



Butterfly Town, USA

Full Description

Butterfly Town, USA focuses on the challenges and achievements of citizen efforts in the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary in Pacific Grove, CA. The plight of Monarchs is being recognized globally as a harbinger of threats facing a wide range of species. The importance of this film is underscored by the fact that it is being released at a time when new studies confirm that there has been a 90 percent drop in the number of Monarchs migrating from the USA to Mexico over the past twenty years. Recently, a petition (www.newsweek.com/monarch-butterflies-petition), supported by a number of environmental groups and respected scientists, has been filed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requesting protection for the Monarch under the Endangered Species Act.

As **Butterfly Town, USA** unfolds, we meet a community of activists, individuals who are working to protect and restore the Sanctuary. We see intimate portraits of people planting and watering new trees by hand, going to City Council meetings to explain their intentions and holding meetings in the Grove itself to decide how to best bring attention to the problems faced by this community in relation to their Sanctuary.

At the heart of this film is the story of one activist, Bob Pacelli, a man leading the effort to restore the Sanctuary. He became actively involved in community affairs when the citizens of Pacific Grove began to seriously disagree with members of the Pacific Grove City Staff about maintenance and care of the Sanctuary. He had been a videographer for more than thirty years. The range of his film work includes having been a Video Production Officer during the Balkan Wars for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

When Bob moved to Pacific Grove, he turned his attention toward filming the Monarch Butterflies in the Sanctuary. His images (which appear throughout the film) capture the ineffable beauty of the butterflies from a hundred different angles. One of Bob's major contributions was to spearhead the effort to plant new trees to fill in large gaps in the canopy that were created when tree branches had been cut as a result of the City's staff recommendations. The openings created by that cutting allowed the wind to blow through the remaining branches, disrupting conditions that had been ideal in the Monarchs' habitat.

Many of Pacific Grove citizens join Bob's efforts to improve the canopy of trees in the Sanctuary. The film follows their frustration with bureaucracy, and their accomplishments with Bob's passion as their guiding light. Preeminent butterfly ecologist Lincoln Brower adds his perspective throughout the film, as the citizens of

Pacific Grove show both courage and compassion with their commitment. This film documents what one group of citizens in one community can do, when they organize, to have a positive impact.

The focus of this film is on the butterfly population, which is seen as the canaries in the coalmine, a warning sign that immediate attention is needed. In particular, we focus on monarch butterflies, whose iconic annual migration across North American is at risk of collapse.

In one of the short films on our website (butterflytownfilm.org/theshorts), we feature Dr. Lincoln Brower inviting a discussion of our collective system of values. "We need to realize that biological treasures, such as the monarch, are valuable in their own right." His statement begs several questions: What is our role in relationship to values reflected in wider society? What is our role in this mass extinction of Monarchs and many other animals? How have we failed to capture popular imagination and foster value for the natural environment? How could we succeed in doing so? As individuals, how do we take action to protect the species in our backyards, the species around us that make our world a place of balance, and one we call home?

For more information, please visit our website: butterflytownfilm.org

CONCENTRIC MEDIA

www.concentric.org

Box 1414 • Menlo Park, CA 94026 • 650-568-4340 • info@concentric.org