Borough of Franklin Park

Borough of Franklin Park, PA

Mayor Dennis O'Keefe

Pledge Summary

The Borough of Franklin Park is a municipality located in Allegheny County, PA approximately 15 miles north of the City of Pittsburgh. The Borough encompasses 13.5 square miles, has a population of 15,500, and boasts 4 parks and 280 total acres of protected green space. Mayor O'Keefe, Borough Council and the Borough's Environmental Advisory Council are committed to protecting, preserving and enhancing natural areas and are excited about the opportunity to join in supporting and providing education on monarch and pollinator conservation.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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.

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.
- 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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Dennis O'Keefe	2025	3/24/2025	Signatories
Mayor Dennis O'Keefe	2024	2/20/2024	Signatories

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Mayor Dennis O'Keefe	2023	3/31/2023	Signatories
Mayor Dennis O'Keefe	2022	3/29/2022	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.).

20

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.)

20 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.

N/A

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?

Mayor O'Keefe and the Borough Manager were aware of the dramatic decline in monarch butterflies and pollinators in general. When the Borough received an email from a member of the general public encouraging the Mayor to take the Monarch Pledge, the Mayor took that recommendation to Borough Council and received approval to formally take action. The Borough had already begun looking for ways to return section of its parks to a natural state, and this program provides an impetus to make that desire a formal part of the Borough's landscaping and property maintenance.

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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?

Simply being able to publicize the fact that the Borough has taken the pledge has helped this year. In the coming years, the Borough will be utilizing the guidance provided by WWF along with engaging the community and seeking grant funding will allow the Borough to implement additional action items and provide further educational opportunities for residents of the Borough and neighboring communities.

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

The Borough is in the early stages of taking action to address monarch butterfly conservation. This year was the first year that Franklin Park took the Mayro's Monarch Pledge. Effort was focused on introducing the concept to Borough residents and the general public, developing relationships within the community, and beginning the planning process to implement monarch butterfly and pollinator conservation as a formal part of the Borough's Parks and Recreation program. We expect to greatly expand our educational efforts in 2023, as well as continuing to develop our formal plans and constructing our initial garden at the Municipal Building.

Selected Action Items

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.

St. John Neumann Care for Creation Committee, Franklin Park Borough Parks Department

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

St. John Neumann Care for Creation Committee - they reached out to us in late summer after reading an article in a local newspaper about our taking the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. The Church has an area of property that they currently mow but would like to return to a natural state. We discussed the importance of pollinator plants, and specifically milkweed, and referred them to the Audubon Society of Western PA for guidance on creating a backyard habitat. Franklin Park Borough Parks Department - the Borough stopped mowing a 21-acre property and allowed it to grow naturally.

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)

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90

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

700

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

The Franklin Park Borough Environmental Advisory Committee staffed a booth at the Borough's annual Festival in the Park and handed out 25 plants and 65 packets of pollinator garden seeds.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

5

What species were collected or propagated?

common milkweed

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

residents of the Borough and surrounding communities

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

A local newspaper ran an article about our Mayor's Monarch Pledge. We were then contacted by individuals who were willing to donate milkweed seeds for our program.

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.

.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 Borough contracted with the Audubon Society of Western PA to do an analysis of a natural area in Old Orchard Park. They determined the area was overgrown with Reed

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Canary Grass and Japanese Stiltgrass. They recommended the Borough look into a Prescribed Burn for the area. We expect to take action in early 2023 with the expectation that we can then replant as a bird and pollinator habitat in the spring of 2024.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

0

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

Educational signage will be installed when the pollinator garden is completed at the Municipal Building in 2023 and when the pollinator and bird habitat is planted in the spring of 2024.

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)

The planned garden will be at the Municipal Building. We anticipate preparatory work to be completed during the summer of 2023, with planting to occur during the fall.

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

A local girl scout troop has volunteered to design the garden as part of helping 4 of the girls attain their Silver Award.

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.

0.1

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?

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Borough Parks Staff and residents

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

500

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Borough Parks staff planted milkweed seeds that were donated by residents around a community garden that was created in the spring of 2022.

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?

N/A

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.

The Borough is currently working with neighboring Ohio Township to complete a Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan, which should be completed by the Fall of 2023. At that time, the Borough will then pursue updating its Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan to incorporate properties purchased since the initial plan was adopted in 2015, and to add an environmental component to the Plan. We will pursue doing this jointly with Ohio Township. We anticipate having this updated Plan completed by the Fall of 2024.

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