

PAUL TITTL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 25TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Government Operations

Senate Bill 443

December 19, 2023

First of all, thank you Chairman Stroebel and members of the committee for allowing me to testify before you today concerning Senate Bill 443 designating the monarch butterfly as the state butterfly.

When I was a boy I remember seeing monarch butterflies regularly each summer. Perhaps you did as well. However, when was the last time you saw a monarch? Did you see one this year? If you haven't seen one, it doesn't surprise me, because the number of butterflies has dropped by a very high percentage. Some observers say the drop has been 90%.

There are various reasons for that drop, and Jack Voight our monarch butterfly expert who will testify in a few minutes will be able to tell you more about the drop and reasons for it.

However, there are some things we can do to help restore the monarch. The first is to raise awareness about the situation. Most people don't even realize what has taken place. Getting the monarch listed as our state butterfly is a major step, because it will help to raise awareness about the current threat. A second thing we can do is plant vegetation that is attractive to the monarchs. Jack will speak to this issue as well.

Restoring the monarch population is not merely a matter of our personal pleasure related to seeing butterflies each summer. Monarchs serve as good pollinators for the environment and are known to fertilize many wild flowers. That activity contributes to a healthy ecosystem.

In short, by making the Monarch the state butterfly, we can raise awareness about the current threat, educate more Wisconsinites about what can be done, and look forward to seeing more butterflies throughout the state in the years ahead.

I want to thank you for allowing me to testify today. I hope you will support the bill, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Capitol Office: Post Office Box 8953 • Madison, WI 53708-8953

(608) 266-0315 • Toll-Free: (888) 529-0025 • Fax: (608) 282-3625 • **Email:** Rep.Tittl@legis.wi.gov



RACHAEL A. CABRAL-GUEVARA

STATE SENATOR • 19TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Operations

Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara

December 19, 2023

Hello, members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 443, a bill that would declare the Monarch as Wisconsin's state butterfly.

The Monarch has experienced a sharp 68 percent decline in population due to pesticide use and colony collapse. These butterflies are important pollinators and, frankly, an important part of nature's food cycle. By declaring Monarchs as the state butterfly, we can put ourselves on the right track to preserve this beautiful species.

Peak migration through Wisconsin is in early September. Our state is also a breeding ground for the eastern migratory population of Monarchs. In short, Wisconsin has had a long history with this species and the Monarch has earned its place as one of our state symbols.

I am hopeful you will support this important first step to preserve one of nature's gems: the Monarch butterfly.



Friends of Butterfly
Gardens Inc.

A 501c3 Nonprofit Organization

WWW.FriendsOfButterflyGardens.com

December 19, 2023

Re: SB 443 Recognizing the Monarch as the State Butterfly

**Board of
Directors**

Jack Voight
President

**Dr. Rich
Merkhofer**
*Vice
President*

**Corinne
Roe, CPA**
Treasurer

Marty Voight
Secretary

Greetings State Senators,

The iconic Monarch butterflies are becoming an endangered species. We encourage your support of the above Monarch butterfly bill. This bill will increase public awareness of the Monarch.

The Monarch butterfly is recognized in seven other states as their state butterfly/insect, including neighboring states of Illinois and Minnesota.

Recently, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress board of directors unanimously supported my citizen resolution to designate the Monarch butterfly as Wisconsin's state butterfly.

Your support would be appreciated!

Yours truly,

**Jack Voight, President of Friends of Butterfly Gardens Inc.
Wisconsin State Treasurer, 1995-2007
Retired Master Gardener of Wisconsin**



Friends of Butterfly Gardens Inc.

Our mission is to ensure the iconic monarch butterfly does not become extinct. We seek your support of our four major programs:

- The Butterfly Gardens Admission Membership Program
- The Habitat for Monarchs Program
- The Monarch Raising Program
- The Legacy Partner Program

We believe each program enables the monarch butterfly to succeed and survive. Program details are presented in this flyer and on our website.

We hope you will experience the joy, excitement, awe, mystery and wonder of native butterflies, animals and plants.

Jack & Marty Voight, Co-founders of Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin Inc.

Contact us for more information

www.FriendsOfButterflyGardens.com
920-733-2929



Programs

of the Friends of Butterfly Gardens Inc.

More program details and fees are posted on our website.



Admission Membership Program:

An annual admission fee for a family or an individual is available. Visits are unlimited.



Habitat for Monarchs Program:

A "Habitat for Monarchs" yard sign displays your support of milkweed habitat for monarchs at home, business or elsewhere. Milkweed seeds & a certificate are included.



Monarch Raising Program:

A raising kit creates an opportunity to experience the monarch life cycle at home or in the classroom. The kit includes a cage, plants, caterpillars and instructions.



Legacy Partner Program:

A major donor campaign has begun to establish a \$1 million endowment fund at the Community Foundation for future funding of the Butterfly Gardens operations.

Butterfly Host Plants

Butterflies have their preferred host plants to lay their eggs on. We recommend native nectar and host plants for your butterfly garden.

Monarch: Common Milkweed, Red/Swamp Milkweed, Butterfly Weed, Poke Milkweed

Mourning Cloak: Birch, Poplar, Willow

Painted Lady: Hollyhock, Sunflower, Thistle

Cabbage White: Cabbage, Nasturtium

Tiger Swallowtail: Willow, Cherry

Red Admiral: False or Burning Nettle

Wood Nymph: Grasses-Bluestem, Wild Oats

Spangled Fritillary: Wild Violets

Yellow Clouded Sulphur: Alfalfa, Clovers

Viceroy: Willow, Aspen, Cottonwood

Question Mark: Elm, Nettle

Eastern Comma: Elm, Nettle

Black Swallowtail: Dill, Parsley, Golden Alexander

Silver-Spotted Skipper: Honey Locust, Wisteria

Buckeye: Snapdragon, Plantains

N2550 State Highway 47, Appleton, WI

Take Exit 142 from US 41 & Go North 2 Miles



FriendsOfButterflyGardens.com



Friends of Butterfly Gardens Inc.

A 501c3 Nonprofit Organization

WISCONSIN'S
LARGEST
BUTTERFLY
HOUSE & MAZE



FriendsOfButterflyGardens.com



Friends of Butterfly
Gardens Inc.

A 501c3 Nonprofit Organization

Since 2013, thousands of visitors have enjoyed our native insects, animals, and plants as well as our other amenities. Butterflies, bees, frogs and turtles will greet you. Our outdoor butterfly house, gift store, waterfall, pavilions, mazes and trails will enhance your garden visit.



Main
Event
Center

Waterfall,
Pond &
Pavilion



Gift Shop,
Butterfly House
& Plant Nursery

Pavilion &
Picnic Area



Butterfly Maze
& 1/2 Mile
Keystone
Plant Trail

NATIVE BUTTERFLIES



Monarch



Mourning Cloak



Painted Lady



Cabbage White



Tiger Swallowtail



Red Admiral



Wood Nymph



Spangled Fritillary



Yellow Clouded Sulphur



Viceroy



Question Mark



Eastern Comma



Black Swallowtail



Hummingbird Moth



Silver Spotted Skipper



Buckeye

NECTAR PLANTS



Golden Alexander
May-July



Red Bee Balm
June-August



Mountain Mint
July-Sept



Purple Coneflower
July-Sept



Bergamot
July-Sept



Black Eyed Susan
August-Sept



Joe Pye Weed
August-Sept



Meadow Blazingstar
August-Sept



Stiff Goldenrod
August-Sept



New England Aster
August-October

The Monarch as Wisconsin's State Butterfly

FACT SHEET

The States of Alabama, Idaho, Illinois, Minnesota, Texas, Vermont and West Virginia have already designated the Monarch as their state's butterfly. This designation creates enhanced public awareness of the plight and benefits of the Monarch butterfly.

PLIGHT:

- The Monarch butterfly is endangered. Their numbers have declined more than 90% since the 1990's.
- Due to increased pesticides and herbicides, there are fewer milkweed plants, the only plant where Monarchs lay their eggs.
- Insufficient numbers of Monarchs currently migrate to Mexico and return to the U.S. each year, thus a steady decrease in numbers of Monarchs each year.

BENEFITS:

- Butterflies and other pollinators help produce 30% of our food.
- Ironically, the butterfly is studied by students (life cycle, migration).
- Tourist attractions at nature centers and business developments.

SUPPORT:

- To increase the Monarch population, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is planting one billion milkweed plants from Minnesota to Texas.

- **The Prime Minister of Canada and the Presidents of the United States and Mexico have pledged to conserve the Monarch population.**
- **Endorsements [since 2014] of this legislation from:**

Dr. David Hogg, Chair, UW-Madison Dept. of Entomology; Dr. Douglas Buege, President, Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association; Dr. Chip Taylor, University of Kansas & President, Monarch Watch; Lucas Olson, Biologist, Natural Heritage Conservation Bureau, Wisconsin DNR; Jack & Marty Voight, owners, Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin; Jim Anderson, retired naturalist, Mosquito Hill Center, New London, WI; 2015 Wisconsin Conservation Congress; **2022/23 Scenic Wisconsin; 2023 Wisconsin Conservation Congress** (with special thanks and appreciation for the support of former DNR Secretary George Meyer)

Supporting this initiative:

**Scenic Wisconsin
Board of Directors**

**Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin
Jack, Marty and Emily Voight**

All Endorsers Listed

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2023

ORDER OF BUSINESS M I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS A. CALL TO ORDER
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Chairman: MarySusan Diedrich [Time] 6:30 P.M.
Via Zoom B. ROLL CALL **ATTENDEES** Mike Ellsworth-Harold Drake-Kevin
Schanning-Michael Hamm-George Meyer- Brad Wagner-Danielle Johnson-Duke
Tucker-Tim Grunewald-Chuck Boley-Steve Bechtka-Butch Roberts-Peter Hellios-
Todd Cook-Tashina Peplinski-Michael Murphy- Gary Roehrig-Matt Wehn
W.D.N.R.- Maggie Hutter W.D.N.R. EXCUSED Lowell Suring-Robert Benson
UNEXCUSED **GUESTS** Merri Ann Gonzalas-Linda Hendrix-Amy Mueller-Deb Martin
-Barb Voightman-**Jack Voight**- Steve Benning C

RESOLUTION 450123 MONARCH BUTTERFLY

COMMITTEE CHAIR DISCUSSION The resolution was read by the committee chair. The author was present and spoke on behalf of the resolution. He related that he wrote a resolution 9 years ago which passed state wide with 90% support. Unfortunately, the legislature never acted on it. Currently he is working with the legislature and a bill has been drafted. (LRB3814) Comments: MarySusan stated the currently 7 states have the Monarch as their state butterfly. Wisconsin is one of nine states without. Steve Bechtka recommended moving the Resolution forward as a means of protecting the Monarch.

ACTION Motion was made by George Meyer to forward the resolution. Motion 2nd by Danielle Johnson. Motion Passed on a voice vote Committee chair will notify resolution author.

Late-emerging monarch butterflies get assist from FedEx on migration from Fox Valley to South Texas

DALE - A dozen Wisconsin monarch butterflies that emerged or soon will emerge from their chrysalises two months past normal will get a big lift from FedEx.

The monarchs, neatly packaged in an insulated FedEx box, will make a 1,600-mile overnight journey from Appleton International Airport to a home in Mission, Texas, to catch up with fellow monarchs already in South Texas on their migration to Mexico.

The shipping cost \$130 and was paid by [Friends of Butterfly Gardens Inc.](#)

Jack Voight, president of the nonprofit organization, said \$130 is a small cost to save 12 monarchs, which otherwise would be in peril on their flight to Mexico at this time of year due to a lack of nectar along the way and the potential for freezing temperatures.

"If we can save 12 monarchs, and half the monarchs are females, each one will lay 400 eggs next spring," Voight told The Post-Crescent, "so we're going to increase the population. The population has gone down by 80 to 90%."

The monarchs were found as eggs by Alicia Griebenow on her and her husband's property in the town of Dale. Griebenow plants seven varieties of milkweed in her yard to attract monarchs. Milkweed is the only plant monarch caterpillars eat.

Griebenow's efforts resulted in the raising and release of 204 monarchs this year.

"I was concerned early on that it was a bad year," she said, "but it took off, and it was once again a part-time job."

No one knows why this last generation of monarchs lingered in Wisconsin. The lifecycle from egg to adult butterfly takes about 30 days, so the female or females would have laid the eggs at the beginning of October.

Griebenow and Voight both speculated that the tardiness might be an effect of climate change. Last year, Voight also sent late-season monarchs on an overnight flight to Texas. All but one survived.

"Something's going on," Voight said. "More of these monarchs are now producing eggs later in the season."

As the monarchs emerged from the chrysalises, Griebenow fed them a solution of one part homegrown honey and eight parts water in preparation for the FedEx flight to Texas.

The monarchs were shipped in a state of torpor, as the insulated box contained a cold pack. Voight gently pinched the wings of each butterfly and carefully placed it in an envelope, then in a second envelope and then in the box. He also prepared three chrysalises for the trip.

"This is emotional for me," Griebenow said as she watched the process. "I get into this."

Voight said the monarchs needed an assist this late in the year. The overnight flight will cut 1,600 miles from their migration.

"Most monarchs left our area two months ago," he said. "If we release them now, they would die because there's not enough nectar on the way to Mexico," where they overwinter.

The monarchs will be received by [Suzanne Tilton](#) in Mission, the home of the [National Butterfly Center](#).

Tilton will tag the butterflies and release them in her yard, which has a lot of flowers in bloom. The hope is that they then will migrate to Mexico.

"I live less than 20 miles from the Mexican border, so the monarchs don't have far to go from here," Tilton told Griebenow in an email.

Post Crescent.

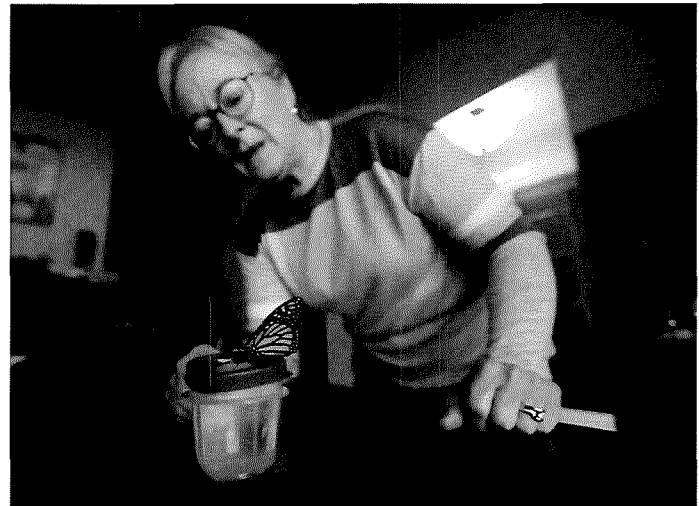
Duke Behnke

Appleton Post-Crescent

Published 3:18 p.m. CT Oct. 31, 2022 | Updated 3:52 p.m. CT Oct. 31, 2022



Jack Voight prepares a monarch butterfly for overnight shipment to Texas at the home of Alicia Griebenow in the town of Dale. Dan Powers/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin



Alicia Griebenow watches as a monarch butterfly feeds from a cotton ball soaked with a solution that is one part homemade honey and eight parts water. Dan Powers/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

Butterfly Gardens owner looks to stimulate action on monarchs

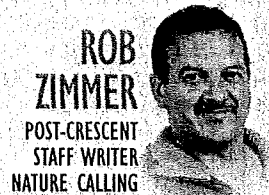
Jack Voight, owner of the Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin, located just outside of Appleton, is passionate about butterflies and butterfly habitat.

To help gain awareness for the increasing threats to the monarch butterfly, Voight plans to introduce resolutions at next week's annual Conservation Congress hearing in Kaukauna to help ensure the monarch gets the recognition it deserves from the state legislature and the public.

Disappearing monarch populations are a concern, and with so many factors working against them, such as widespread pesticide use, land-use changes, weather conditions and habitat loss in Mexico on their wintering grounds as well as here in the United States where they breed, there is fear that monarch populations may never recover.

Overwintering colonies in the mountains of central Mexico were at their lowest numbers in recorded history this past winter, leading many to wonder just how many of these large, black and orange butterflies will make it back this summer.

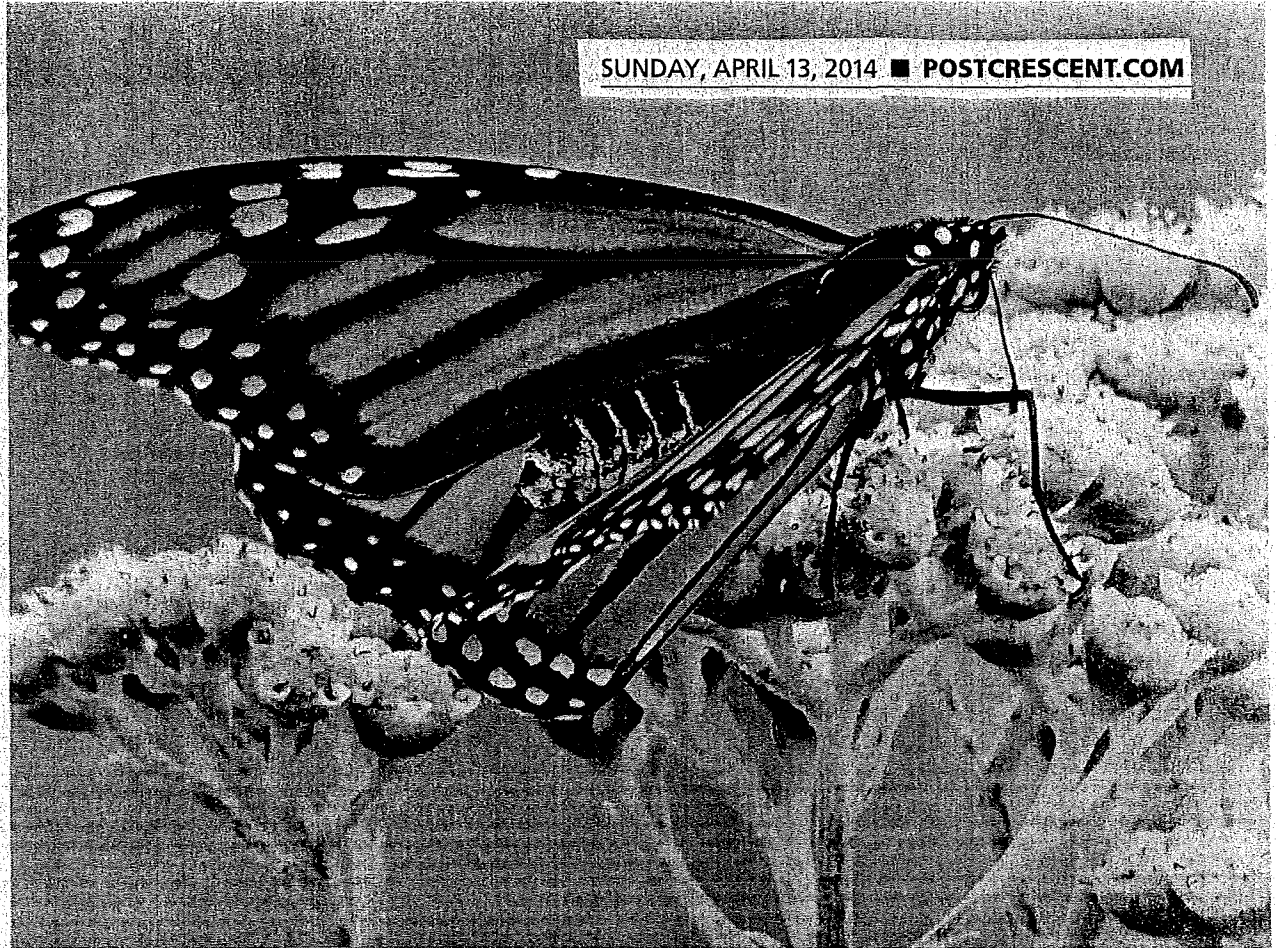
"Estimates indicate that approximately 30 percent of those monarchs annually migrating to Mexico are from Wisconsin, and the total number of monarchs in Mex-



ico has declined by 90 percent from record high numbers in the 1990s," Voight said.

Voight plans to ask the Conservation Congress to recommend that the organization work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Transportation and others to initiate and implement action to institute a public awareness campaign aimed at restoring more milkweed vegetation in Wisconsin.

Additionally, and perhaps more symbolic, Voight will introduce a resolution to call for the state to designate the monarch as Wisconsin's



SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2014 ■ POSTCRESCENT.COM

Jack Voight, owner of the Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin, plans to introduce resolutions to help raise awareness of the plight of the monarch in Wisconsin at Monday's annual Wisconsin Conservation Congress spring hearings. One of Voight's proposals is making the monarch the state butterfly. ROB ZIMMER/POST-CRESCENT MEDIA

state butterfly.

"Twenty-seven other states already have a state butterfly," Voight said. "This includes the states of Minnesota and Illinois, which have designated the monarch as their state butterfly."

Furthermore, Voight

seeks to help create a Monarch Corridor across the state, raising awareness of the peak monarch migration routes through Wisconsin.

The annual Conservation Congress hearings will be held in every county at 7 p.m. Monday.

There are a number of key issues being recommended for action this year, including a proposed tundra swan hunt. If you are passionate on this, or any other topic on the agenda, be sure to get out and attend the meeting in your county.

The complete agenda and locations for each county can be found online: <http://dnr.wi.gov/about/wcc/springhearing.html>.

— Rob Zimmer: 920-419-3734, yardmd@postcrescent.com; Twitter @YardMD