

City of Pharr

Pharr, TX

Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez

Pledge Summary

The City of Pharr is located in the Rio Grande Valley, which is an extremely important section of the migratory flyway for the monarch butterfly during its flight to South America. Unfortunately, much of the natural long-standing habitat that supports the monarch butterfly, other pollinators, and even more wildlife has largely been disrupted with human development and agricultural fields. Local government officials have made efforts to begin protecting existing habitat and restoration efforts through its Keep Pharr Beautiful board, its Tree City USA status, and re-taking of the Mayor's Monarch Pledge year after year. Through proclamations like the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, Pharr continues to make the commitment to educating the general public about the importance of pollinators and the habitat that supports them.

Action Items Committed for 2023

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.
- 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.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- 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

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- 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).

Systems Change

- 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 Ambrosio Hernandez	2026	12/17/2025	
Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez	2025	12/5/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez	2024	12/18/2023	Signatories
Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez	2023	12/9/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez	2022	2/14/2022	Signatories
Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez	2021	1/19/2021	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 (e.g., 50).

2104

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.” (Only allow numerical values.)

1548 youth and 556 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).

0.5

Where is your habitat being created? This may include residences (yards, containers, balconies, etc.), schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, culturally-significant locations, shared public spaces and common areas or parks.

This habitat has been created at a local nature park. There is a highly invasive grass that needs to be removed to put in better quality native plants for pollinators, so that is something that our employees and dedicated volunteers manage when creating this habitat.

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

The Rio Grande Valley has a dense population of marginalized groups in the following categories: low-income households and/or communities of color. We specifically use the Mayor's Monarch Pledge to reach out to the children within these communities while they are in school through field trips and in-school outreaches so that they can go home and share what they are learning with their families.

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

The City of Pharr is within a region that is known for playing a significant role in the central/coastal migratory flyway for monarchs in both the fall and springtime migration cycles. City leadership recognizes this importance and continues to support the efforts toward providing habitat for pollinators as well as educating its citizens about their importance.

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?

Resources that have been helpful are the educational worksheets and information provided on the NWF website. These things have made outreach engagement much simpler being that we do not have to create our own informational items for students. In the future, easier access to funding opportunities would be extremely helpful. Things like grants, scholarships for interns, etc. are things that we are always looking out for. We are also looking for new and innovative ways to communicate with our policymakers about these issues – especially those that have no background in conservation.

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

Pharr continues to grow in population size, and with that comes the displacement (or altogether removal) of habitat in the form of old farmland for economic development. We are looking to sustainability solutions that can be implemented alongside this growth and hope to make bigger strides in this field.

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:

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

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.)

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

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.

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

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event?

How many people attended your event?

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

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)

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

City of Pharr departments: Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and Public Utilities

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 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.

N/A

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

June 2024

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.

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

[Rio Flyer.jpeg](#)

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

[Hilda at Rio.jpeg](#)

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

Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America, DHR Health, Texas Master Naturalists, Texas Master Gardeners, UTRGV students, STC students, local high school and elementary districts, HEB, American Forests, Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Wildlife Corridor

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

The USFWS, in partnership with American Forests and the City of Pharr, planted over 12,000 seedlings with the help of over 1,000 volunteers. Pharr provided assistance for this annual event with operational needs (tents), media coverage, and staff to help with coordination.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

How many people attended your event?

3

What species were collected or propagated?

Asclepias oenotheroides

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

UT-Rio Grande Valley

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

3 students from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley have assisted the City of Pharr this past year with marking populations of native milkweed and then assisting the Urban Ecologist with going out and collecting seed during the appropriate time(s) of the year.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

[PTP Overhead.png](#)

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

[Paint the Park Final Flyer.png](#)

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

N/A

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (e.g., 50).

72

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

The City of Pharr has a nature park with a large parking lot that is often underutilized. In order to get more people engaged, we created "Paint the Park for Earth Day," where residents could register to paint a parking space. Registration and some supplies provided completely free of charge. For 2023, the theme of the artwork was "Pharr pollinators." Contestants also won a cash prize in both the youth and adult categories on a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place basis. Voting was hosted through the official City of Pharr Facebook page. Please click the following link to see our recap video on the project:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkujeu-c_RNY

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).

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)

The Pharr Parks & Recreation team actively staffs and manages and After School Program across 12 schools within the PSJA school district. This year, they engaged the Urban Ecologist to come up with a program to visit each of these schools over the spring

semester to teach the students about native planting. The students were taught how to start seeds using handmade newspaper planter pots along with native seed mixes from Narrative American Seed.

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"?

11

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

Raul Longoria Elementary, Dr. William Long Elementary, Berta Palacios Elementary, Aida C. Escobar Elementary, Cesar Chavez Elementary, Geraldine Palmer Elementary, Henry Ford Elementary, Daniel Ramirez Elementary, Graciela Garcia Elementary, Carmen Anaya Elementary, Allen & William Arnold Elementary

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

N/A

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).

420

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

N/A

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.

0

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

N/A

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?

0.5

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.

The first step in implementing invasive species removal was to educate the grounds team within the City of Pharr about the species of highly noxious invasive species. It is imperative that we maintain sports fields for the programming that takes place, but aside from that, we were able to discuss those that are pervasive in the nature park. Additionally, volunteer groups continue to work on removing the invasive understory at this nature park and plant natives to increase the quality of the habitat.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

[NWF Polinators PROOF 09-25.jpg](#)

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

[NWF Sign Birds of the LRGV PROOF 09-25.jpg](#)

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located?

2

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

A locally known artist, Don Breeden, was commissioned late last year to fulfill a grant requirement from the NWF to display educational signage at some pollinator gardens. Attached are the final images that he produced for this project. These are not yet implemented in their designated locations, but they will be in the near future at Dr. William Long City/School Park and the Pharr Vanguard Academy Nature & Birding Center.

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

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

[Exhibition Flyer Final.png](#)

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this

process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

The City of Pharr was a partner in an effort by a research team from UT-Austin to elevate youth voices and their perspective of the outdoors. In addition to helping the research team facilitate this project, the City also displayed their work through an exhibition at its own library and will be implementing suggestions made by the students in the research project. All students are from campuses within the City of Pharr.