Township of Franklin

Franklin Township (mailing address - "Somerset"), NJ

Mayor Phillip Kramer

Pledge Summary

Franklin Township, located in Somerset County, New Jersey, is home to over 65,000 residents and comprised of 46 square miles. With direct access to the Raritan and Millstone Rivers, nearly 10,000 of preserved open space, 2 beautiful grasslands preserves and approximately 50 miles of trails, Franklin has become a place for outdoor recreation, natural resources conservation, and environmental stewardship. The Township understands the importance of not only protecting our precious resources, but also in creating new habitat and opportunities for special, threatened and/or endangered species to flourish. By signing this Pledge and implementing a series of actions that protect, enhance and conserve the habitat of the Monarch Butterfly and other pollinators, Mayor Kramer and the Township Council recognize this need and pledge to incorporate these actions in the Township's planning and stewardship.

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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

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.

Past Pledge Archive

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Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Phillip Kramer	2024	12/7/2023	
Mayor Phillip Kramer	2022	1/18/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Phillip Kramer	2021	4/28/2021	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.).

100

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.)

100 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.

0

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.

raingardens, municipal building

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

We are planning on increasing habitat at our public open spaces which are visited by a variety of people from all different sections of the Township

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

Franklin Township is very dedicated to protecting habitat for the Monarch Butterfly and other pollinators. We have many community members that frequent our public open spaces for birding and butterfly watching. We want to protect this habitat and enhance it as part of our regular practices.

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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 have been using the website frequently, which has been very helpful.

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

Franklin Township just signed up in April 2021 so we are not in completion of projects just yet. We ordered pollinator plants for the re-planting of our rain garden at John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve, and are looking to partner with Scouts to plant demonstration garden at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve. Our Environmental Commission and Trails Advisory Committee are very much involved with planning and implementing projects under this Program have been planning for completion by the end of 2022.

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:

April 27, 2021

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

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Butterfly Proclamation_signed_042721.pdf

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.

On July 28, 2021, members from the Open Space Advisory Committee, Trails Advisory Committee, and Agriculture Advisory Committee met with Carl Hauck (Director - Department of Public Works) and Tara Kenyon (Open Space Consultant) onsite at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve to discuss maintenance and stewardship of Franklin Township's Grasslands Preserves. Members present have professional experience and

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backgrounds in biology, ecology, farming, birding, butterfly watching, trails (hiking, developing, using), and more. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the best method for mowing grasslands while protecting habitat (specifically that for the Monarch Butterfly and other pollinators) and providing maintenance needed for trail-goers and visitors. As a foundational document, the 2019 Grasslands Management Plan (prepared by New Jersey Audubon Society in conjunction with the Open Space Advisory Committee) was used.

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

Following this onsite meeting, DPW Staff worked closely with Tara Kenyon using feedback from this group to properly mow the Grasslands with the protection of milkweed stands identified, along with other pollinator habitat. The schedule of mowing was discussed to protect this habitat and the nesting season for birds. All milkweed stands were flagged off as a "no mowing zone" in late August/early September. DPW completed the mowing in October 2021. Prescribed Burning has been applied for through the New Jersey Forest Fire Safety Service and is anticipated to take place between December 2021 and April 2022. The group also discussed ordering pollinator plants for the rain garden re-planting at John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve and for a demonstration garden at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve.

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?

Franklin Township's Open Space Advisory Committee and Environmental Commission are working closely with Staff to plant pollinator plants in the re-planting of the rain garden at John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve (anticipated to begin in Spring 2022) and any new rain gardens proposed at the Township's open/public spaces. The Trails Committee is currently in the planning phase for a demonstration garden at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve using pollinator plants.

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.

1. Re-planting of existing rain garden at John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve: list of appropriate pollinator plants submitted to Department of Public Works for ordering; replanting of garden is anticipated for Spring 2022. 2. Demonstration Garden at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve: Trails Advisory Committee is working on the planning of a demonstration garden that will feature pollinator plants with educational signage near the kiosk and parking lot; anticipated completion is Summer 2022 3. Use of pollinator

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plants at open/public spaces: the Environmental Commission discusses site plans at each meeting and makes comments to the Planning Board. These comments now include using pollinator, native plants for use in green infrastructure for stormwater management. This process is ongoing monthly and will continue.

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.

Not yet started - we anticipate completing all actions by the end of 2022

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)

The proposed demonstration garden will be at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve (260 Skillmans Lane, Somerset). Milkweed and other pollinator plants are already established onsite. This site is a "birding hotspot" in New Jersey, and has been the host for numerous bird and butterfly walks through the New Jersey Audubon Society.

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

The Trails Advisory Committee is the lead group in this effort (which is in the planning stage as of the time of this report), and will engage with the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and the Department of Public Works.

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.

0.25

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)

4

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

Educational signage will be displayed at all open/public spaces where pollinator habitat is planted. As of right now, this will include the replanted rain garden at John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve (1091 Canal Road, Princeton) and the proposed Demonstration Garden at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve (260 Skillmans Lane, Somerset). Signage will be made at the Department of Public Works and installed upon completion of both projects (Spring 2022 and Summer 2022, respectively)

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