Cheltenham Township

Elkins Park, PA

Township Manager Alyson Elliott

Pledge Summary

Cheltenham Township is a first-ring suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a population of close to 38,000. Its 9-square-mile community boasts 23 parks and open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. Cheltenham Township adopted a Sustainability Plan in 2013, one of the goals of which is Ecological Stewardship. Cheltenham is taking the Monarch Pledge for the fourth year in 2025 to include cultivating the existing and adding more monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration gardens, continuing public communication efforts to encourage citizens to plant monarch gardens at their homes or neighborhoods, hosting a Monarch Butterfly Festival, and reviewing Township ordinances, regulations and practices. The Township's efforts are collaborative by the partnership of community organizations and resident volunteers, including through the Cheltenham Township Library System, the Township's Environmental Advisory Council, and parks Friends.

Action Items Committed for 2025

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.)

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
President, Board of Commissioners Matthew Areman	2026	3/26/2026	
Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2025	3/11/2025	Signatories
President, Board of Commissioners Matthew Areman	2024	3/5/2024	Signatories
Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2023	3/16/2023	Signatories
Acting Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2022	3/25/2022	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.).

300

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.)

50

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.

.5

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.

habitat at Township building and parks is being maintained, but sustainable-minded residents have been spreading the word to neighbors to naturalize their lawns.

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

We gave away milkweed and other native seeds at our Monarch Festival, which was promoted through our library system that serve all of our communities and populations.

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

Our community continually strives to meet the goals and spirit of our 2013 Sustainability Plan, and our residents have been expressing an interest in personal commitment to the goals of the Monarch Pledge as well.

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?

This year, we weren't in a position to take advantage of more resources, because we were missing the most precious one - staff. Grants for community programs would always be a valuable resource.

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

Our community lost some key staff this year, so our progress on the pledge items faltered a bit, but we are still committed to continuing to pursue these valuable goals.

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:

February 19, 2025

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

Monarch Pledge Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2025 Monarch Pledge Proclamation.pdf

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.)

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

Cheltenham Township's Pollinator Corner - News Story.pdf

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

Monarch Festival FB Post.png

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

Sharing DCNR posts.png

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

The Township continued to share pollinator-supporting information on social media, including sharing in post or story information from PA's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. We posted monthly resources and information to the "Pollinator Corner" on our website. There were no explicitly monarch-focused stories in this year's print publications, but we did include an article on responsible mosquito management - tips rather than using pesticides that also kill butterflies.

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes 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.

thumbnail_image009.jpg

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.

IMG_20250913_153606.jpg

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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How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

175

What was the date of your festival?

September 13, 2025

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

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Cheltenham Township Library System, Cheltenham's Environmental Advisory Council, JourneyWork, and the Friends of Grove Park.

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

This was our second annual two-hour Monarch Festival and it was wonderfully attended! Arts and crafts drew the younger crowd, while partner organizations shared with parents the importance of creating habitat for monarchs and other pollinators. Some of our partners gave away milkweed and other seedlings and saplings. The Library presented a pollinator-related StoryWalk and did story time with a few pollinator/monarch books during the event. The event also included a butterfly release. Attendees were able to see the progress of the Township's pollinator garden at this location, which was planted just before our first annual Monarch Festival last year. The event was publicized through the Township's digital channels, vocalized at public meetings, mentioned in its print calendar mailed to every home, shared through the libraries, through Parks Friends group e-communications, and posted on the announcement board at Grove Park, the event location.

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.

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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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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)

The Township continues to maintain its pollinator gardens at the Township Administration Building at at Grove Park.

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

Cheltenham's Parks Superintendent plans and maintains the garden, and sometimes consults members of local parks friends groups and our environmental advisory council with experience in pollinator gardens.

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.

.05

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

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

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

200

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

300

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

Two events - one was a giveaway at our Monarch Festival (photo); our EAC members and residents from the group Residents for a Sustainable Cheltenham were at the helm of donating and distributing the seeds. The Township also supported (via promotion) the Friends of High School Park, who hosted their annual plant sale in conjunction with their Arts in the Park event in June.

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

2025 05 07 BZ Minutes.pdf

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

Township staff has been working with members of the Environmental Advisory Council on multiple drafts of an amended nuisance ordinance to be far more accepting of naturalized yards.

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 had hoped to complete this during 2025, but will strive now to complete it in 2026. EAC members continue to provide valuable feedback, but around the time this was brought to the Board (see attached minutes), we lost a key staff member and the position has not yet been filled, so the Director has not been able to continue adjustments to this ordinance yet.

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?

EAC, Friends of High School Park, Friends of Grove Park

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

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5

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The Township intended to apply for a free plants and add additional pollinator space on public property. While staffing shortages didn't allow that to come to fruition this year, existing milkweed/nectar-producing gardens have been maintained in High School Park and in public space in the Glenside neighborhood including Grove Park.

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