City of South Padre Island

South Padre Island, TX

Mayor Patrick McNulty

Pledge Summary

The City of South Padre Island is directly in the path of the Monarch Coastal Flyway in the most important state for eastern migratory Monarchs. Our community strives to live harmoniously with nature and pledges to become a city-wide haven for migratory Monarchs by creating and managing habitat and through community awareness and education.

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.
- 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 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.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- 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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- 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.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Patrick McNulty	2024	4/30/2024	
Mayor Patrick McNulty	2023	3/31/2023	
Mayor Patrick McNulty	2022	3/12/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Patrick McNulty	2021	3/23/2021	Signatories

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.).

325

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.)

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100 youth and 225 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.

1

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.

Community Gardens, City Parks, and The South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center

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

Everyone in the community is invited to our HalloWings Monarch Migration Celebration Festival and admission fees to the center are kept to a minimun.

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

Our motivation is seeing the positive results of the work we have done in the last couple of years and the knowledge we have gained in doing it. We feel like we've learned quite a bit and have become better and more efficient in building and maintaining habitat and communication between city staff, nature center staff, Texas Master Naturalists, and our community.

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?

We haven't taken advantage of many resources to be honest, but we do enjoy the workshops that have been offered by the NWF this past year. Being able to chat with others about what they are doing in their cities is always helpful and inspiring.

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

It was a very tough year for us on SPI. We suffered a deep freeze event in Feb and recovering from it took a lot of time away from Public Works staff, SPI Birding Center staff, and the city of SPI as a whole. It think the time it took to recover set us back in our Monarch Mayor's Pledge action items this year, but hopefully we can bounce back better this coming year. We are learning to communicate a lot better between entities involved and we are building a really good crew of people. We feel hopeful for the future.

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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):

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).

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.

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.

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

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

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

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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.

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).

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

What species were collected or propagated?

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

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

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

Where is the monarch habitat located? (Please provide an address, if possible)

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

What is the total acreage of land that has been converted? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.

How many lots were converted to monarch habitat? Please limit your answer to only the number of lots in the answer field below (e.g., 3)

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Please describe when the lots were converted to monarch habitat and the planned maintenance schedule.

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

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

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

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.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

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

When did this challenge take place?

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.

Please describe your challenge and the results.

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

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

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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.

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.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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.

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

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below.

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

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.

Rio Grande Valley Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists

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

The RGVCTMN are engaged in habitat creation, maintenance (removing invasive grasses/plants from garden beds), and citizen science (contribute observations to SPI Monarch and Milkweed iNaturalist project).

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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.

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

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

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

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

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We sold 75 native plants during our HalloWings Monarch Migration Celebration Plant Sale. All plants were butterfly nectar plants that are well known to do well in our local environment. We also sold native milkweed (Zizotes Milkweed).

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

250

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

We partnered with the RGVC Texas Master Naturalists that volunteered during the event.

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.

Butterfly park.jpg

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

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

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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)

There are two significant butterfly gardens on SPI. The SPI Birding & Nature Center has expansive native gardens and certified Monarch Waystations that have been planted by staff alongside community volunteers. The City of SPI has a Monarch Waystation at the intersection of Gulf Blvd. and E. Esperanza St. Both gardens have signage and sculpture/art relating to the Monarch butterfly.

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

South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center, Keep SPI Beautiful Committee, SPI Public Works, RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists

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.

1

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

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).

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

RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists

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

iNaturalist Project called "Monarchs and Native Milkweeds of South Padre Island". The project gathers data on the distribution of native Zizotes Milkweed in the city, timing of occurrence of Monarchs in the area, local Monarch habitat ecology, and what species of native plants are utilized by Monarchs on the island. https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/monarchs-and-native-milkweeds-of-south-padre-island

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.

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

South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center, Keep SPI Beautiful Committee, RGV Texas Master Naturalists, local volunteers.

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

75

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

We planted native to the island, Zizotes Milkweed, at existing Monarch waystation gardens at the SPI Birding & Nature Center as well at the city's butterfly garden/Monarch Waystation. Plants have been spreading seed and more milkweeds are spreading and multiplying.

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.

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

Hallowings flyer 2.png

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)

275

What was the date of your festival?

October 30th, 2021

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

South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center and RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists

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).

Every fall the South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center hosts its annual "HalloWings Monarch Migration Celebration" on the Halloween weekend, which usually coincides with the peak of fall Monarch migration through our area (coastal flyway). We have a Halloween/Monarch themed celebration where we have live music, vendors, playgrounds, sandcastle building, and of course we have a big Native Plant Sale, "Gardening for Monarchs" presentation, butterfly garden tours, Monarch ecology crafts and games for kids, and more! It has become a popular fall event in the city and our gardens are in peak bloom during our event.

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