

Monarch Butterflies in Peril

Monarch butterflies have faced steep declines over the past several decades, with the 2023-2024 eastern overwintering population estimated to be the second lowest on record. In December 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed to list monarch butterflies as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. **Hundreds of Department of Defense (DOD) installations across the continental U.S. fall within monarch butterfly's range. If listed, monarch butterfly protections would be upheld through the Sikes Act to fulfill ESA obligations through habitat management and regulatory compliance.**

Rights-of-Way as Habitat

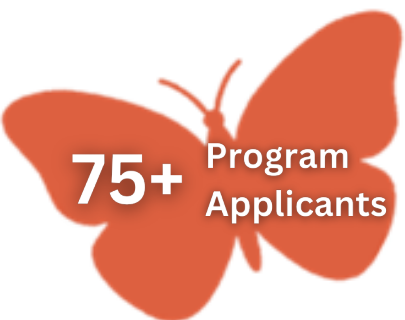
Through integrated vegetation management, energy and transportation rights-of-way (ROW) can support habitat that help to achieve pollinator and wildlife objectives on Department of Defense lands.

Since 2015, **the Rights-of-Way as Habitat Working Group (ROWHWG)** has brought together organizations from across the U.S. and Canada to promote habitat on energy and transportation lands.

The Monarch CCAA

The *Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterflies on Energy and Transportation Lands* (Monarch CCAA) is the first **nationwide agreement to promote voluntary conservation of monarch butterfly habitat**. The CCAA was finalized by the USFWS and the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) in April 2020.

Results to Date



Why Rights-of-Way?

Can Help Fulfill INRMP Objectives

Reconnect Fragmented Natural Areas

Build Conservation Partnerships

Supports Mission-aligned Corridor Management



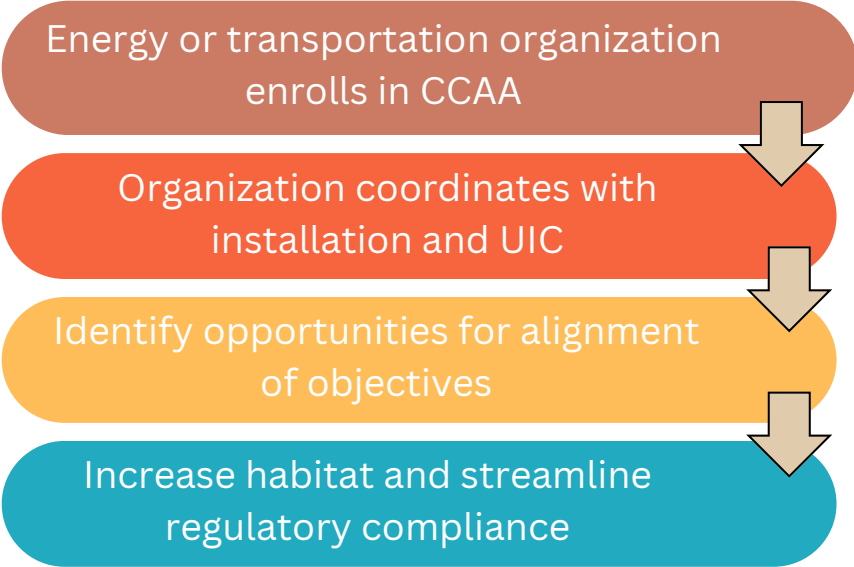
Voluntary Conservation Incentives

In exchange for implementing **conservation that supports monarch butterfly habitat** on their enrolled lands, industry participants **receive regulatory assurances of no further conservation measures** in the event the species is listed under the ESA.

Engaging Monarch CCAA Partners on DOD Installations

UIC is collaborating with the Office of Secretary of Defense and the Forest Service to further extend the the Monarch CCAA’s conservation benefits to DOD installations across the country. Since 2024, UIC has helped to facilitate working relationships between partnering installations and ROW organizations to restore, manage, and monitor pollinator habitat on overlapping landscapes. Strategies align participating organizations’ respective management objectives with conservation best management practices and federal policies.

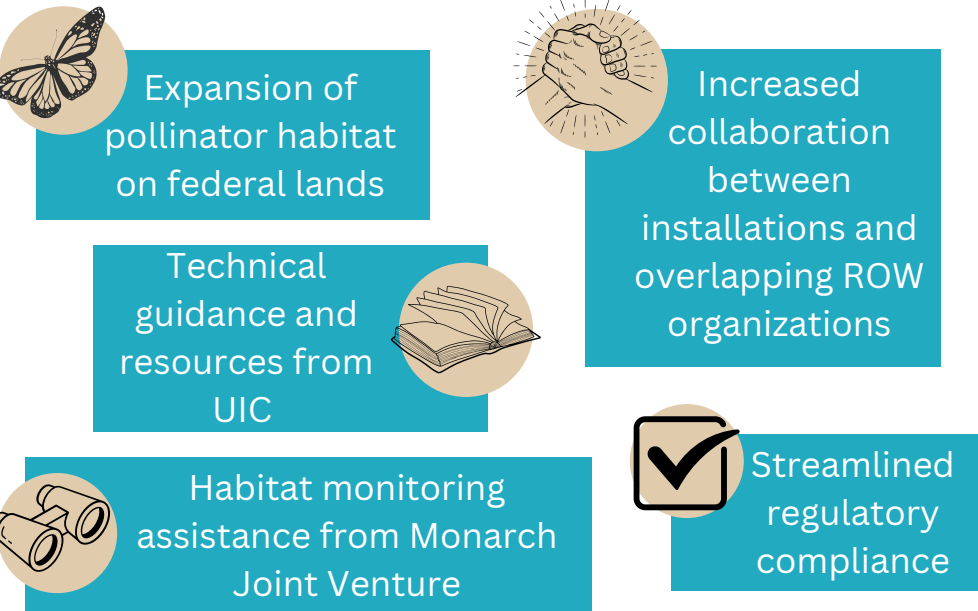
Partnership Approach



Conservation Strategies and Compliance

Through the framework of the CCAA, this initiative’s outcomes will align with the parameters of the proposed monarch ESA listing as well as the DOD-wide Monarch Section 7(a)1 Strategy’s recommendations for ROW-specific management. Ultimately, the goal of this work is to both increase pollinator habitat while potentially streamlining regulatory compliance for all participating organizations.

Benefits to Participation



Roadside habitat managed by Oklahoma DOT through the Monarch CCAA

Learn more about the Monarch CCAA program at:

<https://rightofway.erc.uic.edu/>

Contact Alison Little (all2@uic.edu) with questions

