



Town of Knightdale

Staff Report

Title: Mayors' Monarch Pledge

Staff: Dustin Tripp, Asst. Town Mgr.

Date: March 15, 2023

Asst. Town Manager Signature: DMT

Town Manager Signature: WRS

PURPOSE

- To renew the Town's commitment in taking action to save the monarch butterfly.

BACKGROUND

- With a mission of *Uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world*, the National Wildlife Federation, a 501(c)(3) organization, is committed to: Protect, Restore, and Connect Wildlife Habitat; Transform Wildlife Conservation; and Connect Americans with Wildlife.
- One aspect of their goals is to protect the monarch butterfly, an iconic species whose eastern populations have declined by 90% and western populations by 99% in recent years. Through the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, U.S. cities, municipalities, and other communities are committing to create habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators, and to educate residents about how they can make a difference at home and in their community.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

- The large and brilliantly colored monarch butterfly is among the most easily recognizable of the butterfly species that call North America home. They have two sets of wings and a wingspan of three to four inches (7 to 10 centimeters). Their wings are a deep orange with black borders and veins, and white spots along the edges. The underside of the wings is pale orange. Male monarchs have two black spots in the center of their hind wings, which females lack. These spots are scent glands that help males attract female mates. Females have thicker wing veins than males. The butterfly's body is black with white markings.
- Monarch caterpillars are striped with yellow, black, and white bands, and reach lengths of two inches (five centimeters) before metamorphosis. They have a set of antennae-like tentacles at each end of their body. The monarch chrysalis, where the caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis into the winged adult butterfly, is a beautiful seafoam green with tiny yellow spots along its edge.
- Monarch butterflies are found across North America wherever suitable feeding, breeding, and overwintering habitat exists. They are broken into two populations separated by the Rocky Mountains, called the eastern and the western populations.



Town of Knightdale

Staff Report

- From September into early October, fall southern migration to Mexico begins, with most monarchs following the reverse path south along the central migratory corridor. Monarchs from the Northeast head south along the Atlantic coast, concentrating in the states that make up the Delmarva Peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay on the journey. Florida is a stop for many monarchs before they fly over the Gulf Coast to Mexico.

PLEDGE

- The National Wildlife Federation recommends that the best way to help monarchs is by restoring their natural habitat by planting native milkweeds and nectar plants, eliminating pesticides, and encouraging others to adopt these practices. Due to the risks of spreading disease, limiting healthy genetic diversity, and bypassing natural selection, the National Wildlife Federation does not support the rearing of monarch caterpillars in captivity, or the mass release of commercially farmed butterflies.
- By signing the Mayor's Monarch Butterfly Pledge, we are committing each year, that Knightdale will complete at least 3 Action Items from the pledge list. We will report on our progress at the end of the year. At least 1 of those actions must be taken from the "Program & Demonstration Gardens" section.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Motion for Knightdale to join the Monarch Butterfly Pledge and direct staff to complete at least three items as required.