City of Topeka

Topeka, KS

Mayor Mike Padilla

Pledge Summary

The City of Topeka is the capital city of Kansas, with a population of approximately 126,000 residents. Topeka is supportive of its wild places and wild animals and plants that depend on those places. Topeka supports conservation of monarchs and other pollinators through a variety of strategies including native restoration at construction or improvement projects, and significant amounts of education and hands-on conservation work through efforts at the Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center in Topeka.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- 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).
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

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.)

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Mike Padilla	2024	2/7/2024	
Mayor Mike Padilla	2023	3/3/2023	

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Mayor Michelle De La Isla	2021	4/23/2021	Signatories

Action Items

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

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

Monarchs live in the Topeka area throughout the warm months, and migrate directly through Topeka northward each spring and southward each fall. We consider them to be local animals and want to help ensure their future.

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 think NWF offers excellent and helpful resources.

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.).

240000

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.

Our new habitats created and aleady planned to be created are multiple. We seeded and reseeded a drainage swale to native flowering plants. Its native seeded area was 1,200 ft x 30 ft = 36,000 sq ft. We have created several new native beds on zoo grounds. We started a Shawnee County School Monarch Waystations program in the fall of 2023. It will provide monarch waystations for 27 schools in SN County (Topeka) this spring. Each of those will be 100 sq ft - 800 sq ft.

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

When we started the Shawnee County School Monarch Waystations Program, fall of 2023, 13 of the schools who signed up to receive these free monarch waystations are Free/Reduced Lunch Program schools, in economically challenged neighborhoods.

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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.)

132000 adults and 108000 youth. These numbers refer to the number of people who visited the zoo in 2023 and saw/read our information on Monarchs combined with those who took part in our fall classes and tagging activities.

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

Our butterfly pavilion here on zoo grounds is heavily populated with monarchs, which continue to be highly popular.

Selected Action Items

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

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

500

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

None

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

2,336 plants (73 flats) (Saturday, May 13, 2023)

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

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.

1

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

City of Topeka, Facilities Department, Water Pollution Control Section, provides maintenance including watering and controlling invasive species.

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

Through the complete distance of the 500, 600, 700 blocks of southwest Jackson Street.

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

250

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

All 27 individual schools listed below, representing 4 different school districts.

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 Shawnee County Monarch Waystations Program that will put monarch waystations at 27 separate schools in the county. Each will be prepped, planted, and maintained by students at those schools with designated teaching staff to supervise. Plants were ordered in 2023 but actual planting will occur in May of 2024.

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.

0

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

All of the milkweed plants and native flowering plants for all 27 waystations, as well as all of the mulch, edging, water hoses, and an educational graphic for each waystation.

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

When the waystations are planted in the spring, each school is responsible for watering, weeding, controlling invasives. Waystations were required to be placed within close

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proximity to a water source to guarantee that maintenance is performed.

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).

800

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)

27

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

Wanamaker Elementary, Sheldon CDC, Jardin Elementary, Tecumseh North Elementary, Northern Hills Elementary, Logan Elementary, Williams Science and Fine Arts Magnet, Silver Lake High School, Silver Lake Elementary, Meadows Elementary, Lowman Hill Elementary, Mathes Early Learning Center, Capital City High School, Seaman Middle School, West Indianola Elementary, Auburn Elementary, Seaman High School, Whitson Elementary, Landon Middle School, Topeka West High School, Washburn Rural High School, Eisenhower Middle School, Scott Dual Language School, Hope Street Academy, North Fairview Elementary School, Lin Education Center, Shawnee Heights High School.

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

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

Citizen Science through public monarch classes and tagging events during the monarch migration through Topeka in September.

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).

598

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

The Kansas Museum of History - Topeka. We (the zoo) partner with the museum because they have excellent and large native grasslands around the museum. We provide them with new plantings each year in exchange for our using their classrooms and prairies for the public monarch classes and tagging activities.

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Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

27

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

The signs are still being designed by Compass Marketing Company of Topeka, for this program. They will focus on identifying this space as a Monarch Waystation, and describing the need (for all to read) on the importance of individuals creating monarch waystations at their own homes, yards, and gardens. We are also partnering with Operation Monarch Watch on this. They will also review and support language for the educational graphic that will go up at each waystation.

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)

In addition to the 11 pollinator beds we have on zoo grounds, we also entered stage 2 in late 2023 of the plans to provide monarch waystations to 27 Shawnee County Schools. Preparation of those Monarch Waystations will begin soon, and plants will arrive for them all in the last week of April 2024.

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

USD 501, USD 437, USD 345, USD 450, The Silver Lake School District, ITD (a $2,500.00 sponsor)

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

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

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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).

The Topeka Zoo offered numerous Monarch classes and tagging opportunities during the fall migration in 2023. These classes are formal classes for schools during the day and to the general public on evenings and weekends. Those to the general public are FREE of charge. Each has a 45-minute class exclusively on monarchs before going out to catch and tag. We also have a public exhibit on monarchs along a part of the zoo's walkway, as well as a butterfly pavilion on grounds with monarch interpretives.

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