A Big Day for Butterflies
Ribbon-cutting at the new Visitors Pavilion of the National Butterfly Center

by Jane Vicroy Scott

Sometimes, dreams do come true!
Everyone was excited. On October 28th, 2010, the ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the Visitors Pavilion at the National Butterfly Center marked the fulfillment of the second step of our long-held dream to create the premier center for education, conservation and research about wild butterflies.

The first step, taken in 2002-2003, was obtaining 100 acres of land on the Rio Grande and beginning to create gardens that would demonstrate the potential of the site to attract butterflies. These gardens have exceeded everyone’s expectations, with clouds of butterflies filling the air at peak times and with more than 200 species of butterflies seen.

Since 2004, we slowly made progress toward the goal of constructing a Visitors Pavilion that would house exhibits, offices, a gift shop and a cafe. We were almost there in 2008, but the national financial crisis hit us particularly hard when we lost more than $850,000 in pledged funding.

Overleaf: A view of the newly constructed Visitors Pavilion. The reflecting pool contains a small fountain (not in operation when this photo was taken) and will include native water plants. The bare soil areas surrounding the building will be planted in the spring of 2011 with grasses native to the Lower Rio Grande Valley.