

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, March 26, 2021 Meeting

FROM: Darryl Gray, Director, Education and Training

RE: **FLIGHT OF THE MONARCHS DAY PROCLAMATION**

KEY ISSUE

Approval of a TRCA proclamation of Flight of the Monarch Day, on August 21, 2021, as well as TRCA application for mayoral proclamations in local watershed municipalities in support of Flight of the Monarch Day, on August 21, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is the national host of the Monarch Teacher Network of Canada program, a special project and training program seeking to support monarch butterfly conservation education in Canada;

WHEREAS Monarch Teacher Network of Canada brings together a collective of educators and butterfly enthusiasts in Ontario and across Canada, whose combined experience and expertise in educating the public about monarch butterflies, places them in an ideal position to advocate for the monarch butterfly;

AND WHEREAS 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);

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT TRCA proclaim August 21, 2021 as Flight of the Monarch Day;

THAT an application for a mayoral proclamation be made to TRCA's local watershed municipalities to recognize August 21, 2021 as Flight of the Monarch Day;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff work with other organizations and jurisdictions across Canada to seek adoption of a nationally-recognized day of awareness related to the monarch butterfly.

BACKGROUND

Monarch butterflies are one of the most iconic and cherished insects in North America. Their epic 5,000-kilometre migration from eastern Canada to the forests of central Mexico begins in late August each year. In 2013, the eastern population of monarch butterflies dropped by 95 per cent, resulting in the smallest recorded population since the mid-1990s. Since 2013, the population has rebounded, owing in part to the collective efforts of thousands of individuals, groups and communities across Canada; however, the monarch's future remains in peril. *Flight of the Monarch Day* is an opportunity to celebrate the growing movement to protect monarch butterflies and the astonishing phenomenon of their migration as their epic journey southward begins.

Item 7.4

Since 2009, TRCA has been the Canadian administrator for the Monarch Teacher Network of Canada, a national program focused on educating the public about monarch butterflies and empowering people to bring monarchs into a variety of teaching and learning contexts. The program inspires people to connect with nature through a series of hands-on training, educational activities and professional development workshops.

In 2018, building on the success of the Monarch Teacher Network of Canada, TRCA was awarded a \$1,125,000 grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada to develop and deliver the Monarch Nation program. The goal of Monarch Nation is to improve engagement and awareness related to species at risk with children aged 6-12 years old. During the 3-year term of this program, Monarch Nation committed to leading the coordination of a national butterfly day to celebrate and raise awareness for monarch butterflies.

RATIONALE

On August 22, 2020, TRCA and Monarch Nation hosted the inaugural National Flight of the Monarch Day. Thousands of people across Canada participated in activities celebrating the monarch butterfly migration. Actions included citizen science monitoring, monarch-themed nature hikes and artistic performances. Due to the pandemic, Flight of the Monarch Day engagements were a blend of both online and outdoor in-person events. A post-event review of the metrics reveals:

- Eleven (11) upper- and lower-tier municipalities from TRCA's watersheds proclaimed August 22 to be Flight of the Monarch Day
- 270 organizations and families registered their participation, representing an estimated 4,000 participants in nine (9) provinces and one (1) territory
- 19,000 views of over twelve (12) Facebook Live events held by TRCA and other organizations on August 22, 2020
- More than 100 monarch butterfly-related sightings on Mission Monarch and iNaturalist platforms on August 22, 2020
- Nearly 1,200 'tweets' and 'retweets' using the hashtag #feeltheflutter
- 3,452 Instagram posts and 'likes' using the hashtag #feeltheflutter

Environment and Climate Change Canada funding for Monarch Nation is currently scheduled to end in March 2021, however staff continue to work to secure additional sources of funding including seeking renewed funding for this program from Government of Canada. TRCA's Monarch Teacher Network of Canada program will serve as lead organizer for Flight of the Monarch Day, ensuring event continuity and building on the momentum from TRCA's watershed municipalities and beyond.

TRCA's support of the Monarch Teacher Network of Canada allows key program activities to expand into new markets and user groups, leverages internal expertise, and enables the development of special resources and other marketing assets. The centralized support of these functions increases capacity and enhances efficiency for partners while providing consistent messaging related to monarch butterfly conservation.

Direct engagement of municipal councils through official proclamations of Flight of the Monarchs Day, will provide improved opportunities for collaboration between local municipalities and community partners in achieving goals related to monarch butterfly conservation.

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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 Teacher Network of Canada program is provided in part through a trustee-initiated grant from The Weston Family Foundation. The expenses are tracked under account code 366-55/11490.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

TRCA staff will prepare necessary materials for TRCA's proclamation of Flight of the Monarch Day, including events, press releases and any supporting promotional materials.

TRCA staff will prepare a support package for organizations wishing to hold an event as part of Flight of the Monarch Day, to be available as a download from the Monarch Teacher Network of Canada website.

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