City of McAllen

McAllen, TX

Mayor Javier Villalobos

Pledge Summary

The City of McAllen is a city in south Texas with a population of roughly 142,000. It is the largest city in Hidalgo County of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a region known for its high biodiversity and as an ecotourism destination. Mayor Javier Villalobos of McAllen, Texas has committed to conserving the monarch butterfly and the pollinator community that are so important to ecosystem and economic health. Mayor Villalobos looks forward to engaging residents and creating more pollinator habitat throughout the city

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural

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awareness and recognition.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2026	12/2/2025	
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2025	12/10/2024	Leadership Circle
Major Javier Villalobos	2024	1/11/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2022	4/19/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Jim Darling	2021	3/19/2021	Leadership Circle

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.).

6000

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.)

4000 youth, 2000 adults

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.

3

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.

Schools, parks, roadsides

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

91% of City of McAllen residents are people of color and 46% are considered to be in poverty. Engaging with our community at large through educational programming and habitat creation projects ensures that we are connecting and impacting the lives of folks in marginalized communities.

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

We continue to want to encourage the people of McAllen to support ecosystem health for the benefit of people and wildlife.

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?

NWF website, from plant finder to this portal, have been useful.

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

We hosted a Monarch Monitoring Workshop in association with the Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting in October.

Selected Action Items

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

3/27/2023

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Mayors Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2023 3-27 Proclamation.jpg

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2023 3-27 Commissioner Quintanilla proclamation to recommit to Mayors Monarch Pledge.jpg

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

374556108_699120168811033_1240906562283493258_n.jpg

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

Community Artwork 2.jpg

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

Community Artwork 3.jpg

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

Community Artwork 4 (Monarch).jpg

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Keep McAllen Beautiful, Texas Department of Transportation, Don't Mess With Texas Program

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

572

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

"We Only Have One" mural featuring iconic Monarch butterfly and other Texas plants and animals. The official unveiling was on August 25. Part of the Don't Mess With Texas Program to advocate for reducing litter, which has negative impacts across entire ecosystems. It celebrates the culture of Texas and is directly advocating for environmental stewardship for our iconic wildlife, including monarch butterflies.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

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

20211210_111703 (1).jpg

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

PXL_20231212_151956096.jpg

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Continued to share monarch gardening flyers and NWF habitat creation hand-outs at events such as McAllen Monarch Fest and Keep McAllen Beautiful Arbor Day. We also host those printed materials at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, where all guests are able to view and take hand outs. Monarch & pollinator conservation messaging added to various programs, including gardening workshops, school field trip lessons, and other seasonal events.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

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

Texas Master Naturalists (Rio Grande Valley Chapter), Edinburg Scenic Wetlands, USFWS

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

They provided educational outreach at Monarch Fest 2023.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

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

Pequin Plant Sale 10142023 (2).png

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

2074DF5A-C0D6-4DC7-AD1B-B8C180A1063F.png

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

2023 INVITATION to Planta Nativa.jpg

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

Tree Giveaway.png

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

20231021_082011.jpg

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

20231021_092147.jpg

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

20231021_102429.jpg

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

20231021_105917.jpg

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

908

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3166

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Native Plant Project for one of the events. Please note that we integrate native plant sales, seed giveaways, and tree giveaways into many events throughout the year. Included are flyers and photographs from some of them.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3

What species were collected or propagated?

Asclepias oenotheroides

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Quinta Mazatlan

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

This was an in-house effort by the Center for Urban Ecology team at Quinta Mazatlan to save seed from and propagate Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides). We collected seed from over 25 individuals over the year and saved well over 150 seeds. We are currently in process of germinating seeds. Any plants that result will be used either on-site, or sold (such as in association with native plant gardening workshops).

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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

Screenshot_20231212-095841.png

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

Tiny Forest Ware Road 3-25-23 (1).jpg

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

Tiny Forest Ware Road 3-25-23 (39).jpg

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

Tiny Forest 11-18-23 (8).jpg

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

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Location: 26.186985, -98.264644 Roadside location along Ware Road, near Palm View Community Center and Brown Middle School.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3600

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.5

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

These are part of Tiny Forest projects. As such, they are maintained during establishment period by control efforts for introduced grasses (e.g. bermuda grass) and by supplemental watering.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Tiny Forests with McAllen Independent School District

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

Cathey Middle School

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

Plant materials and curriculum ideas

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How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

909 (849 students and 60 teachers)

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

Friends of Quinta Mazatlan, McAllen Independent School District

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? 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.

.25

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Significant site preparation efforts (including over 4 months of silage tarping) to control introduced grasses (e.g. bermuda grass). Dense planting to reduce time period in which grasses are receiving enough light to thrive. Added 3 inches of mulch after planting for additional weed suppression. In-ground sprinkler system for watering.

Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

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

community science 2.jpg

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

community science.jpg

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

197

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

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Quinta Mazatlan, Texas Master Naturalist (Rio Grande Valley Chapter), Texas Master Naturalist (South Texas Border Chapter).

Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

We supported the City Nature Challenge 2023 by being co-organizers of the community science event. Prior to the event we hosted trainings, did outreach to encourage folks to participate, and did the background organizer tasks as required for participation. During the event, we sent staff to document the plants and wildlife at some of the parks and roadsides that we maintain pollinator-friendly habitats to make observations. Over 11,000 observations were made during the event, including 570 of butterflies. No monarchs were documented during the CNC, which was from April 28 - May 1. Additionally, we also curate Monarch inaturalist observations made during the year by adding life stage annotations and nectar plant observation fields. This results in data that helps showcase the seasonality of monarchs in the RGV and build data on which nectar plant species they are predominantly seen using.

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

2023 3-27 Commissioner Quintanilla proclamation to recommit to Mayors Monarch Pledge.jpg

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

2023 new monarch street banner.jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (9).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (11).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (13).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (57).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (118).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (129).jpg

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

Monarch Fest 2023 (162).jpg

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

2383

What was the date of your festival?

4/1/2023

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

McAllen Public Library, McAllen Recycling Center, McAllen Parks & Recreation, McAllen Public Utility, USFWS, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands, Texas Master Naturalists, Texas Parks & Wildlife

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

Monarch Fest is an annual event we have put on in the City of McAllen for over 5 years. It is held every year at Quinta Mazatlan, a highly visible and accessible location (it is off of a major roadway that has bus routes for ease of access). It was held on 4/1/2023 following several weeks of outreach/marketing to ensure that the greatest number of people in the community were aware of it in the hopes that they would attend. It featured educational booths, local small business vendors, featured native plant sales, garden tours, cultural dances and music, book reading, scout badge activities, and more.

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