# Town of Black Mountain

Black Mountain, NC

Mr. Mike Sobol

## Pledge Summary

The town of Black Mountain is along a major fall migration route for the monarch butterfly on their journey South across the Blue Ridge Mountains towards Mexico. We have thousands pass through our town and public parks during last week of September and/or 1st week of October annually. In 2015 we created our 1st Monarch Waystation in a 10 acre field in our Veterans Park that is right along the migration route to make an inviting place for monarchs to stop to fuel up with nectar from native aster and goldenrod on their journey. This field as over 500 common milkweed plants where monarchs also lay eggs April through June each spring and is filled with purple clover which seems to be one of their favorite sources of nectar locally.

## Action Items Committed for 2024

### Communications and Convening

- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

### Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

## Past Pledge Archive

| Mayor Name | Program Year | Pledge Date | Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor C. Michael Sobol | 2026 | 3/12/2026 | |
| Mayor C. Michael Sobol | 2025 | 4/23/2025 | Leadership Circle |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. Mike Sobol | 2024 | 4/13/2024 | Signatories |
| Mr. Larry Harris | 2022 | 4/21/2022 | Signatories |
| Mayor Larry B Harris | 2021 | 3/19/2021 | |

## Action Items

**In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).**

150

**Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)**

50

**In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

0.5

**Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.**

Lake Tomahawk Park has reclaimed a formerly neglected pollinator garden. This park is a public park and shared public space.

**How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?**

No specific programs targeting these communities.

**What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?**

Continuing to provide habitat for monarchs and other pollinators while providing public space for people to connect with nature and observe them.

**What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?**

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Our volunteers is a valuable resources! We'd like to see more hours dedicated to building our volunteer base to help meet our goals.

**What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?**

Because of the regional devastation due to Hurricane Helene that impacted our area in late September, we didn't record observations of the fall monarch migration, though monarchs did stop in the area in early October 2024, as there were gardens that were not destroyed by the storm.

## Selected Action Items

### Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Milkweed Plants at VP.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Milkweed Plant 2.jpg

**Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.**

The Dr. John Wilson community garden which is adjacent to one of the monarch waystations is sometimes involved in our workdays and/or tours of the waystation meadow and learn about the efforts of the waystations and the plants that are most beneficial to monarchs! We also maintain a community Facebook page for engagement opportunities. https://www.facebook.com/groups/195921917425575/

### Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Monarch Education Booth.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

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Monarch Waystation Monitoring 2.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation VP.png

**How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.**

Monarch Waystations of Black Mountain is a community group created in 2018 that has weekly volunteer opportunities to volunteer in 1 of 4 Monarch Waystation spaces. https://www.facebook.com/groups/195921917425575/ . We also have engagement with the Black Mountain Primary School where one of the Monarch Waystations is located. Classes come out each semester to observe pollinators in the garden and monarch caterpillars on common milkweed there when present. The Black Mountain Library staff and patrons also have connection to the Waystation on their site, advertising workdays there and staff sometimes comes out to engage or volunteer. We are also coordinating with Bee City USA to have 2 stops in Black Mountain on the “Asheville Butterfly trail”, this is a new program that installs a human sized butterfly artwork of a particular species relevant to the area and includes signage with species/conservation information. Annually, the Waystation Program participates in a local garden tour. In June 2024 the Primary school garden was on this tour.

**Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.**

Black Mountain Public Works Mows the meadow based on Monarch Migration/reproduction. Whenever monarch eggs/caterpillars/adults area present, which is typically in mid April-early June, and again from mid Aug-early Oct, these areas are not mowed.

## Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

**Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)**

99 White Pine Drive, Black Mountain, NC 28711. This is part of the Town's Community Garden & Veterans Park property. The 10 acre field containing milkweed and clover along with several diverse pollinator meadow areas totaling 1+ acre is located along a migration corridor where large numbers of monarchs stop to nectar on fall migration.

**What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?**

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Emily Sampson is a part-time employee of Town of Black Mountain Recreation and Parks. She works along with the Dr. John Wilson Community Garden Manager, an employee of the Town of Black Mountain Parks & Recreation, and sometimes coordinates with Town of Black Mountain Public Works Department in efforts related to monarch conservation.

**What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres ). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

0.5

## Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation at BML.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation Lake Tomahawk.png

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Volunteer Checking Milkweed.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Milkweed Plant with Catepillar.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Monarch Milkweed.jpg

**What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?**

We maintain the 4 Monarch Waystation locations throughout Town. We utilize our website for engagement efforts, as well: https://www.townofblackmountain.org/2871/Pollinator-GardensMeadow-Locations, and our Facebook Page.

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**How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

300

**Please describe your effort in completing this action.**

Alot of plants in these waystations and pollinator habitats are perennials and come back each year, but as the locations are maintained, volunteers plant beneficial flower and milkweeds to fill in any spots, or to further fill out the gardens. 300 plants planted are a rough estimate or plants that have been planted in years past and/or are newly planted each year such as via seeds or transplants (not including established perennials). Seed swaps are also conducted by the local library.

## Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

2025 Mayors Monarch Pledge Proclamation.pdf

**What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?**

Black Mountain Public Works is very agreeable with our mowing schedule set up around pollinators/monarch presence. In 2024 we held off field mowing until mid June so that people could enjoy watching the lightning bugs in the field. This season (2025), we may wait until late June/early July as the mowing in mid June greatly impacted the population. The Town Council adopted a "No Mow May" Resolution beginning in May 2025 to bring awareness on not mowing their yards to allow for pollinator plants to grow and bloom to help all pollinators! Town ordinances for high grass will be suspended during the month of May.

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

In progress

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

No Mow May Resolution adopted by Town Council for month of May- beginning May 2025.

**If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.**

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We continue to watch populations and determine best time to mow to both allow people to enjoy the space and pollinators/monarchs and lightning bugs to flourish. The Parks and Recreation staff reports to the Planning Department on significant changes to the monarch populations. Staff continues to follow existing zoning/land use ordinances requiring native plants for design standards and installation, and minimally disturbing naturally occurring vegetation and native plants in areas. There is no set date for a change in ordinances, but awareness, education, community groups, and residents alike are mindful of the importance of pollinator habitats in Town.

## Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation at BML.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation Library.png

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Waystation Lake Tomahawk.png

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Butterfly Sign.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

LT Waystation Sign.jpg

**How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

10

**Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).**

Signage is located at all of the Monarch Waystations throughout Town, including signage that shows the gardens are pollinator gardens and their significance. The attached photos are examples of various signage at the pollinator gardens and waystations.

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