Town of Garner

Garner, NC

Mayor Buddy Gupton

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 third year participating in the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

Action Items Committed for 2024

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 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.
- 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.

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- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- 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

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.).

1629

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.)

863

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.

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.

Yards, containers, community garden, park gardens

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

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We offer several free programs and events (Discovery Days, Kids in Nature Day, etc.) and bring programs to Title I schools in our community. We try to place our monarch habitat in high-traffic, accessible areas in our parks

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

The Town of Garner is committed to doing our part to provide habitat for Monarchs and other wildlife, given the decrease in habitat in our state and across the country. It is also a great tool to reach people when educating about conservation.

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 habitat guideline resources on the website and opportunities to purchase or receive plants and seeds are super helpful. We have also attended some very informative webinars.

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

N/A

Selected Action Items

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

What species were collected or propagated?

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

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

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.

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PXL_20240928_130759088.jpg

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

Screenshot 2024-11-26 141239.png

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

Throughout the year we have offered in-person programming for all ages (both on-site and outreach) that included discussions about planting monarch habitat and sometimes included milkweed seed planting (see photo). We also posted to Facebook and maintained and replaced signage at our Low Mow Zones and native gardens (including our monarch/milkweed garden) for casual visitors to our parks. Multiple presentations were made by staff members to citizens and local groups on the benefits of creating monarch and other native wildlife habitat in yards, school grounds, and other public locations.

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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

Wake The Forest

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

89

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Along with the addition of 30 perennial wildflowers of various types that were added to our gardens, we partnered with the local non-profit group Wake the Forest, who donated and planted 59 shrubs and trees throughout two of our parks. All of these trees and shrubs were chosen for their benefit to wildlife, including those that are important pollinator nectar and host plants. Species included tulip poplar, fetterbush, bottlebrush buckeye, and pawpaw. We also continue to maintain our Low Mow Zones at two parks and our four gardens at White Deer Park.

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 Zone Sign.pdf

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

Monarch Waystation Sign.jpg

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

PF Native Garden Sign.jpg

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

Rain Garden sign.jpg

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

9

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

We have six Low Mow Zone signs (posted at two parks), a Garden for Wildlife sign and Monarch Waystation sign at our main garden at the White Deer Park Nature Center, and an interpretive sign adjacent to our rain garden and parking lot. Photos of each of these signs are attached.

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 (a group of municipalities and other organizations around Wake County that are recognized as Bee City USA communities/partners

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

Bee City USA (https://beecityusa.org/)

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

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

Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Workshop 1.jpg

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

Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Workshop 2.jpg

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

Pollinator Walk.jpg

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

Parks for Pollinators post on FB.png

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).

151

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

Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Program, National Parks and Recreation Association, Science Across NC

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

We hosted two workshops led by Jeff Pippen of the Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Program. The goal of these workshops were to train and recruit adult volunteers interested in setting up monitoring routes for butterflies in our area. We also partnered with Jeff to create a monitoring route at White Deer Park, and have recruited staff and a volunteer interested in helping to complete the surveys starting in 2025. We also participated in the Parks for Pollinators Bio Blitz led by the National Parks and Recreation Association, and hosted two Moth Night events during Moth Week. Participants collected records of pollinators and pollinator plants in iNaturalist, adding to our park's data. We are also a participating organization in the citizen science collaborative Science Across NC, and provided staff-led and self-guided opportunities for people of all ages to earn a moth patch or sticker as part of an effort to promote citizen science during Moth Week.

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

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

2024-05-11 Native Plant Swap.jpg

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

2024-05-11 Native Plant Swap-Set Up.jpg

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

2024-05-11 Native Plant Swap-Perusing.jpg

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

2024-05-11 Native Plant Swap-Shirley.jpg

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

465

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

22

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

Wake Audubon, Garner Grows Community Garden (we advertised to these groups, as well as the general public)

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.

Park staff gave presentations on creating backyard/local habitat to the Raleigh Garden Club and the Laurel Hills Garden Club. We also led a butterfly ID hike for members of the Raleigh Garden Club at a local open space that featured a monarch waystation, pollinator and native plant gardens, as well as a prairie habitat. We are also looking for ways to partner with the "Gardening For Life" group at the Garner Senior Center, and hope to involve them in the maintenance and possible expansion of our gardens and Low Mow

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Zones. The Garner Grows Community Garden participated in our Native Plant Swap and we provide facilities for them to host some of their programs.

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.

Garner is currently planning two new parks, one of which begins construction in 2025. The master plans for both parks include areas for pollinator habitat, and using native plants for landscaped areas whenever feasible. We are also working on updating our master plan for an existing park, Lake Benson, and we have plans to reclaim a Low Mow Zone that was not properly maintained in the last few years, as well as adding pollinator plants around a new boat rental facility.

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 partnered with at least 5 partners in various ways. (Wake County Master Gardeners, South Wake Conservationists, NCSU Entomology Graduate Student Association, Wake County Soil & Water, and Wake Audubon)

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

Our partners have attended events at our parks as vendors to help spread the word about monarch conservation, native plants, and other conservation efforts that support monarchs and other pollinators. They have volunteered with us to assist with our invasive species removal and native planting projects, shared our program flyers and social media posts, and are all working on their own projects to support conservation.

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.

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

20240911_095059.jpg

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

20240911_095322.jpg

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

2.5

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.

We continued our invasive species removal effort this year, focusing again on areas in White Deer Park. We had a total of 72 volunteers work for 154.75 hours on invasive species management, in addition to time spent by staff. The main species we removed were autumn olive, Chinese privet, English ivy, and Japanese honeysuckle. For the privet and olive, we cut and treated the stumps of larger plants and hand-pulled smaller plants. We manually removed English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle, treating larger vines as needed. We use various concentrations of Triclopyr and directly apply the herbicide using daubers. The Parks Manager is working on an invasive species "Adopt-a-Plot" program and has already recruited three families/organizations interested in adopting a plot, and hopes to launch the program by the spring of 2025. This winter, Public Works will be assisting in cutting down larger invasive trees, including Bradford pears and princess trees.

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.

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 the Parks and Grounds division of our Public Works department to ensure proper maintenance of our Low Mow areas. They also supply us with mulch for our native plant gardens, and we have worked together to find opportunities to replace non-native landscape plants with natives. We are currently planning to reclaim a Low Mow Zone that has gone wild, and hope to expand the area if possible. This project will hopefully take place in 2025, depending on our budget and staffing levels.

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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).

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

Screenshot 2024-11-26 142048.png

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

Pollinator Walk.jpg

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

Screenshot 2024-11-26 141313.png

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

Screenshot 2024-11-26 141530.png

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)

Native Plant Swap, Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Program survey route

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)

12

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

Creech Road Elementary School (Science Day and field trips), West Smithfield Elementary School, Wild Wednesday Homeschool group, Johnston County Adventurers (homeschool)

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

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Discovery Bags, Pollinator Bingo cards, milkweed seeds

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).

1629

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

Wake Pollinator Protectors, Wake the Forest, South Wake Conservationists, Wake Audubon

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.

.25

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

Low Mow Zones are cut back in February/March, staff and volunteers weed and maintain gardens year-round

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