

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #8/20, Friday, November 20, 2020

FROM: Darryl Gray, Director, Education and Training

RE: **NATIONAL FLIGHT OF THE MONARCH DAY**
Post Event Report

KEY ISSUE

Information report on August 22, 2020 National Flight of the Monarch Day Proclamation and activities.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS at Board of Directors Meeting #11/19, held on January 24, 2020, Resolution #A228/19 was approved, proclaiming August 22, 2020 as Flight of the Monarch Day;

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT this report be received for information of the Board of Directors;

AND FURTHER THAT this update report be circulated the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority watershed municipalities that participated in Flight of the Monarch Day 2020;

BACKGROUND

TRCA is the national host of the Monarch Nation program, a federally funded biodiversity program seeking to achieve community activation in support of species at risk in Canada.

Monarch Nation brings together a collective of partners in Ontario and across Canada, whose combined experience and expertise in educating the public about species at risk, particularly monarch butterflies, places them in an ideal position to advocate for the monarch butterfly;

The monarch butterfly is designated as a species at risk in Ontario and Canada by The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), Government of Canada Species at Risk Act (SARA) and Species At Risk in Ontario (SARO);

At Board of Directors Meeting #11/19, held on January 24, 2020, Resolution #A228/19 was approved, proclaiming August 22, 2020 as Flight of the Monarch Day, and requesting local watershed municipalities to recognize August 22nd as Flight of the Monarch Day.

RATIONALE

The initial Flight of the Monarch Day workplan included working with organizations across Canada to support multiple external agencies in organizing monarch-focused events on August 22nd, raising awareness of the at-risk status of the monarch butterfly. With the onset of the global pandemic related to COVID-19, plans shifted to enable participation on an individual or household basis. Monarch Nation developed a suite of resources to engage children in activities centred on the monarch butterfly which were distributed to all those registered for the event throughout the summer, building up to the August 22nd Flight of the Monarch Day event.

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While delivering an event of this scale during a pandemic presented significant challenges, the inaugural National Flight of the Monarch Day provided the opportunity to forge new partnerships, build new learning and stewardship models and engage thousands of individuals, families and local community groups in activities in support of biodiversity across Canada. Nearer to the event, it became clear that there was appetite from many external agencies to hold targeted events, primarily online, however, several organizations developed strategies to run safe, in-person events, with over 50 external organizations registering Flight of the Monarch Day events, as well as over 200 smaller, localized groups participating in self-directed family or information activities.

Organizations participating and supporting Flight of the Monarch Day included eleven municipalities from within TRCA's watersheds: Ajax, Brampton, Caledon, Markham, Mono, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Uxbridge, Vaughan, York Region. The following is a brief summary of programs or activities delivered by local municipalities in support of Flight of the Monarch Day:

- City of Brampton: childrens' activities through the libraries and through Blue Skies theatre company;
- Town of Mono: delivered a children's colouring contest;
- City of Richmond Hill: distributed monarch-friendly plant kits to 187 residents free of charge and created a video and community collage;
- Town of Pickering: socially distant creative dance performance in local municipal parks;
- City of Toronto: monarch-focused art workshop for children through Toronto Public Library online programs;
- Town of Uxbridge: guided, monarch-focused hike;
- City of Vaughan: online children activities and a Facebook video.

Other organizations that participated in, or supported, Flight of the Monarch Day included Alus Norfolk, Assiniboine Park Zoo, The Butterflyway Project, Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory, Georgian Bay Land Trust, Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, Nature New Brunswick, Nature Saskatchewan, Parks Canada, Royal Botanical Gardens, Toronto Zoo and Wye Marsh. Activities included guided hikes and citizen science monitoring, interpretive dance, interactive live caterpillar and butterfly displays, monarch-related art instruction, butterfly releases, colouring contests, plant kit give-ways and planting events. In addition, a large number of engaging Facebook Live sessions and pre-recorded videos promoting the event were delivered.

Overall, the 2020 Flight of the Monarch Day saw an estimated total involvement of over 15,000 people across Canada, taking into account both virtual and in-person participation. Additionally, the event was covered on local and national media providing further exposure to individuals and communities on the importance of supporting and restoring biodiversity both locally and nationally.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funding for the Monarch Nation program is provided through a Government of Canada grant. Account #366-56/14160.

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DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Staff will continue to work with Environment and Climate Change Canada to achieve an official designation for August 22nd as National Flight of the Monarch Day.

Additionally, staff will continue to explore funding opportunities through Environment and Climate Change Canada and others in support of future Monarch Nation and Flight of the Monarch Day programs and services, including the submission of grant applications as appropriate.

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Date: October 9, 2020

Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: [Flight of the Monarch Day Supporting Doc](#)