

# WAFWA Monarch Working Group Charter

v. March 8, 2018

## 1. Background

On June 20, 2014, President Obama issued a Presidential memorandum entitled "Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators" in response to the fact that there has been a significant loss of pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies, from the environment. The memorandum specifically mentions the imminent risk of failed migration by the monarch butterfly, an iconic species well known and admired by the public. The memorandum created a Pollinator Health Task Force, charged with developing the National Pollinator Health Strategy. The Strategy, completed in May 2015, lays out current and planned Federal actions to achieve the overarching goals for honey bees, monarch butterflies, and pollinator habitat in general. The memorandum also directed federal entities to increase and improve pollinator habitat.

Both western and eastern populations of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*) have shown significant declines since 1997. Based on those declines, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) received a petition to list the monarch butterfly as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the summer of 2014. FWS completed a 90-day finding in December of 2014 and determined that there was substantive information such that a 12-month species status assessment (SSA) should be conducted. The current deadline for publishing the FWS decision is June 30, 2019, with the SSA needing to be completed by late Fall 2018 in order to inform this decision. While FWS works on the SSA, they are encouraging that conservation of monarchs and their habitat proceed throughout the U.S. in hopes that the need to list will be prevented. The FWS and Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) monarch coordinator reached out to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) to join them in working towards conservation of the monarch butterfly by taking up efforts in the west. WAFWA Directors responded by creating a new Monarch Working Group in July 2017.

## 2. Working Group Purpose

To identify and promote unified, ecosystem-based management approaches at the landscape-level for the western population of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*), and pollinators in general, across all partner agencies.

## 3. Objectives

Conservation efforts for the monarch butterfly need to be formalized by fall 2018 in order to be considered in the SSA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE) process. FWS will be collecting information on conservation efforts starting April 2018 using an on-line tool—the Monarch Conservation Database. While the Working Group is envisioned to support monarch and other pollinator conservation across the western states into the

foreseeable future, there is a need for near-term objectives that can be accomplished to address the short timeline for contributing to the SSA process in a meaningful way. Therefore, the Working Group has established several near-term objectives specifically to inform the SSA, including the development of a western Monarch Conservation Plan in 2018. Future objectives will focus on implementation of actions contained within the Conservation Plan with the long-term goal of improving status and maintaining persistence for the monarch throughout the western portion of the species range into the foreseeable future (50 years).

Near-term objectives include:

- a. Work with western monarch experts to identify priority research, management, and conservation needs to address priority threats in the west (April 2018).
- b. Facilitate the capture of currently implemented and proposed western states monarch butterfly conservation efforts into the FWS Monarch Conservation Database (March - September 2018).
- c. Develop and present a draft outline of a Western Monarch Conservation Plan to the WAFWA Directors at the Annual Meeting, in Eugene, OR for their approval to proceed (July 2018).
- d. Present a final draft of a western Monarch Conservation Plan for approval by the WAFWA Directors at the 2019 Mid-Winter meeting in Tucson, AZ (January 2019).

Long-term objectives include:

- a. Identify and promote unified, ecosystem-based management approaches for the western population of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*), and pollinators in general, across all partner agencies.
- b. Identify and promote conservation opportunities for the western monarch butterfly across state and federal boundaries, in accordance with the adopted Conservation Plan.
- c. Identify science and data gaps for western monarch butterfly conservation, and find and direct resources to fill those gaps.
- d. Facilitate conservation partnerships for western monarch butterfly management.

#### 4. Near-Term Project Milestones

<b>Milestone Date</b>	<b>Milestone Name</b>	<b>Milestone Description</b>
Jul 2017	WAFWA Annual Meeting, Vail, CO	The WAFWA Directors established the Western Monarch Working Group, and approved Karen Miner of California Dept. Fish and Game as chair and WAFWA representative to the FWS's Core Team working on the monarch butterfly SSA.
Nov 2017	Kickoff conference call w/ Working Group members	Discuss scope of the Working Group and begin planning for the January 2018 Mid-Winter Meeting in San Diego, CA.
Dec 2017	Working Group conference call	Conference call to finalize agenda for January 2018 meeting.
Jan 2018	Working Group meeting at WAFWA Mid-Winter Meeting in San Diego, CA	Discuss the charge of the group as an enduring Working Group to support monarch and pollinator conservation, with short-term objectives relative to the FWS's Monarch SSA process. Determine next steps, assignments, and future meetings.
Feb 2018	Working Group conference call	Review and discuss working draft Charter and Monarch Conservation Survey questions.
Mar 2018	Working Group Charter	Submit charter and timeline for short-term objectives to WAFWA Directors for approval.
Mar 2018	Working Group conference call	Review and discuss Monarch Conservation Survey questions, agenda and invitees for April Working Group meeting in Reno, NV.
Mar 2018	NFWF Grant	Prepare and submit pre-proposal for a possible 2018 NFWF grant for plan preparation and outreach work.
Mar 2018	Conservation Efforts Surveys	Each state conduct survey of various affected sectors to determine current and planned conservation efforts for Monarchs and other pollinators.
Apr 2018	Working Group conference call	Review and discuss Monarch Conservation Survey results, and finalize agenda for April Working Group meeting in Reno, NV.
Apr 2018	Working Group meeting in Reno, NV	Share biological and conservation effort information specific to the western population of monarchs, prioritize conservation targets and actions, make assignments and begin to draft outline of the Conservation Plan to submit to WAFWA Directors.
May 2018	Working Group conference call	Continue work on draft outline of the Conservation Plan in preparation for the annual WAFWA meeting; draft agenda for July Working Group meeting in Eugene, OR.
Jun 2018	Working Group conference call	Finalize work on draft outline of the Conservation Plan in preparation for the annual WAFWA

		meeting; finalize agenda for July Working Group meeting in Eugene, OR.
Jul 2018	WAFWA Annual Meeting, Eugene, OR	Present draft outline of the Conservation Plan to the WAFWA Directors for their approval to proceed.
Aug 2018	FWS Monarch Conservation Database populated	Working Group members complete facilitation of entry of monarch conservation efforts into the FWS database in time for their consideration during PECE evaluation and recommendation development starting September 2018.
Aug-Dec 2018	Monthly Working Group conference calls	Continue development of the draft western Monarch Conservation Plan.
Jan 2019	WAFWA Mid-Winter Meeting, Tucson, AZ	Submit the Final Draft Conservation Plan as a recommendation for approval by the WAFWA Directors.

## 5. Working Group Members

Stafford Lehr (Executive Sponsor), Deputy Director of Wildlife and Fisheries Division, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Karen Miner (Chair), California Monarch Butterfly Coordinator, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Bill Van Pelt (WAFWA Liaison, Grassland Coordinator, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (non-voting)

Taylor Cotten, Conservation Assessment Section Manager, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Davia Palmeri, Conservation Policy Coordinator, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rex Sallabanks, Wildlife Diversity Program Manager, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Chris Keleher, Recovery Programs Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources

Mindy Wheeler, Rare Plant Conservation Coordinator, Utah Department of Natural Resources (non-voting)

Jennifer Newmark, Division Administrator, Wildlife Diversity, Nevada Department of Wildlife

Jim DeVos, Assistant Director, Wildlife Management Division, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Samantha Marcum, Monarch Butterfly Conservation Coordinator, USFWS Pacific Southwest Region (non-voting)