



Washington Butterfly
Association

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The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

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<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

Facebook: Washington Butterfly Association. Instagram: #washingtonbutterflies (anyone can use this hashtag)

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/washington-state-butterflies>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@washingtonbutterflyassocia4732>



Hilltopping butterflies at Satus Pass, which we might visit for our 2026 Study Weekend. (D. James)

Upcoming Programs by Zoom First Wednesday at 6 PM

February 4: David Droppers: Butterfly Recolonization Following Wildfire

March 4: James Adams, TBD

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President's Message from Liz Kuehn

Hello WBA members and friends,

My last message reflected on the end of summer, with thoughts of hot apple cider and hot chocolate. And now after celebrating the shortest day of the year on December 21st, we can look ahead to longer, warmer days and the butterflies awaiting us in the 2026 field season. Melanie Weiss is busy recruiting field leaders, and the lineup already looks amazing.

Volunteer Opportunities for 2026

In addition to our exciting Field Trip plans, WBA is organizing a range of events and activities. The success of these efforts depends on the support of dedicated volunteers.

Support the Annual WBA Study Weekend

Assist with logistics, including welcoming and registering attendees.

Help set up conference rooms for sessions and gatherings.

Contribute to videography documenting and capturing activities for our YouTube channel.

Idie Ulsh Young Naturalist Scholarships

We are seeking a volunteer to oversee coordination of the Idie Ulsh Young Naturalist Scholarships. This role involves managing the scholarship process which awards free attendance for a student and parent to attend our annual Butterfly Weekend and supporting young naturalists at the event.

WBA Tabling Events Across the State

A Chair is needed to lead tabling events throughout Washington. Responsibilities may include:

Handling incoming event requests.

Enlisting volunteers for the events.

Managing our educational materials and interactive activities to promote awareness of native butterflies.

Member Outreach Initiatives

Members are invited to chair or participate in outreach efforts. These initiatives focus on developing activities to engage our community, boost promotional efforts, and enhance recruitment strategies for WBA.

Seattle Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden Work Party

Join us for monthly restoration work parties at the Seattle Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden. Volunteers work together to create a welcoming habitat for butterflies and their pollinator friends. These events take place from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm typically on the fourth Saturday of each month. Announcements and sign-up links are distributed via our Noticeline email communication.

We encourage all members and friends to get involved and help make the upcoming season a success!

Interested? Send your name and e-mail address to: wabutterflyassoc@gmail.com or any Board member and we will gladly sign you up.

See you out there soon!

Liz Kuehn

Astarte Fritillary on Slate Peak. (C. Bellin)



2026 Wild and Wonderful Field Trips and Outdoor Fun

Melanie Weiss, Field Trip Coordinator

Given the mild winter weather so far, Washington's butterfly season may surprise us with an early start this year.

We are fortunate to have enthusiastic and knowledgeable community members volunteering as field trip leaders throughout our state. I especially appreciate this opportunity to visit quiet, out-of-the-way areas where butterflies are more commonly found. Each season my knowledge of Washington's ecosystems expands as I explore new areas, and the camaraderie of trip participants is always a pleasure.



WBA at Mima Mounds. (R. Johnson)



Melissa Arctic. (M. Weiss)

for some of us. With 2026 being an even year, a visit to Slate Peak will be especially rewarding, offering the chance to see two biennial, even-year species, the Astarte Fritillary and the Melissa Arctic. For those who live in the Seattle area, we are also planning a group visit to the Butterfly House at the Zoo or Science Center. And as always, keep an eye out for spontaneous "Flash Field Trips" popping up throughout the season.

Mark your calendars now! We would love to have you join us for our **annual Butterfly Study Weekend** taking place **June 12-14** in the Goldendale area.



Spring White. (M. Weiss)



Johnson's Hairstreak.
(Tanna Knouse)

And don't miss our second annual iNaturalist Big Butterfly Month, happening June 20 through July 20.

In the coming months we'll send out a Noticeline with confirmed locations and dates, and the information will also appear on our website. Happy Butterflying 2026.

Klickitat River Valley. (Connie Youel)



WWU Environmental Studies grad student models potential habitat for highly endangered local butterfly

Emily Bradford's thesis maps areas where the endangered and endemic Island Marble butterfly could thrive outside of its tiny current habitat on San Juan Island. Read the article here:

<https://news.wwu.edu/wwu-environmental-studies-grad-student-models-potential-habitat-for-highly-endangered-local>

Grad Student Needs Your Help!

Hello, my name is Taylor Hatcher, and I am a PhD student at the University of Washington Seattle. My thesis focuses on the Sachem skipper (*Atalopedes campestris*), building on Lisa Crozier's early 2000's Washington work on the species to assess cold tolerance and the mechanisms by which the butterflies have expanded their range since the original study.

I plan to be conducting this research over the summers for the next few years in Richland, Yakima, Ellensburg, and the Tri-Cities. I will be monitoring first flight timing and measuring development time, body size, and survival at multiple sites in each location. I am still zeroing in on sites and trying to get a sense of where skippers are abundant.

If you are out and about in these areas and happen to see Sachem skippers, I would love to hear about your observations— early sightings are particularly valuable as I work to catch the first generation. I am also looking for anyone interested in assisting me directly with the project (i.e., catching butterflies, checking field sites, or providing your yard for overwintering experiments).

If you have any questions, or are interested in helping, please feel free to contact WBA at wabutterflyassoc@gmail.com (and we will forward to Taylor). I look forward to hearing from you!



Sachem Skipper. (T. Hatcher)

Tagging Monarchs with David James

The Washington State University Pacific Northwest Monarch tagging program which started 14 years ago has proved that all Oregon Monarchs and the vast majority of Washington Monarchs migrate to California and overwinter along the coastline. However, it has not answered the question of where the majority of Idaho Monarchs go. From many thousands of Monarchs tagged in Idaho, only three have been recovered in California (compared to hundreds of Oregon and Washington-released Monarchs). Where do most Idaho Monarchs migrate to? It is possible that they head due south (we have some short-distance tag recoveries that suggests this), flying through Utah, Arizona and perhaps end up in Mexico for overwintering. Conventional tagging, using sticky paper tags seems unable to throw a light on this mystery likely because of the wide, open spaces and relative lack of people to sight tagged Monarchs on an inland route south through Utah and Arizona.

Excitingly, due to very recent technological advances, we now have the opportunity to track individual Monarchs via the use of a tiny transmitter that can be carried by a Monarch! This solar-powered transmitter allows us to see the progress and route taken by a monarch in real-time! Signals produced by these E-tags are detected by any cell phone with Bluetooth capability that is within about a quarter of a mile of the butterfly. The signals and data are automatically transmitted to a central data-gathering point and available to scientists.



Monarch wearing one of the new e-tags. (D. James)

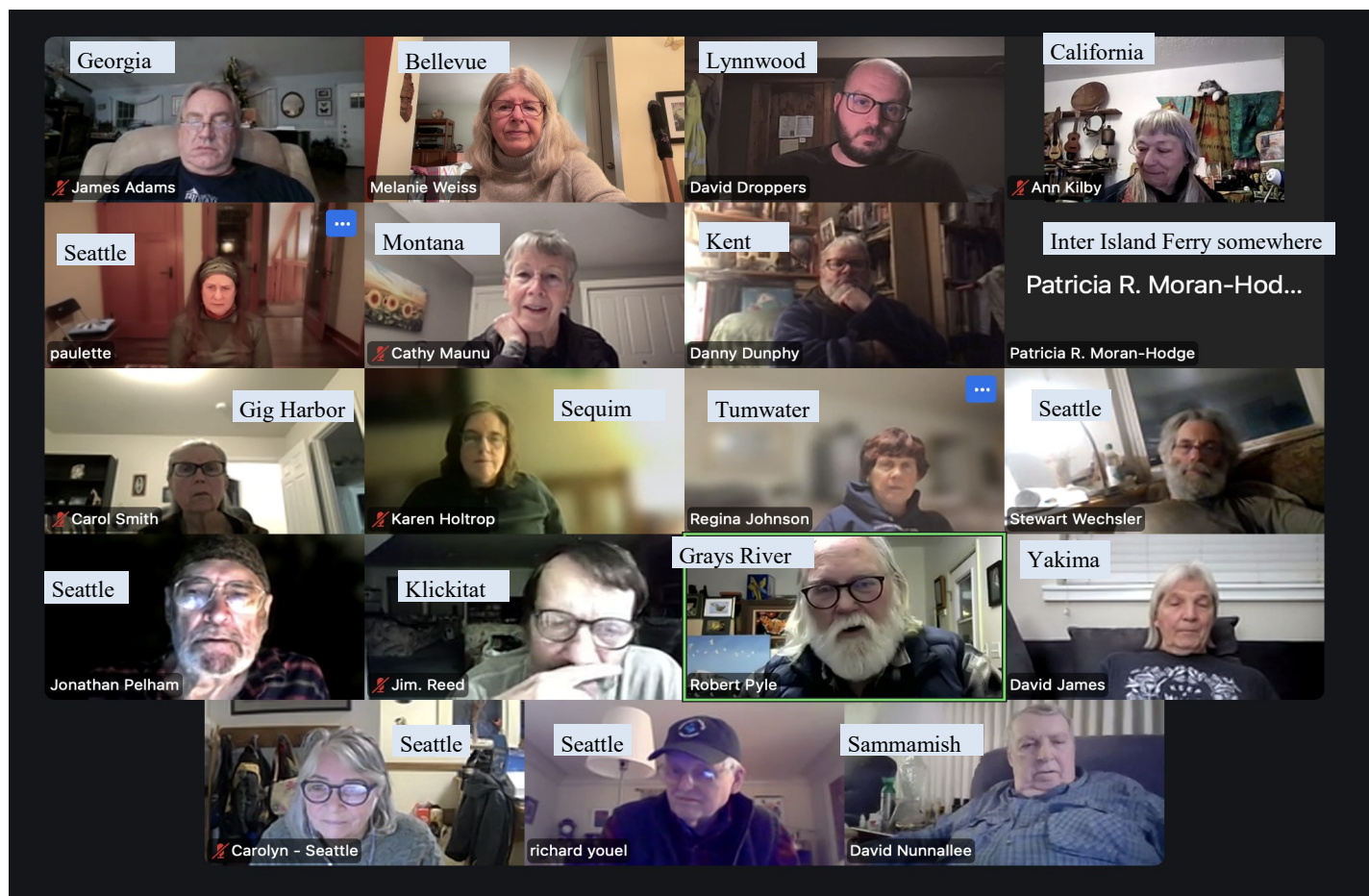
This year, we hope to E-tag at least 100 monarchs in Idaho. Unfortunately, E-tags cost \$200 each, so we need donations. We will accept any amount but if you want to contribute the full cost of a tag, then you can name the Monarch that carries your tag. You will also be able to track the progress of your Monarch on your cell phone! If you are interested in helping our research and solving this mystery, then go to: <http://adoptamonarch.org> where you will find all the details about the program and how to donate. Hopefully, our Monarch E-tagging program this year will go a long way towards solving the Idaho Monarch Mystery and you will be part of it!

First Butterfly of 2026 from David James

After weeks of gray, cold and wet weather, the sun shone in Yakima today, the 5th day of January and I took a walk at Snow Mountain Ranch. I was not expecting to see a butterfly, but there it was flying through the sunny patches and occasionally basking! A Milbert's Tortoiseshell! This is the earliest in the year that I have spotted a butterfly in Yakima so I will take my January Tortoiseshell as an excellent omen for the butterfly year ahead!
(Another one was spotted at Mima Mounds on Jan. 14 by Regina Johnson.)

The Milbert's Tort. (D. James)





Our Winter Party! Not just statewide—we’ve got attendees from other states too!

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