

# Operation Habitat

**Don't Mow It - GROW IT!**

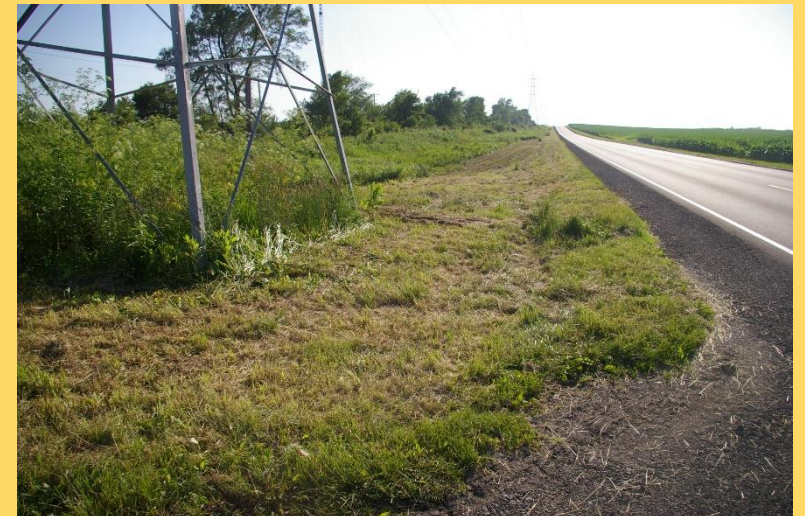
Operation Habitat is IDOT's program to investigate opportunities to create, preserve or protect habitat areas on our rights-of-way, specifically to provide food sources and shelter for the monarch butterfly, rusty patched bumblebee and other pollinators.

We're doing WHAT??

For BUTTERFLIES??????????

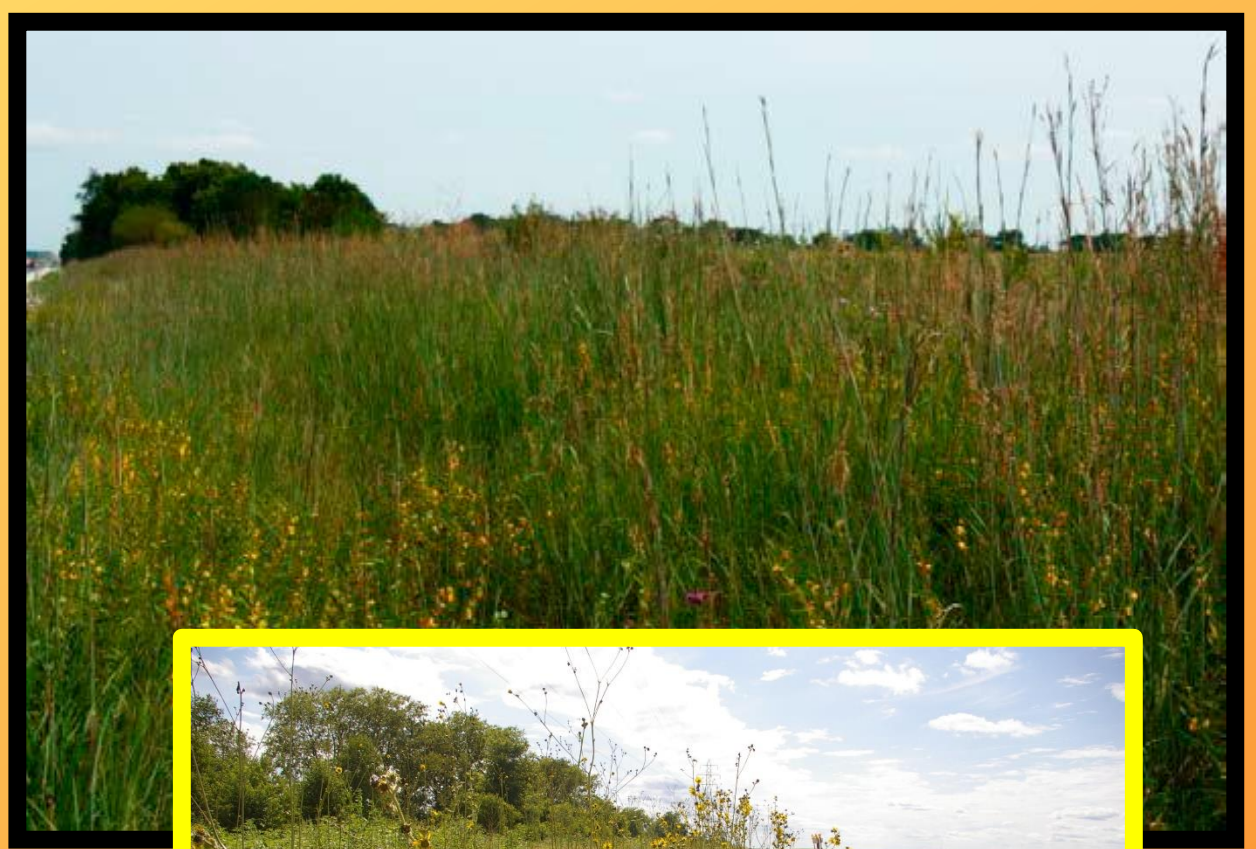
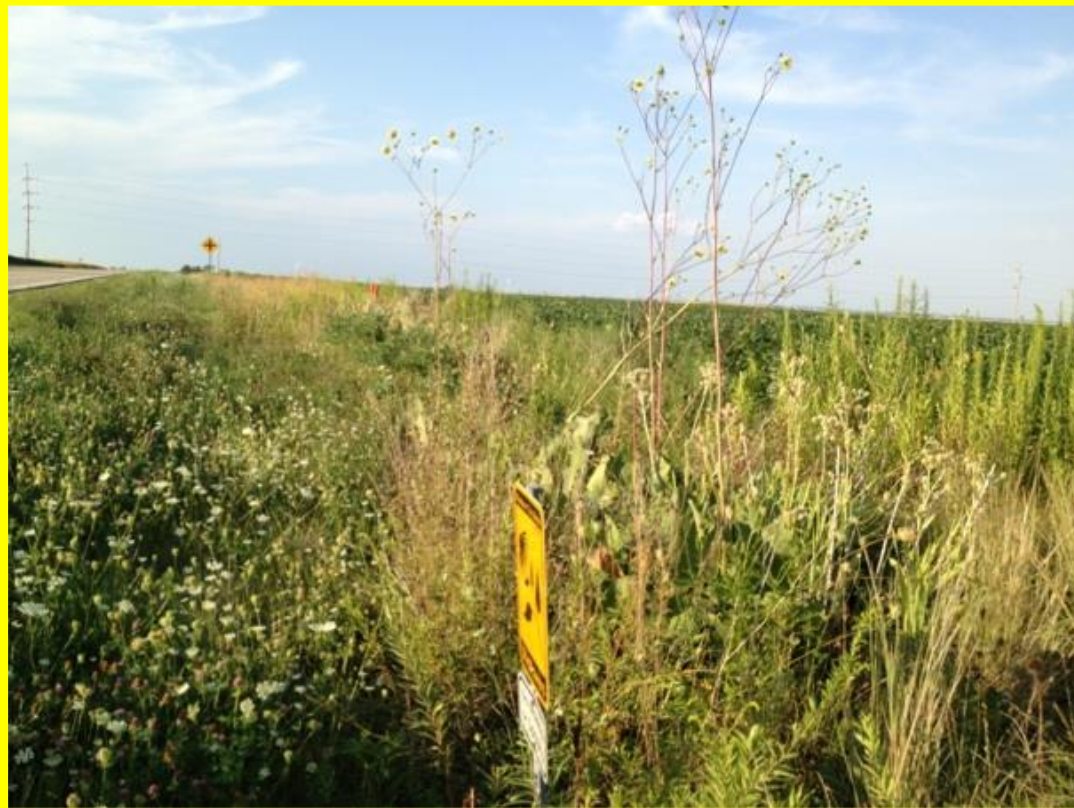


# How do we get from here . . .





. . . to here?



But, that looks like weeds!



To a pollinator this . . .



=




Looks like this



# May 2017 – New Mowing Policy


- ❖ Mow only one pass – 15 ft. safety strip along the roadway
- ❖ Mow for vision clearance at intersections and other safety sensitive areas
- ❖ Final mowing delayed until September 15 in the north and until October 1 in the south



**MDOT**  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**With Special Session to Determine Budget, Mississippi DOT Serves Notice to Contractors**


Even as the Mississippi Department of Transportation sounded assurances that state lawmakers in a June 5 special session would approve an agency budget and head off a funding crisis at month's end, MDOT officially put its contractors on notice that it does not yet have a budget for the year starting...



**Illinois DOT Alters Roadside Mowing Approach to Aid Monarch Butterfly, Other Pollinators**

To help revive shrinking populations of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators, the Illinois Department of Transportation said it is adjusting its mowing routine along state highways this spring and summer.

AASHTO



State of Illinois  
Bruce Rauner, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Instagram YouTube

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 15, 2017

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**New IDOT Mowing Approach to Help Protect Monarch Butterfly, Pollinator Populations in Illinois**

*Encouraging plant growth to aid at-risk species, including official state insect*

**SPRINGFIELD** – To help revive the shrinking populations of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators, the Illinois Department of Transportation is adjusting its mowing routine along state highways this spring and summer. The approach, part of IDOT's overall effort to encourage green and sustainable practices in all its programs and projects, will help to re-establish types of plants that are food sources for bees, butterflies and other insects that are native to Illinois.

"As one of the largest land owners in the state, IDOT appreciates its tremendous responsibility to act as stewards of the environment," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. "This simple change in our maintenance obligations will have little impact on the traveling public, but will give a big assist to Mother Nature at no cost to the state."

Although their numbers are on the decline, pollinators play a vital role in agriculture and the state's ecosystem by fertilizing and aiding in reproduction of flowers, fruits, vegetables and seeds. The official state insect of Illinois since 1975, the monarch butterfly is at risk of being declared endangered, with a population that's declined by 80 percent the last 10 years.

Starting this month, IDOT will only mow 15 feet of right of way beyond the edge of the roadway. Exceptions will be made in certain areas to preserve sightlines for motorists and to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.

Prior to this initiative, mowing widths varied by location. By reducing the amount of land being mowed, IDOT hopes to encourage the growth of critical plant species, such as milkweed, the only food source for monarch caterpillars. In the coming months, IDOT will be monitoring roadsides to determine if the approach is working.


In recent months, IDOT has taken other measures to restore native habitat along state highways, including a prairie restoration [project](#) on U.S. 45 near Champaign.

###

72° 95% 7:13 PM

idot monarch


Top Latest People Photos Videos




**Chicago Sun-Times** @S... · 21 May

**IDOT will change mowing routes to protect monarch butterflies**

[chicago.suntimes.com/news/idot-to-c...](http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/idot-to-c...)




10 26



**USFWS Pacific Region** ... · 19 May

**New IDOT Mowing Pattern Tries to Help Monarch Butterflies**



**New IDOT Mowing Pattern Tries to Help...**

[news.wsu.org](http://news.wsu.org)

13 1



# Can an endangered bumble bee shut down a project???

LONGMEADOW PARKWAY, KANE COUNTY

## Judge's endangered-bee ruling stings road project

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — A highway in suburban Chicago has become the second Midwest road construction project delayed temporarily because of concerns about possible harm to a bumblebee recently listed as an endangered species.

U.S. District Judge Sharon Johnson Coleman this week halted work on the nearly 6-mile-long Longmeadow Parkway in Kane County, Illinois, until at least April 25. The Chicago Daily Law Bulletin reported the judge's order was in response to a filing by project opponents who said the roadway could affect the rusty patched bumblebee.

According to court documents, the bumblebee was

found in the Brunner Family Forest Preserve along the planned route for the parkway, the (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald reported.

The holdup could boost the project's costs by tens of thousands of dollars, said Carl Schoedel, the county's transportation director.

"Every day that we're not working during the construction season is a potential delay to the project," Schoedel told the newspaper.

The rusty patched bumblebee in March became the first bee species in the continental U.S. added to the federal endangered list. Once common in the Midwest and parts of the East Coast, it has disappeared from nearly 90 percent of its range in the past 20 years.

Along with other bees, it plays a crucial role as a pollinator of crops and wild plants.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which deals with endangered species, is not involved in the parkway dispute, said Louise Clemency, a supervisor in the agency's Chicago field office. But she said the planned route is within an area considered to have a "high potential" for the presence of the bees, which were spotted there as recently as 2012.

The federal agency is providing information to the Illinois Department of Transportation about surveying the planned route for signs of the bees and ways to protect them, such as providing more habitat, Clemency said.

Even if the bees are found there again, it's "highly unlikely" they would prevent the road from being built although minor alterations might be needed, she said.

Minnesota's Hennepin County delayed work last month on a 4-mile stretch of a road called Flying Cloud Drive because of concern about the endangered bees. But federal officials visited the area and determined it was not within a high-potential zone for the bees, said Andrew Horton, a biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The county plans to move forward with the project, spokesman Colin Cox said. It still needs federal permits dealing with issues not related to the bees.





# ILLINOIS HABITAT HIGHWAY

- NO MOWING - NO SPRAYING -

In Partnership with:



Illinois Department  
of Transportation





Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes



↻ IDOT Retweeted



**Pheasants Forever** @pheasant... · 4d ▾

ANNOUNCING new partnership with  
[@IDOT\\_Illinois](#) for pollinator habitat and  
critical wildlife corridors [bit.ly/2uli7nr](https://bit.ly/2uli7nr)  
[#Illinois](#)







Adopt-A-Planter project, planting day  
Central Office, Springfield, IL  
Planters are now a registered monarch waystation!







I've learned about monarchs now...  
I see milkweed everywhere - T. Kory  
Felt bad when I hit one on my mirror  
THEY ALWAYS EMERGE WHEN WE AREN'T AROUND  
Have planted milkweed at home - P. Anne  
Add yours!

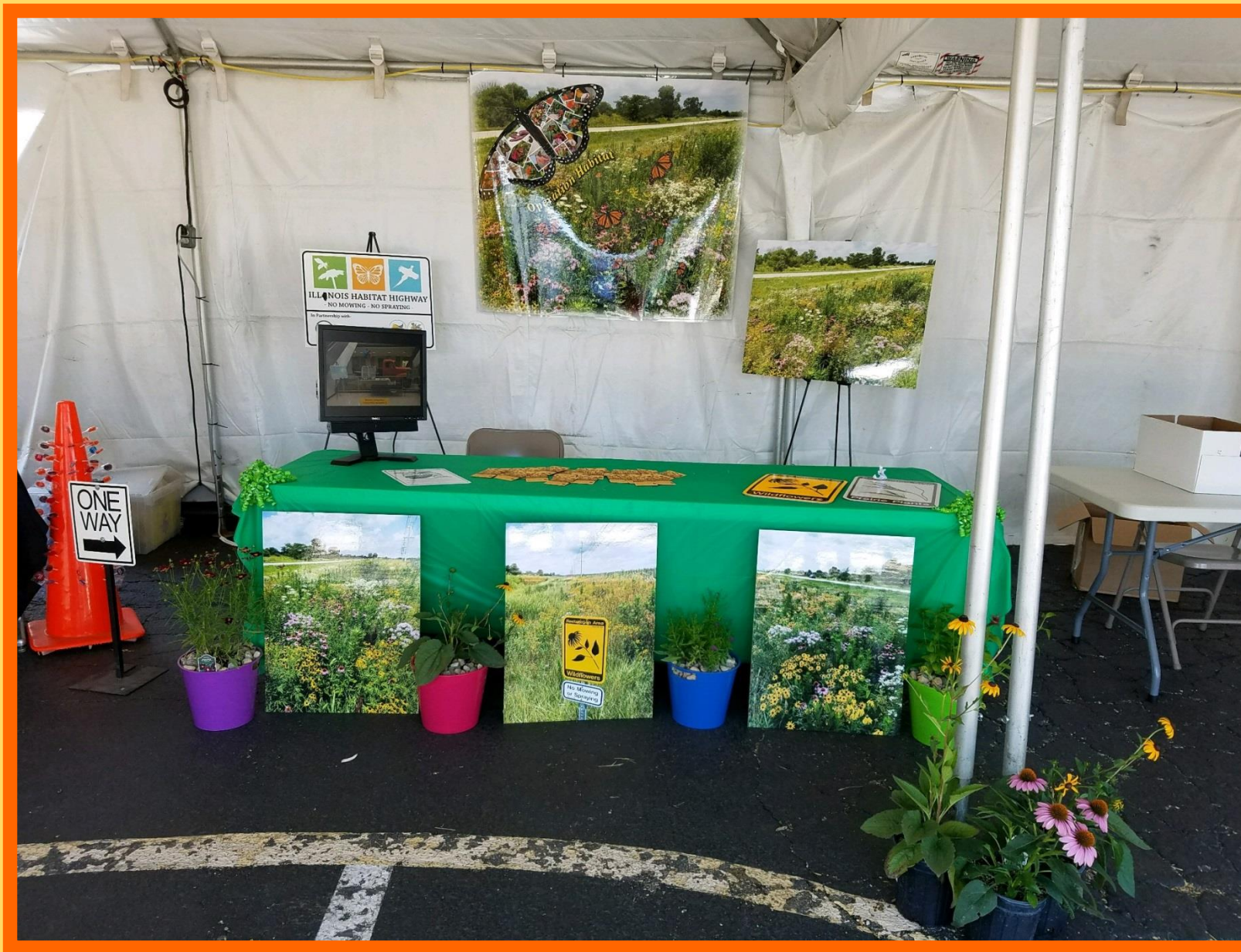
Monarch raising project  
Central Office, Springfield IL





Monarch Raising Project  
Central Office, Springfield IL  
Two monarchs in chrysalis





Operation Habitat booth – IDOT tent – Illinois State Fair



## MONARCH WAYSTATION



This site provides milkweeds, nectar sources, and shelter needed to sustain monarch butterflies as they migrate through North America.

Certified and registered by Monarch Watch as an official Monarch Waystation.

**CREATE, CONSERVE, & PROTECT MONARCH HABITATS**

[WWW.MONARCHWATCH.ORG](http://WWW.MONARCHWATCH.ORG)

Monarch Watch • University of Kansas • Entomology Program • 1200 Sunnyside Ave. • Lawrence, KS 66045-7534

## 24 Monarch Waystations certified in FY17

**Central Office – Hanley Building**

### **District 2**

- ❖ Willow Creek rest area south bound
- ❖ Willow Creek rest area north bound
- ❖ Turtle Creek rest area
- ❖ Long Hollow Scenic Overlook

### **District 3**

- ❖ Great Sauk Trail rest area west bound
- ❖ Great Sauk Trail rest area east bound
- ❖ Main Line Station rest area south bound
- ❖ Main Line Station north bound
- ❖ Limestone rest area south bound
- ❖ Limestone rest area north bound
- ❖ Three Rivers rest area west bound
- ❖ Three Rivers rest area east bound
- ❖ District 3 Headquarters

### **District 4**

- ❖ Mackinaw Dells rest area west bound
- ❖ Spoon River rest area west bound
- ❖ Spoon River rest area east bound
- ❖ US 150 Princeville Jubilee Wayside

### **District 5**

- ❖ Salt Kettle rest area
- ❖ Farmland rest area west bound
- ❖ Farmland rest area east bound
- ❖ Illini Prairie rest area north bound

### **District 6**

- ❖ Coalfield rest area north bound
- ❖ Coalfield rest area south bound



# Why???



# Education!!!





# Theme?

**Tweet**

 **IDOT**  
@IDOT\_Illinois

It's Monarch Month and we're planting pollinator-friendly species at our headquarters to help preserve the [#monarchbutterfly](#) population.




12:30 PM · 23 May 17

10 Retweets 25 Likes

Search: idot schuler

**IDOT** @IDOT\_Illinois · 10 Jul 17

IDOT's Eric Allan Schuler holds native prairie seeds for planting this fall near state highways to strengthen [#monarchbutterfly](#) populations.



10 Retweets 19 Likes

Search: idot monarch

**IDOT** @IDOT\_Illinois · 08 Jun

The **monarch** caterpillars donated to us have made their chrysalis and are on their way to becoming butterflies! [#monarchbutterfly](#)



1 Retweet 7 Retweets 23 Likes

**missourians4monarchs** @... · 08 Jun


Our neighbors at @IDOT\_Illinois are reducing mowing to 15 ft of the right of way for **monarch** & pollinator habitat.



Search: idot monarch

**Illinois DNR** @IllinoisDNR · 12 Aug 17

Stop by the **monarch** displays at the IDOT tent and butterfly house at Conservation World @ILStateFair



1 Retweet 2 Retweets 5 Likes

**A Devoted Yogi** @ADEvo... · 10 Jul 17

IDOT to change mowing routes to protect **monarch** butterflies | Chicago Sun-Times



12 Retweets 10 Likes

**Chicago Sun-Times** @S... · 21 May

IDOT will change mowing routes to protect **monarch** butterflies [chicago.suntimes.com/news/idot-to-c...](#)



10 Retweets 26 Likes

**USFWS Pacific Region** @... · 19 May

New IDOT Mowing Pattern Tries to Help **Monarch** Butterflies



New IDOT Mowing Pattern Tries to Help... [news.wsu.org](#)

**Illinois Department of Transportation**

Aug 23, 2017 at 3:05pm ·

IDOT's monarch raising project is going so well that we gifted 16 caterpillars to the **Sangamon County Soil & Water Conservation District** for them to raise at their office. At left is Brian Rennecker, resource conservationist for Sangamon County, and Stephanie Dobbs, roadside maintenance manager at IDOT.

35 Likes


Like Comment Share

More Photos

**Following**

**IDOT** @IDOT\_Illinois · 1h

We're taking a new approach this spring and summer to help protect monarch [#butterflies](#) and pollinator populations: [goo.gl/y5clFK](#)




7 Retweets 5 Likes

**Marilyn Rose Monarch Butterfly Fund** at Jarman Center Senior Living.

May 22 at 7:14am · Tuscola, Illinois ·


Monarch Month in Illinois continues to help increase the population of monarch butterflies! Yesterday, I gave four monarch caterpillars to Stephanie Dobbs, the Roadside Maintenance Manager for the Illinois Department of Transportation. The caterpillars will be on display at the IDOT headquarters in Springfield to show employees the lifecycle of the... [Continue Reading](#)



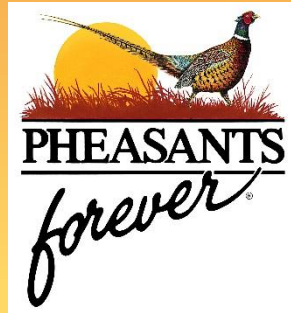
**Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever of Illinois** added 3 new photos.

Sep 15 at 12:00pm ·

The IL Dept. of Transportation has done a fine job mowing less along roadsides and medians. Less mowing, more pollinator plantings, and more growing wildflowers makes our roadsides scenic and pollinator friendly! [#IDOT](#) [#Pollinators](#) [#Don'tMowIt,GrowIt](#)







**Partner!**  
**Partner!**  
**Partner!**







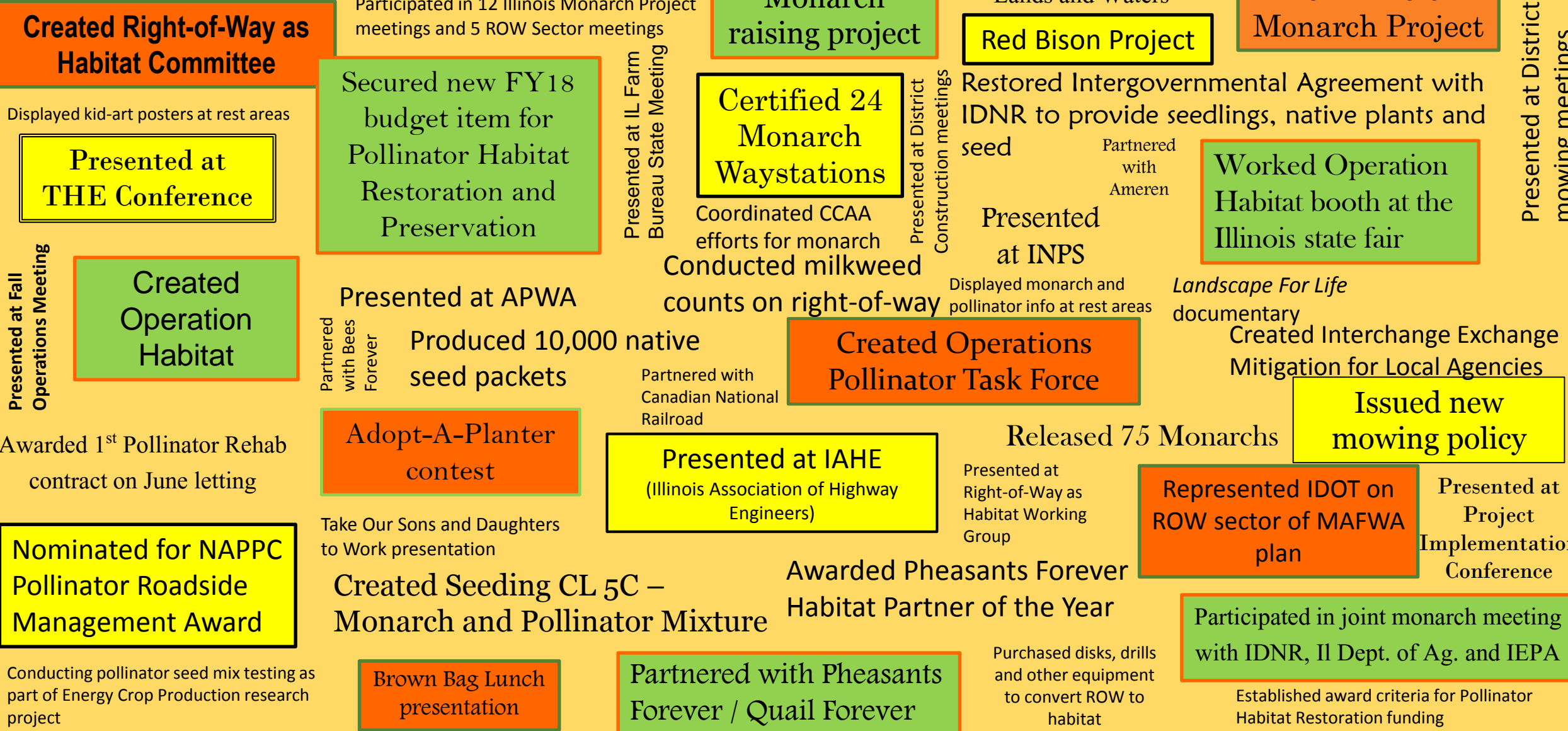
# US 45 – Ford County IDOT – Pheasants Forever Cooperative Restoration Project





# What has IDOT done in the last 12 months to increase awareness and build habitat on right-of-way?

Planted over 200 acres via co-op projects







Questions?









# Contact Information

Stephanie Dobbs, Roadside Maintenance Manager  
Office of Highways Project Implementation  
Bureau of Operations


[Stephanie.Dobbs@Illinois.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Dobbs@Illinois.gov)

(217) 720-6817







A photograph of a field of whorled milkweed plants. The plants have green, finely textured leaves and clusters of small white flowers. Some plants are taller than others, and the field appears to be a roadside area. The background shows more of the same vegetation under bright daylight.

Whorled milkweed on ROW  
Along Interstate 57  
District 7

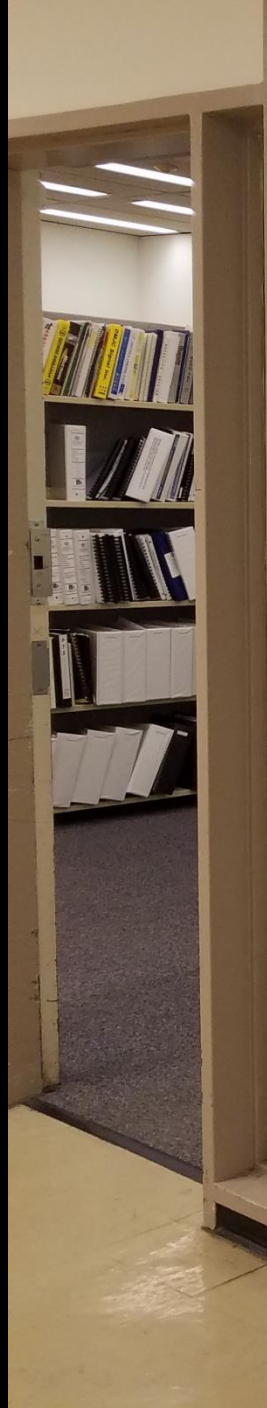












009  
Operations





## Credits

Claus Rasmussen – vernal and  
carpenter bee photos



USFWS

Xerces Society

I35-Highway.com

Monarch Joint Venture

Photo: W. Caldwell

Illinois State Museum

Illinois Department of Agriculture



FHWA

Pheasants Forever

IDNR

INHS

MonarchWatch.org

University of Illinois Extension

