

Bureau of Land Management: Monarch News

Monarch Gardens Installed at National Historic Trails Interpretive Center

Who (partners): Teacher, Janet Wragge and 5th graders from Oregon Trail Elementary School and Gayle Irwin and Jason Vlcan National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, BLM.

What (*species*): Imagine Monarch butterflies stopping to rest at the [National Historic Trails Interpretive Center](#) during their annual migration in the winter and spring. Thanks to students from Oregon Trail Elementary, Trails Center visitors can now observe the colorful orange and black butterflies resting atop colorful native flowers in a beautifully planned garden. This is exactly what 40 Oregon Trail Elementary 5th graders hoped as they planted three monarch butterfly way stations at the Trails Center in Casper, Wyo. on May 24, 2007.

When: May 24, 2007

Where: Casper, Wyoming

How: The 5th graders brought some of their own plants they grew at school using [Monarch Way station seed kits](#). The kits include six varieties of milkweeds, and six general nectar plants. Milkweed is used by the butterfly larvae, and nectar plants are used by the adults.

Before they started digging, BLM employee Jason Vlcan taught the students the importance of using native plants that will survive in Wyoming's dry climate. "Native species are plants that are adapted to our dry environment. Plants that can live in the dry sandy soils here at the Trails Center," noted Vlcan.

The project was a huge success, and the kids were proud of the work they accomplished. They learned about native plants, monarch butterflies, providing shelter for animals, the importance of pollinators, and they even discovered a few interesting bugs along the way. Many of the students planned to bring their parents back to see what they had done.

Why: Students learned before they arrived at the Trails Center that Monarch Butterflies are facing population declines as a result of human-induced habitat destruction along its migration pathways. Monarch habitat areas provide migratory butterflies energy to complete their journey south in the fall and north in the spring.

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Center Employee Jason Vlcan talks to Oregon Trail 5th graders about plants native to Wyoming.



Oregon Trail 5th graders help spread mulch around the new plants.



Students watered the new plants in the butterfly garden.



Oregon Trail student secures her plant in the new butterfly garden.