



Upper Peninsula Communities Rally to Assist Monarch Migration

Marquette May Be the Most Monarch-Friendly City on the Great Lakes

July 10, 2017

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN: The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is an important stopover site for monarch butterflies on their annual migration from Canada to Mexico and the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP) has engaged communities across the peninsula to help this endangered pollinator.

Sadly, monarch butterfly populations (*Danaus plexippus*) have declined more than 80% in the recent decades due to habitat loss, pesticides and other factors. The good news is that SWP programs are restoring critical habitat on public and private lands throughout the Upper Peninsula in a successful effort to counter this alarming trend. The common milkweed plant (*Asclepias syriaca*) is the monarchs preferred food and they also rely on milkweed plants to deposit their eggs and feed their larvae.

Marquette just may be the most monarch-friendly city on the Great Lakes! The city recently collaborated with the SWP to mail out over 6,000 packets of milkweed seeds in utility bills to city residents and businesses. The city has also provided sites for SWP volunteer pollinator habitat restoration events with local schools and citizen volunteers. At the Marquette farmers market and other events the SWP also provided thousands of free milkweed plants, grown in local greenhouses, for families to transplant together. In addition, thanks to a grant through the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the SWP is restoring over a mile of Lake Superior coastal pollinator and migratory bird habitat within the city limits. And that's just in Marquette!

The SWP also distributed over 10,000 seed packets to other Upper Peninsula communities, schools, churches and community groups on Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. All totaled; that's over 1 Million milkweed seeds and milkweed plants already distributed with an estimated 70% already planted!

But that's not all! For almost a decade the SWP Great Lakes Conservation Corps has been working with local, state and federal landowners throughout the Upper Peninsula to restore

prioritized monarch habitat, including rare migration stopover sites such as the tip of the Stonington Peninsula which juts out into Lake Michigan.

For a few weeks in the late summer and early fall the trees of the Stonington Peninsula can be covered with tens of thousands of Monarchs resting up before they fly across the open waters of Lake Michigan on their journey to Mexico. Working with the Hiawatha National Forest and private landowners SWP crews have removed invasive plants, transplanted over 100,000 milkweed plants and restored acres of prioritized habitat to assist monarchs at this geographically unique migratory site!

Finally, thanks to the Lake Superior Volunteer Corps local residents and visitors to the Upper Peninsula can now volunteer to help the endangered monarch butterfly or assist with other important Great Lakes conservation projects. Simply log on to the SWP website (www.superiorwatersheds.org) and sign up for a time to volunteer!

For more information, please contact:

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or visit us at:

www.superiorwatersheds.org



LAKE SUPERIOR VOLUNTEER CORPS

Be a Part of the Solution!



**For local residents or summer visitors! Schedule a date to volunteer.
HELP WITH IMPORTANT GREAT LAKES PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS.**

For more information contact the Superior Watershed Partnership: www.superiorwatersheds.org

