

For Rusk Ranch Nature Center, 2020 was a particularly challenging year.

We started out the year with our mainstay attraction of monarchs being virtually unavailable because they are so threatened. The pandemic has meant a lowered visitor rate since the beginning of the summer. Plus our local community, already economically challenged, lost jobs and struggled to have kids attending school online when our rural internet service is spotty at best. Then we got hit with catastrophic fires, causing us to have to evacuate and close the center early!

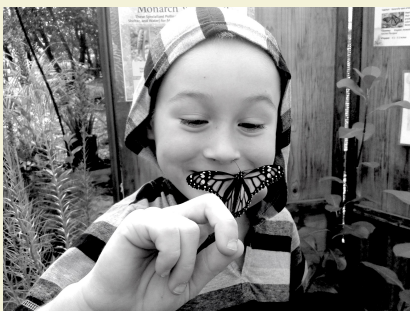
With all of this, we still did OK. An anonymous donor gifted us with a few breeding adult Monarchs in early June - enough to seed the rest of the season. While we had a low visitor rate, we also received a loan from SBA, which allowed us to hire docents as planned, thus contributing to local summer employment. To help out our community, we were awarded a grant from Oregon Community Foundation to provide free children's services: SUN School and Earthworks. The fires clogged the air, making breathing difficult and we had to close the Butterfly Pavilion a month early - but we have used the time to jump in to the final stages of building the glamping facility for the Nature Service Program.



We feel like we have “kept our feet moving”, and with the help of wonderful volunteers, foundations, our Angel donors and of course the SBA loan, we have continued to increase the amount of service, jobs and nature enrichment we can offer to the community.

We just need a little help this year to make it through until the Nature Service program is up and running next spring. Once it is so, we will have made a huge step toward our long term goal of creating the Oregon Nature & Environmental Discovery Center (O.N.E. Discovery). We expect that this mission focussed revenue will allow us to have a small paid skeleton staff and move from being mostly volunteer to mostly paid staff - an essential to continue offering services.

We have a goal of raising \$6,000. by the end of the year 2020. This money will support our children's services through the winter, help us continue progress to build the glamping area for the Nature Service Program and pay staff who grow our milkweed and pollinator plants over the winter.



The Nature Center has been such an asset to our community. From a mom: *“Thank you so much for offering this opportunity for our daughter! She is so happy with the program and can't wait for the next outdoor class!”*

Please make a donation to support our efforts to keep these wonderful nature and learning opportunities available in the valley. Our families and kids so appreciate it!

Go to our web site and click Donate, send us a check, or give us a call!

*Warmest Regards,*      *The Board of Directors for Rusk Ranch Nature Center*