



# Working Together & Flying Forward

## BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

BY SHELLY GROW, ERIN SULLIVAN AND RUTH ALLARD

Most workshop organizers would feel fortunate if just *one* of the leaders of their field were able to participate in their meeting. Erin Sullivan from Woodland Park Zoo, and Dan Grosboll from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, hit the jackpot in December 2003. All three of the pioneers of Northwestern butterfly conservation, Robert Michael Pyle, Jon Pelham, and Dave McCorkle, and almost 40 other people dedicated to butterfly conservation gathered in Tacoma, Washington for the Northwest Butterfly Conservation and Recovery Workshop. Enthusiasm and excitement were obvious results, as participants and organizers alike left the meeting flush with new and specific ideas and contacts that would further their own butterfly conservation work.

The goals of the one-day workshop, hosted by the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, were ambitious: 1) imparting information about the threatened Pacific Northwest butterflies to new and key players in recovery efforts; 2) sharing current progress on butterfly recovery projects; 3) introducing government and academic scientists to non-traditional partners; and 4) pooling the talents and resources of participants to help butterfly populations while increasing public awareness and involvement in local and regional butterfly conservation efforts.

Participants included representatives from three zoos and aquariums, three nonprofit organizations, four different government agencies, five universities, consultants and authors. "It was wonderful to get a great diversity of people together who are all working on butterfly conservation in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. We often talk to people within our own disciplines but it is less common to hear other perspectives," said workshop co-organizer Dan Grosboll. "Getting these people together was inspiring."

Robert Michael Pyle set the tone for the December workshop by discussing the history of butterfly conservation in the Pacific Northwest which began 50 years ago. There is still much work to be done and many people with the skills for doing it. The Pacific Northwest is home to one federally-endangered butterfly, the Fender's blue in Oregon, and one federally-threatened species, the Oregon silverspot. The Oregon silverspot's range historically extended from Washington south to Northern California. BFCI members Oregon Zoo and Woodland Park Zoo have both been active in butterfly conservation, with the Oregon Zoo rearing the Fender's blue in captivity and releasing the adults into the wild, and the two zoos work with the Oregon Coast Aquarium, a BFCI contributor, and The Nature Conservancy to raise the Oregon silverspot in captivity and release the adults at Cascade Head, Oregon; one of the few sites where this butterfly is still found. Both zoos also are leaders in using education to further butterfly conservation.

Pyle's remarks were followed by a variety of presentations by

experts from The Nature Conservancy, Evergreen State College and the Oregon Zoo that focused on the status of prairie butterfly populations in the Northwest, strategies for collaborating on butterfly conservation, and updates on progress being made on local butterfly conservation. Participants broke into groups for the rest of the day to prioritize which butterflies they should focus their efforts on, identify threats to those butterflies and develop specific action items each participant could do individually or collaboratively.

Some of the ways participants plan to directly incorporate lessons learned at the workshop are: using techniques described that day for engaging more volunteers in their work, taking back some of the ideas to their own institutions, utilizing education as a tool for butterfly



ABOVE AND BELOW © OREGON ZOO/MICHAEL DURHAM

*All eyes were on the Oregon silverspot butterfly at the Northwest Butterfly Conservation and Recovery Workshop held in December. The efforts of the Butterfly Conservation Initiative's partners are aimed at helping this and other threatened and endangered butterflies.*





Workshop participants included:  
 First row sitting down, left to right: Patrick Dunn, Dan Grosboll ,  
 Erin Sullivan, Mace Vaughn, David Sheperdson, Cheryl Fimbel

Second row: Anne Walker, Robert Michael Pyle, Sue Nicole, Greg  
 Toffic, Claire Hagen Dole, Kelly McAllister, Nancy Pollot, Alicia  
 Harmon, Anita McMillan, Charis Henrie

Third row: Ann Potter, James Miskelly, Debbie L. Pickering,  
 Richard Easterly, Stewart Wechsler, Barry Bidwell, Karen D. Lewis,  
 Vince Harke, John Fleckenstein, Derek Stinson

KATIE REMINE © WOODLAND PARK ZOO

conservation, adapting educational material to specific target audiences, utilizing techniques described for controlling invasive species and incorporating new background information into their own writing and presentations. Networking among attendees was a crucial part of the success of the workshop as participants have plans to continue working with those they met to launch new collaborative projects.

This is one of two outcomes that clearly demonstrate the success of this meeting. Considering the rather small number of people involved in northwestern butterfly conservation, one of the most surprising and impressive accomplishments was the large number of participants stating that they met new contacts with whom they wanted to follow-up on specific issues after the meeting. And participants were so enthusiastic about this workshop that they voiced strong interest in additional meetings where they could continue the discussion and delve deeper into specific topics. [Partly as a result of this and other meetings, the Oregon Zoo hosted an educator's workshop in March.] Because many of the action items the group identified were related to education, participants agreed that the next workshop should focus solely on education. Topics could include the role of education in butterfly conservation, effective and engaging techniques for communicating butterfly conservation messages, and methods for inspiring people to become involved locally.

The idea behind the Northwest Butterfly Conservation and Recovery Workshop and the basic format of the meeting came from the BFCI Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Implementation Workshop held at the Toledo Zoo in June 2002. This workshop was “an excellent example of what BFCI was designed to do,” said Syd Butler, AZA’s Executive Director. “By bringing together individuals and organizations committed to butterfly conservation, Initiative members and partners share ideas, resources and enthusiasm. We look forward to celebrating the continued successes of this group and others who follow in its footsteps.” Many thanks to Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium for hosting the meeting, and to Woodland Park Zoo for providing additional meeting support.

*Shelly Grow is the BFCI Program Coordinator; Erin Sullivan is a keeper at Woodland Park Zoo, and Ruth Allard is AZA’s Conservation Biologist. The BFCI is a coalition of 47 AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and six partner organizations, including AZA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation, Xerces Society, Environmental Defense, and the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera Research, dedicated to the conservation of threatened, endangered and vulnerable North American butterflies. To learn more about BFCI, please contact sgrow@aza.org or call (301) 562-0777, ext. 263.*

## NEW BOOKS ON BUTTERFLIES:

**A World of Butterflies.** Brian Cassie (text), Kjell Sandved (photography), with a foreword by Robert Michael Pyle. Bulfinch Press, \$22.50, ISBN 0-8212-2893-5, May 2004.

With stunning pictures of 200 butterflies from Brazil, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Guinea, Mexico, Africa, Ireland, Russia, Canada and the United States, this book grabs—and keeps—your attention. The photos are accompanied by those details of each butterfly’s life cycle, appearance, migration, behavior, and conservation status that make each butterfly fascinating and unique. This beautifully designed and produced book keeps you paging through and inspires you to go out and look for butterflies yourself.

**Pollinator Conservation Handbook.** Matthew Shepherd, Stephen L. Buchmann, Mace Vaughan, Scott Hoffman Black (text), Dr. Edward S. Ross (photography). Xerces Society in association with The Bee Works, \$19.95, ISBN 0-9744475-0-1, 2003.

The **Pollinator Conservation Handbook** is a comprehensive book on the conservation of bees, butterflies and other native pollinator insects and is an indispensable resource for gardeners, farmers, and managers of parks, recreational areas and wild lands. The Handbook guides the reader through the steps needed to create and enhance habitat for insect pollinators and contains information on selecting and planting forage flowers, providing nesting and egg-laying sites for bees, butterflies, and other insects, and caring for your pollinator habitat over time. The Handbook also contains an extensive, up-to-date resource section and ideas for educational activities. This book would be a great addition to zoo and aquarium gift shops and can be ordered from The Xerces Society, [www.xerces.org/pch.htm](http://www.xerces.org/pch.htm).

