

Virtual Miles for Monarchs Athletes Aim to Raise Awareness and Money to Help Recover Monarch Butterfly Populations

St. Paul, MN – January 19, 2021 –Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and the Monarch Joint Venture have joined forces to support declining pollinator populations, including the iconic monarch butterfly. From February to October 2021, athletes from across the country will run, walk, bike, hike, or paddle to see how many miles the group can log. Will it compare to the tremendous 3,000 mile journey that monarch butterflies endure each fall during their migration? Through staying active and getting outdoors, this year-long campaign aims to increase awareness about pollinators, inspire action to protect them, and raise funds to support recovery efforts.

Monarch butterflies, which weigh about as much as a paper clip, undergo an annual migration of thousands of miles across North America. To most of us, this seems unfathomable without the aid of modern-day transportation. But, while monarch populations have drastically declined, they continue to endure this magical migration. To protect this phenomenon for future generations, monarch butterflies need us to act fast. Eastern monarchs, which overwinter in the mountains of central Mexico, have declined by more than 70% over the past few decades. The western population finds refuge along the California coast during the winter, and preliminary estimates suggest that fewer than 2000 butterflies are overwintering on the coast this year, a greater than 99% decline.

By way of a new year's resolution, an office wellness challenge, distance learning gym class, or simply maintaining an active lifestyle, Miles for Monarchs is an exciting way to support pollinator conservation. In February, participants launch the campaign with setting mileage goals and learning about the spring migration where butterflies make the return journey from their overwintering grounds. In June, they celebrate National Pollinator Week and log miles while learning about the various opportunities for building monarch habitat to support the breeding generations. Finally, September challenges participants to push through the final miles to reach their migration goal and learn about the wonders of monarch migration. Participants log their miles during each of the three months and are engaged in various fun activities throughout the course of the year!

The funds raised through Miles for Monarchs support pollinator habitat, education, and research initiatives through the Monarch Joint Venture, Pheasants Forever, and their partners!

Register at: <https://donate.monarchjointventure.org/MilesforMonarch2021> and contact Ella Phillips (ephillips@monarchjointventure.org) or Drew Larsen (dlarsen@pheasantsforever.org) with questions.

About Monarch Joint Venture

The Monarch Joint Venture is a national nonprofit made up of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and academic program partners working together to conserve the monarch butterfly migration for future generations. Read more at <https://monarchjointventure.org/>.

About Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever, including its quail conservation division, Quail Forever, is the nation's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to upland habitat conservation. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever have more than 140,000 members and 740 local chapters across the United States and Canada. Since creation in 1982, Pheasants Forever has spent \$867 million on 540,000 habitat projects benefiting 18 million acres nationwide.

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