

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Jennifer Quermann

Butterfly Pavilion

iquermann@butterflies.org

703-477-0668

**Butterfly Pavilion and Colorado State University Launch
Beyond the Hive: Discovering Colorado's Bees
Buzz-Worthy New Exhibit Opens September 12**

WESTMINSTER, CO, September 4, 2025 – Make some room, honey bees, there's a whole world of buzzing neighbors waiting to be discovered! Butterfly Pavilion, in partnership with Colorado State University (CSU), is opening a brand-new interactive exhibit, *Beyond the Hive: Discovering Colorado's Bees*, on September 12, 2025. This one-of-a-kind experience shines a spotlight on the more than 1,000 native bee species that call Colorado home, many dazzling, quirky, and surprising in ways most people have never seen before.

Colorado is one of the most bee-diverse states in the country, yet these native pollinators are often overlooked and misunderstood. Despite their vital role in pollinating native plants, supporting biodiversity, and sustaining healthy ecosystems, they tend to be overshadowed by the familiar honey bee. *Beyond the Hive* seeks to change that by revealing just how essential, and extraordinary, Colorado's native bees truly are.

Although honey bees can get most of the credit, Colorado's native bees are the unsung heroes of our gardens, wildflowers, and food supply. *Beyond the Hive* is designed to spark curiosity, bust common myths, and give visitors of all ages fun, simple ways to be bee heroes in their own backyards.

"Native bees play a crucial role in keeping our landscapes alive and thriving," says Rich Reading, Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion. "Through this exhibit, we're shining a spotlight on their beauty, their importance, and the simple things all of us can do to help them."

What You'll Discover in *Beyond the Hive*:

- **Meet Colorado's Native Bees:** Interactive videos and stunning photography showcasing Colorado's diverse native bee species, from the shimmering metallic green sweat bees to the solitary leafcutters, and their essential roles in sustaining healthy ecosystems.
- **In the Lab:** Learn how Butterfly Pavilion and CSU scientists identify native bees, monitor their populations, and investigate real causes of pollinator decline. Visitors can find out how to get involved and make a difference as community scientists.
- **Be a Bee Hero:** Take the "Which Colorado Native Bee Are You?" quiz, test your pollinator smarts, and discover simple, research-based ways to support native bees,

like planting native flowers, reducing pesticide use, and creating pollinator-friendly habitats in your yard, balcony, or even windowsill.

- **The Evolution of Beekeeping:** An in-depth exploration featuring live honey bee colonies, tracing the evolution of human-honey bee relationships worldwide, and examining what these interactions mean for native bee populations.
- **Live Honey Bees:** Step up close to see thriving honey bee colonies and learn how humans and honey bees have shaped each other's stories over centuries.

Beyond the Hive was inspired by joint research between Butterfly Pavilion and CSU's Animal-Human Policy Center, Forest and Rangeland Stewardship Bee Ecology and Education Lab (FRSBEE lab), and the CSU History Department, which revealed how much confusion exists around bees. For example, more than half of guests surveyed at the invertebrate zoo thought honey bees were native to Colorado (they're not!) and most didn't realize honey bees sometimes compete with native bees for food. But here's the good news: Coloradans are eager to help, and this exhibit shows them how.

"This exhibit is designed to make learning about bees exciting and accessible," says Dr. Rebecca Niemiec, CSU researcher. "We're starting with what people already love, honey bees, and using that as a gateway to spark discovery of Colorado's truly amazing native bees."

Beyond the Hive makes science playful, immersive, and unforgettable. It's about celebrating the wonder of bees while giving everyone, from kids to lifelong learners, tools to protect them. Through this collaboration, Butterfly Pavilion and CSU seek to engage people of all backgrounds, fostering community stewardship, supporting vital conservation efforts, and encouraging interest in pollinator science and related careers to ensure a sustainable future for these essential pollinators.

"Pollinators touch every part of our lives, from the food on our tables to the flowers in our gardens," says Amy Yarger, Senior Director of Horticulture at Butterfly Pavilion. "And the best part? Anyone can help. Plant a sunflower, skip the pesticides, or join a community science project—every action counts."

Beyond the Hive: Discovering Colorado's Bees opens September 12, 2025, at Butterfly Pavilion and is included with general admission.

Learn more at <https://butterflies.org/beyond-the-hive/>

About Butterfly Pavilion

Celebrating its 30th year in 2025, 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 Mexico to Tanzania and Sumatra, Indonesia. www.butterflies.org.

About Colorado State University

[Colorado State University](http://www.csu.edu) is a public research university that serves more than 33,000 students. Founded in 1870 as Colorado's land-grant institution, CSU ensures that students with the talent and desire for a college degree have access to world-class faculty, research and academic excellence. CSU has leading programs in veterinary medicine, occupational therapy, and atmospheric sciences, and excels in areas ranging from infectious disease to clean energy to business. CSU is rooted in the Fort Collins community, has a presence in every county in Colorado, and its academic excellence and innovation impacts the nation and the world.