

## **Monarch Butterfly Conservation: Private sector, LandCAN step up as populations decline**



“Landowners, homeowners, and businesses can find county-level resources to help them conserve monarch habitat whether their focus is agriculture, small plot gardening, municipal/rights-of-way land management, or forests and grasslands. Organizations, professionals, funding and educational programs are listed by county in each of 11 central US states.”

### **Yarmouth, ME (PRWEB) April 14, 2021 -**

A new, free resource for private landowners aims to stop the decline of monarch butterflies. The web-based **Habitat Conservation Assistance Network** (HabitatCAN, <https://www.HabitatCAN.org>) is a growing resource currently focused on providing resources to help bring back the Sage Grouse, the Lesser Prairie Chicken, and now the Monarch Butterfly. Originally developed with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), HabitatCAN expanded by adding the **Monarch Butterfly** with support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Monarchs epitomize the plight of many wildlife, and now insect, species in North America. Once plentiful and abundant, these iconic orange and black butterflies suffered the loss of an estimated 165 million acres of breeding habitat in the United States in recent decades. The USFWS declared monarch listing under the Endangered Species Act “warranted but precluded” in 2020. In 2021, the total forest area occupied by overwintering monarch colonies in Mexico was only 2.1 hectares, a 26% drop from the previous year. Conservation action is imperative.

Enter the [HabitatCAN Monarch website](#), which provides more than 7,400 county-level listings of service providers for the 1,184 counties in 11 central U.S. states critical to monarchs. Organized with the landowner in mind, the site makes it easy to drill down according to four land use types: small plot gardening, agriculture, municipal lands and rights-of-way, and forests and grasslands. Likewise, HabitatCAN lists 500 service providers serving the 85 counties in the 5-state Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat area, and 2,030 service providers serving the 228 counties in the western 11-state Sage Grouse habitat area.

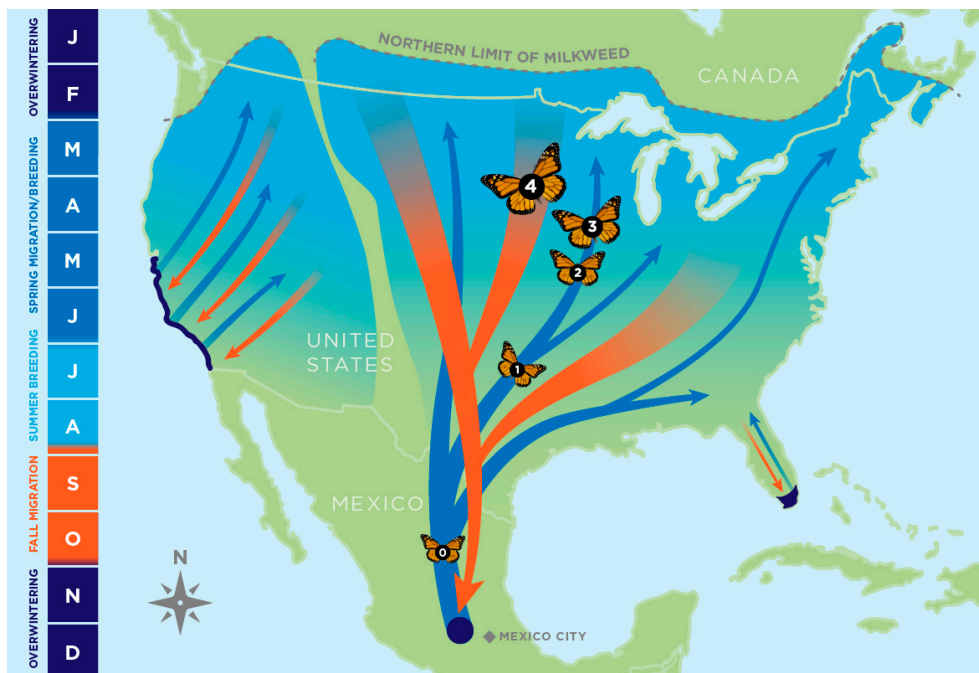
The size of the monarch population from generation to generation is determined by spring and summer conditions in North America, including the quantity and quality of host plants (milkweed) for monarch caterpillars and nectar sources for adult butterflies. Thus, monarch conservation is an invitation to millions of Americans to participate! Unlike so many of today’s intractable environmental issues, monarch recovery can be assisted directly by individuals when they create the right habitat, whether by the acre or by the flowerbed.

“From farmers who are seeding native plants through improvements funded by NRCS to urban gardeners looking to help bees and butterflies, landowners are rapidly gaining interest in providing pollinator habitat,” said Peter Berthelsen, who has years of experience working with private land managers as President of Conservation Blueprint and advisor to HabitatCAN.

Many landowners recognize that managing for monarchs is also good business:

- Regenerative practices that support native grasses and hedgerows also can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and increase forage for livestock.
- Managing for open, sunny native habitats that benefit monarchs also benefits other native pollinators, grassland birds, and many more species of beneficial insects.

HabitatCAN is a project of the nonprofit **Land Conservation Assistance Network** (LandCAN, <https://www.LandCAN.org>). Executive Director Amos Eno explains their philosophy: “People are the most valuable asset in expanding conservation, and individuals are the key to sustaining conservation success. Seventy percent of the United States and over 90% of Midwestern states remain in private ownership. More to the point, for more than half of federally listed threatened and endangered species, more than 80% of their geographic range is on private land. The keys to habitat conservation lie with the private landowners of our farms, ranches, forests, and even suburbia. Mobilizing their individual conservation efforts will result in an ecosystem-wide impact.”



**Company Profile:** LandCAN is the “google” of private land conservation, a one-stop-shop for busy conservation-minded landowners. With 70% of land in the lower 48 states privately owned, LandCAN focuses on providing the country’s 13 million private landowners with the tools they need to conserve habitat and declining wildlife species while also managing their land profitably and sustainably.

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