



April 8, 2025, 12 p.m. ET, 11 a.m. CT, 10 a.m. MT, 9 a.m. PT

## Moving the needle on the conservation of rare butterflies in Michigan

Ashley Cole-Wick, Conservation Associate - Zoology, Michigan Natural Features Inventory | Michigan State University Extension

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Ashley Cole-Wick works on interdisciplinary research teams at Michigan Natural Features Inventory to protect rare butterflies and other wildlife by providing high-quality data to decision-makers and thinking outside of the box for conservation. She will share her work on two federally listed butterflies: Karner blues and Mitchell's satyrs. By studying how these species respond to habitat management and succession, she assists land managers in making the tough decisions about allocating limited resources for restoration. Ashley will also discuss ongoing collaborations on genetic rescue, assisted migration, species distribution modeling, and population reintroductions that can be used to support butterfly and other invertebrate protection throughout North America.



### **Ashley Cole-Wick, Conservation Associate - Zoology, Michigan Natural Features Inventory | Michigan State University Extension**

Ashley joined Michigan Natural Features Inventory in 2018 with a mission to protect our state's rare species like the Mitchell's satyr and Karner blue butterflies. While at MNFI she has also conducted rare species and ecological inventories on tribal lands, and has conducted surveys for aquatic plants, small mammals, land snails, freshwater mussels, aquatic snails, and various insect species. A native Iowan, she received her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and Policy at Drake University, where she worked with professors on butterfly movement studies in prairies, documenting a new Regal Fritillary population, which ignited her interest in the peril of endangered species. She gained an introduction to prescribed fire in Iowa through Drake's Prairie Rescue & Restoration Program in 2003, and now provides information to land managers in making burn prescriptions that have the maximum benefit for rare species. Before moving to Michigan, Ashley spent time abroad, studying in Austria, working in South Korea and the Peruvian Amazon, and then completing a Master's in Conservation Biology at the University of Alberta in 2013. She enjoys helping people better understand the natural world around them so that they can work to protect it.