



Catwillow Monarch Project

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
Lakewood-Laona Ranger District

2013 Accomplishments

Catwillow Monarch Area (CMA) is a gated system of trails and 41 wildlife openings managed for pollinators by focusing on Monarch Butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) and Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).

FY13 saw continued treatment of non-native invasive plants, native seed collection, and 11 pollinator surveys May through August. West Virginia White Butterflies (*Pieris virginiensis*) and *Osmia* mason bees were among the pollinators seen during May. Despite the rarity of Monarch sightings across the continent, both adults and caterpillars were in the CMA this summer, one of 36 native butterfly species observed here to date. Yellow-banded Bumble Bees (*Bombus terricola*) were photographed in several locations throughout the CMA, and a possible nest found. A Ruffed Grouse hen and chicks, Black Bear, and White-tailed Deer were observed, suggesting Catwillow's abundant native herbaceous plants provide for game species, too.

This year's surveys documented the importance to CMA pollinators of the surrounding hardwood forest's spring ephemerals and flowering trees and of shrubs like raspberries, blackberries, and gooseberries / currants. These surveys also uncovered some more pollinator preferences. In contrast to 2012's early spring, 2013's spring was record-breaking late, and the blooming period of American Red Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) overlapped that of milkweed. Provided with such a choice, pollinators clearly preferred visiting raspberry over milkweed flowers.



Figure 1. A Monarch caterpillar rests on Common Milkweed flowers during a July survey in the CMA.



Figure 2. A Female Monarch Butterfly lands on Common Milkweed during a July survey in the Catwillow Monarch Area.

Year Project Initiated : 2010

Project completion: On-going

Report number: 4 of 4

Expenditures (through 09/2013): \$13,275

FY13 funding: NFXF5T, NFXFC6, NFWF13,
NFVW13

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