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A Butterfly to Bloom in Kansas

San Francisco, CA (June 5, 2007) A bold plan to publicize the importance and plight of pollinators in the United States is literally taking root on a small farm in Kansas. To draw attention to the importance of pollinators in ecosystems, agriculture, and biodiversity, a continent-wide campaign to protect pollinators, the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) is partnering with world-renowned Kansas-based crop artist Stan Herd to build a 50-foot butterfly out of natural materials. The Southern Dogface butterfly is one of four *Pollination* stamps to be issued June 29 by the U.S. Postal Service.

The project is already gaining widespread support; the first major sponsors were Robin Williams and Marsha Garces Williams. “Without the birds, bees, and butterflies, so much of the beauty that surrounds us would be missing,” said the Williams. “We are proud to support the Pollinator Partnership and to help protect our pollinator friends. This living Crop Art highlights the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.”

Stan Herd plans to complete the crop art installation in time for Pollinator Week, June 24-30, when visits to see the butterfly in full bloom will be scheduled by contacting Karen or John Pendleton (karenp@pendletons.com or 785-843-1409) or Chip Taylor (chip@ku.edu or 785-864-4850 or 785-766-6850). Images of the pollinator crop art can be viewed at www.pollinator.org (click “News Room For Media” or “Crop Art”).

Laurie Davies Adams, who directs NAPPC, is quick to point out the connection between pollinator health and our food supply. “Pollinators are essential to our quality of life, and they may be in trouble,” said Adams. “Many people don’t realize that we depend on pollinators for 85% of the flowering plants in natural areas and for much of the food we eat. A world without pollinators is a world without strawberries, apples, almonds, berries, and even one-half of the oils in our diet.”

Convinced that public awareness and involvement are essential to pollinator protection, NAPPC Steering Committee member Professor Chip Taylor of the University of Kansas, and the head of MonarchWatch, has enlisted the help of acclaimed artist Stan Herd to publicize the issue. Herd specializes in large-scale earthworks, such as crop art and rock mosaics, and has been featured in publications such as *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. His previous work can be viewed at www.stanherdart.com, and a sketch of the crop art is available at http://pollinator.org/pix/gridded_image_crop_art.jpg.

In mid-May, Herd began building the world's largest living stamp using only plants and other natural materials. The installation is being executed near Pendleton’s Country Market, a family farm off Kansas Highway 10 between Olathe and Lawrence.

Herd and his staff of three began creating the framework for the crop art by laying 150 hay bales, each weighing 120 pounds. They then began reproducing the green areas of the stamp by planting 350 squash and 50 sunflowers. When completed, the resulting evanescent image will be viewed aerially for a brief few weeks. Flyovers originating from an airport three miles away are planned.

The crop art will coincide with National Pollinator Week, June 24-30, designated by the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help publicize the vulnerability of pollinators and to call on the public to create pollinator-friendly habitats in their own landscapes.

National Pollinator Week will focus on information on actions that help pollinators. Through habitat destruction, misuse of pesticides, and pollution, humans have provoked a decline in many species of pollinators, such as birds, bats, bees and butterflies that play an essential role in the reproduction of flowering plants both on farms and in the wild.

NAPPC encourages all types of groups – classrooms, congregations, families – and individuals to follow Stan Herd’s progress as he creates the crop art by visiting www.pollinator.org (click “Watch the Crop Art Grow!”), and to use this opportunity to learn about pollinators by organizing their own National Pollinator Week activities. Visit www.pollinator.org for ideas for activities and for more information about events scheduled around the country.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the crop art project, visit www.pollinator.org (click “Crop Art Donations”) or Contact Laurie Davies Adams at (415) 362-1137 or info@coevolution.org. NAPPC encourages all types of groups – classrooms, congregations, families – and individuals to use this opportunity to learn about pollinators as they fundraise to support this project. NAPPC gratefully welcomes donations of any amount, and will recognize contributors on www.pollinator.org.

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(ELECTRONIC RESOURCES at www.pollinator.org include: (1) Fact Sheets on Pollination and for Gardeners, Public Land Managers, Educators and Students, Food Industry, Farmers and Ranchers; (2) Full-color artwork on Pollination; (3) Information about events and activities planned for Pollinator Week, and ways to get involved; (4) Crop Art Sketch <http://www.pollinator.org/pix/crop%20art%20sketch.jpg>. (5) Downloadable 300 dpi image of the *Pollination* stamps http://pollinator.org/pollinator_week.htm.