



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Board of Supervisors Prioritizes Actions to Protect Declining Populations of Western Monarch Butterflies and Other Pollinators

Ventura, CA – In April, the Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a County policy aimed at protecting the declining populations of the Western Monarch Butterflies and other pollinators. The policy prioritizes planting native milkweed and flowering plants that support pollinators and protects Monarch overwintering groves on County property.

“Given Ventura County’s coastal areas have Western Monarch overwintering sites essential to their survival, and our Board’s adoption of new landscaping requirements for private development, it is fitting that our extensive County facilities and properties support Western Monarch butterfly recovery. We hope other coastal California jurisdictions will join us in taking bold action,” said County Supervisor Linda Parks.

The County has also added the protection and restoration of Western Monarchs to its state and federal legislative priorities, including support for its listing as an Endangered Species. The decision comes after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently labeled the Western Monarch as a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

“Ventura County is really important for the recovery of Western Monarchs. The planting of pesticide-free native milkweed in our area is vital to their recovery,” said Dr. Catherine Darst with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ventura County, along with other Western coastal areas, has historically hosted substantial populations of migrating Western Monarch Butterflies. Recent population estimates indicate the species will likely be extinct in less than twenty years unless there is a significant improvement in conditions that impact their population.

The Xerces Society coordinates an annual Monarch Butterfly count and has reported a significant decrease in the numbers over the years. Twenty years ago, there were more than 1.2 million and now they are down to 2000 from the last count in November.



COUNTY *of* VENTURA

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As the exclusive food source of Monarch butterflies, native milkweed is crucial to the survival of the species. Non-native milkweed poses challenges because the plants can bloom more often and interrupt the migration of the pollinators.

The new policy is consistent with the Board's recent adoption of revisions to the County Zoning Ordinance that requires, among other things, the use of pesticide-free, native plants, and planting of flowering plants that support pollinator insects such as bees and butterflies.