



Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund

2016 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: *Monday, May 2nd, 2016* by **11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**

OVERVIEW

The monarch butterfly is an iconic species that inspires people throughout North America, but its population numbers have declined over the last two decades. Monarchs have gained familiarity due to their beauty, accessibility (many people have encountered them), and worldwide attention for the migratory phenomenon they exhibit. The migration of monarch butterflies in North America to overwintering sites in Mexico is among nature's most spectacular phenomena.

North American monarchs form two distinct populations: a western population and an eastern population, separated by the Rocky Mountains. The eastern population is critically important as it comprises the majority (over 95%) of the continent's monarch population. Each summer and fall, millions of monarch butterflies migrate up to 3,000 km from their summer breeding range in parts of Canada and the central U.S. to their overwintering sites in central Mexico where they congregate in densely packed groups.

Monarchs cannot survive without milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.). Adult butterflies lay eggs on milkweed plants as the host plant for larvae; monarch caterpillars consume only this species. In early spring, the first generation of the wintering butterflies in Mexico begin their northbound journey, arriving in Texas and neighboring states where they lay eggs on milkweed plants. The larvae hatch on milkweed and eventually emerge as adult butterflies and disperse from their spring breeding habitat into the rest of the eastern U.S. and Canada in search of milkweed as they continue their annual cycle of multiple generations. Several generations of monarchs will occur during this northern migration. At this time, the late summer adult monarchs from the eastern population begin a return migration to Central Mexico, their ancestral homeland, yet a place none of these individuals have ever seen.

In contrast to the annual cycle of the eastern migratory population, the breeding area of the western population occurs throughout western United States and Canada and overwinters on coastal California. The western population of monarchs winter in small clusters along the California coast, from San Diego in the south to just north of the San Francisco Bay. In summer these monarchs disperse throughout the western U.S. and Canada, but their movements, habitat requirements, as well as other aspects of their natural history are lesser known than the eastern population.

Recent surveys of monarchs overwintering in Mexico indicate that the population fell in 2013 to 10% of the 20-yr average. Multiple threats are known to impact monarch survival and experts agree that a decline in milkweed and nectar plants in the summer breeding areas in the Midwest has reduced the ability of the population to recover to historical levels. Conversion of land to agriculture, other land uses, and use of more efficient and productive weed management practices have contributed to a decline in the availability of milkweeds for sustaining the monarch population.

Winter population surveys for the western population have also shown a steady decline in numbers over the long term trends (50% decline). Loss and degradation of habitat at these wintering sites is a known contributor.

NFWF's Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund will support efforts to increase monarch butterfly population numbers – with the ultimate goal of supporting a resilient population and continuing its migratory phenomenon. The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund will prioritize the eastern, migratory population (roughly 20% will be directed towards the state of Texas spring breeding area and population) and a portion of awarded funds will be allocated to the western population. Resident populations in south Florida or elsewhere are not priorities for the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund at this time. Recognizing that research on monarchs is ongoing, we anticipate that the strategic focus of the program may shift from year to year as we learn more about the threats to the species and the solutions that address those threats. This year, the goal is to focus on three strategies that are broadly considered critical to reversing the decline of the population. They are: 1) increasing connectivity in habitat for monarchs (i.e., habitat conservation, restoration, and improved land management practices); 2) enhancing coordination and capacity of monarch butterfly conservation efforts; and 3) improving the seed supply of regionally adapted and native milkweeds and nectar-producing plant species.

By supporting these strategies, the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund will be investing in both short-term (habitat restoration and best management practices) and long-term solutions (sustainable seed supply and organizational capacity) to bolster monarch numbers and support a healthy and sustainable population.

Approximately \$3.9 million is available in this year of the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund. Funding is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Monsanto Company, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Geological Survey, as well as private National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds. Grants may be up to two years in length and will generally range in size from \$50,000 to \$250,000. Matching funds of at least 1:1 in non-U.S. federal funds are required.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund grants will be awarded to projects that significantly advance monarch butterfly conservation in the monarch butterfly range in North America (USA, Mexico, and Canada). Applications are encouraged throughout the species range; however a priority has been placed for project awards with activities that occur in the eastern population's migratory flyway often called the "monarch butterfly corridor". This includes the 14 priority states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Proposals are welcomed from other states and projects in the West will be awarded, with priority given to proposals with activity on or adjacent to USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Proposals also will be accepted from Mexico and Canada.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Competitive Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund proposals should address one or more of the following strategies: 1) increasing habitat availability for monarchs (i.e., restoration, enhancement, land management, and creating habitat connectivity,) with associated monitoring to assure conservation efforts are –effective and strategic; 2) enhancing coordination and capacity of monarch butterfly conservation efforts; and 3) improving the seed supply and affordability of regionally adapted milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) and nectar-producing plants (prairie species). Within the expansive monarch distribution, physiographic and social conditions vary widely across the species’ range. As a result, proposals should describe local or regional conditions and address them in the context of the three major strategies described below.

1. *Habitat Improvement and Best Management Practices:* The overall goal is having a connected patchwork of monarch habitat across the monarch range to support the annual life cycles and migration. NFWF will prioritize projects to increase the quantity, quality, and connectivity of monarch butterfly habitat. Emphasis will be on land restoration acres containing ample milkweed and a diversity of nectar plants. Also important will be monitoring effectiveness of proposal outcomes for number of monarchs and reporting the establishment rates (and acreage) of new habitat to assure conservation efforts are productive and targeted to key landscapes. Improving habitat management using best management practices is also a priority (e.g., timing, frequency, and tools used for monarch/prairie habitat). Specifically in Mexico, provision of habitat and protection of overwintering sites will be prioritized.

If preparing a restoration proposal please define the step-by-step restoration process. Proposals should emphasize adapted milkweed species and nectar plants. Restoration work will be focused on several categories of land:

- State, private, tribal and other lands managed by professionals.
 - Lands in the west managed by (or adjacent to) the USDA Forest Service and/or Bureau of Land Management.
 - Habitats managed and retained for the movement of people and goods and services, such as: railroad right-of-ways, transmission/pipeline corridors, levees, and roadsides.
 - Agricultural Lands: marginal land, buffers, rangeland and pastureland, including land enrolled in Farm Bill programs.
2. *Organizational Coordination and Capacity:* NFWF will seek to increase organizational capacity and coordination among organizations, 501c (3), states, and NGOs engaged in monarch conservation. Funding for state and regional monarch conservation consortiums will be available, and should include participation by academia, NGOs, federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector. Funding will be awarded to support positions and programming that is additive (i.e., new positions and programming as opposed to existing positions and overhead).
 3. *Regionally Adapted and Native Plant Seed Supply:* There are many species of milkweed and nectaring plants, each with different habitat requirements and regional suitability. In some

areas there is limited availability of appropriate varieties and blends. NFWF will make grants to help ensure adequate native milkweed and nectar-producing plant seed or plugs. Additionally, NFWF will prioritize projects that propose ways to increase affordability of local/regionally adapted seed blends per acre. Projects that grow and then collect seed with a planned pathway for new seed to be sown will be competitive.

An underlying premise of the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund is that investment in a core set of strategies can achieve measurable outcomes that span several aspects of monarch conservation. The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund does not preclude investments in high-priority features in other areas, but the strategies above will drive investments to restore high quality monarch habitat and subsequently monarch butterflies.

PROJECT METRICS

The following metrics will be used to both assess proposals and to track progress. The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting. We ask that you select the most relevant metrics from this list (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Teal Edelen to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance for Applicants
Monarch Habitat	Acres restored/enhanced*	
	Patches restored/enhanced	Patch is defined by at least .10 acre in size
	Conservation plans created	Number of conservation plans created
Milkweed Seed and Plugs	Pounds of milkweed seeds collected	
	Number of plugs propagated	Please designate acres on farm, other private land, public land
Capacity Building for Monarch Conservation	Number of individuals or partners reached	Please designate methodology of outreach
	Number of landowners reached taking monarch habitat conservation actions	
	Number of FTEs hired	
	Number of FTEs sustained	
	Number of workshops hosted	

*Definitions of restore and enhance:

Restore - The manipulation of an area with the goal of returning natural/historical function(s) and integrity to a site that has lost or degraded native habitat for monarchs.

Enhance - The manipulation of an area to change specific function(s) or successional stage of the project site conditions to provide additional benefits for monarchs (e.g., interseeding existing habitat with milkweeds and forbs).

Site preparation activities, such as weed management, removal, burning, etc., as well as maintenance activities are encouraged, but should be budgeted for matching funds.

ELIGIBILITY

• Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- ✓ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, educational institutions, and international organizations.
- ✗ Ineligible applicants include for profit businesses and unincorporated individuals.

• Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- ✗ NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used for terrorist activities or in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- ✗ NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, or litigation.
- ✗ NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund will award up to approximately \$3.9 million in grants in 2016. Grants may be up to two years in length and will generally range in size from \$50,000 to \$250,000. Matching funds of at least 1:1 in non-U.S. federal funds will be required. Funding has been provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Monsanto Company, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Geological Survey, and private National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Required Criteria:

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposals.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are appropriate.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).

Other Criteria:

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds. A 1:1 non-federal, US match is required for all awards.

Complementarity – Project complements and builds on the work of others rather than duplicating efforts.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

OTHER

Federal Funding Requirements: Projects selected to receive Federal funding may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. Federally-funded projects must operate in compliance with the [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable to the applicant.

Quality Assurance: If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task.

Permits: Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the [Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund Program](#) page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✓ Applicant Webinar | April 5th, 2:00 PM, EST |
| ✓ Full Proposal Due Date | May 2nd, 11:59 PM, EST |
| ✓ Awards Announced | Mid-August, via email |

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to www.nfwf.org/easygrants to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.
2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded at [Monarch Fund Program](#).

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded at [Monarch Fund Program](#). Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's "Applicant Information" page (<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx>).

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

Teal Edelen, Manager, Central Region Office

Email: teal.edelen@nfwf.org

Tel: 202-595-2473

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.