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The CCRCD Joins the All-Hands-on-Deck Effort to Support the Threatened Western Monarch Butterfly Population

The western monarch butterfly population has declined drastically. Protecting and creating monarch habitat in California is crucial to turning this around. The Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRCD) is working with farmers and ranchers to make it happen.

CONCORD, CA, May 21, 2021 – The CCRCD has been awarded a grant from the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) to fund monarch conservation projects in Contra Costa County. The CCRCD will provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who want to create and/or restore monarch habitat on their land – helping with planning, design, permitting, planting, monitoring, and more.

The western monarch butterfly population has declined over 99% in the past 20 years. Western monarch counts in 2020 were the lowest yet, and the next several years will be a critical time to bring back the butterflies from a path to extinction. Researchers, including those at the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, have determined that the most important strategies to bolster the western monarch population include protecting and restoring overwintering sites, providing nectar resources along the migratory flyway, and increasing the availability of early-season native milkweed. This year, Xerces has identified and ranked Priority Restoration Zones in California and recommended the best conservation actions for different parts of the state.

“CARCD awarded this round of grants only to RCDs with strong proposals for projects located in the Priority 1 Restoration Zone, and they will provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to create and restore habitat appropriate for their locations,” said Karen Buhr, Executive Director of CARCD. “They will also convene regional monarch working groups to bring together members of their communities with knowledge about monarchs and a desire to get monarch conservation work done. The CCRCD already works directly with state, federal, and local agencies, landowners, communities, and other stakeholders on conservation activities, so they will be able to create working groups with the expertise and energy to amplify the impact of the CCRCD’s work with farmers and ranchers.”

“We’re excited to get started on this important work to conserve and restore crucial monarch habitat in Contra Costa County”, said Chris Lim, Executive Director of the CCRCD. “All our work relies on mutually-beneficial partnerships and by working with farmers, ranchers, and other interested community members, we can make a real impact. Monarch experts like the Xerces Society say that an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ effort is needed to save the western monarch, and we’re glad to be a part of it.”

The CCRCD is a special district of the State of California and is one of the state’s 95 Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs). The mission of the CCRCD is to facilitate conservation and stewardship of the natural resources in Contra Costa County. RCDs make conservation happen on-the-ground by partnering with local communities on a voluntary basis to care for California’s land, water, soil, and other natural resources.

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