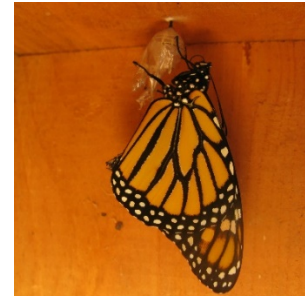
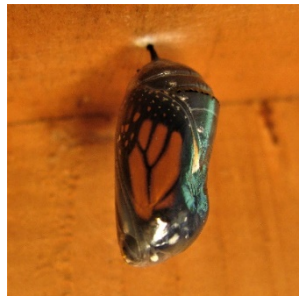


Proposed Action for the Village of River Hills for Protection of the Endangered Monarch Butterfly

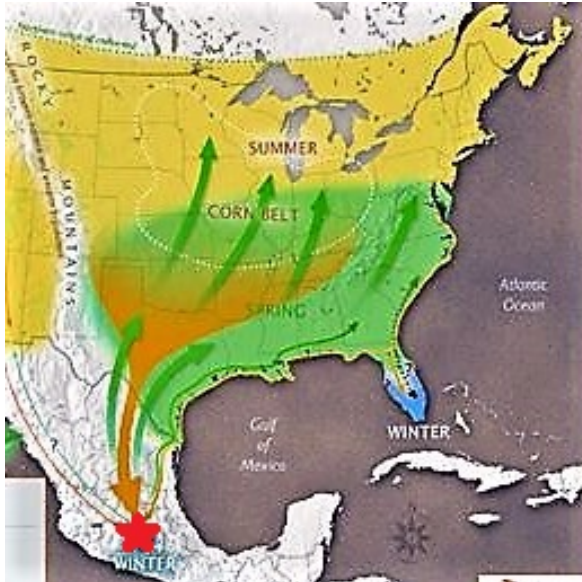
Committee for the Environment, May, 2017



The endangered monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is an iconic North American species whose metamorphosis and multigenerational migration has captured the imagination of millions of Americans. Emerging from a barely-visible egg always laid on a milkweed (*Asclepias sp.*), the monarch caterpillar increases its weight 10,000 fold before transforming into a chrysalis where metamorphosis takes place. A brilliant butterfly emerges who typically mates, flies a few hundred miles north, lays eggs on milkweeds, then dies.



Every fall the *fifth* generation of monarchs behaves drastically differently. Monarchs from across Eastern North America embark on a *two thousand mile journey* to a tiny mountain range in Central Mexico, whose location was a mystery until 1975. Here they huddle on treetops through the winter, and when spring arrives, they come back to life, mate, and journey north again.



Over fifty million monarchs gathered in their winter home in Mexico last year. However twenty years ago their estimates were *greater than a billion*. The monarchs have suffered an *80% decline* of their population, chiefly due to habitat loss and destruction of their one critical plant, the milkweed.



ROLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN PROTECTING THE MONARCH

“Monarch Conservation in American Cities, a Solutions Guide for Municipal Leaders,” prepared by the National Wildlife Federation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is intended for local governments that want to take action to help save the declining monarch butterfly in their communities. An initial recommended step is to take “Mayors’ Monarch Pledge” (attached) and to “issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species’ need for habitat.” The guide goes on to outline numerous actions a local community can implement to help with monarch conservation, such as establishing community gardens, converting median strips to no-mow zones and monarch habitats, and citizen education. Hundreds of communities nationwide have formally taken the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge and issued such proclamations, including the Wisconsin communities of Milwaukee, Baraboo, Fitchburg, Sheboygan, Shorewood, and Hales Corners.

PROPOSED SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR RIVER HILLS FOR MONARCH CONSERVATION

The Committee for the Environment unanimously recommends that the following specific actions be implemented immediately:

- 1. Sign the “Mayors’ Monarch Pledge” and declare a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the Monarch Butterfly and the Species’ need for habitat.** This will serve as a framework for other activities.
- 2. Create two “Monarch Butterfly Demonstration Gardens,” one at the Village Hall, and the other on the median strip of Good Hope Road.** (Gardens details in *appendix*). Both gardens would have a backbone of milkweed along with a mix of nectar flowers that attract butterflies and other pollinators. Applications would be made for declaration of these gardens as “Official Monarch Waystations” and to declare River Hills as a “Monarch City USA.”
- 3. Incorporate monarch conservation education at the River Hill’s Annual International Migratory Bird Day/Tree Day festivities.** Educational material generated would be housed at Village Hall.

We hope that implementing these proposed steps by River Hills could help our beloved and imperiled monarchs.

Appendix

Proposed Monarch Butterfly Demonstration Gardens

Village Hall Garden



Proposed garden at the Village Hall would consist of two oval plantings. The smaller planting, nearer the entrance to Village Hall, would consist of brightly colored nectar flowers that would attract butterflies and other pollinators. This would be visually stunning, and serve as a demonstration to the community how beautiful a conservation project can be. The larger oval planting would consist of a field of common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), the critical plant for monarch survival. We would submit this project to Monarch Watch and as a “Monarch Waystation.”



Good Hope Island Median Strip

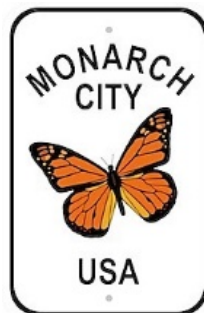


Median strips across America are coming to the rescue of the monarch butterfly through conversion to no-mow zones and milkweed plantings. Despite what one might think, studies demonstrate that the butterflies in these setting rarely have motor vehicle collisions! River Hills has numerous median strips that currently require periodic mowing with inherent noise and greenhouse gas emissions. Most are currently covered in dandelions.

The Good Hope Island median strip was chosen as a pilot project because of the prominent sign welcoming visitors to River Hills, and announcing that we are an “Environmentally Aware Community.” As in the proposed Village Hall garden, two ovals are proposed. The oval surrounding the Village of River Hills sign would consist of brightly colored nectar flowers. The larger oval filling the bulk of the median strip would be common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). Another reason this particular strip was chosen as a pilot is because members of the Committee for the Environment live on each side of this road, and they have promised to make this the most appealing median strip not only River Hills, but all Wisconsin!



Our median strip now proudly announces that River Hills is a “Bird City” USA, and a “Tree City” USA. We propose to submit these projects and other conservation efforts, and become a “Monarch City” USA as well!



Both proposed gardens would be supervised by Wendy Walcott, member emeritus of the Committee for the Environment, and the former Director of Land Stewardship at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center. Funding for the plantings would be sought through the River Hills Foundation and other sources. It is envisioned that after initial planting, the gardens would require simply periodic weeding carried out by the Committee for the Environment, as well as a single annual mowing.

The Committee for the Environment believes these initial proposed gardens would be wonderful thing for our community, and for the monarch butterfly.