High Bridge Borough

High Bridge, NJ

Mayor Michele Lee

Pledge Summary

High Bridge is a small town in Northern New Jersey and home to over 300 acres of Green Acres Open Space. High Bridge is committed to preserving and enhancing its Monarch Habitat and promoting Monarch Awareness. One space, our Nassau Road site, is now home to three large Common Milkweed colonies consisting of over 1000 Common Milkweed plants, is a Monarch Larva Monitoring Project site and will be certified as a Monarch Waystation in 2022.

Action Items Committed for 2021

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.
- 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.
- 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-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- 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.)
- 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 or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- 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

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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).
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Michele Lee	2025	3/31/2025	
Mayor Michele Lee	2022	3/15/2022	
Mayor Michele Lee	2021	12/8/2020	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.).

500

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.)

480 adults, 20 youth

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.

.02

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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 and shared public spaces

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

The lead of our program Mia Baldwin, a representative of both the low-income community and community of color in High Bridge has used our program to connect her children to other residents and to our natural world. Her efforts were made possible through the program were possible, as there were no fees, no social requirements, etc.

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

High Bridge resident Mia Baldwin reached out to schoolteacher Lynn Hughes in regard to the milkweed patches throughout the town. She was given permission to use signage and worked with the High Bridge Environmental Commission to engage the local government, residents and students.

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?

Many grants don't fund the tools needed for maintenance of garden areas. For a town our size with over 500 acres of open space, maintenance is difficult for a DPW comprised of three employees. Funding for tools such as push mowers, etc. would be very helpful.

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

2021 we were awarded a New Jersey Native Plant Society Grant to add nectar sources to our larger site on Nassau Road.

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:

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

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

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

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

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

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

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

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

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.)

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

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

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

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).

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).

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

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

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

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.

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

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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

High Bridge Environmental Commission, Borough of High Bridge Town Council, Councilwoman Lynn Hughes

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

The Borough of High Bridge is a Certified National Wildlife Federation Wildlife Habitat

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

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

milkweed colonies.docx

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)

The site is located within the 50 acre Green Acres site encompassing the Nassau Trail on Nassau Road.

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

The site is part of the High Bridge Environmental Commissions Monarch Habitat efforts and is too the site of a Rutgers Environmental Steward's internship/certification project.

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.

2

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.

IMG_4755.jpg

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

High Bridge Environmental Commission, High Bridge Town Council, High Bridge Department of Public Works

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

1000

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Five Common Milkweed Colonies totaling over 1000 plants are marked annually and saved from mowing. Signs are displayed and stakes with roping are used to alert DPW when mowing.

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.

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

3

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

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The High Bridge Environmental Commission works with their Town Council Liaison Lynn Hughes to implement mowing practices that ensure the safekeeping of Common Milkweed colonies throughout the borough through verbal communications and signage.

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.

3

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

Rutgers Environmental Stewards Student, High Bridge resident, and High Bridge Environmental Commission Volunteer Mia Baldwin worked with the Borough Administrator Bonnie Fleming, Hunterdon County Representative for the New Jersey Native Plant Society Susan Haake to secure a New Jersey Native Plant Society Grant to add nectar sources to a 2 acre restoration site.

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

High Bridge Environmental Commission, Save Springside Action Committee, High Bridge School District, High Bridge Town Council President Lynn Hughes

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

In Progress, On-going

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

All plants purchased for introduction to the town's landscape are native.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

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pollinator habitat signs.docx

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

2

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

With the funding from a New Jersey Native Plant Society grant award two pollinator habitat signs (English and Spanish) were to be purchased and in turn were generously gifted by the Xerces Society. https://gifts.xerces.org/products/pollinator-habitat-sign-2020

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.

monarch blitz amy.jpg

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

monarch blitz linda.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).

5

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

High Bridge Environmental Commission, Clinton Township Council, High Bridge School District, Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program

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

2021 Monarch Monitoring Blitz Program (eggs, larvae, adults, milkweed)

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

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What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

10

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

Our invasive species removal program is ongoing. This year, under the leadership and guidance of resident and Green Team Chair we cut and bagged (20 bags total) Japanese Knotweed from a future native plant garden project funded by a grant award through Sustainable Jersey. 2022 we will focus on other areas throughout the borough.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

milkweed seed fb post.docx

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

2

What species were collected or propagated?

Common Milkweed

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

High Bridge Environmental Commission

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

Common Milkweed seed pods were collected by local residents (3) and information was posted online. We received two requests for seeds.

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).

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

hbms milkweed patch.docx

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)

The High Bridge Elementary school is a certified National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat. The High Bridge Middle School is working towards certification.

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)

5

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

High Bridge Elementary School High Bridge Middle School

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

The High Bridge Green Team Chair is developing informational flyers to be distributed to residents through local outlets (businesses, borough hall, etc.)

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).

4 educators, 100 students

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

High Bridge Elementary School Teacher and Environmental Club Leader Lynn Hughes, High Bridge Elementary School Environmental Club Students, High Bridge Middle School Environmental Club Leaders and students

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.

.02

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

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weekly monitoring once the growing season starts

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