Reston, VA

Reston, VA

Chief Executive Officer Larry Butler

Pledge Summary

Reston is a planned community located in Fairfax County, Virginia with approximately 65,000 residents. The community is located 20 miles west of Washington, DC and is renowned for its preservation of natural areas and commitment to environmental stewardship. Reston has been certified by NWF as a Community Wildlife Habitat. It is also a Tree City USA as designated by the National Arbor Day Foundation and a designated Biophilic City. Reston recognizes the plight of the Monarch species and endeavors to conserve habitat on Reston Association property, which is accessible to residents and visitors. Reston Association staff educate homeowners about monarch conservation efforts and provide resources for people to create butterfly habitats on their own properties and in their neighborhoods.

Action Items Committed for 2021

Communications and Convening

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

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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).

Systems Change

- 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
Acting Chief Executive Officer - Reston Association Peter Lusk	2026	3/17/2026	
Chief Executive Officer - Reston Association Mac Cummins	2025	3/21/2025	Signatories
Chief Executive Officer Larry Butler	2022	12/16/2021	Leadership Circle
Chief Executive Officer Larry Butler	2021	3/26/2021	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.).

8658

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.)

218 youth, 8440 adult

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

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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.

Residences, rights of way, roadsides, community gardens, nature center, parkland

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

All programs and volunteer opportunities, including those related to monarch conservation last year, are open to our diverse Reston community. 1,300 acres of open space are equitably distributed throughout our community as per our Master Plan. 55 miles of pathways and trails connect people to nature and heavily used, especially during the pandemic. Partnerships with the Reston Community Center and Friends of Reston help to provide some free programs as well as scholarships.

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

Reston has been known for its environmental stewardship and education since its inception in the 1960's. This program was a natural fit for us. We have many residents and staff concerned about the Monarchs and motivated to help as they can.

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?

I participated in the monthly call and especially appreciated the opportunity to hear Dr. Chip Taylor and Dr. Doug Tallamy present. Now that our Nature Center is open to the public again, we would like any printed materials that NWF can provide for our brochure racks and events. We would also like to invite you to table at our Spring Festival which will be returning on May 7.

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

Despite the pandemic, we were able to create safe ways for the community to stay engaged in land management activities and nature programming both in-person and virtually.

Selected Action Items

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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)

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)

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

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

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).

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

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.

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

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:

11/19/2021

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

Mayors' Monarch Pledge Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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Mayors Monarch Proclamation 2021 SIGNED.pdf

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.)

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

Branching Out Summer 2021 Monarchs.pdf

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

Reston Today Pollinator Video.png

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

Monarchs in Peril was the cover story of our Walker Nature Center's summer newsletter, Branching Out. The story included action items for residents to help conserve the species. 1,000 copies were distributed in print form. Another 2,900 subscribers received it electronically. The newsletter was also shared on the Reston Association website, social media platforms and RA News (a weekly e-newsletter). During National Pollinator Month, Reston Association produced a 3 minute video "Reston Today- Unsung Heroes of our Gardens". The video spotlighted not only the plight of many pollinator species, including Monarchs, but also ways to help. The video pointed viewers to the online resources offered by National Wildlife Federation and showed milkweed plants growing in one of Reston's community gardens and Monarch Waystations. It encouraged the planting of native species, especially milkweed. View the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNOMZzGzbzg. The Walker Nature Center also incorporated Monarch conservation education into a variety of programs, including preschool programs (Monarchs & More), camp programs, all ages events (Spring Show Day), and adult programs (Native Plant Webinar). These programs reached approximately 148 participants.

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.

RGC Day.jpg

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

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Reston Association partnered with the Reston Garden Club to plant milkweed and other nectar producing and butterfly host plants at the Soapstone Wildflower Trail. We also partner with Plant NoVa Natives and the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (Audubon at Home Program) to educate residents about butterfly friendly yards and cross promote events such as native plant sales and webinars.

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

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

Best Management Practices_Final July 16.pdf

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

Reston Association is the umbrella community association that produced the attached Best Management Practices for Invasive Plants. Its outreach materials and covenants distribute to 134 "cluster" HOAs.

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

Reston Association engaged a team of 7 volunteers to work with staff on developing Best Management Practices for Invasive Plants. The guidelines inform homeowners and clusters housing developments that own common land about the harmful effects of non-native plants on wildlife habitat and biodiversity. The BMP document was distributed to the Presidents of the local cluster HOAs, made available on the RA website and is planned to become part of in-person trainings with clusters when those resume post-pandemic.

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.

Native Plant Sale Flier 2021.pdf

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

Native Shrub Sale Flyer 2021.pdf

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

1,735 wildflowers and ferns, plus 205 shrubs

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

204

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

The sales were held at Reston Association's Walker Nature Center. They were cross-promoted by Plant NoVa Natives.

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.

Glade Front Garden Milkweed Close.JPG

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 Walker Nature Center (11450 Glade Drive) has demonstration naturescaped gardens for sun, shade, rain garden and pond habitats. In 2020, we maintained and enhanced the front pollinator garden.

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

We partnered with Hidden Lane Landscaping who provided pro bono labor and new native plants.

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.

.04

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).

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

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Biophilic Cities Reston.png

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

Biophilic Cities Network

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

Reston maintained its designation as a Biophilic City. https://www.biophiliccities.org/

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.

Butterfly Count 2021 resized.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).

14

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

Several of our volunteers are from the Virginia Master Naturalists program. We also have expert assistance from Dr. Elise Larsen of the Georgetown University's Butterfly Lab.

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

Each year since 1994, Reston Association has hosted the Annual Reston Butterfly Count, engaging volunteers to search for butterflies throughout Reston's 1,300 acres of open space. Since 2010, our count circle has been registered with the North American Butterfly Association, and data has been shared with NABA for its Fourth of July Butterfly Count Report (https://www.naba.org/butter_counts.html). Our 2021 count was held on July 10. 495 butterflies of 29 species were observed, including 3 Monarchs.

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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Lake House Garden 2021 resized.jpg

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

Reston Association engaged the Reston Garden Club

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

15

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

In celebration of the Reston Garden Club's 50th Anniversary, the club enhanced the pollinator garden at the Lake House, a community building used for public programs and private events. A native Fringe Tree was planted as the focal point surrounded by native shrubs and wildflowers.

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

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

Girl with Invasives Bag.PNG

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

800

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.

Reston Association continued its invasive plant removal program throughout 800 acres of natural areas. Land parcels are monitored, and staff and volunteers work to remove invasives and plant natives. In 2021, this work was conducted during Reston's Arbor Day at three locations with approximately 60 volunteers, also at monthly Habitat Heroes locations, each with approximately 12-20 volunteers. Invasive plant control is also part of routine maintenance performed by staff. RA deploys a number of techniques including manual removal and pesticide application by certified technicians.

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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Garden Signs.png

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

Goldfinch by Sun Garden Sign.png

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

15

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

There are 4 styles of purchased signs displayed on open space throughout Reston such as the Community Gardens, Monarch Waystations, Lake House and the Walker Nature Center. (see photo attached). There are also a number of custom interpretive signs at the Walker Nature Center and at meadows throughout the community. A sample custom sign which educates people on landscaping with native plants to support wildlife is attached (being admired by a dining American Goldfinch :)

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.

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

RASER 2020 Report Card & Recommendations FINAL.pdf

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

Reston Association's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), Reston Association State of the Environment (RASER) Project Team

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

Since 2017, promoting the removal of invasive plants and the installation of native plants has been included throughout the Reston Association State of the Environment Report's (RASER) Vegetation Chapters and Recommendations, including those related to Forests, Meadows, and Urban Landscaping. The RASER Report Recommendations are updated annually and approved by the Reston Association Board of Directors. The full RASER Report is updated and approved by the RA Board of Directors biannually.

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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.

The general recommendations are complete with renewed commitment as of December 2020. The RASER Report and Recommendations can be viewed at https://bit.ly/RASER2020.

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

In progress is RA's Environmental Advisory Committee's effort to further strengthen the RASER recommendations related to native plants by asking the Reston Associaton Board of Directors to "Develop a policy compatible with the Fairfax “Natural Landscaping at County Facilities” amendment for all Reston Association properties". This item has been accepted as a recommendation. The EAC will seek policy development and adoption in 2022.

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?

Fairfax County (Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination, Resilient Fairfax Initiative), Reston Association's Environmental Advisory Committee, Reston Association Climate Change Project Team

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

Our County has recently created a Climate Change Report and is reaching out to communities, including Reston, to engage in next steps of planning and implementation. There may be opportunity for Monarch Conservation to be included. Also Reston Association created its first Climate Change Report in 2019. While Monarch Conservation is not specifically called out, the Vegetation Section does speak to the general topic of impacts on wildlife habitat/native plants. The 2019 Report can be viewed here https://bit.ly/RestonClimateChangeReport2019. An updated 2021 Reston Climate Change Report is being drafted.

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