ASSOCIATION of FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Joint Memorandum Regarding Collaborative Efforts to Conserve the Monarch Butterfly and Other Native Pollinators

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

To: State Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Secretary, Department of Natural Resources
of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Governor of Guam
Governor of U.S. Virgin Islands
Governor of American Samoa
Governor of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mayor of the District of Columbia

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) join in a common voice to urge you as leaders of the State and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies to take creative actions on behalf of monarch butterflies and other pollinators. We ask you to be resourceful in developing projects supported with financial assistance funds from the Service that include actions that either directly or indirectly benefit the monarch butterfly and other pollinators, to the extent that such actions fall within the management authority of your agencies.

Many species of pollinators, including butterflies and bees, have experienced severe declines in the past two decades. The population of monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) has declined more than 90 percent. The Presidents of the United States and Mexico and the Prime Minster of Canada have called for cooperative action. This decline also prompted a recent petition for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

In response to these population-level declines, on June 20, 2014 the White House issued a Presidential Memorandum directing Federal actions to address pollinator conservation. On September 4, 2014, the Service's Director issued a Service-wide charge to develop a strategy for monarch conservation that addresses habitat restoration and enhancement, education and outreach, and monitoring and research needs. Both of these initiatives include aggressive schedules for implementation.

To promote joint plans and efforts for monarch conservation, AFWA passed Resolution 2014-1 on September 24, 2014. This resolution supports "voluntary and incentive-based efforts to address threats of loss, fragmentation and modification of monarch breeding habitat" including numerous milkweed species which serve as the monarch butterfly's larval host plants in North America.

We ask that you consider adding the monarch butterfly and other pollinator species as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in your State Wildlife Action Plan. This will allow State Wildlife

Grant Program (SWG) funds to be used for implementing conservation efforts to benefit these species.

States may also include actions that support monarch and pollinator conservation in projects funded through other Service programs. For example, projects funded by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs may incorporate practices to conserve monarch butterflies and other pollinators, such as planting locally native milkweed in grassland restoration projects. Monarch butterfly habitat and other pollinators' habitats may also be conserved through other Service programs, such as National Coastal Wetlands Restoration, North American Wetlands Conservation, and Endangered Species projects. We also encourage States to work with other partners, private landowners, and the public to increase awareness and expand knowledge in support of this vital initiative. Doing so will help us reach and engage young people and other segments of society that will be crucial to support for conservation in the future.

For additional guidance and support, please visit the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program at http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/Pollinators/Pollinators.htm for resources you may find useful. Please use the contacts listed on these sites to share your ideas and successes. Working together we can help restore this iconic butterfly and other pollinator species that are so important to the American people.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Larry Voyles
President, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies