

**Lincoln P. Brower
Department of Biology
Sweet Briar College
Sweet Briar, VA 24595**

**434-277-5065
e-mail: brower@sbc.edu**

30 January 2009

Dear Governor Doyle, County Executive Walker, and
The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors:

Having heard about the potential loss of a Monarch butterfly migration route on the **Milwaukee County Grounds**, as well as the sincere and concerted effort by the community to save this superb area from development, I would like to explain how important preserving such specific habitats as this has become. Monarch populations require space with milkweed plants for reproduction and numerous wildflower species for maintaining their lipid reserves that fuel their lives. Habitat quality is enhanced by geographical complexity, including streams, ponds and topographic diversity, as well as stands of trees for wind and storm protection. All of these parameters contribute to the success of the monarch's incredible 2500 mile migration to Mexico, and in the spring, another 1200 mile return journey. **Milwaukee County Grounds** exemplifies such a constellation of habitat quality features, and unless we can, one by one, save recognized areas, the local and migratory populations of monarch butterflies, and indeed many other species, will begin an inexorable decline.

I know that you are aware of the value this land holds for the human community, for education, and to provide open, natural space in an urban area. I trust that my note may help to underscore the scientific importance of its preservation; such rich biological areas cannot be moved, recreated, or replaced. If this educated effort in your county, and others nationwide, cannot succeed in saving areas such as these, we will soon begin to see, among other biodiversity disasters, the unraveling of the great migration of the monarch butterfly, truly one of this planet's greatest wildlife spectacles.

Sincerely yours,

Lincoln P. Brower,
Research Professor of Biology, Sweet Briar College and
Distinguished Service Professor of Zoology Emeritus, University
of Florida

November 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Academic Coordinator at the Boys and Girls Club and have found the Monarch Trail to be a unique and vital “outdoor classroom” which supports our programming at the club.

This past summer I ran a program called the “Wonders of Nature” where the kids studied, collected, raised, and released Monarch Butterflies! Taking a field trip to the Monarch Trail and getting involved in this effort to save the land for the monarchs was the culminating project for us. The joy, through hands on learning, I’ve seen in these children cannot be duplicated inside a classroom. Only outside on the Monarch Trail did these urban children find the wonders in nature.

I hope this land is not lost to the development of buildings when creative planning could help overcome this and save this beautiful piece of land for the butterflies and for the children!
Sincerely,

Michelle Dougherty
Coordinator of Academic
Enrichment Programming
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater
Milwaukee



***“Only outside
on the Monarch
Trail did these
urban children
find the wonders
in nature.”***

Michelle Dougherty
Coordinator of Academic
Enrichment Programming
**Boys & Girls Clubs of
Greater Milwaukee**

November 6, 2008



**Milwaukee Public
MUSEUM**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this note in the hope of better informing all parties involved in planning the development of the Milwaukee County property containing the Monarch Trail and temporary roost site of its potential biological significance. I have served as the Curator of Lepidoptera (butterflies & moths) at the Museum for more than 30 years, with a strong interest in the monarch butterfly- having done my Master's theses & continued research studies involving this species.

“I hope you can appreciate just how unusual, biologically significant and potentially useful for research this site is.”

Susan Borkin

Although the monarch butterfly is not a rare species, it is unique in the animal kingdom in having evolved its particular autumn migration and over wintering behaving (an adaptation that has been recognized as an endangered phenomenon with many aspects that are still poorly understood.) Three or more generations occur between the migratory phase, and unlike migratory birds, no older individuals lead the new migrants along the way to their selected roost sites.

“I have only been made aware of 3 other sites in SE Wisconsin that historically have been used consistently as temporary roost sites by monarch butterflies during their autumn migration.”

Susan Borkin

We know change in day length and temperature influence the hormonal changes that trigger the butterflies to migrate, and it is essential for them to feed along the way and build up sufficient fat reserves to carry them through the winter. However, what factors determine the actual migration routes and control the selection of temporary roost sites is not currently known.

Population levels, distribution of nectar sources, weather patterns, topography, the physical structure of the selected trees and microclimates are all likely influences.

In all my years at the Museum, interacting with other entomologists in the state and the general public, I have only been made aware of 3 other sites in SE Wisconsin that historically have been used consistently as temporary roost sites by monarch butterflies during their autumn migration.

Given this information, I hope you can appreciate just how unusual, biologically significant and potentially useful for research this site is, and hopefully can continue to be, for better understanding of our best loved butterflies.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Borkin
Curator of Lepidoptera
Milwaukee Public Museum

“We are losing 6000 acres a day in this country to development. That adds up to 2.2 million acres per year & an area larger than the state of Illinois in the 16 years I’ve run the Monarch Watch Program.”

November 16, 2008

Orley Taylor, Director, Monarch Watch

Dear Barb,

Thank you for alerting me to the potential loss of a major monarch habitat on the Milwaukee County Grounds. As you have made clear in our communications, monarchs naturally funnel into the glade due to the geography of the region and the abundance of nectar sources in the area. The number of sites we know of to which monarchs are directed by natural factors each year is quite small. Such sites

sustain the monarch migration and offer a unique opportunity to engage the public in the wonders of this extraordinary migration. As a population and culture, we are increasingly becoming disconnected from the natural world around us and less aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy environment for the wildlife and all of the diversity in the ecosystems on which we depend. Increasingly we seem to act as if our land use, or abuse, is of no long-term consequence, but it is.

CREATE, CONSERVE, & PROTECT MONARCH HABITATS

Dr. Orley “Chip” Taylor
Dept. of Entomology
Director of Monarch Watch
University of Kansas
1200 Sunnyside Ave.
Lawrence KS 66045-7534



www.MonarchWatch.org

As you may know, there is legislation moving through Congress based on Richard Louv’s book *Last Child in the Woods*, called “No Child Left Inside.” This bill is beginning to gain momentum in Congress and is likely to gain enough support to be enacted in the next few years. Once enacted, the value of all wildscapes will be apparent to our leaders and will provide a buffer or resistance to some of the pressures to develop every bit of land within and around our cities. We need to get our children and the public outside and to reconnect our citizens with nature.

As Louv’s book makes clear, as a society, it is in our best interests to further these connections and it sounds like “The Monarch Trail” created on the county property is one of those sites which can be used to educate the public while providing recreational opportunities at the same time, and it’s important to monarch migration as well.

“The number of sites we know of to which monarchs are directed by natural factors each year is quite small. Such sites sustain the monarch migration and offer a unique opportunity to engage the public in the wonders of this extraordinary migration”

If you have followed our Monarch Waystation Program, you are surely aware that one of the justifications for this program is the grim fact that we are losing 6000 acres a day in this country to development (9.7 square miles/day). That adds up to 2.2 million acres per year and an area larger than the state of Illinois in the 16 years I’ve run the Monarch Watch Program. Development is necessary, but it shouldn’t be done at the expense of the increasingly rare and valuable natural sites.

We have a wetland here in Lawrence, Kansas that has been the subject of a 15 year dispute. The city and state want to put a highway through the wetlands, while environmental groups and Native Americans with an attachment to this parcel of land want to keep it intact. The city will soon grow to surround this area, and, if maintained, this wetland will become one of the most unusual educational resources within any city within this country and a great place for our children to experience the wilds. As with your situation, the potential solution is to move the footprint, in this case the highway, which could be routed south of the river. The expense would be greater, but a valuable natural asset would be saved.

I hope that a solution of this nature might be available on the Milwaukee County property. Moving a footprint for a project can have a big effect and our program is benefiting from just such a move. The building that houses our program was scheduled to be leveled to make way for a new research building next spring, but after considering all the factors, the University decided to move the footprint of the new building a bit to the west, allowing us to continue our public outreach from this location.

I hope a similar resolution might be found on the County Grounds that will protect the Monarch Trail and serve the public in your area.

Sincerely,



Chip Taylor, Director

Orley R. Taylor, Director
Monarch Watch