

Dear Students, Colleagues and Friends,

I've always been a "river woman". Whether engaging people to think about rivers as the front doors of our communities or developing programs to deploy green infrastructure for infiltration and filtering H₂O, rivers and their rich biodiversity have always been my passion.

So, when I was called back to Missouri I looked for an organization that protected water. Naturally I joined the Missouri Prairie Foundation(MPF). The fit for me was a no-brainer. Here was an organization protecting water at a very LARGE scale – as in "aquifer" sized!

More than that though, MPF and one of its main programs GrowNative! work to conserve landscapes and educate home and business owners on how they can help creatures like the monarch butterflies discussed below by planting natives at their very own homes and offices – while also diverting stormwater and creating better, "greener" businesses.

Recently, a GrowNative! colleague, Bill Ruppert sent a distressing article on monarchs below. Though we've all known their numbers have been declining, this report and the other links I've given stress the importance of not only MPF's work to protect over 3,000 acres of prairie to date <http://www.moprairie.org/where-we-work/> (Only 90,000 acres of the original 15 million remain in this state.) but the specific work GrowNative<http://grownative.org/> members are doing to be part of the solution. <http://www.moprairie.org/2014/01/12/1355/>

Thanks Bill, and thanks GrowNative members for consistently (Some would say doggedly!) pursuing the spread of native plants including the milkweed so vital to the monarch's continued flight . Your work does not go unnoticed! And to the larger organization, the Missouri Prairie Foundation of which GrowNative is part - kudos to you for protecting thousands of acres of prairie and serving as a home for GrowNative. Although you're only approaching your 50th year (as opposed to the almost 2 million years the monarch has been around) hopefully both individuals and companies will continue to flock to you to support this critical work.

NAFTA leaders could save the monarch butterflies

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/14/opinion/roberts-monarch-butterflies/index.html>

"... According to surveys carried out by World Wildlife Fund, together with Mexico's National Commission on Protected Areas and other partners, the entire hibernating population of monarch butterflies in the 2013-2014 season occupied an area of forest not much bigger than a football field -- a mere 1.6 acres.

This is a 44% drop from the previous season, and a continuation of the freefall migrating monarchs have taken since data collection began two decades ago..."

“...2013 was the worst year for these butterflies in recorded history. Now people are talking about the migration disappearing altogether.

There are several reasons for the decline, including extreme climate events in the U.S. and Canada as well as deforestation in Mexico. Yet the biggest culprit is likely the widespread extermination of milkweed, a flowering plant critical to monarch butterfly reproduction and development.

Across much of the monarch's range, particularly in the mid-western U.S., milkweed has fallen victim en masse to changing land use and the advent of herbicide-resistant crops. In short, the cupboard is bare for monarch caterpillars, and as a result one of North America's most dazzling natural wonders is on the brink of vanishing entirely. . . .”

We can certainly hope our leaders recognize the opportunity they have in pairing business and natural resource development with NAFTA. But we can take action today by supporting organizations like MPF and GrowNative! – and planting milkweed and other native plants at our homes and businesses to make a difference one lawn, pasture and prairie at a time.

Best to you and our grasslands too,

Margo

Margo Farnsworth

Screendoor Consulting

<http://screendoorconsulting.com/>

615.478.4889

Give good people good information and they'll do good things.

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)