



May 23, 2019

Greetings Environmental Advocates!

We are contacting you about a new community project that we're undertaking along Lincoln's 13th Street this summer. We hope you'll be as excited about it as we are and will choose to be involved!

We believe we all play a role in protecting Nebraska's pollinators, inspiring environmental stewardship, and giving back to our communities. The project is spearheaded by **Nebraska Wildlife Federation (NEWF)**, **Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA)**, **Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA)**, and **UNL's Bee Lab**. Additional in-kind support will be provided by **Tailored Landscapes**. It will also be a **Groundwater Guardian** site.

This local team is creating the **13th Street Pollinator Flyway**. The project entails planting native pollinator plants in more than 60 permanent planting beds that line 13th Street between R Street and the Lincoln Mall (8 blocks). Cities like Chicago, Seattle and Austin have successfully created downtown pollinator flyways and we want Lincoln to join their ranks.

Beginning in mid-May, we will begin adding more color and plant textures to the beds while establishing effective habitat for pollinators. This habitat acts as a rest stop for butterflies, a safe spot for them to feed and lay eggs. We will also use the space to educate the public about pollinators in peril and the value of planting water-wise native perennials that support our state's biodiversity. The flyway will bring beauty to 13th street and engage community interest. Attractive, nonintrusive signage will be placed in the beds along the route to educate the public.

We are especially interested in providing habitat for **monarch butterflies** that migrate through Nebraska during the spring and fall. Although we have seen population increases in the last two years, their numbers have declined 90% over the past two decades due to habitat loss, use of pesticides and herbicides, and extreme weather events. The monarch is the only butterfly to make a 2-way migration like birds do. Monarchs travel up to 3,000 miles spanning from Canada to Mexico. It takes four to five generations of monarchs to complete the journey. Monarchs *only* lay their eggs on milkweed and their caterpillars *only* eat milkweed. Therefore, milkweed plants will be added to the other nectar-rich plants established along the route.

The design and planting of the beds will be overseen by the DLA along with long-term maintenance. Chemical-free native plants will be supplied by NSA and Bluebird Nursery along with expert consultation. Nebraska Wildlife will coordinate the project and will be the communication liaison. Basic plant materials and labor will be primarily absorbed by the DLA as part of their contract with downtown businesses, however, additional funding is needed to install educational signage and large boulders. To offer programming that draws people to the space, we're currently working to secure that additional funding.

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How Can You Get Involved?

Most of all, we want your enthusiasm for the flyway! Thus, we're contacting individuals and organizations to ask that you join us in bringing the flyway to life. Participation might include:

- Tell friends and family what we're up to. Help us get the word out!
- Include information about the flyway in newsletters and at community events.
- Once the flyway is installed, hold meetings downtown and share the flyway with others.
- Volunteer to help us plant the beds (if we determine help is needed).
- Offer a staff meeting on the importance of pollinator habitat. Educate others about pollinators in peril.
- Encourage clients and customers to visit the flyway to celebrate our city.
- Sign on to become an official pollinator flyway partner. Contact Carolyn for details.
- Make a monetary contribution to the project at: <http://www.nebraskawildlife.org/13th-street-pollinator-flyway/flyway-donations/>. In-kind contributions are happily accepted!
- Consider establishing an urban pollinator flyway in your city or town.

With your help, we hope to engage community pride with the flower-filled flyway, for Lincolniters and visitors for years to come. For now, our team plans to celebrate the 13th Street Flyway during **Pollinator Week, June 17-23** with daily tours led by local entomology and horticulture experts. Watch partner websites and social media for updates.

To reach us or to get more information, contact Carolyn Butler, carolyn@nebraskawildlife.org. or voicemail 402-477-1008 or Brian Munk, bmunk@downtownlincoln.org.

Let's do this!

The 13th Street Pollinator Flyway Team

