



# Illinois Monarch Action Plan Takes Flight

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# ILLINOIS



DEPARTMENT OF  

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NATURAL AREAS

# NATURAL RESOURCES

Springfield, Ill. — The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Thursday solidified their commitment to protecting monarch butterflies and other pollinators by signing the Illinois Monarch Action Plan at Conservation World on the Illinois State Fairgrounds.

“Though small, pollinators play an extremely important role in our survival here in Illinois and the world,” said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan. “This signing not only moves us as a state from plan to action, but also reaffirms our commitment as public servants to doing our part in ensuring pollinators’ survival.”

“Monarch butterflies capture the hearts of people across Illinois, from school children to mayors, in cities and across rural areas. The Illinois Monarch Project and this action plan harness this enthusiasm to empower others to take steps to help monarchs and other pollinators,” said Iris Caldwell, University of Illinois Chicago and state coordinator for Illinois Monarch Project. “We’re excited to launch the implementation of the action plan through a series of virtual events beginning in October.”

Tasked with bolstering the population of monarchs and other pollinators by protecting habitat and adding food sources, the project brings together public agencies, private organizations and residents of the state in a collaborative and coordinated effort to ensure the survival and successful migration of monarchs.

As part of a regional effort to add 1.3 billion stems of new milkweed to the central U.S. to support migrating monarchs, Illinois is tasked with adding 150,000,000 stems of new milkweed embedded in diverse nectar sources by 2038. As one of the largest landowners in the state, IDOT is in a unique position to contribute resources to this goal.

“We hold a special commitment at IDOT for the environment and the role pollinators play in the Illinois ecosystem and economy,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “From mowing schedules and restricting the use of pesticides to

planting only certain species along our roadsides, IDOT has embraced many changes in policies and practices over the years to protect pollinators. This plan only serves to strengthen those efforts going forward.”

Prior to the project’s beginning in October 2016, efforts to protect pollinators already were in place at state agencies and organizations. Those plans, as well as new initiatives, have been included in the state’s action plan to maximize efforts.

“The Illinois EPA works to provide a healthy environment and reduce threats to essential components of the ecosystem like the Monarch butterfly and other pollinators,” said Illinois EPA Director John Kim. “We applaud the efforts of the Agencies and organizations involved with the development of the Illinois Monarch Project Action Plan.”

“Illinois leads the nation in soybean production and is number two in corn, so our state’s farmers are well aware of the importance of pollinators,” said IDOA Acting Director Jerry Costello II. “Understanding their importance to all Illinois crops, IDOA has executed a multi-year pollinator habitat establishment at our fairgrounds in Springfield and DuQuoin. This multi-year plan, which is in its second year, will convert approximately 25-30 acres of land when fully completed.”

Additional information on the Illinois Monarch Project, as well as full text of the plan, can be found at [IllinoisMonarchProject.org](http://IllinoisMonarchProject.org).