

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 2015

Speaker Encourages Action to Help Monarch Butterflies

“I don’t think it’s hopeless,” butterfly expert Andrew Brower said in conclusion after outlining the impact that changes in climate and habitat have had on the beautiful monarch. A professor of biology at Middle Tennessee State University, Brower spoke at Recycle Rutherford’s 2014 annual meeting, held June 2 after storms delayed the April meeting.

Brower described the complex migration that monarch butterflies undertake, flying thousands of miles and spanning five generations. Although adult butterflies live only about a month, the fifth generation of monarchs lives seven or eight months, the time it takes to fly south from Canada and the United States to central Mexico. Brower described the amazing scene of millions of colorful butterflies wintering in the mountains as “one of the wonders of the world.” The Mexican overwintering sites were discovered in 1976.

Explaining that he “had the good fortune to visit a site in the middle of winter,” Brower said, “It was very quiet, and there were large clusters of butterflies clinging to the trees.” The trunk itself has some heat—sort of like a hot water bottle. As winter progresses, the butterflies stay quiet and still, but that changes as the days warm. Around the middle of March, colonies start moving about.

Planting and protecting native milkweeds and nectar plants can help monarchs.

“As soon as they encounter milkweeds, they lay eggs and die.” Thus, there is a second generation by April as they make their way up to the Great Lakes. It’s not hard to see that any changes—even slight ones—can impede this almost miraculous journey. Extreme weather can change the starting time and affect the food source. Monarchs need to lay their eggs on milkweed, and newly hatched larvae eat milkweed leaves as their first meal.

But more than the weather has dramatically decreased milkweed plants. At one time, farmers plowed to get rid of weeds, but it takes much less time to spray unwanted plants. With the develop-

ment of genetically engineered corn and soy beans that resist spray, milkweeds plants have gone from plentifully growing along road-ways and the edges of fields to being hard to find in some areas.

Brower observed that “conservation is in a long battle with efforts to make money.” Not only is that seen in the direct threat to the monarchs’ habitat through the use of GMOs to assure bigger crops with less effort, but it is seen in the direct threat to the overwintering sites through commercial logging.

The speaker readily admitted that “part of what I know is the result of being my father’s son.” His father, Lincoln Brower, is recognized for his studies on the migratory pattern of the monarch butterfly, and he contributed to the “Monarch Action List,” distributed at the meeting and quoted below:

What can you do to help increase the abundance of monarchs?

Become involved

- a. Plant and protect native milkweeds and nectar plants, while making sure that the plants you transplant or plant as seeds are native to your region. Use locally sourced material when possible. Avoid using herbicides and pesticides on or near these plants.
- b. Advocate for monarch conservation. Educate others. Write to and speak with school and citizen groups about the importance of maintaining natural habitat for monarchs and other pollinators. Share your enthusiasm.
- c. Urge the following and similar groups to create milkweed/monarch/pollinator habitats and promote the conservation of monarchs and other pollinators:
 - Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Future Farmers of America, and 4-H
 - schools and non-profits such as nature centers and churches
 - garden clubs, horticultural societies, Master Gardeners, and Master Naturalists
 - administrators of city gardens and parks
 - garden centers, landscaping firms, and businesses sensitive to their public image
- d. Support organizations whose missions favor activities that support native landscapes, including milkweed/monarch/pollinator habitat.

(continued on page 2)

Monarch Action List

(continued from page 1)

There are many such organizations, and the following is just a sample; look especially for organizations active in your area.

- land trusts
 - native plant societies; e.g., Wild Ones (<http://www.wildones.org/>), Texas Native Plant Society (<http://npsot.org/>)
 - prairie and grassland preservation organizations; e.g., Missouri Prairie Foundation (<http://www.moprairie.org/>)
 - Pheasants Forever (<http://www.pheasantsforever.org/>)
 - The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org/>)
 - Pollinator Partnership (<http://www.pollinator.org/>)
 - Ontario Nature (<http://www.ontarionature.org/>) and other regional groups
 - Ducks Unlimited (<https://www.ducks.org/>)
 - any other organizations that promote land preservation, restoration, or protection
- e. Encourage repeal of laws that require manicured home gardens and lawns.

Provide financial support

Donate money to organizations that work to sustain monarch habitat and the monarch migration. Numerous organizations are worthy of support, including all those listed below. Go to their Web sites to learn more about each and look periodically for updates about their activities. Please consider supporting the Monarch Butterfly Fund, which works to preserve monarchs and their spectacular migration through a conservation strategy that fosters healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities in and near the Mexican overwintering colonies. For more information, go to <http://www.monarchbutterflyfund.org/>

Learn more

The following organizations all provide very helpful and useful information. Please learn from their Web sites and consider supporting these organizations financially.

- a. In addition to learning from the first set of organizations, you can participate in their citizen science programs to contribute to research about monarchs:
- Journey North (<http://journeynorth.org>)
 - Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (<http://www.mlmp.org/>)
 - Monarch Monitoring Project (<http://www.monarchmonitoringproject.com/>)
 - Project Monarch Health (<http://monarchparasites.org>)
 - Monarch Watch (<http://www.monarchwatch.org/>)
 - Southwest Monarch Study (<http://www.swmonarchs.org/>)
- b. The following are also excellent organizations with informative Web sites.
- Monarch Joint Venture (<http://monarchjointventure.org/>)
 - Monarch Butterfly Recovery Plan (<http://monarchwatch.org/blog/>)
 - Creating habitat (<http://monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/create-habitat-for-monarchs>)
 - Monarch Conservation Talking Points (http://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/MonCons_talking_points.pdf)
 - Monarch Butterfly Fund (<http://www.monarchbutterflyfund.org/>)

- Make Way for Monarchs (<http://makewayformonarchs.org/i/>)
- Xerces Society (<http://www.xerces.org/monarchs/>)
- David Suzuki Foundation (<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/media/news/2014/04/got-milkweed/>)

Become active politically

Communicate with local, state, and national political leaders in person or by letter to

- Advocate for a tax incentive for landowners to set aside acreage for growth of native plants.
- Advocate for increasing the acreage maintained in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp>)
- Ask highway departments and utilities to reduce the frequency of mowing road edges, power lines, and rights-of-ways where milkweeds and wildflowers grow, and promote a single mowing in mid-summer to increase milkweed regrowth for monarch reproduction; advocate for reduced herbicide and insecticide spraying. Millions of miles of roadsides in the eastern U.S. could provide beneficial habitat for monarchs.
- Oppose federal subsidies for production of corn ethanol so that there is less pressure for converting land from other uses to intensive agriculture (changes to the U.S. Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills).
- Write county, state, and federal agencies urging protection of existing milkweed/monarch/pollinator habitats and advocate restoration of native plants (including milkweeds) in those areas from which they have been extirpated.
- Advocate for reduced herbicide use in agriculture. Talk to local farmers and recommend herbicide free portions of their fields.

These recommendations were compiled from suggestions made by Alfonso Alonso, Lincoln Brower, Don Davis, Gail Morris, Karen Oberhauser, Chip Taylor, and Ernest Williams. Anyone may add to, modify, or use this list to promote the conservation of monarch butterflies.

Recycle Old Shingles

Builders and home-repair companies in the mid-state now have options for recycling used shingles rather than taking them to the landfill. It has been estimated that shingles make up to 10 percent of the weight in a landfill; thus diverting shingles is significant.

At least two local companies accept old roofing shingles and grind them into a product that can be used in road paving. The materials are kept out of the landfill, and the resulting roadway is less expensive than one made with all new asphalt.

GroundUp Recycling, which accepts sorted roofing waste, has three locations: Cookeville, Mt. Juliet, and Murfreesboro.

Tennessee Shingle Recycling is located in Triune. Bo Teague, co-owner, estimates that the company diverted 5,000 tons of shingles in Rutherford County.

Mayor Shane McFarland Shares City's Plans

Murfreesboro Mayor Shane McFarland accepted an invitation to discuss the city's role and plans for recycling and solid waste disposal with Recycle Rutherford Board of Directors in their monthly meeting on January 5. Attending also were a number of interested citizens.

Elected mayor in April, 2014, McFarland began his remarks with information about the city's 2035 comprehensive plan, sharing some of the information and projections already gained. He urges all citizens to take part in the process by accessing the Website at <http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/index.aspx?NID=755>

McFarland said that recycling is one of the issues citizens list as being part of the quality of life. In addition are concerns about Middle Point Landfill being full by 2026. Since both the city and county have been able to take their garbage to the landfill without paying any tipping fees, there perhaps has not been a cost incentive to decrease the amount of garbage through recycling. Further complicating the situation is the rapid growth taking place, said the mayor, explaining that Murfreesboro's population is now slightly more than 117,000; the projected 2035 population is 228,000.

While acknowledging the need for more convenient recycling, McFarland stressed that cost must be considered, saying that we need to determine both the annual cost and the one-time start-up costs before we can consider a citywide recycling program. He indicated that "the first step has to be education" so that citizens realize that there is an economic impact as well as an environmental one to increased recycling. "People have to be on board to be willing to pay for it," he said, describing Murfreesboro as progressive and willing to look at possibilities.

He said that city staffers plan to investigate the possibility of a curbside recycling program operated by

an independent firm as well as one conducted by the city. Eventually "we will develop and issue an RFP (request for proposal)" the mayor said, explaining that the exploration process is still in the early stages and that such proposals can't be developed quickly.

"Right now, I don't think the city is equipped to do it," he explained. McFarland acknowledged that there may well "come a point when we have to look at privatizing our trash collection." He emphasized that the city leaders will have to look at all options, probably including user fees and equipment needs.

McFarland deplored the fact that "so much waste comes to the landfill from other communities" as did several listeners during an extensive question and answer period. "I'd like to think that increased recycling would put a dent in that, but I'm not sure we can extend the useful life of it," he said.

Some of the listeners stated that recycling could indeed have an impact, and various suggestions were shared, including providing a tax credit for citizens who pay a private firm to pick up their recyclables as well as paying for trash pick-up based on the amount of garbage a household generates. Questions were raised about impact fees to help offset the costs of growth, and it was observed by several that taxes in both Murfreesboro and Rutherford County are considerably lower than many comparable communities.

Solid Waste Director Mac Nolen said that in 2014, Rutherford County launched a campaign to raise public awareness and increase recycling. He talked about incentivizing curbside recycling at the expense of trash collection. He quickly acknowledged that charging a fee for trash pick-up would be a nightmare for elected officials to gain support for. "The perception is that our trash is free. To get people to really recycle, we're going to have to charge a fee for trash," Nolen concluded.

Recycle Rutherford appreciates Mayor McFarland's willingness to listen to citizens' concerns and ideas and his commitment to develop viable plans for consideration.

4 The Recycler, January 2015

Kudos and thanks go to

- **Overall Creek Elementary School Second Grade class taught by Mala Womack** for designating Recycle Rutherford as the recipient of 10 percent of the proceeds from their annual fundraiser! On October 28, 2014, President Glenn Himebaugh accepted a check for \$935.01; the Board has decided to use the funds as prize money for students in a competition that promotes recycling.
- **McFadden School of Excellence** for being recognized for their recycling efforts by the Good Sports Always Recycle program. McFadden, a Rutherford County magnet school, received \$1,000 toward its environmental program. It was the only school in the county so recognized.
- **Scott Broden, Daily News Journal**, for the informative “Stump Scott” column on January 18, 2015, detailing where recyclables go after they are dropped off at either the city or county convenience center bins. Kudos also to Murfreesboro Solid Waste Director **Joey Smith** and Rutherford County Solid Waste Director **Mac Nolen**, who coordinate getting recyclables to their next stops. It isn't a simple process, and the work these two individuals and their staffs do is appreciated.
- **Brian Wilson, Daily News Journal**, for the Q&A feature with Recycle Rutherford President Glenn Himebaugh, on January 4, 2015. It's wonderful to begin the new year with a focus on recycling.

**Reminder: To renew your membership, please see the form on page 3.
Dues are only \$25 per year.
We don't want to lose you!**

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

2014-16 Officers and Board

Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.

Glenn Himebaugh, president
Linda Hardymon, vice president
Rachel Cornett, secretary
Rick Racker, treasurer

Board Members:

Gib Backlund, 2016 Suma Clark, 2016
Bonnie Black, 2016 Crystal Mallory, 2016

Dates to Remember

Oil-Based Paint Collection

Saturday, March 28, 2015, 8:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Haley Road Recycling Facility
Contact the county's Solid Waste Dept. at 615-898-7739 with questions.

Annual Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, April 27, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Rutherford County Courthouse
Speaker TBA

**For more information, go to
www.recyclerutherford.org
Like us on Facebook!**