Township of Franklin

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

Mayor Phillip Kramer

Pledge Summary

Franklin Township is a 46-square mile municipality located in the southeastern portion of Somerset County, New Jersey. Previously recognized by Money Magazine as one of the top 100 places to live, Franklin Township is home to over 65,000 people. In Franklin, many different land uses can be found. The Township has over 200 acres of native grasslands preserves, 22 miles of the Delaware-Raritan Canal, a large portion of the State's Six-Mile Run Reservoir Park, multiple municipal parks and recreational facilities, urban areas, farms, and much more. The mission of Franklin Township is as follows: "Residents of the Township of Franklin will live and thrive in a community that values community pride and spirit, celebrates diversity and creates an environment that provides opportunities for all people so that they develop as healthy, caring, positive, educated and responsible members of the community". As part of creating this type of environment, Franklin is committed to preserving open spaces and protecting habitat. The Township joined the Mayors Monarch Pledge in 2021 and was able to incorporate the protection of pollinator habitat as well as the inclusion of pollinator habitat into new projects. Our Open Space Advisory Committee, Trails Advisory Committee, and Environmental Commission now incorporate the practice of pollinator protection, conservation and advancement into its regular work. Franklin understands the importance of pollinators and habitat for pollinators, and intends to continue making this work part of our standard practice in all applicable projects. We pledge to continue to work closely with our municipal staff and committees to ensure this practice, and hope to measure our success in forwarding this incredible cause!

Action Items Committed for 2022

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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

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.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

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.)

not sure - visitors to the municipal sites are not generally monitored

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.

0

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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?

We are very committed to protecting wildlife habitat, especially pollinators. We also want to be sure to include the creation and conservation of wildlife habitat into our regular landscaping practices. This is a work in progress but we are committed and working towards this goal through a myriad of projects.

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?

The website is full of resources and very helpful. I would like to see concept plans for gardens, demonstration plots, rain gardens, etc. to implement pollinator plants

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

We are moving towards our goals and slowing acheiving them. As we get grant funding and complete projects that include this effort, we will make much bigger strides.

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:

4/29/2022

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

April 27, 2021 Proclaimed as Mayors Monarch Butterfly Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Butterfly Proclamation_signed_042721.pdf

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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.

Through our Trails Advisory Committee, we have been working on restoring demonstration gardens at our Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve (260 Skillmans Lane) to remove weeds , add soil and mulch, and replant native plants. While we are only in the beginning phases of this, we are planning on submitting a grant request to purchase pollinator plants, add a walk-through trail, and install signage. As part of this project, we have been in discussions with Rutgers Master Gardeners. In the Fall, we worked with a local Boy Scout Troop who helped us weed and move mulch. We have also done extensive research about these types of gardens, and are putting together the grant application for February 2023.

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.

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

2022 Mowing Maps_101122.docx

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

Recommendations Table_only.pdf

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

Members of the Trails Advisory Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee, and Agriculture Advisory Committee worked closely with NJ Audubon Society in 2019 to develop the Updated Grasslands Management Plan. As part of this Plan, recommendations were made specifically for mowing height, type of mowing equipment to use, and time to mow.

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

In 2021, these Committee members met with Tara Kenyon (Land Management Consultant) and the Director of DPW at Negri-Nepote Grasslands Preserve to discuss mowing needs. At this onsite meeting, we marked off a large stand of milkweed that was to be protected. We also discussed mowing and Prescribed Burning to address natives while protecting pollinator plants. In 2022, this group again went over the proper mowing areas and timeframes with DPW to ensure protection of pollinator habitat. We also purchased the recommended mower for DPW to use to ensure the correct mowing height is achieved.

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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.

Final Site Plans_Senior Center_051222.pdf

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 proposed demonstration gardens at Negri-Nepote (see Action #3), we are planning on adding a rain garden near the Senior Center in the municipal complex, which will incorporate pollinator plants.

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

We worked with Rutgers University's Water Resources Group to develop the Green Infrastructure Action Plan (2021). The recommendation for a rain garden at the municipal complex was part of this effort. In 2022 we met with Staff onsite, and determined the Senior Center to be a better location to treat stormwater runoff and incorporate pollinator plants due to the high visibility. We hope to install this raingarden in the spring/summer 2023

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.

0.1

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.

Other Govt RXB application_FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP_2023 - SIGNED AND FINAL_070722.pdf

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

152

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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.

In addition to our mowing plan and new equipment (Action #4), we have again applied for Prescribed Burning through the New Jersey Fire Safety Service. The application calls for Prescribed Burning at both grasslands preserves for ecological purposes. This action will remove invasive species that threaten our native pollinator plants, while improving the quality of soil at the Preserves. Mowing was completed in early October 2022 to prepare, and the application was submitted on July 7, 2022. We have been in contact with NJFSS, who have stated that we are approved an on the schedule when weather permits, between January 1st and April 30th 2023.

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?

The Envionmental Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee, an Trails Advisory Committee

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.

We discuss the implementation of pollinator plants during appropriate times at meetings (during site plan review, trail maintenance), and will recommend it for any municipal landscaping as it comes up. We have also submitted a list of pollinator plants that also retain stormwater to our DPW. Examples include: Butterfly Milkweed, Black-Eyed Susan, Dense Blazing Star

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.

We have began contact with the Rutgers Master Gardeners, and have previously worked with the NJ Audubon Society. Additionally, we have frequently worked with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to weed and perform trail maintenance.

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

Very early on in our discussions but we intend to continue this effort.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

Firefly Walk flyer_2022.pdf

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

GLDC Template_updated 032822.docx

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

Franklin Township Astronomy Club and Franklin Township Environmental Commission

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.

We have been working with the Franklin Township Astronomy Club to host observation nights at the John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve. These events are focused on astronomy, but do highlight the importance of the reduction of light pollution. We held one after our Firefly Walk (July 9, 2022) which combined both groups. We have reviewed our light pollution ordinances and are planning on making recommendations for amendments. Lastly, the Environmental Commission reviews and makes recommendations on lighting during its biweekly site plan review.

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