

SAVE OUR SANDHILLS
RESOLUTION ON NATIONWIDE MONITORING AND PROTECTION
OF INSECT POPULATIONS

AN OVERVIEW

A healthy insect population is critical. Insects help stitch together the web of life. They break plants down into organic matter. They disperse seeds. They provide prime food for birds and many fish. They pollinate plants, providing food security for mankind as well as for wildlife. They are threatened by pesticides and common agricultural practices on mega farms, GMO's, a loss of natural forage habitat, and electromagnetic fields. Some iconic insects such as the honeybee and the monarch butterfly are facing critical declines. They need monitoring, an assessment of how to best help them, and rules and regulations to help them recover. Now is the time to help . . . before it is too late and they head toward extinction. They are the canary in the coal mine for all of mankind.

WHEREAS, a healthy insect population is critically necessary for the survival of many wildlife species, including songbirds, quail, turkeys, many herpetological species, and trout and several other freshwater fish species; and

WHEREAS, pollinators of all types – ants, bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, moths, and wasps – help stitch together the web of life with essential services such as breaking plants down into organic matter, dispersing seeds, providing a prime source of food for birds and many fish, and pollinating our plants and food crops, thereby assuring food security for mankind as well as for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that insect populations around the world are experiencing stress, examples being the alarming decline in Canada of birds that feed on flying insects; a 90% decline in the North American monarch population in the past 20 years – from a high of one billion monarchs down to 35 million – that has caused scientists from several environmental organizations to request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to classify the monarch as “threatened” under the U.S. Endangered Species Act; declines in firefly populations in the United States, Europe, and Asia; critical global declines of honeybees in the past decade caused by a mysterious malady called colony collapse disorder; and declines in several species of native North American bumble bees; and

WHEREAS, insecticides called neonicotinoids are used nationwide on vegetables, fruits, and ornamentals, and when the chemical is taken up the plant's vascular system and makes the plant poisonous to insects eating the leaves, pollen, and nectar, it either kills the insects immediately or in smaller doses compromises their immune systems, affecting their ability to navigate home or contaminating the brood's food stores with the polluted pollen and nectar; and

WHEREAS, the herbicide glyphosate, known as Monsanto's Roundup, has increased in usage from 10 million pounds in 1993 to 300 million pounds this year as a result of the widespread adoption of herbicide-tolerant, genetically engineered crops, and has never undergone an endangered species assessment despite being linked to the decline of many wildlife species including the monarch butterfly; and

WHEREAS GMO's (genetically modified organisms) refer to those GM crops currently on the market whose DNA are modified to resist against plant diseases caused by insects or viruses through the use of neonicotinoids, and to increase tolerance toward herbicides such as glyphosate; and

WHEREAS data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Geological Survey have been studied by the Pesticide Research Institute at Berkeley, California, and show that as pesticide use has soared, honey production has plummeted and as more plantings of corn and soy cover the midwest (80% to 90% are treated with neonicotinoids before being planted), that honey production has fallen and bee deaths have risen; and

WHEREAS the loss of natural forage habitat through mega farms and the mass conversion of conservation land in the midwest to farmland leads to malnutrition, and this makes insects susceptible to toxins and viruses; and

WHEREAS native plant species that match the life-cycle needs of our native insects are critical to native wildlife, as many insects will not, or cannot, eat alien plants and therefore disappear, and the birds and animals that depend upon them for food are negatively affected; and

WHEREAS the proliferation of taller, more closely spaced cell phone towers may cause a threat to insects through radiation generated; and

WHEREAS, a New York study commissioned by The Nature Conservancy showed high levels of mercury in the blood and feathers of songbirds, which suggested that when mercury falls on land it is absorbed by the soil and by vegetable matter that is consumed by insects; and

WHEREAS, despite the excellent work being done by numerous researchers across the country, there is no coordinated and broadly based methodological program in effect to monitor the ongoing health of insects in the United States; and

WHEREAS, policy makers, law makers, and wildlife officials need the hard data that such a coordinated program might provide in order to set effective laws and rules to help protect our native wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the best position to establish and coordinate such a nationwide monitoring program; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is in the best position to oversee the assessment of chemical risks for insects, and to follow up with detailed and strong regulations;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Save Our Sandhills, Inc. (SOS) meeting in Southern Pines, NC on _____ urges the Executive and Legislative branches of North Carolina's state government to critically assess the needs of our insect populations, which are essential to the survival of many wildlife species and, ultimately, to the food security for mankind, and to put pressure on the appropriate agencies to save our insect populations from extinction through effective rules and laws, and to regulate all entities that are having a negative effect on our insect populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government work with numerous agencies, including the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS), Structural Pest Control and Pesticide Division, and the Soil Testing Division, to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment by regulating the pest control industry and the pesticide products used and minimizing and reducing the risks of these products by testing both the products and the effects on soil and environment, and by encouraging the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to determine the best nonchemical methods (including beneficial insects), cultural practices, or pesticides that would do the least harm; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government work with the NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division and Apiary Services Division in order to test the safety of plant seeds used in conjunction with pollinators of all kinds, including honeybees, North American native bees, and monarch butterflies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government work with the NC Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), which has worked in cooperation with NCDA&CS since 1919, in order to provide timely statistics on the cause and effect of pesticides and loss of habitat on wildlife species, including insects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government pressure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to classify the monarch butterfly as "threatened" under the U.S. Endangered Species Act as has been requested by scientists from several organizations after the monarchs decreased from one billion down to 35 million, and to classify other endangered species of insects appropriately; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government pressure the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ban the herbicide glyphosate, known as Monsanto's

Roundup, the use of which has increased dramatically with genetically engineered crops, until an endangered species assessment has been completed showing that glyphosate has not caused the decline of many wildlife species including the monarch butterfly and that it is not a carcinogen, as suspected by the World Health Organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government ban any GMO (genetically modified organism) which is herbicide-tolerant and contains the nicotine-based insecticide called a neonicotinoid that systematically delivers the pesticide through the plant's vascular system, thereby making the plant poisonous to insects eating the leaves, pollen, and nectar, and which affects our honeybees and other pollinators, and which has been linked to the decline of many wildlife species, and which has been banned in other European countries including Austria, France, and Germany, among others; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government insist on the labeling of genetically engineered foods in North Carolina, for if the plant is poisonous to pollinators, the fruits are likely to be toxic to anyone eating them since the poisons cannot be washed off, and Maine, Connecticut, and Vermont have already passed this legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government ban the use of neonicotinoids on vegetables, fruits, herbs, and ornamentals in any of its forms, its subgroups including the names Imidacloprid, Clothianidin, Thiamethoxam, Acetamiprid, Thiachloprid, Dinotefuran, and Sulfoxaflor, as they are readily available in stores in the pesticide area with the subgroup names, which are totally unrecognizable as neonicotinoids to most consumers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government should work with the NC Department of Agriculture (NCDA) in order to prevent the loss of natural forage habitat which causes malnutrition, making insects more susceptible to toxins and viruses, and to encourage the development of land devoted to pesticide-free wildflowers along highways, power rights-of-way, and the like; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NC state government should work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to encourage public education matching native plant species with the life-cycle needs of our native insects since these populations are critical to the well-being of our native wildlife, to establish baseline information on this, and to provide continued monitoring so that progress can be measured.

SIGNATURE: _____, President
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