MN 55114



## How You Can Support the Monarch Migration

**Create habitat.** Plant milkweed and other native flowering plants. Visit the MJV's [Create Habitat](#) page for recommendations on how to create a pollinator-friendly garden.

**Report observations.** Participate in [community science projects](#), such as tagging or habitat monitoring.

**Educate others.** The Monarch Joint Venture offers [monthly webinars](#) and a variety of free educational resources for teachers and others.

**Make Connections.** Consider the circles of people and groups in your life and invite them to connect with the MJV and our growing [partner network](#).

**Share our work.** Share the work of the MJV 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.** [Donate 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 [Monarch Conservation Implementation 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.