



FORESTS **FOR**  
MONARCHS

# LA CRUZ HABITAT PROTECTION PROJECT



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT





*Monarchs el Rosario | Sanctuary Site 2018*

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# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

2022 was a year of growth for Forests for Monarchs. When I started with the organization in 2017, we planted 250,000 trees - an amazing accomplishment. I never thought we'd be planting 1.3 million trees five years later. Over the last five years, with help from you - our community of supporters and partners - we've planted a total of 1,845,000 trees in and around the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone and the Highland Lakes Watershed region of Lakes Pátzcuaro and Zirahuén.

The communities in this region, along with the monarch butterfly, have faced years of hardship from the loss of the forests. The monarch population has declined 90% since the late 90s, and in July of 2022, they were declared endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The communities in these high-need areas have worked tirelessly to rehabilitate their land back into forests and create a sustainable economic resource for this rural region of Mexico. There is still plenty of work needed to be done and more trees need to be planted. In addition to the historical causes for the monarch's decline, the region has faced an increase in forest fires in recent years, with some reaching within 30 minutes of our partner tree nursery, Vivero Forestal Hacienda La Cruz. We are also seeing a slight increase in bark beetle infection, which impacts the trees' survival rate.

That is why this work must continue. Our goal remains to help conserve the monarch butterfly winter habitat while aiding the surrounding communities in creating a sustainable livelihood supported by good forest stewardship.

*Megan Fulton*

**MEGAN FULTON**  
Executive Director

## OUR MISSION:

La Cruz Habitat Protection Project, Inc. (dba Forests for Monarchs), reforests land in and around the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, where millions of monarch butterflies spend each winter, and in the Highland Lakes Area of Michoacán, Mexico. Our goal is to help conserve the monarch butterfly winter habitat while aiding the surrounding communities in creating a sustainable livelihood supported by good forest stewardship.





# STATE OF THE MONARCH IN 2022-2023

With the monarch butterfly declared endangered by the IUCN in July of 2022, many have wondered how to save this marvelous creature. The eastern population saw a 22% decline from the 2021-2022 count. During the annual count in early 2023, eleven colonies were found on over 2.21 hectares (as compared to 2.84 hectares in 2022). Scientists anticipated this drop, but it is still troubling. (Source: Monarch Watch (March 21, 2023) Monarch Population Status).

The leading causes of the population decline continue to be the mass use of pesticides, the ongoing climate crisis, the clearcutting of the winter habitat, and migration problems. To help the monarch butterfly, there are many ways individuals can make a difference: Plant native milkweed and pollinator plants (avoid big box stores for plants where they've likely been treated with chemicals); Get your local officials involved (see if your mayor will be a part of the National Wildlife Federations Mayors' Monarch Pledge); Stop the use of harmful garden & lawn care products that can harm pollinators and contaminate or degrade monarch breeding habitat; Plan a visit to the Monarch Biosphere Reserve (ecotourism helps the local communities with a sustainable economic resource and promotes the protection of the habitat).

The western monarch population, those found west of the Rocky Mountains, is also in crisis, reaching just 2,000 monarchs a couple of years ago. With a miraculous rebound, the population sits at around 300,000 monarchs but this is still less than 1% of its historic population.





# 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



1,300,000

native trees  
planted



1,193

hectares of  
degraded forest  
restored and cleared  
land reforested



8,980

volunteers that  
supported  
reforestation efforts



94

communities and  
landowners  
impacted



# ORGANIZATION UPDATES:

The growth Forests for Monarchs experienced over the last year wouldn't be possible without our partners.

Since 2017, we've partnered with the Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) and Avocados from Mexico to plant 1.2 million trees in the high-need areas around both the monarch overwintering area and Highland Lakes Watershed region, with 200,000 planted in 2022.

We continued our partnership with American Forests, planting 500,000 trees in communities surrounding the monarch overwintering area and the Highland Lakes Watershed region for a total of 695,000 trees planted since 2020.

In 2022 we entered our first year partnering with One Tree Planted to plant 500,000 trees in and around the monarch overwintering area. One Tree Planted also supported our second annual Earth Day event where volunteers learned about the importance of reforestation, toured the nursery, helped pack trees and got to plant trees at a reforestation site near the nursery.

We also want to thank our partners, large and small! A special thanks to Vermont Woods Studios, the Meshewa Farm Foundation, The Premack Law Office, Claudia Schwalm Photography, Derby Farm Flowers & Gardens, and White Mountain Nature Center.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Hamm, Ph. D, President

Peggy Farabaugh, Vice President

Ed Rashin, Treasurer

Molly Hoopes, Secretary

Barbara Maldonado

Michaela Rogers

Sarah Hall-Bagdonas

Donnamarie Duffin

Ben Miles

Ron Miller

Mark Hunter

## TAKE ACTION

Your donation directly supports the production of native trees in communities around the Monarch Biosphere Reserve and the Highland Lakes Watershed Region.

[www.forestsfomonarchs.org/donate](http://www.forestsfomonarchs.org/donate)



*Monarchs at a sanctuary site*



# 2022 FINANCES

## Total Contributions

**\$749,493**

Partner Contributions

\$100,000

Grants & Foundations

\$603,750

Individual Contributions & Public Support

\$45,743

## Program Expenses

**\$648,969**

Tree Seedling Production + Transportation & Distribution

\$582,764

Monitoring & Technical Field Support

\$48,053

Public Outreach & Education

\$18,153

## Administrative Expenses

**\$44,537**

Fundraising Expenses

\$21,326

Management & General Expenses

\$23,211

## Total Expenses

**\$693,506**

For the 2022 year, 94% of our total yearly expenses were directed towards our reforestation efforts and conservation efforts. The remaining funds are allocated for monitoring and multi-year project expenses in the coming year.

For a more in-depth look at our financial information, please see our 2022 990 located on our website under the "Reports & Finances" tab.







# FORESTS FOR MONARCHS

PO BOX 597  
DEDHAM, MA 02027



*Founder, Jose Luis Alvarez, planting at a site in the lakes region*