



March 10, 2021

Dear Friends, Family and Eagle's NEST Supporters,

When Eagle's NEST US was launched in the spring of 2013, we developed a Mission Statement of **Providing Quality Creation Education Leading to Better Environmental Integrity and Conservation**. Over these past eight years we have taught numerous classes and weekend retreats using our original Expedition Study Series curriculum. We have given numerous talks and lectures and we have undertaken many conservation actions. Another thing that we have done is extensive study and research on many of the environmental and conservation issues and challenges that our planet is currently facing. In 2013, I started studying the plight of one of our most iconic and important pollinator species, the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). I am sorry to report to you that what was alarming to me eight years ago is now drastic and dire. The Western Monarch Butterfly is not just in serious decline anymore, it is now, very much, in danger of extinction! Let me share with you excerpts from four news stories. The first two are from the first two years of our organizations existence and the final two were from these past two years. I share these with the hope that you will notice the dramatic progression of decline and the concern that we have seen. With a biblical calling to be caretakers of the earth and its species (Genesis 2:15), this is concern that we should all have.

2013 – *The amount of (migrating Monarch) Butterflies wintering in Mexico dropped 59% this year. Six of the last seven years have shown drops and there are now only one-fifteenth as many butterflies as there were in 1997. - Mark Stevenson, Associated Press – March 13, 2013*

2014 – *Even more studies on the Monarch Butterfly indicate that species populations have dropped by 90% in the past two decades. Monarch Butterfly populations have dropped from approximately 1 billion butterflies in the mid 1990's to about 35 million last winter. – John M. Glionna, Los Angeles Times – December 31, 2014*

2019 - *... the Pismo Beach Butterfly Grove recorded a low number of (Monarch) butterflies wintering in the area this season. The results are similar to the rest of the state, which has seen a marked decline in the fluttering population in the past year. Volunteers counted only 2,300 butterflies at the Pismo Beach grove at this season's annual Thanksgiving Day tally. The number was down roughly 81% from the 2017 count of 12,300. In the first Thanksgiving count in 1997 volunteers counted more than 1.2 million butterflies across the state. In 2018 the statewide count recorded a mere 20,456 Monarch butterflies. That's 1.7% of the 1997 population. – Kaytlyn Leslie, The Tribune News – January 6, 2019*

2020 – *Volunteers saw only 200 butterflies this year's count at the Pismo State Beach Butterfly Grove, one of California's paramount overwintering sites for the Western Monarch Butterfly... in an annual count held from November 14 through December 6. Just five years ago the site counted more than 28,000 butterflies. California may see fewer than 10,000 total Monarchs overwintering this year. **"We might be witnessing the collapse of the species,"** (emphasis mine) said Emma Pelton, Senior Conservation Biologist with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. – Mackenzie Shuman, The Tribune News – December 9, 2020*

So how did WE get here and what can WE do to help?

Monarch populations have dropped dramatically due to many reasons, but at the top of the list are habitat loss and chemical pesticide/ herbicide usage. Habitat loss means less nectar producing flowering plants for pollinator species like adult butterflies. Importantly though, one of the main problems is that the Monarch caterpillar eats only one plant – Milkweed species (*Asclepias* spp.). The rampant use of herbicides (weed killers) have killed off much of the milkweed plants throughout our nation leaving little to no food source for emerging caterpillars to eat.

We can help! But it will take many. This **Eagle's NEST Rescue the Monarch Campaign** involves each of us incorporating components from two of our initiatives – our Eagle Action Initiatives and our Plant-It Earth Initiatives. We can take action and we can plant!



- Use organic gardening practices in your own home and garden – organic soils and fertilizers and eliminate chemical insecticides and herbicides.
- Reduce lawn size. Lawns require copious amounts of our vital water supply and leave less space for Monarch habitat. In our quest for the perfect lawn, many of our lawns utilize chemical lawn foods and regular chemical herbicide usage.
- Provide life sustaining nectar for adult Monarchs by planting flowering perennial plants that attract butterflies.
- Plant Milkweed plants in our own yards! Remember Milkweed plants are the only source of food for monarch caterpillars. All of us together can help this species by providing the “baby food” they need to grow into adults. Enclosed you will find a package of milkweed seed to plant this spring. Planting instructions are on the seed packet. If you are still unsure, please reach out to me personally for advice or instructions. If you do not have a yard or garden, please give this letter and the seed packet to a friend or family member who has space to plant these. Eagle's NEST will be planting Milkweed at the area Boys and Girls Clubs where we install organic gardens. So let's get these planted! With all of us doing this, WE can make a difference. WE MUST!



The National Wildlife Federation estimates that the Eastern Monarch Butterfly has declined by 90% in the past two decades and the Western Monarch Butterfly has declined by 99% in that same short timeframe. The late Billy Graham said this, “To drive to extinction something that God has created is wrong. He has a purpose for everything... We Christians have a responsibility to take the lead in caring for the earth”.

WE MUST!

Joy and Peace!

Todd Slinde, President & CEO

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