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## **CATERPILLAR OF RARE BUTTERFLY FOUND AT OG&E SOLAR FARM**

*OG&E collaborates with Frosted Elfin Project Survey Team on research*



*LEFT: A frosted elfin caterpillar nestles against a yellow wild indigo plant on the grounds of OG&E's solar farm in Davis, Oklahoma.*

*RIGHT: Jeff Everett (left), Environmental Regulatory Manager for OG&E, along with Brenda D. Smith, the Frosted Elfin Project Survey Team Coordinator, grin as Smith holds a rare frosted elfin caterpillar found on the grounds of OG&E's Davis solar farm.*

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**OKLAHOMA CITY (June 23, 2022)** – This week is National Pollinator Week which is dedicated to promoting the health and protection of important pollinators like honeybees, butterflies and small birds. Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E) has been doing its part to preserve pollinator habitats by designating portions of the company's land as butterfly waystations – intentionally managed land that provides food and habitat for pollinator populations. Over the last 4 years, the electric company has planted 30 acres of pollinator habitats with another 30 acres on the way.

During a survey of state roadways, an eagle-eyed University of Oklahoma student working with the [Oklahoma Frosted Elfin Project](#) spotted some yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*) as they drove past the grounds of OG&E's solar farm in Davis, Oklahoma. Much like milkweed supports the lifecycle of monarch butterflies, wild indigo is a critical host plant for the rare frosted elfin butterfly during its caterpillar phase.

A lesser-known pollinator generally found in the northeastern United States, the frosted elfin butterfly's population has been in decline in recent years. At first glance, these butterflies look similar to a common moth, as they are typically brown or dark gray in

color. However, the whitish scales on their hindwings give them a unique frosted appearance, making them easier to identify.

"We were thrilled to learn that the OG&E pollinator habitat on our solar farm was growing such an important plant to a butterfly whose population is in decline," said Jeff Everett, Environmental Regulatory Manager for OG&E. "That's a great example of why we focus on these efforts."

Unfortunately, natural habitats hosting these plants have been depleted severely over the past few years, contributing to a steady decline in frosted elfin butterfly numbers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been studying the frosted elfin to help restore the habitats necessary for the butterfly population to thrive.

Upon discovery of the yellow wild indigo, OG&E partnered with the Oklahoma Frosted Elfin Survey Team to conduct a species survey of the frosted elfin at the Davis OG&E solar farm. During the assessment, the team observed the bright yellow frosted elfin caterpillars feasting on wild indigo, as well as monarch caterpillars on milkweed.

"As a significant landowner in our service territories, we are committed to protecting and preserving the natural habitats and the wildlife that call these environments home," said Everett. "It's gratifying to know that our partnership with state and federal wildlife agencies and commitment to environmental conservation is positively impacting important pollinators like the frosted elfin and monarch butterflies."

"Being able to access and study the frosted elfin population and its habitat on OG&E's solar farm increases our knowledge of the butterfly in Oklahoma and aids in efforts to reverse its decline," said Brenda D. Smith, the Frosted Elfin Project Survey Team Coordinator at the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory. "We're grateful to OG&E for prioritizing conservation and protection of vulnerable species and look forward to monitoring the solar farm population."

This spring, OG&E also gave away free pollinator seed kits at community events across the service area for community members to plant their own pollinator gardens. Even small pollinator gardens help these vulnerable pollinator populations and are a great way for anyone to contribute to conserving their ecosystems.

Support and preservation of pollinators and their associated habitats is just one example of OG&E's commitment to environmental stewardship. For more information about OG&E's conservation efforts, visit [oge.com/environmentalstewardship](https://oge.com/environmentalstewardship).

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### **About OG&E**

*Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of OGE Energy Corp. (NYSE: OGE), is Oklahoma's largest electric utility. For more than a century, we have provided customers in Oklahoma and western Arkansas the safe, reliable electricity needed to power their businesses and homes with some of the nation's lowest electric rates, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.*

*Our employees are committed to generating and delivering electricity, protecting the environment, and providing excellent service to approximately 882,000 customers. OG&E has 7,207 MW of electric generation capacity fueled by natural gas, wind, low-sulfur coal, and solar. OG&E employees live, work, and volunteer in the communities we serve. For more information about OG&E, visit us at [OGE.com](https://oge.com) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

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