

WCMG BUSINESS MEETING

April 7, 2026

Washington County Extension Office Auditorium

Members present: 96

Administrative

President Pam Butler called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

Past President Alfi Anderson introduced Marty Powers, A.K.A. the “Monarch Man,” as the speaker for the evening, whose presentation was on “Monarchs, Milkweed and More.” The following is a brief overview of the main points that Marty made:

- Milkweed is the only plant that Monarchs will lay their eggs on and that the caterpillars will eat. Predators of Monarchs find the caterpillars and butterflies undesirable to eat due to their ingestion of milkweed.
- Milkweed native to our area – Common, Swamp, and Butterfly Weed.
- How to grow milkweed, collect seeds, and to prepare seeds for planting.
- Educate adults and children on the importance of growing milkweed.
- There was a 64% increase in 2025-2026 in the Monarch overwintering population in Mexico.
- The importance of planting a variety of native plants to provide food and habitat for all pollinators and birds.
- Trim Common Milkweed halfway back in summer to encourage tender new growth for discerning Monarch Mamas to lay their eggs.

Marty introduced Wings on the Edge – a project along the Razorback Greenway to install native plants for pollinators, including milkweed and wildflowers, along the edge of the trail just outside the area that is mowed.

Marty gave a big shout out Thank You to Elkins High School. He is working with students to grow milkweed plants in their greenhouse for distribution to the community.

Administrative

The March Business Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously by the membership and will be sent to the archivist, Kimberly Hosey, by Carole Ball.

The February Financial Report was approved unanimously by the membership and will be sent to the archivist by Julie Murray.

The membership voted unanimously to approve Steve Shearman as Vice President to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of former Vice President Rick Oliver.

The membership voted unanimously to approve Kim Coslett as Member-at-Large to fill the vacancy left by Steve Shearman when he became Vice President.

Busy Bee Awards were presented by Jan Lefler to the following WCMGs who have reported 50 or more Sanctioned Project hours.

February: Pam Butler and Kim Coslett.

March: Liz Hale, Jan Lefler, Patsy Louk and Julie Murray.

April: Marguerite Abowitz, Carole Ball, Doris Cassidy, Kelly Chaney, David Edwards, Roger Faulkner, Roxanne Gallup, Carrie Gamble, Peter Gavin, Karen Hanna-Towne, Ruthanne Hill, Caleb Israel, Kathy Launder, Pam Salamo, Mariette Spidel, Jim Sposato and Susan Young.

Photo Contest winners were announced as follows:

February – Flowers, Flowers, Flowers

- Third Place Tie - Donna McDaniel with “Clematis Showoffs.”
- Third Place Tie – Kelly Chaney with “Nature’s Brushstroke.”
- Second Place – Delcina Cunico with “Beauty and the Bud.”
- First Place - Michael Whitehead with “Lunch.”

March – Spring Bloomers

- Third Place – Marguerite Abowitz with “One of Many.”
- Second Place – Colleen McCarthy with “Spring Tulips at Garvan Gardens.”
- First Place – Delcina Cunico with “Peaches and Cream.”

April Photo Contest theme is Flowering Trees and Shrubs. Submission deadline is April 15th.

January through March quarterly volunteer hours report was shown with the following totals:

- Committee Hours – 946
- Sanctioned Project Hours – 2,350.25
- Non-Sanctioned Project Hours – 150.75
- Education Hours – 1,532.25

In the News

Mariette Spidel and Caleb Israel were at the KUAF studio for the Ask-A- Master Series at noon and 7 P.M. discussing native plants and invasive species.

Lynette Terrell and John and Carole Ball were on the cover of the 2026 Olli (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) Spring Catalog shown while attending a course on flower arranging.

Nicholas Sammer and Caleb Israel were featured on KFSM Channel 5 speaking about "Prepping for Spring Gardens."

Photos in the Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette:

- Susan Cagle Gardner teaching an Olli class on how to use recycled glass and wire to make hummingbird feeders.
- Students in Ivan Huffmaster's Lincoln Middle School EAST classes planting onions in the Lincoln Community Garden.
- The article "From Seed to Support" in the March 26th Edition of the Northwest Arkansas Democratic Gazette featured Community Outreach Committee Chair Kelly Chaney and Nicholas Sammer.
- Marty Powers and Jack Bardell, from Springdale for Monarchs, partnered with teacher Joe Kelly and his Middle School's EAST students to begin a yearly project of restoring native habitat and planting milkweed along the Razorback Greenway to create a milkweed flyway for migrating Monarch butterflies. Photograph of the group appeared in the March 29th Edition of Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette What's Up!

On March 22nd Chuck and Donilyn Rutherford were highlighted on Facebook/KNWA Fayetteville Farmer's Market, as one of the three generations of their family as concurrent vendors at the Farmer's Market along with a daughter, Beth, and a granddaughter, Beverly, each with a separate enterprise at the market.

In the March 11th Edition of the Washington County Enterprise Leader, Linda Hall, Linda Morrow and Chris Bell were photographed working in the Mock Park gardens.

Sanctioned Project Report

Peggy

Sissel, Chair of Garden Explorers, said that Gail Pianalto is involved when she feels able to help. Peggy gave an overview of the project activities as follows:

- For children ages 5-12 although some teens who have been in the program continue to participate to help the younger children.
- Project is run by WCMG and is a part of 4-H.
- Meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 10 A.M. at the Washington County Extension Office.
- Varied activities included making seed balls, creating seed tapes and working in their very own garden plot at the back corner of the Extension Office garden.

- Spread the word and help it grow.

Announcements

Kelly Chaney is asking for WCMG volunteer involvement in the Saturday, September 12, 2026, Arkansas Insect Festival sponsored by Entomology Department at University of Arkansas which will be held at the Washington County Fairgrounds. Kelly and Caleb Israel will have a session on Pollinators and Planting in Raised Beds from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. The first hour will be quiet time to allow the participants to relax and prepare to focus on their project.

The Gardening 101 with WCMG Series kicked off at the Fayetteville Public Library on March 28th with Seed Starting presented by Joyce Hardin. There were 33 participants and a free seed give-away. The remaining series sessions are follows:

- June 13th – Pollinator and Wildlife Gardens – Kathy Launder and Kitty Sanders.
- August 15th – Plant, Grow, Eat – Teresa Morris Sullivan and Jessica Guillory.
- October 17th – Your First Garden – Jessica Guillory, Caleb Israel, Kara O’Dell.

Jim Sposato made a proposal to the Executive Board to give an award for reporting 100 hours in a category. After a discussion, the Board designated the new award to be named Wise Owl. It will be awarded to members in December who have reported 100 or more education hours.

Patsy Louk and Kathy Launder are asking WCMGs to consider buying garden tools they displayed at the meeting for the County 76 Fundraiser. Information has been sent through Constant Contact emails and will be sent out again.

Upcoming Events

April 13th at 6:30 P.M. – Springdale Public Library – Kitty Sanders will present “Butterfly Gardening.”

May 5th at 6:30 P.M. – WCMG Business Meeting will be held at Ozark Veterans’ Healing Harvest Garden.

WCMG volunteers are needed on Wednesdays from 9-11 A.M. to help at the Washington County Extension Office Sanctioned Project to get winter clean-up done and plants installed for the upcoming Garden Gate Tour.

Date Change: WCMG Annuals to Perennials will now be held on Wednesday, July 15th, rather than as originally scheduled on July 7th.

April 26th Farm Friends Event – Volunteers are needed to make cornbread.

Pam Butler adjourned the meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Ball, Secretary