Town of Clinton

Clinton, NJ

Mayor Janice Kovach

Pledge Summary

The Town of Clinton is a small historic river community in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, where residents place a strong value on environmental stewardship, open space preservation, and quality of life. Located along the South Branch of the Raritan River, the town is supported by an active Environmental Commission, Green Team, and community partners that work to protect natural resources and promote sustainability. Clinton is renewing its participation in the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge to continue expanding habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. The town has established native pollinator gardens, supported community planting initiatives, and incorporated pollinator-friendly practices into municipal landscapes. Clinton also recognizes the importance of addressing light pollution as part of ecosystem health. Efforts to promote responsible outdoor lighting help protect nocturnal pollinators, migratory wildlife, and the night environment while maintaining public safety. Through this pledge, Clinton reaffirms its commitment to biodiversity, education, and long-term environmental resilience.

Action Items Committed for 2026

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

- 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

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

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Janice Kovach	2026	2/15/2026	
Mayor Janice Kovach	2025	4/25/2025	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.).

30

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

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.

2

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.

Hunts Mills Park riverbank restoration project.

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

Through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, the Town of Clinton is working to make environmental education and monarch conservation accessible to residents of all backgrounds. In partnership with the Clinton Conservancy and our local summer recreation program, we offered hands-on educational activities in the Children's Garden, providing children with opportunities to learn about monarch butterflies, pollinators, and the importance of native plants. By incorporating these activities into an existing community recreation program, we are reaching children and families who might not otherwise participate in environmental education initiatives. Our goal is to encourage broad community participation and ensure that opportunities to learn about and support pollinator conservation are available to everyone.

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

The Town of Clinton's commitment to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge reflects our broader efforts to protect biodiversity, promote environmental sustainability, and preserve our community's natural resources. Recognizing the decline in monarch butterfly populations and the importance of pollinators to healthy ecosystems, we saw the pledge as an opportunity to turn environmental awareness into meaningful local action. Through partnerships with the Clinton Conservancy, our Environmental Commission, and community volunteers, we have worked to expand native plantings, create pollinator-friendly habitats, and engage residents, particularly children, in environmental education. Our continued participation reflects our belief that even small communities can make a meaningful contribution to protecting monarchs and other pollinators. By building on our existing initiatives and encouraging residents to take action in their own gardens and neighborhoods, we hope to make pollinator conservation a lasting part of Clinton's environmental stewardship efforts.

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?

Our most valuable resources have been the educational materials and guidance provided through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program, along with the knowledge and enthusiasm of local partners, including the Clinton Conservancy, Environmental Commission, and community volunteers. These partnerships have helped us translate conservation goals into practical projects, including native plantings, pollinator habitat improvements, and hands-on educational programs for children. Additional resources that would be particularly helpful include guidance on creating and maintaining pollinator habitats in small urban and suburban spaces, recommended native plant lists, and examples of successful initiatives in other municipalities. Access to small grants, affordable native plants, and ready-to-use educational materials would also help communities like ours expand their efforts. To encourage more equitable participation, we would welcome resources designed to make pollinator conservation accessible to residents regardless of income, gardening experience, or access to private outdoor space. The Town of Clinton is developing a residential rebate program that will help offset the cost of replacing traditional lawns with native pollinator gardens, planting native trees, and installing environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. By providing financial incentives, we hope to encourage more residents to participate in creating wildlife-friendly landscapes while reducing some of the costs associated with these improvements. Additional funding for public pollinator habitats, free native plant distributions, and educational programs offered through schools, libraries, and recreation programs would further expand opportunities for participation. Our goal is to ensure that all residents have opportunities to experience nature and contribute to protecting our community's biodiversity.

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

Over the past year, the Town of Clinton has continued to build on its commitment to monarch butterfly conservation by combining habitat enhancement, environmental

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education, and community partnerships. One of our highlights was a collaboration between the Clinton Conservancy and our local summer recreation program, which introduced children to the monarch butterfly's life cycle through hands-on activities in the Children's Garden. Participants had the opportunity to observe a monarch egg on native milkweed, learn about pollination through an interactive puppet show, and create models of the monarch life cycle. These experiences helped foster an appreciation for monarchs and other pollinators among our youngest residents. We are also expanding our conservation efforts beyond public spaces through a new residential rebate program that will encourage homeowners to replace traditional lawns with native pollinator gardens, plant native trees, and adopt wildlife-friendly outdoor lighting practices. This initiative will help create additional habitat while raising awareness of the importance of protecting nocturnal pollinators as well as monarch butterflies. Perhaps most importantly, we are working to make pollinator conservation an ongoing community effort rather than a series of isolated projects. By engaging residents, local organizations, and municipal volunteers, we hope to create a lasting network of pollinator-friendly habitats throughout Clinton and inspire residents to take an active role in protecting biodiversity.

Selected Action Items

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).

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:

June 10, 2026

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

Monarch Butterfly Month

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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

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awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

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

Monarch_Garden_Photos_2_Pages.pdf

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)

As part of our Mayor's Monarch Pledge commitment, the Clinton Conservancy partnered with the Town's summer recreation program to provide an engaging outdoor educational experience in the Children's Garden. Students explored the monarch butterfly's life cycle while learning about the importance of native plants and pollinator habitats. A highlight of the program was the opportunity to observe an actual monarch egg on a native milkweed plant, offering students a firsthand look at the butterfly's reproductive cycle. Participants also enjoyed a Pollinator Puppet Show that demonstrated how pollination works and the vital role pollinators play in our environment. The program concluded with a creative, hands-on activity in which each student used different pasta shapes to construct a model of the monarch butterfly's life cycle, reinforcing what they had learned in a fun and memorable way.

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)

2

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

Clinton Public School

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

Demonstration garden, samples for children to bring home.

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).

20 children, 1 educator

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

Clinton Summer Recreation, Clinton Conservancy

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.

0.5

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

as needed

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

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

Dark Sky Ordinance.docx

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

Dark Sky New Jersey, Native Plant Society of New Jersey, Clinton Conservancy, Clinton Green Team

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

In progress. Awaiting review by attorney and Land Use Board.

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.

Proposed ordinance is attached.

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

Plan to introduce in February with adoption in March 2027

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