



Monarch & Pollinator Regional Advisory Committee (MRAC)

Thursday, July 29th

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Webinar

Meeting Minutes

Facilitated by Andrew Spyrka

Ventura County Resource Conservation District

2.00: Meeting Begins

2.05: Introduction

- **Andy:** Thank you for joining
- Presentation of Agenda

2.06 Open Discussion and General Updates

- VCRCD submits grant to potentially bring additional funding to MRAC
- Abigail (Ventura County) update on incoming western monarch legislation

2.14 Chris Amendt (Efficient Lab Innovations & Native Monarchs) Activity Update

- Monarchs in the rough program
- Golf Courses & Wildlife Conservation
- Invasive Weeds vs Milkweed
- Presentation of different milkweed seedpods and species
- Reduction in monarch deformities due to OE Parasite
- Proposed area for expansion
- Drought tolerant monarch and pollinator garden plants
- Questions and Answers

2.47 Andy: Butterflies have been flying in residential areas and there is high community interest

- Eggs are being laid on milkweed but not persisting to caterpillars in Ojai, but being monitored
- Occurring in other portions of the county as well., but we will circle back

2.49 Antonio Sanchez (Santa Monica Mountains Fund) Milkweed and Pollinator Plant Update

- SAMO Fund introduction, only work with Santa Monica mountains natives
- Identifying existing populations of milkweed
- Seed collection occurred with a focus on milkweed

- National Park Foundation Seed Collection and Youth Employment Grant
 - Saving seed long term through seeding and also using seed for restoration purposes
- Malibu Foundation Grant to expand the existing nursery as well as hire interns
 - Over 5000 plants over the next two years will be distributed to those who may not have otherwise had access
- Has hired two people, and will be looking to hire two more
- We are holding educational classes on monarchs for free to the public
- Working with the public to offer in-person workshops, milkweed conferences, seed collection, seed bombs, free seed packs, and free live plants
- Goals: Jobs, and funding to secure them, seed collection, give out 2,500 pollinator plant packs to over 1,000 households
- Invest in advertising with social media platforms such as Instagram and Tik-tok
- Questions and Answers

3.20 Kelly Schmoker-Stanphill (CDFW Senior Environmental Scientist) presentation

- Updates on the Status of terrestrial invertebrates under CESA
- Currently going through the courts
- Commission and CDFW appealed the court decision, and claim that insects can be included under invertebrates
- Developing a FAQ page, and the link will be sent out when it goes live
- We recommend not planting milkweed 1 mile from the coast in Ventura and 5 miles in Santa Barbara County
- Working to maximize milkweed survival
- Seeds should not be taken without permission and proper permits
- Questions and Answers

3.37 MRAC Subcommittee

- Call for Subcommittee members
- 10-15 members to add governance to the committee
- Diverse group of organization
- Meet more regularly than quarterly to decide on topics and act as an MRAC working group

3.41 Final questions & comments

- **Georgia:** Malibu would like to continue the efforts of Ventura County, and would like thoughts on how to implement
 - Possible residential conversions
- **Mari (UCSB Graduate Student):** we have a great stand of narrowleaf milkweed attracting monarch caterpillars, and are hoping to approach a more direct restoration effort
 - Barriers include campus being 2-3 miles from the coast
 - The stand is about 20x30 feet

- It is naturally occurring
- **Kelly:** We would recommend against it, because it distracts monarchs from their standard overwintering cycle
- **Sean:** what is more important is the coastal terrace, so it is more about looking at the geography of where the butterflies are moving. This could serve as great nursery stock as a resource.
- There has been a loss of coastal scrub, so planting nectar and native plants would substantially help
- **Nancy (CARCD):** Hillary would say “plant native, plant nectar, plant now”, Xerces typically states that naturally occurring milkweed is okay to keep as it was meant to be there.
- **Antonio:** It would be hard to know how long the plant has been there due to proximity to the nursery, so be careful because plants can establish quickly
- **Andy:** Thank you, the next meeting will be held in October. Please reach out if you are interested in being a part of the subcommittee.

END OF MEETING 3.55pm