



Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge



Monarch Meadow Habitat Restoration Grant

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program awarded a \$35,000, 2 year grant to the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. "Friends", the Wampanoag Tribal Council, and the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Rhode Island for habitat creation and restoration of 17 acres for monarchs and native pollinators.

These partnerships recognizes the importance of pollinators for local crops and how critical it is in establishing and maintaining fields that support bumblebees and provide critical habitat for the monarch butterfly . Both Monarchs and Bumblebees have declined by 90% in the last 20 years. We believe that restoring pollinator fields will contribute to a more complex and viable ecosystem for all native plants and wildlife species which enhances diversity and sustainability over time.

Within the Friends grant, they received \$17,000.00. In close collaboration with local conservation partners the Friends will establish seven acres of pollinator fields within the Town of Falmouth and the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge. These partners and acreage are:

1. Falmouth Rod and Gun Club: 5 acres
2. Town of Falmouth(Dupee and Sea Farms north): 2 acres
3. The Falmouth 300 Committee Land Trust: 0.25 acres

To establish these pollinator fields, commercial equipment was employed in preparation for seed and plantings and native seeds and plants were purchased to seed the fields and grown in local greenhouses. We will utilize a combination of seed mixes, plant plugs and/or mature plants along with seed collection from local sources for milkweed and other native species to provide 8 months of nectar, pollen, seeds and critical late fall nectar sources for migrating Monarchs. Host plants for regional butterfly species were also included in plant selections. Spring flowering bushes will provide seed and fruit into the winter months to sustain wildlife species such as wintering robins, turkeys, quail, songbirds and New England Cottontails. These partners will maintain the fields by annually mowing by volunteers, business donations and clubs.

The Friends also include an educational component with this grant to provide three educational workshops on native pollinators, garden design, and curriculum for up to ten local schools, teams of two teachers per school in grades 3-5. These teachers will learn life-history needs of Monarch and native pollinators, given educational materials and age- appropriate lesson plans, and mature native plants and gardening aids for creation of pollinator gardens at their schools.

Bristol Agricultural High School has generously offered to grow and plant 5000 native plants at Teaticket park's pollinator gardens. Native plants for school gardens are being raised at a local greenhouse donated to the project this winter. Lastly, the Spohr Gardens in Woods Hole will be raising local butterfly species that will be released at these new garden sites going into the near future. Lots of excitement, collaboration and good things happening for our local native pollinators and migrating monarchs!

