Town of Garner

Garner, NC

Mayor Buddy Gupton

Pledge Summary

Garner is a town of approximately 44,600 people located in Wake County and just seven miles from our Capitol City of Raleigh, NC We have an active and expanding Parks System which includes a passive park at Lake Benson and a nature park in an adjacent location. Our Town has recently acquired additional land in excess of 100 acres, part of which will soon be open as Yeargan Park. The additional land will allow us to increase recreational space and also expand our trails and greenways. Garner is committed to improving habitats within our parks and to adding native plants for pollinators.

Action Items Committed for 2025

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.
- 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).

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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

Systems Change

- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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.).

1447

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.)

1170

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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?

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

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 are very helpful. We have also attended some very informative webinars.

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

We had hoped to do more, but we were short-staffed for the majority of the reporting year.

Selected Action Items

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.

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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.

Wake Audubon group surveying gardens at Nature Center.jpg

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 the benefits of native plants for pollinators. We also posted to Facebook and maintained 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. We are also partnering with Wake Audubon and have hosted two volunteer trainings for their newly formed yard certification committee and initiative, which should be active in spring of 2026. Our site is being used as an example of how to incorporate native pollinator and bird-friendly plants into various landscapes.

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.

Wake Audubon, South Wake Conservationists, South Wake Area Native Ecosystem Conservation, Activate Good, Boy Scout Troop & Pack 391

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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

All of the groups listed provided volunteers to assist with invasive species removal and habitat restoration efforts in Town of Garner parks. Wake Audubon and South Wake Conservationists also have their own projects related to monarch and pollinator conservation, and we share resources and information to assist one another in these efforts. The Town of Garner provides classroom space in addition to staff and knowledge-based resources.

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, Garner Parks & Greenway Planner

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

We are working with our new Parks and Greenway Planner on plans to add a native plant/pollinator garden to a small open space adjacent to the Garner Performing Arts Center and will be working in 2026 to create functioning rain gardens in the parking lots at White Deer Park. We work closely with the Town's Public Works crews to maintain our Low Mow Zones and ensure that our pollinator gardens are properly maintained and free of pesticides.

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 is nearing completion of phase one of construction. 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. There is also a plan to add a pollinator/native garden to a pocket park located adjacent to the Garner Performing Arts Center. Park staff will work with the Town's Parks & Greenway Planning Manager and the Garner Public Arts Board on this project, which will hopefully be completed in 2026.

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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

highres_530087446.jpg

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

We swapped (gave away) approximately 420 native plants over the course of two swaps (one in the spring and one in the fall).

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

21

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

Participants included members of the Garner Grows Community Garden, Wake Audubon, and the NC Native Plant Society. We advertise directly to these groups, as well as the general public.

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/)

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.

20250413_150414.jpg

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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

20250413_160029.jpg

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

20250911_151518.jpg

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

2

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 efforts this year, focusing again on areas in White Deer Park. We had a total of 67 volunteers work for 155 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 stiltgrass. 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, cutting and treating larger vines as needed. We use various concentrations of Triclopyr and directly apply the herbicide using daubers. The Parks Manager continues to work on establishing and marketing an invasive species "Adopt-a-Plot" program and has worked with three families/organizations in maintaining their adopted plots. The goal for this coming year is to maintain the current adopters and add at least three more. We also hope to have a website page for the program and signage in the park.

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.

20251121_113134.jpg

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

20251121_113146.jpg

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

Wake Audubon

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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 are hoping to engage Town leaders in adopting a Lights Out policy for all Town buildings and to work toward a Town ordinance by December of 2026. We started engaging the community in this effort by partnering with Wake Audubon and sharing posts on social media during spring and fall migration, and by displaying signage at the White Deer Park Nature Center and park kiosks year-round.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Pollinator garden sign 1.jpg

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

Pollinator garden sign 3.jpg

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

Poolinator garden sign 2.jpg

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

19

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, 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. This year we added a set of ten signs at our main gardens at the Nature Center that are bilingual and cover topics from native plants to monarch conservation. Photos of each of these signs are attached.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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.

PXL_20250715_152712872.jpg

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

PXL_20250715_152106490.jpg

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

Outdoor Explorers Fall 2025 14.jpg

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 surveys, Summer Nature Camps, Parks for Pollinators, Public and group programs

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)

6

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

Homeschool co-op groups from Wake, Johnston, and Lee counties

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

Discovery Bags, Pollinator Bingo Cards, Pollinator ID Sheets

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).

361 students; 33 educators

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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

Community of Hope Ministries (provides afterschool programs and camps)

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.

.5

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

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

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

3.jpg

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

7.jpg

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

8.jpg

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

Moth Night. Parks for Pollinators.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).

76

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]

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, Wake Audubon, EcoEXPLORE, Science Across NC

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

Staff participated in site surveys for the Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Program along the established route at White Deer Park. We also participated in the Parks for Pollinators Bio Blitz led by the National Parks and Recreation Association and hosted two Moth Night events (one during P4P month and one 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. We have two host sites for the EcoEXPLORE program (Lake Benson and White Deer Park). This program encourages youth to record observations through iNaturalist, and we promote opportunities and programs related to these efforts during the aforementioned events.

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?

Boy Scouts

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

150

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

When one of our current gardens (the Sensory Garden) was scheduled to be demolished as part of construction plans for a new playground, park staff and volunteers performed three plant rescue days and moved roughly 100 plants to other gardens and spaces in the parks. We also purchased and added additional plants to our pollinator garden and new landscape areas close to the Nature Center.

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u344:v1.14.0.49966]