



**BUTTERFLY
PAVILION**

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Butterfly Pavilion Partners with Bureau of Land Management Colorado on Invertebrate Research and Conservation Project

Westminster, Colo., June 13, 2024 – Butterfly Pavilion — the first Association of Zoos and Aquariums-accredited stand-alone, non-profit invertebrate zoo in the world — recently began a “Survey of Colorado Diurnal Pollinators & Other Invertebrates on BLM Managed Land in Colorado” through a cooperative agreement from the Bureau of Land Management – Colorado (BLM CO) to further state-wide invertebrate research and conservation efforts. With more than 8.3 million acres of public land in Colorado, the BLM, working with Butterfly Pavilion scientists, can aid in understanding pollinator species populations and distributions through surveys focused on providing baseline data on these important species.

“As a global leader in invertebrate research, conservation, and education, Butterfly Pavilion proudly collaborates with the Bureau of Land Management – Colorado to begin the important task of understanding the invertebrate species, particularly pollinators and their associations with plants, that occur in our state,” said Rich Reading, Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion. “We expect the project to enhance invertebrate knowledge leading to more effective conservation and education action in Colorado and beyond. Such work is crucial because these small creatures comprise 97% of all animals, form the foundation of life on Earth, and are declining at alarming rates.”

The cooperative agreement aims to estimate the diversity and species richness of diurnal pollinators (insects that pollinate during the day) and other invertebrates that inhabit BLM CO-managed land. This includes species of concern that are currently being evaluated for threatened or endangered status such as monarch butterflies and western bumble bees.

“Managing public lands to help protect invertebrate species is crucial for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem health,” said Carol Dawson, BLM Colorado state botanist. “The BLM Colorado botany team takes a proactive approach to conservation and is eager to promote pollinators, manage habitat efficiently and effectively, and support the recovery of populations where they have declined on public lands in alignment with the BLM Strategic Plan for Pollinator Conservation. Through Butterfly Pavilion's research into pollinator habitat and invertebrate conservation, we will be able to ensure our lands are managed to benefit every user, no matter how big or small.”

Conservation biologists report a 45% decline in invertebrate populations over the last four decades, with the IUCN estimating that 30% of all invertebrate species face extinction risk, yet less than 1% have been adequately evaluated. Invertebrates represent 97% of known animal species on Earth and form the foundation of every ecological community, responsible for pollination, nutrient cycling, soil aeration, biological pest control, water purification, and serve as food sources for wildlife.

Beginning in June, Butterfly Pavilion entomologists and field experts began field surveys of invertebrates across 48 land plots inside BLM CO's four largest watersheds (Upper Colorado, Rio Grande, Arkansas-White-Red, and Missouri Rivers). Each of the sampled plots represents different ecosystems found throughout the state. The team will also document floral preferences to provide valuable insights for future management strategies to support pollinators.

In addition to the survey and identification efforts, Butterfly Pavilion experts will conduct annual data analyses comparing invertebrate diversity and pollinator-plant richness between sites to provide scientific recommendations for conservation and education actions. This project will assist in fulfilling the mission for BLM CO's Threatened and Endangered Species Program aimed at conserving and recovering sensitive species on public lands, and their goal to conserve species now, preventing endangered listings in the future.

Upon completion of this project, Butterfly Pavilion will submit a dataset of observed invertebrates and plants to BLM CO. A final report comparing diversity and richness between sites and evidence-based recommendations will also be provided for the protection of sensitive species and sustainable management on land managed by BLM CO.

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, located in 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. Beyond Colorado and the United States, Butterfly Pavilion conservationists are doing important invertebrate research, conservation and education projects around the world from Mongolia and Tanzania to Turks and Caicos and Sumatra, Indonesia. www.butterflies.org.

About Bureau of Land Management Colorado

The BLM manages 8.3 million acres of public lands and 27 million acres of federal mineral estate in Colorado, ranging from alpine tundra, colorful canyons and sagebrush steppe to mountains rising more than 14,000 feet above sea level. Most of our public lands are concentrated on Colorado's Western Slope. We manage this land for a variety of uses like recreation, energy development, conservation, wild horse and burro habitat, cultural resource protection and livestock grazing. We work to balance these multiple uses and interests to sustain the health and productivity of BLM lands now and for generations to come.