Town of Garner

Garner, NC

Mayor Ken Marshburn

Pledge Summary

The Town of Garner is located in central North Carolina, just south of the state capital of Raleigh. The Town is invested in taking action to preserve the Monarch butterfly and other pollinator species. This is Garner's second year participating in the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- 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 developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

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Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Buddy Gupton	2026	3/3/2026	
Mayor Buddy Gupton	2025	3/28/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Buddy Gupton	2024	2/12/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Ken Marshburn	2023	3/24/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor ken Marshburn	2022	3/4/2022	

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.).

476

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.)

216 youth and 260 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.

No new habitat; maintaining the .55 acres created last year

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

N/A

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

We want to engage our community in helping to create habitat for monarchs and other wildlife by serving as an example and by providing information about how they can help through a variety of programs and initiatives.

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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?

The variety of publications and webinars offered by NWF have been helpful in increasing our staff's knowledge base, and we were also able to take advantage of the Garden for Wildlife plant donation program.

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

We have two new parks being added to our system, and we have kept native plants and beneficial habitats for pollinators in mind as the master plans are created for these properties.

Selected Action Items

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).

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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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)

Multiple Programs (7): Prolific Pollinators, Parks for Pollinators Walk, Pollinator Party (new), Toddler Nature Time, Little Outdoor Explorer's Club, Little Wild Ones: Pollinator Paradise, Discovery Day: The Flower Moon

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)

3

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

Aversboro Elementary School, Creech Road Elementary School

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

Milkweed seeds and plant care instructions

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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).

315 students and 26 educators

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

Camp Good Hope (Community of Hope Ministries)

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 is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Milkweed seeds are given to students, teachers, and parents along with care sheets to be taken and planted at home/school.

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.

Town of Garner Public Works

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

We work closely with our Public Works Department, as their Parks and Grounds crew is responsible for the physical maintenance of our Low Mow Zones and all other habitat maintenance within our parks. We partner with them anytime additional staff or equipment is needed to maintain our gardens and natural habitats. The Outdoor Education and Parks Manager and Parks and Grounds Supervisor have plans to meet to work towards better defined management plans for the parks, specifically in terms of invasive species control and best management practices for various habitats.

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.

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

Nash County Master Gardeners, Edgecombe Master Gardeners, NC Native Plant Society, Wake Audubon

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

One of our staff members was a speaker at the Nash County Master Gardeners' 2023 Pollinator Symposium. The presentation covered identifying common species of butterflies, including the Monarch, and how to create habitat in backyards and other spaces to conserve butterfly species. This event was attended by Master Gardeners from both Nash and Edgecombe County. We have also worked on cultivating relationships with the NC Native Plant Society and Wake Audubon to partner on educational and conservation efforts. Audubon has a Native Plants for Birds initiative and works with local native plant nurseries. 108 Master Gardeners and other interested adults attended the event.

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

The Town of Garner is in an exciting period of growth right now, with four major capital parks projects in the planning phase. The project team includes the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Director and the Parks & Nature Superintendent, both of whom have a focus on sustainability. They have been working directly with consultants on design elements for these parks. For one of the properties, there are several stormwater devices that will include vegetation for pollinators and interpretive signage. Similar conversations are being held relating to a greenway project in Garner, and opportunities for bioswales that add both beauty and habitat are a focus. There is also a push for the use of native species in all park projects. We were pleased to help review the North Carolina General Assembly's new native plants policy requiring any state-funded projects (including those using state-administered grant funds) to use only native vegetation for landscaping. The Town's Unified Development Ordinance now encourages developers to use native plants.

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).

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

Xerces Society, Wake County SWARM (association of Bee City USA designees within Wake County NC), Monarch Watch, National Wildlife Federation

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

Maintained Bee City USA designation; also have Certified Wildlife Habitats and a Monarch Waystation within our parks.

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.

approximately 1 acre

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.

Prior to 2023, there were no management plans or efforts in place for the removal and management of invasive species in our parks. Starting this year, park staff is in the process of developing natural resource management plans that will include a plan for invasive species control. Staff and volunteer efforts to map and remove invasive species were started, using the SEEDn app for both mapping and to track level of efforts. Species targeted included English ivy, Chinese privet, Autumn olive, Japanese stiltgrass, and Princess Tree. Because we do not have dedicated staff for these efforts, we are prioritizing our pollinator gardens and the natural areas closest to them, hence the small area treated so far. We hosted three volunteer workdays focused on invasive species removal, and staff and three individual volunteers also worked at various times throughout the year. The methods of removal were hand pulling and cut-stem treatment, depending on the species and plant development stage.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Low Mow Zones.jpg

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

MonarchWaystation.jpg

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

Sensory Garden 1.jpg

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

Raingardens_proof2.jpg

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

PFNativeGarden.jpg

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

BeeHotel.jpg

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

ButterflyHouse.jpg

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

10

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

Low Mow Zone Signs: 4 (3 at White Deer Park, 1 at Lake Benson Park) The Town of Garner has set aside three large areas of White Deer Park and Lake Benson Park as “Low Mow Zones.” These zones are left alone to grow wild in order to provide habitats for native pollinators. Leaving this land alone allows for pollinators to build a safe and undisturbed home; leaving seed heads and stems will help our solitary bees have nesting materials. Monarch Waystation Sign: 1 (White Deer Park) This sign marks the certified monarch habitat at White Deer Park. https://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/ Sensory Garden Interpretive Sign: 1 (White Deer Park) This garden celebrates the five senses of hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. Each section of the garden appeals to an individual sense. We have selected plants that are native to North Carolina, most of them pollinator-friendly. The sign describes the importance of native plants to pollinators, the environment and for water conservation. Rain Garden Interpretive Sign: 1 (White Deer Park) The interpretive sign in the rain garden at White Deer Park describes the importance of native plants to help fight erosion from water runoff and to clean the runoff water. The sign also mentions the benefits of native plants to pollinators, birds, and other native species. Pollinator-Friendly Native Plant Garden: 1 (White Deer Park) This sign came with the Garden For Wildife plant donation we received this year and is being installed in the front garden at the nature center. Homes for Insect Signs: 2 (White Deer Park) We have a set of four insect homes on the walkway to our nature center, including a butterfly house and native bee hotel. Each home has an interpretive sign.

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

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

We were unable to host a native plant swap as planned this year, but we have plans for one in the spring of 2024.

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

0

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

We will be partnering with Wake Audubon and South Wake Conservationists, and hope to also partner with Project Pando/We Plant it Forward and The NC Native Plant Society

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).

62

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

Science Across NC, Wake Audubon

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

In 2023, the Town of Garner participated in the City Nature Challenge/NC BioBlitz, the Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz, and held moth nights for families and adults where we collected data in iNaturalist. We maintain a milkweed garden at White Deer Park where the Monarch Larva Monitoring Program can take place.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

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

34

What species were collected or propagated?

common milkweed, purple milkweed

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

N/A

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

Our seed collection was a small-scale operation and not a public event. Staff members collected seeds from their homes and other locations (with permission from the landowners) and we distributed the seeds in our low-mow areas and gardens. We also received milkweed seeds from a member of Wake Audubon who has a large amount of milkweed in her yard and shares them. We also had help from our "Little Outdoor Explorer's Club" preschool program participants in helping to collect and sort the milkweed seeds from our established Monarch Waystation garden.

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