

Monarch Survival: Oregon to see \$557,600 for butterfly habitats

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Oregon will receive \$557,600 in federal funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)'s Monarch and Pollinator Fund.

The funding is designed to increase and improve western monarch butterfly and pollinator habitats in Oregon and California.

Overall, monarch populations in the United States have plummeted more than 80% in the past two decades. Without emergency help, it's almost certain that the western population of monarchs will disappear within 50 years, researchers said.

The grants will come from a new pool of funding that was announced at Oregon U.S. Senator Merkley's summit on preserving the monarch butterfly, which he co-hosted in collaboration with the Department of the Interior this past June.

Award recipients

Monarch Joint Venture: \$207,700 to help expand the California Working Lands Free Seed Program to include Oregon and provide technical assistance, seed mixes, and milkweed seedlings to public lands, private working lands, and private non-working lands including businesses, corporate campuses, school campuses, community sites, and solar energy sites in California and Oregon.

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: \$175,000 to help increase habitat by expanding the Monarch and Pollinator Habitat Kit Program and provide technical assistance to 40 land managers on public and private lands in California and the Willamette Valley region of Oregon.

Pollinator Partnership: \$174,900 to help improve habitat for monarch butterflies by providing technical support to agricultural producers on private working lands in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Columbia Plateau, and Southern Oregon regions as well as regions in California.

"Protecting monarch butterflies is an urgent issue that requires sustainable solutions," Merkley said.

The senator secured additional western monarch conservation funding as Chairman of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee in the fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill.

"If we let the western monarch butterfly go extinct, we'll lose an iconic, beautiful species – and an important pollinator – forever," Merkley said. "I am happy to see more projects come to fruition that will help ensure future generations are able to enjoy the monarch butterfly."

At the conclusion of the two-day summit, Merkley and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced a \$1 million investment to NFWF's Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Conservation Fund, and the establishment of a Pollinator Conservation Center at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Monarch and Pollinator Fund funded a total of 16 projects, 3 of which are in Oregon and California and total \$557,600.

The three projects, funded by the NFWF Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund, will focus on preserving the western monarch butterfly by improving the availability of high-quality habitat; increasing the capacity needed to expand conservation efforts into the future; and supporting the implementation of technical assistance to engage private landowners with pollinator conservation practices on working lands.

By leveraging the resources and expertise of partners, the program aims to help reverse recent population declines and ensure the survival of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators, according to a release from Merkley's office.