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Butterfly Pavilion Receives National Award and Grant from National Environmental Education Foundation, with Support from Toyota, for Innovative Urban Prairies Project to Enhance Pollinator Habitat Across Colorado's Front Range

Westminster, CO, August 31, 2023 – Butterfly Pavilion is pleased to announce the receipt of a prestigious 2023 Biodiversity Conservation Grant: Enhancing Pollinator Habitats on America's Public Lands. The grant, totaling \$60,250, has been awarded to support the groundbreaking Urban Prairies Project (UPP), a dynamic community science initiative designed to engage local communities in enhancing the quality, quantity, and interconnectedness of pollinator habitats within public open spaces. This grant has been generously provided by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), with support from Toyota Motor North America.

With this funding, the UPP will extend its impact across seven municipalities situated along Colorado's front range. The project will drive the restoration and preservation of vital habitats for essential pollinator species including butterflies, bees, and beetles. These species play a pivotal role in the health of ecosystems and are integral to agricultural processes.

"By augmenting the pollinator habitats in the Denver region, the Urban Prairie Project exemplifies a shared vision with NEEF's Biodiversity Conservation Grant," said Maria-Veronica Banks, Director of Grants Administration at NEEF. "The UPP underscores a dedication to educating the public about the significance of pollinators and inspiring communities to become devoted custodians of their shared lands."

Commencing in September 2023, the expansion UPP will orchestrate volunteer-driven initiatives with planting of native species such as milkweed, the revitalization of restoration areas, the removal of invasive species, and the collection of native plant seeds for subsequent propagation. This concerted effort will span 26 open space sites, encompassing an area exceeding 3,000 acres. UPP's influence also will be felt through the establishment of three demonstration gardens, poised to serve as educational hubs where visitors can learn to enhance habitat in their own spaces while observing pollinators in their natural habitat.

The UPP is committed to furthering public awareness about pollinators through an array of outreach activities, fostering connections between families and nature while inspiring environmentally-conscious stewardship. A series of seasonal BioBlitz events is scheduled, inviting participants to engage in interactive, hands-on activities aimed at cataloging local species. Furthermore, the project will allocate resources for community outreach and engagement initiatives, aimed at educating the public and empowering them to establish and safeguard local pollinator habitats.

"UPP represents a compelling avenue for community volunteers to directly contribute to the conservation of pollinators and other wildlife in their own neighborhoods," commented Patrick Tennyson, President and CEO of Butterfly Pavilion. "Our conviction remains steadfast: sustained conservation success necessitates collaboration and mutual benefit for local communities."

Urban Prairies Project Collaborative Partners

A partnership between Butterfly Pavilion and a group of municipalities, the UPP involves the identification of site-specific objectives for habitat restoration, monitoring, and volunteer participation. These esteemed partners extend their support by furnishing personnel for all project-related endeavors, promoting public events, providing essential plant materials and supplies, and delivering motorized equipment for restoration activities.

Key municipalities aligned with Butterfly Pavilion's UPP mission encompass the City of Aurora, City of Brighton, City & County of Broomfield, City of Greeley, City of Lafayette, Town of Superior, City of Thornton, City of Westminster. UPP will also work with the Colorado Monarch Larvae Monitoring Program (MLMP) & Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP).

About NEEF Awards

NEEF awards annual grants through a competitive application and review process. For over twenty years, NEEF has partnered with Toyota to provide a variety of grants and awards to support national and regional environmental preservation projects.

About Butterfly Pavilion

Butterfly Pavilion has been part of the Colorado community since 1995 and is the first Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited, stand-alone, non-profit invertebrate zoo in the world, currently occupying a 34,000-square foot facility situated on an 11-acre campus provided by the City of Westminster, Colorado. Butterfly Pavilion's mission is to foster an appreciation of invertebrates by educating the public about the need to protect and care for threatened habitats globally, while conducting research for solutions in invertebrate conservation. www.butterflies.org

About NEEF

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) is the nation's leading organization in lifelong environmental learning, creating opportunities for people to experience and learn about the environment in ways that improve their lives and the health of the planet. Congressionally chartered in 1990 as a 501c3 nonprofit to complement the work of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NEEF is a non-partisan, non-advocacy organization working to make the environment more accessible, relatable, relevant, and connected to people's daily lives. Learn more at www.NEEFusa.org

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