

# **Building Tribal Capacity for Monarch Habitat Restoration in Oklahoma**

What makes a TEAM?

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Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

- Chickasaw, Citizen Potawatomi, Muscogee (Creek), Eastern Shawnee, Miami, Osage, and Seminole



**Tribal Environmental Alliance for Monarchs (TEAM)**





- In 2015 the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) awarded **Monarch Watch** \$248,000 to partner with 7 tribes in Oklahoma to increase capacity to restore monarch habitat on tribal lands

# Unique Project Between Tribes and a Major University

Project goals:

1. Restore milkweed/monarch habitat to tribal lands
2. Collect, process, store, and propagate seeds
3. Establish seed production plots
4. Create demonstration gardens for public
5. Develop conservation plans
6. Train tribal employees for long term maintenance of selected sites







## Dr. Chip Taylor, University of Kansas

Founder and director of **Monarch Watch** since 1992, and a dynamic and energetic leader of this grant project.

An insect ecologist by training, he is now regarded as one of the top experts on monarch butterflies in the world.

Outreach focused and a supporter of sovereign tribal actions toward land management. Present at every event providing education and support.





## Jane Breckinridge, Euchee Butterfly Farm

Director of Euchee Butterfly Farm. Dedicated to butterfly conservation. Citizen of Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma.



On the ground coordinator of grant project in Oklahoma making several follow up visits to each location every year.

Passionate advocate of tribal sustainability and sovereignty, helping to create economic independence.





## 2016

Program provided:

1. Individualized field outings to identify wildflowers for seed collecting
2. 2 day in-depth training at **Monarch Watch** in Lawrence, KS
3. Hoop houses for growing seedlings to transplant
4. Supplies needed for growing seedlings
5. 2500 milkweed plugs to begin habitat restoration efforts
6. Supplies and support for planting plugs





## 2017

### Program Activities:

- Another round of 2500 milkweed plugs planted
- Growing 4000 native wildflowers
- Continuing education on cleaning seeds and plant identification
- TEAM conference in fall recognizing 2 years of hard work
- Monitoring progress of first milkweed plugs





- Instrumental in overall success of project
- Unique partnership with Tishomingo Wildlife Refuge and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Staff



**Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma**



- Hoop House construction at Chickasaw Nation Cultural Center in 2016
- Special thanks to Thalia, Rhonda, David, and the staff of the Chickasaw Horticultural Dept.



**Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma**



- Implemented in Cultural Preservation Dept. to restore natural aesthetic to tribal lands
- Partnered within the Nation at the CPN Eagle Aviary
- Demonstration areas incorporated into community garden



**Citizen Potawatomi Nation**



- TEAM working together to plant milkweed in 2016 at CPN Eagle Aviary
- Continues to successfully involve community and youth



**Citizen Potawatomi Nation**



- Muscogee Creek Nation Indian community developing resources at community building
- Hosted several training and educational events for TEAM
- Working closely with Euchee Butterfly Farm



## **Morris Indian Community**

- EPA Department excelled in technical execution
- Demonstration plots along community walking trails



**Eastern Shawnee Tribe**





- Chip Taylor, the Eastern Shawnee EPA Dept. and a group of Eastern Shawnee volunteers planting in 2016
- Program continues to grow with additional greenhouses and youth activities

**Eastern Shawnee Tribe**

- Located unique and rare variety of milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*) to produce seeds for distribution



- Continued success in planting and involving community



**Miami Nation**





- Miami planting event with youth volunteers 2016
- 2017 planting event

**Miami Nation**



Part of the development of Bird Creek Farms, an outdoor community eco-park designed to promote healthy lifestyles and spiritual wellness for tribal citizens



**Osage Nation**



- Native wildflowers and milkweeds were grown at an aquaponics center that also produced herbs and fish to feed tribal members
- Indoor grow room excelled at germination



## Osage Nation

- Partnered with Citizen Potawatomi to transplant seedlings and plugs in 2017
- Seed gathering and cleaning classes for youth



**Seminole Nation**



- 2016 TEAM planting event with Seminole Tribal Youth



- 2017 Planting



**Seminole Nation**

While the project was intended to last from 2015-2017, the supplies and education provided are continuing to impact tribal lands and citizens.

This land is part of our heritage. It is our responsibility to be the voice for these plants and insects, not everyone can see their cries for help.

The tribes didn't ask why we needed to help, our ancestors saw first hand the destruction of their habitat. We know the feeling of being pushed to the fringes of extermination. It is never too late to take some action to bring life back.

## **TEAM effort continues today**

Special thanks to University of Kansas' Monarch Watch, The Euchee Butterfly Farm, All Tribal Leadership supporting this action, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Resource Conservation Service, Cedar Valley Nurseries, Leon's Greenhouses, and all of the hard working volunteers.