# City of San Marcos

San Marcos, TX

Mayor of City of San Marcos Texas Jane Hughson

## Pledge Summary

San Marcos is a city in central Texas with a population of roughly 68,580. Located midway between Austin and San Antonio, San Marcos is a quickly growing community that is situated along a major migration route for many species including monarch butterflies. Our city has a direct impact on monarch populations as they move across this region each year. Mayor Hughson of San Marcos, TX has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators with their signing of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to contributing to the enhancement and conservation of pollinator habitat throughout the city.

## Action Items Committed for 2024

### Communications and Convening

- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- 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.
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- 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 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 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.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

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- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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).
- 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).
- 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.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

### 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 an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

## Past Pledge Archive

| Mayor Name | Program Year | Pledge Date | Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|
| City of San Marcos Mayor Jane Hughson | 2026 | 4/29/2026 | |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor Jane Hughson | 2025 | 4/24/2025 | Monarch Champions |
| Mayor of City of San Marcos Texas Jane Hughson | 2024 | 3/22/2024 | Monarch Champions |
| Mayor of City of San Marcos Texas Jane Hughson | 2023 | 3/30/2023 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor of City of San Marcos Texas Jane Hughson | 2022 | 4/28/2022 | Leadership Circle |

## Action Items

**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.**

9

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

We recognize that monarch conservation is integral to healthy habitats for wildlife in general. Monarchs are culturally significant in Mexico, USA, and Canada and lend themselves towards community engagement and unites the community.

**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?**

Educational PowerPoint/PDF's, monarch identification, migration pathway maps, Spanish language resources, and the certification program have been most helpful. More possibilities for collaboration of public events in underserved community parks for help expand equitable engagement in the community. Grants for native plant landscapes for underserved residents would be beneficial as well.

**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.).**

2420

**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.**

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Schools, community gardens, shared public spaces, community centers, roadsides, culturally significant locations (El Centro & Meadows Center), residential yards, parks, and neighborhood initiatives.

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

The City engaged wth non-profit partners who serve marginalized communities through plant donations and educational programs. These groups include: El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, Youth Service Bureau, and A Rocha USA Central Texas.

**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.)**

430

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

We have seen an increased interest in monarch and pollinator conservation from our community based on positive community feedback, general inquiries, increased attendance of our events, record plant sales, program requests, and pollinator garden installation requests. In addition to pollinator and milkweed plants, the City has a robust tree planting program. Two hundred and ten trees were planted throughout parks and natural areas, partnerships with schools, and right of ways. Trees provide valuable roosting habitat for monarchs. During the city's annual tree giveaway, 650 native trees were given out (two per household) as well as educational information on how to care for and plant. The Discovery Center is in the process of applying for a night sky friendly pollinator garden in partnership with Hays County Friends of the Night Sky.

## Selected Action Items

### 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?**

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

**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.**

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## 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:**

10/02/2024

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

Monarch Butterfly Month

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

Monarch Butterfly Month.jpg

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

2024 Monarch Proclamation.jpg

## 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.**

Brochure.pdf

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

Monarch_Community_Science pdf.pdf

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

moncons_talking_points_spanish.pdf

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

The CoSM has launched a Certified Habitat Stewardship Program that encourages residents to implement sustainable practices, improve wildlife habitat, and retain

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stormwater on site resulting in further conservation and establishment of pollinator and monarch habitat. https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/faq.aspx?TID=72 Social media posts, education information at various programs, events, and camps. Interpretive signage on display at multiple community garden locations. Community science printed materials handed out at events and made available at the Discovery Center. Presented monarch programming for A'Rocha's Picnic en El Arroyo including information on why monarchs are important, native pollinator & milkweed plant giveaway, how to identify monarchs, monarch tagging, monarch lifecycle crafts, and monarch obstacle course. This program was presented in Spanish. Monarch focused fieldtrip to San Marcos Academy 5th graders. How to identify monarchs, monarch habitat survey, monarch tagging game, information on why monarchs are important and how we can help them. Free native pollinator plant giveaway to all students and teachers. Monthly themed Wild Wednesday program that focused on pollinator and monarchs. This program is a self-guided interpretive activity that includes information, crafts, and other activities geared towards kids. Leading up to the annual Monarch Festival, we had social media posts that encouraged planting native plants and milkweed for monarch habitat. During the festival/plant sale, we displayed posters about milkweed and monarchs, gave away 600 native milkweed plants, had an information table about how to garden for monarchs, displayed posters about monarch identification and migration. At the Discovery Center, we have a permanent interpretive signage displaying monarch importance, migration, population decline, and how to learn more from monarch joint venture. Display informational flyers at the Discovery Center encouraging the public to become monarch community scientists. English and Spanish brochure called 'The Magic of the Monarch Butterfly' available at the Discovery Center and tabling events. Promote monarch conservation at public outreach events.

## 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.

The CoSM presented a Growing Wildflowers program at Hays County Master Gardeners lunch break series. The CoSM partners with the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance to restore and conserve monarch habitat in city natural areas. Efforts include pollinator plantings at Schulle Canyon NA as well as milkweed and pollinator species provided to the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment (TxState). The COSM provided plants for a pollinator demonstration garden project lead by TxState Interpretive Geography class at Roughhouse Brewery. The CoSM donated native milkweed and pollinator plants to Hernandez Elementary School as part of their afterschool garden club. Provided tools, mulch, and guidance during planting of pollinator beds. SMGA/CoSM staff hosts monthly invasive species removal workdays and ongoing native seed collection and broadcasting efforts throughout all city natural areas. TxState Sustainability Squad volunteers have been on ongoing partner with these efforts. The CoSM partners with the Hays County Master Naturalists to maintain and expand native milkweed and pollinator gardens on city properties. Youth Service Bureau, an after-school and summer prevention program, volunteers at the San Marcos Discovery Center to assist with monarch and pollinator garden planting and maintenance. This targets a diverse demographic to participate and learn about monarch conservation efforts. San Marcos Discovery Center donated native plants to Youth Service Bureau, Crockett Elementary School, Hernadez Elementary School, Native Prairie Association of Texas for the Dowell Ranch, A'Rocha for Bull Creek

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Preserve Upland Restoration Area, Ezell's Cave Preserve (Texas Cave Management Association), Travis Audubon for Blair Wood Preserve, and Meadows Center for Water and the Environment.

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

Hernandez Elementary School Butterfly Garden Planting with Garden Club.docx

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

Travis Audubon Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Hernandez Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Travis Audubon Blair Woods Sanctuary Plantings.pdf

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

Native Prairie Association of Texas Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

## 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.

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

The City has drastically updated mowing schedule, locations, and frequency and improved practices under new supervision resulting in a decrease of the overall acreage mowed and improved practices aligned with monarch habitat conservation. Mowing has been reduced down to 2-4 cycles per year. We have planted demonstration pollinator and nectar, monarch friendly, and native prairie gardens, as well as expanded existing gardens. These include Public Library, Discovery Center, The Depot, Rain Gardens, and Rio Vista Park. The CoSM has implemented no-mow zones across many public parks to encourage native recruitment and conserve wildlife habitat, including monarch and pollinators. These areas are along the San Marcos River riparian zones, over 2,500 acres of city natural areas, the depot pocket prairie, among many others. The CoSM has also launched a Certified Habitat Stewardship Program that encourages residents to implement sustainable practices, improve wildlife habitat, and retain stormwater on site resulting in further conservation and

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establishment of pollinator and monarch habitat. More info: https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3467/Certified-Habitat-Stewardship-Program; https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3473/Program-Resources.

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

No mow zones and prairie conservation.pdf

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

Discovery Center, Parks & Recreation, Resource Recovery, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, and Certified Habitat Stewardship Program.

## Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

Kissing Tree 55+ Active Adult Community.

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

San Marcos Discovery Center are working with residents of Kissing Tree and the Executive Director of the Kissing Tree HOA (Cohere) to promote native landscapes. The Discovery Center was included as a resource for native landscape guidance in the KT Lifestyle Journal distributed to all HOA neighborhood residents. When presenting to Master Gardener groups, Discovery Center staff offers assistance to work with HOAs when regulations are resistant to native plantings. Provided a one-page information sheet to CoSM Code Enforcement on the benefits of tall grass. The CoSM has also launched a Certified Habitat Stewardship Program that encourages residents to implement sustainable practices, improve wildlife habitat, and retain stormwater on site resulting in further conservation and establishment of pollinator and monarch habitat. More info: https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3467/Certified-Habitat-Stewardship-Program; https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3473/Program-Resources

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

KT-NATIVE-PLANT-MATERIAL-LIST (002).pdf

## Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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**Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.**

San Marcos Discovery Center (SMDC) staff advised Mainstreet City Dept. (directs downtown landscaping) regarding the plant pallet for large scale landscape renovations of downtown beds. We encouraged the use of monarch nectar plants whose blooms coincide with spring and fall migrations including Turk's cap, Gregg's mistflower, Texas lantana, frog fruit, among others. Also recommended was the replacement of tropical milkweed with native milkweed. Tropical milkweed will be removed. Downtown landscape beds are highly visible making it a great opportunity to showcase monarch friendly landscapes. SMDC staff did a site visit and made recommendations for improving monarch habitat in the new Public Services Complex landscape beds. Plants recommended include flame acanthus, mealy blue sage, zexmenia, wooly stemodia, snake herb, and Texas sage. SMDC staff work closely with Community Enhancement Division and Stormwater LID crew to install monarch friendly plants throughout the city.

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

pollinator beds.docx

## 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.**

Magic Monarch Butterfly English and Spanish.pdf

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

Brochure.pdf

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

HunDun.docx

**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.**

San Marcos Discovery Center created an English/Spanish brochure about monarch conservation for use at outreach events and programs and is available in a rack card at the Discovery Center. This was created after a monarch program with a Spanish speaking organization A'Rocha shared a brochure they created for us to use as a template. We use

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several Spanish language NWF posters about monarch identification during outreach events. The City is obtaining conservation land from a local developer to construct a trail connection (HunDun Trail) to create access to Purgatory Creek natural area and eventually the San Marcos River from Dunbar neighborhood (underserved community). Efforts completed in 2024 include the removal of invasive species for the trail alignment that will be funded by a TPWD grant. Through community driven public meetings, the City has approved construction of a trail system connecting the west and east sides of town under IH35 to Blanco Gardens neighborhood (underserved community). This will provide connections to river parks, downtown, and community services via an ADA shared use pathway.

## 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.**

Dowtown Mural.docx

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

community input mural.pdf

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

City of San Marcos - Mainstreet, Arts Commission, Convention and Visitor Bureau, general public, and all city staff.

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

30

**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 San Marcos Arts Commission held a community input meeting for the Big Mural (200 foot long) welcoming downtown visitors. During the meeting, Discovery Center staff advocated for the mural to reflect the importance of the San Marcos River and habitat to birds, butterflies, and other wildlife, as well as paying homage to indigenous culture. The artist says, "The mural celebrates the history, nature, and community of San Marcos from the area's indigenous roots, to the architectural, and educational heritage. It invites viewers to explore and appreciate the City, and serves as a reminder of the importance of

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protecting it's natural beauty." It was clear through the final design that our input was incorporated.

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

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

1900

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

Hays County Master Naturalists, Texas State Entomology Club, El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, San Marcos River Foundation, ECO Club, Native Plant Society of Texas, Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, Texas Preparatory School, and Certified Habitat Stewardship Program.

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

Monarch Festival 2024.docx

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

15,250

## Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

700

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

Asclepias texana were grown from plugs to gallons and were included with Asclepias tuberosa and Asclepias asperula in a milkweed giveaway at our Monarch Festival. Total milkweed plants included in the free giveaway were 600. City staff works with the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance to collect native milkweed seeds from local natural areas to be used for propagation and seeding.

**What species were collected or propagated?**

Asclepias oenotheroides, Asclepias texana, Asclepias tuberosa, Asclepias asperula, and Matelea reticulata.

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

San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, TxState Sustainability Squad, and Hays County Master Naturalists.

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

Monarch Festival 2024.docx

## 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)**

Maintained a butterfly garden at the San Marcos Discovery Center at 430 Riverside Dr. San Marcos, TX, located along the monarch migratory pathway adjacent to IH35. Supplementary demonstration garden beds with native plants for pollinators and monarchs are also maintained onsite. Additional demonstration monarch friendly gardens are located and maintained at City Hall, San Marcos Public Library Rain Gardens, CM Allen Rain Gardens, The Depot Pocket Park, Craddock Medians, Downtown landscapes, among many others.

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

The City of San Marcos has partnered with the Hays County Master Naturalists, Hays County Master Gardeners, SMCISD Crossroads Program, SMCISD schools, Youth Services Bureau, Texas State University student interns, and volunteers from the general public. City programs involved include Discovery Center, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, Low Impact Development Program, Horticulturalist, and Resource Recovery.

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

pollinator beds.docx

**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.**

1.5

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## Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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

pollinator beds along roadsides.docx

**What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

1

**Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.**

City Horticulturalist staff, LID crew, and volunteers regularly maintain these planted areas by weeding, mulching, and performing cut backs as needed. Reuse water drip lines are regularly checked and repaired as needed. Both areas are highly visible to the public, so maintenance is a high priority.

**Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)**

Planting locations include CM Allen Medians (29.884731, -97.937310), HWY 80 Welcome Bed (29.882241, -97.920830), Downtown landscapes (29.884709, -97.938372), and Craddock Medians (29.891023, -97.965334).

**How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

450

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

Youth Services Bureau, SMCISD, Carol Fernandez, Melani Howard, Amanda Golian, Ashley Arledge, and Julie Hollar.

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**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)**

Pollinator Beds for the Community. As a service to our local schools and community centers, the Discovery Center offers pollinator and milkweed plants at no cost. Discovery Center staff are involved from design to assisting with installation and guidance after planting. Hosted an A'Rocha USA Picnic en el Arroyo at the Discovery Center focused on monarch conservation efforts. All participants received a free milkweed and nectar plant to plant at home. Hosted a 'Power of Plants' program at the Discovery Center in which participants learned to propagate native nectar plants for monarch conservation. Donated nectar and milkweed plants spring and fall to Hernandez Elementary School. Planted alongside after-school garden club students to further enhance monarch habitat created in partnership over the last three years. Teachers use this garden space as an outdoor classroom that also contains a little learning library where students can explore and learn independently. Donated nectar and milkweed plants to Travis & Crockett Elementary Schools. Provided native nectar and milkweed plants to TxState Interpretive Geography class for an interpretive garden bed at Roughhouse Brewing that included educational signage. Hosted a fifth-grade field trip to the Discovery Center focused on monarch conservation where participants learned how to identify monarchs, the importance of monarchs, what constitutes monarch habitat, monarch tagging, and a habitat assessment survey. All students and teachers were given a free native nectar plant to plant at home and/or the school.

**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.**

0.3

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

Guidance, garden design, plants, seeds, tools, mulch, and oversight during planting event. Monarch educational programs as well as educational items for loan.

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

All school locations have garden clubs or designated caretakers that perform regular maintenance with their students. Mulch was provided at Hernandez Elementary to aid in maintenance. Discovery Center staff check in regularly to offer support and guidance to ensure long-term success of gardens.

**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).**

295 students and 12 educators.

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**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.**

Hernandez, Travis, and Crockett Elementary Schools. Texas State University and Youth Services Bureau.

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

Hernandez Elementary School Butterfly Garden Planting with Garden Club.docx

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

Hernandez Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Crockett Elementary Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Crockett Elementary Plantings .pdf

## 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).

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

monarch waystation.jpg

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

Hernandez Elementary Monarch Waystation.pdf

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

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National Wildlife Federation, Audubon Texas, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., Texas State University, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, San Marcos River Foundation, El Centro, Hays County Master Naturalists, Native Plant Society of Texas, Community Enhancement Division, American Bird Conservancy, Hays County Friends of the Night Sky, Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan, Destination Services and Convention Visitor Bureau.

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

The butterfly garden at the Discovery Center is maintained as a certified and registered monarch waystation. Hernandez Elementary School maintained their monarch waystation certification. The City of San Marcos applied for and received Bird City Texas certification and Scenic City certification this year. The official public announcement of Bird City Texas will occur early Jan 2025. We are also in the process of applying for Bee City certification.

## Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

**When did this challenge take place?**

Launched Nov 2023 and ongoing.

**How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).**

6

**What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.**

0.3

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

City of San Marcos and Texas State University - Horticulture Dept.

**Please describe your challenge and the results.**

The CoSM has launched a Certified Habitat Stewardship Program that encourages residents to implement sustainable practices, improve wildlife habitat, and retain stormwater on site resulting in further conservation and establishment of pollinator and

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monarch habitat. More info here: https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3467/Certified-Habitat-Stewardship-Program. Results include several sites officially certified with more in process.

## 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.**

Monarch tagging datasheets 2024.pdf

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

Texas Pollinator Bioblitz_iNaturalist table at Monarch Fest.pdf

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

During the monarch festival, we had a booth with tagging demonstrations for attendees on how to identify a monarch, how and why we tag. Promoted the Texas Pollinator BioBlitz run by Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. with a booth on how to participate and how to use iNaturalist. In addition, we had a monarch information booth that described other monarch community science programs such as Journey North and Monarch Larval Monitoring Program. Texas State field techniques lab conducted two class visits where they tagged 30 monarchs at the Discovery Center gardens. Discovery Center staff, interns, and volunteers tagged 50 monarchs and ongoing until Dec 1, 2024. Discovery Center staff attended a Citizen Science workshop and a Gardening for Monarch and Other Wildlife with Native Plants workshops with NWF in order to obtain Monarch Steward Certification and increase involvement in MLMP Monitoring in local natural areas.

**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).**

188

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

Texas State field techniques lab, Hays County Master Naturalists, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., A'Rocha, San Marcos Academy, Conservation Crew, Discovery Center staff, interns, and volunteers.

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

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

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1100

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

pollinator beds.docx

**Please describe your effort in completing this action.**

The following monarch friendly community gardens were maintained: HWY 80 Welcome to San Marcos bed, City Hall, San Marcos Public Library Rain Gardens, CM Allen Rain Gardens, The Depot Pocket Prairie, Downtown landscape beds, Craddock Medians, various themed gardens at the San Marcos Discovery Center, among many others.

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

The City of San Marcos has partnered with the Hays County Master Naturalists, Hays County Master Gardeners, SMCISD Crossroads Program, SMCISD schools, Texas State University student interns, and volunteers from the general public. City programs involved include Discovery Center, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, Low Impact Development Program, Horticulturalist, and Resource Recovery.

## 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.**

7.5

**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.**

San Marcos has a robust invasive plant removal program. The City of San Marcos has hosted a public (almost) monthly two hour invasive species removal workday for several years in partnership with San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, Hays County Master Naturalists, and Hays County Master Gardeners. In the last year, focus has shifted to the new trail alignment between Hunter Rd. and Dunbar Park along Purgatory Creek. The signup can be found here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084BA8AE2CA7FC1-51155849-natural#/. These workdays are limited to 20 participants plus 2-3 city staff, and regularly fill up. Discovery Center staff and the City of San Marcos Urban Forester also remove invasive species in neighborhood parks throughout the year as they are identified. The City of San Marcos also has three dedicated staff members that are the Trail Crew for the Natural Areas. They work in cooperation with San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and have a trail workday every Thursday. During their routine activities as well as during the Thursday workdays, if invasive plant species are encountered, they remove or mark them for

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removal, and Team Flora - another group under SMGA, also hold invasive removals. The HCP in San Marcos oversees numerous projects of invasive removal along riparian areas of the river and associated watersheds contracted through the city. The Hays County Master Naturalists hold a workday every fourth Saturday. The purpose of this project is to remove invasive plants, like Johnson grass from the grounds of the Meadows Center and periodically from Spring Lake. They also maintain the native plant demonstration beds.

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

HunDun.docx

## 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.

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

Hays County Master Naturalists, El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, San Marcos River Foundation, Texas State Entomology Club, and Texas State ECO Club.

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

Monarch Festival 2024.docx

**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)**

700

**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).**

The event is free to the public and was extensively advertised using a variety of methods to reach all residents including banners, flyers, email, school district notifications, and social media posts. The event is held on a Saturday from 9am - 2pm when most people are available to attend along with our Native Plant Sale. Event is handicap accessible. Included Spanish language printed materials/posters centered on monarch conservation. Location is centrally located in San Marcos within walking distance of neighborhoods and conveniently located along IH35 frontage road.

**What was the date of your festival?**

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10/12/2024

## 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)**

2

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

Monarch general information sign on permanent display inside the Discovery Center. NWF Monarch Waystation sign at the butterfly garden. NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat sign at the entrance to grounds.

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

signage.docx

## Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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

City of San Marcos

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

N/A

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

complete

**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.**

Milkweed has never been included in the list of noxious plants in city weed/landscaping ordinances.

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

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

in progress

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

No mow zones and prairie conservation.pdf

**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.**

The CoSM has reduced anywhere from 2-4 cycles of mowing per year. No ordinance update yet, with a target date of end of 2025. The CoSM has implemented no-mow zones across many public parks to encourage native recruitment and conserve wildlife habitat, including monarch and pollinators. These areas include along the San Marcos River riparian zones, over 2,500 acres of city natural areas, the depot pocket prairie, among many others added in 2024. The CoSM has also launched a Certified Habitat Stewardship Program that encourages residents to implement sustainable practices, improve wildlife habitat, and retain stormwater on site resulting in further conservation and establishment of pollinator and monarch habitat.

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

City of San Marcos departments, City Contractors, Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan, Edwards Aquifer Authority, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, and Army Corps of Engineers.

## Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

complete

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**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.**

03/16/2021

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

City of San Marcos. https://user-3vpeqil.cld.bz/San-Marcos-Design-Manual-March-16-2021/180/

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

N/A

## Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

**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.**

All city planting projects are carefully reviewed to ensure high percentage of native species used. Most city landscape and tree planting projects are installed and maintained in-house, so species selection is tailored to support monarch/pollinator habitat. https://user-3vpeqil.cld.bz/San-Marcos-Design-Manual-March-16-2021/180/

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

All city planting projects are carefully reviewed to ensure high percentage of native species used. Most city landscape and tree planting projects are installed and maintained in-house, so species selection is tailored to support monarch/pollinator habitat.

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

City departments/divisions include Engineering/CIP, Parks & Rec, Discovery Center, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, Resource Recovery, Urban Forestry, Stormwater - Low Impact Development. Various volunteer organizations including Hays County Master Gardeners, Texas State Organizations - Horticulture Dept., Greek Society, and various student clubs.

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

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complete

## Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

complete

**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.**

04/17/2018. San Marcos Land Development Code includes standards "established to ensure that citizens and visitors to the city are able to continue to enjoy the night sky, natural environment, and traditional character of the community". These standards are based on the model lighting ordinance developed by the International Dark Sky Association (now known as Dark Sky International). The City of San Marcos committed to turn off or dim all non-essential lights on municipal buildings from 11pm to 6am during critical migration periods. This message was imparted to employees through a proclamation as well through the City Manager's reports during migration periods (sent to all employees) https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/911f7f173e4445ecb36b45ded61e3fd8

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

b61f1481-e206-4b87-9660-ddd4262196e4Land_Development_Code_7.5_Lighting_page_365-merged.pdf

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

City of San Marcos and Dark Sky International

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

N/A

## 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.

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

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Participated in and provided monarch conservation information and activities for our 2024 Fall Monarch Fest and Spring Sustainability Fair including examples and lists of monarch nectar plants, native milkweed plants, community science programs, why tropical milkweed can be harmful to monarchs, native plant grants available to landowners, how to identify monarchs, how to determine gender of monarchs, crafts pertaining to the monarch lifecycle, free native milkweed plants, etc. Hays County Master Naturalists volunteer weekly assisting with native pollinator-friendly plant propagation and pollinator garden and monarch waystation maintenance. Hill Country Native Plant Society of Texas regularly promotes the Discovery Center at tabling events as a location to obtain native and pollinator-friendly plants. Additionally, they provide information about monarch conservation and NPSoT monarch related grants. San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance works with the Discovery Center weekly gathering native seeds for propagation and restoration efforts as well as partnering in monthly restoration efforts within local natural areas. Presented a wildscaping program to the TxState horticulture club to encourage them to grow more native plants for plant sales and campus gardens. Donated native plants and milkweed and planted with students, teachers, and volunteers at Hernandez Elementary School (https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CuHASHs9w/?mibextid=WC7FNe). Donated plants to Crockett Elementary to support their monarch conservation efforts. Donated plants to A'Rocha for the upland restoration area at Bull Creek Preserve. Donated native plants to El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos for raised beds. Donated plants to Travis Audubon for Blair Woods Sanctuary. Partnered with TreeFolks to spread native prairie seed mix at Kenneth Copeland Park over 3.5 acres to encourage pollinator and monarch habitat.

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

Crockett Elementary Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Hernandez Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Travis Audubon Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

A Rocha_Bull Creek Foundation Plant Donation 2024.xlsx

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

Monarch Festival 2024.docx

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

Native Prairie Association of Texas Plant List 10.2024.xlsx

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

Hays County Master Gardeners, Hays County Master Naturalists, Hill Country Chapter of the Native Plant Society, San Marcos River Foundation, El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, A'Rocha USA, Central Texas Native Prairies Association of Texas, Travis Audubon, TreeFolks, and San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance.

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