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Seneca Park Zoo Society and Department of Transportation Receive Environmental Excellence Award

December 5, 2017 —Seneca Park Zoo Society and New York State Department of Transportation were awarded an Environmental Excellence Award from the State Department of Environmental Conservation. This was one of seven awards granted at a ceremony held at Union College last month.

The award recognizes organizations and municipalities in New York for their innovative programs and commitment to environmental sustainability, social responsibility and economic viability. The Zoo Society/NYS DOT team won the award for its work restoring pollinator habitat on Interstate 390. “Restoring monarch habitats is a big priority for the Zoo Society,” stated **Director of Programming and Conservation Action Tom Snyder**, “We were thrilled when the DOT wanted to partner on the I390 project. This solution is simple, scalable and can be used all over the state.”

The I390 Pollinator Project included changing mowing practices along a six mile stretch of I390. This resulted in 93 acres of naturally regenerating wildflowers for pollinators to complete their life-cycle uninterrupted by mowing. Additionally, the team planted pollinator gardens at rest stops, in part, to educate the public about pollinator migration.

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Paul A. Karas said, “We are proud to be recognized along with the Seneca Park Zoo Society on our innovative Butterfly Beltway pollinator protection program on Interstate 390. This project, which exemplifies Governor Cuomo’s commitment to protecting nature and wildlife throughout New York State, will continue to benefit not only pollinators and their food sources, but all of us who rely on New York State grown produce to keep our families healthy.”

“It is an honor to be recognized for the conservation work we’re doing right here in our region,” commented **Seneca Park Zoo Society Executive Director Pamela Reed Sanchez**. “We believe conserving wildlife and wild places starts right here in our home region.”

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.