



306 Dickop Street  
South Beloit, Illinois 61080  
815-200-6910  
info@natureattheconfluence.com

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Therese Oldenburg, 815-200-6910, info@natureattheconfluence.com

### **South Beloit Mayor takes Mayor's Monarch Pledge for city**

**South Beloit, Illinois** – The timing was perfect. On the day that South Beloit Mayor Ted Rehl announced the city's participation in the National Wildlife Federation's Mayor's Monarch Pledge, the first migrating monarchs started arriving in their over-wintering refuge in Mexico. Fifty school students from Willowbrook Middle School's Servo Terra Environmental Club were witness to the mayor's proclamation at Nature At The Confluence on Friday, November 3, 2017. The students then learned more about the monarch's incredible 3,000 mile migration, and signed a "Butterfly Hero Pledge" before they headed out to sow milkweed seeds in the Centennial Prairie and planted butterfly-friendly plants in the pollinator garden.

Mayor Rehl joins 341 mayors across the U.S. that have taken the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, in which cities commit to creating habitat and educating citizens about how they can make a difference at home for the monarch butterfly population.

As stated in the mayor's Monarch Butterfly Day proclamation, "Every citizen of South Beloit can make a difference for the Monarch by planting native milkweed and plants to provide habitat for the Monarch and pollinators in locations where people live, work, learn, play and worship."

It's estimated that the population of eastern monarchs is just a tenth of what it was in the mid-1990s, according to a recent study that found it could be at risk of extinction. A major cause of the decline is the widespread loss of a native plant called milkweed, which is the only plant monarch butterflies lay their eggs on, and is the monarch caterpillar's only food source.

Milkweed received a boost this month in Illinois, as the Illinois Senate approved a bill that would prohibit counties and cities from classifying milkweed as a noxious weed, a designation that would have previously prevented it from being planted in those areas.

Each fall, millions of monarch butterflies leave their summer breeding grounds in U.S. and Canada and travel upwards of 3,000 miles to reach overwintering grounds in southwestern Mexico. They start their incredible journey north in the spring, and their offspring return in May to start the cycle all over again.

**Find Nature where the Rock River and Turtle Creek Meet | [www.natureattheconfluence.com](http://www.natureattheconfluence.com)**

Under the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, communities must identify at least three specific actions they'll take in the next year to help monarch butterflies. South Beloit is already well on its way in this initiative. Willowbrook Middle School's Environmental Club started a prairie on their school grounds a few years ago. Nature At The Confluence has a newly planted pollinator garden and 5 acres of prairie has been seeded in the Centennial Prairie. In addition, volunteers planted over 300 prairie plants funded by Northern Winnebago Rotary Club this fall. Over 25 butterflies were raised and released this summer at Nature At The Confluence, and organizers have a goal of increasing the pollinator programming and plan to raise and release 100 monarchs in 2018.

"People of all ages were just fascinated to witness the whole life cycle of butterflies this summer", said Therese Oldenburg, program coordinator at Nature At The Confluence. "We're appreciative of Mayor Rehl's support and really look forward to supporting the city's initiative by increasing our monarch educational programs and have South Beloit stand out as a Monarch City."

To encourage planting of milkweed in the city free seeds and planting instructions will be available at South Beloit City Hall, Nature At The Confluence and the South Beloit Library. Now is the perfect time to plant milkweed seeds, as they can easily be planted in the fall or spring.

If citizens have questions about supporting this initiative, they can contact Nature At The Confluence by email at [info@natureattheconfluence.com](mailto:info@natureattheconfluence.com) or call 815-200-6910.

###

The Mayor's Monarch Pledge follows on next page.



## PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING "MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE DAY"

**WHEREAS**, the Monarch butterfly is one of the most iconic and studied butterflies in North American and is widely admired for its stunning metamorphosis and resulting beauty; and

**WHEREAS**, the Monarch butterfly is also extremely beneficial, pollinating many cultivated flowers and crops; and

**WHEREAS**, the Monarch butterfly population has plummeted 90 percent due to habitat loss and environmental stress; and

**WHEREAS**, a major cause of the decline is the widespread loss of a native plant called milkweed, which is the only plant monarch butterflies lay their eggs on, and the is the monarch caterpillar's only food source; and

**WHEREAS**, each year, millions of monarch butterflies migrate from their overwintering sites in Mexico to our region to feed and reproduce, and then return to their over wintering habitat in the fall; and

**WHEREAS**, every citizen of South Beloit can make a difference for the Monarch by planting native milkweed and plants to provide habitat for the Monarch and pollinators in locations where people live, work, learn, play and worship; and

**WHEREAS**, conservation efforts have already started in South Beloit by creating habitat for these magnificent butterflies at Willowbrook Middle School and Nature At The Confluence; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Theodore Rehl, Mayor of the City of South Beloit, do hereby proclaim November 3, 2017, as "**MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE DAY**" in the City of South Beloit to shine a spotlight on our pledge of support and raise awareness of Monarch butterfly conservation in South Beloit, Illinois.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the seal of the City of South Beloit, Illinois on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2017.

---

Theodore Rehl, Mayor