



Dear Mayor:

The migration of monarch butterflies is one of the natural world's most epic journeys. Weighing as little as a paper clip, the eastern population of monarchs fly up to 3,000 miles from their summer homes in America's backyards and grasslands to wintering grounds in Mexico's mountain forests.

But in recent years, the monarch butterfly populations have plummeted at an alarming rate. This decline threatens to deprive future generations of the wonder and beauty of the monarch — and is an ominous sign of the worsening health of ecosystems. As recently as 1996, the monarch population wintering in Mexico was more than 1 billion, turning forests into seas of orange and black. Last year, the wintering population numbered only about 56 million, and gathered on fewer than three acres of forest—a decrease of more than 90 percent.

Monarch butterflies, as well as other butterfly species, bees, birds and bats, help move pollen from one plant to another, fertilizing flowers and making it possible for plants to produce food needed to feed people and wildlife. More than a third of the food that we eat requires pollinators to grow. Yet many of these pollinators are declining, with habitat loss, pesticides and climate change all contributing.

We need to know more about why monarchs are disappearing. But, we don't need to wait to take the actions that scientists tell us are necessary. Monarchs need all of us to make their homes, businesses, schools and community spaces more wildlife-friendly.

That's why the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, and the cities of St. Louis, Missouri, and Austin, Texas, are asking all of our nation's mayors to take action by launching a nationwide "Mayors' Monarch Pledge." Working with mayors and local, state and national partners, we will restore and enhance habitat for monarchs right where people live, work, learn, play and worship.

Cities, towns and counties have a critical role to play to help save the monarch butterfly. Municipalities in particular can provide Monarch habitat at public parks, median strips, community gardens and municipal buildings. City properties like recreation centers and libraries can host demonstration gardens and serve as community hubs where citizens can learn how to help. Educating citizens about how and where to grow milkweed is also a key piece for success.

The decline of monarchs has continued in part because, until now, saving them has been viewed as someone else's job. By joining forces through the "Mayors' Monarch Pledge," we are declaring that era over. Together, we will ensure that future generations have the chance to enjoy this iconic butterfly.

We hope you will join us in making monarch butterfly conservation a priority in your city by taking the "Mayors' Monarch Pledge." (www.nwf.org/MayorsMonarchPledge)

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Dan Ashe in blue ink.

Dan Ashe
Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Handwritten signature of Collin O'Mara in blue ink.

Collin O'Mara
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation

Handwritten signature of Francis Slay in blue ink.

Francis Slay
Mayor
City of St. Louis

Handwritten signature of Steve Adler in blue ink.

Steve Adler
Mayor
City of Austin