Village of Grayslake

Grayslake, IL

Mayor of Grayslake Rhett Taylor

Pledge Summary

Grayslake is a Village located in Northeast Illinois with a population of roughly 21,000. The Village has worked extensively to maintain and create green space in conjunction with development, and places emphasis on planting native plants and other pollinator promoting plants when undertaking landscaping and other projects. Mayor Taylor is committed to protecting the Monarch butterfly population and looks forward to continuing to work to promote local pollinators through the Village's efforts as well as engaging the community about ways they can help the Monarchs at home.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Elizabeth Davies	2026	1/26/2026	
Mayor Rhett Taylor	2025	2/7/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor of Grayslake Rhett Taylor	2024	2/14/2024	Signatories
Mayor of Grayslake Rhett Taylor	2023	1/4/2023	
Mayor Rhett Taylor	2022	4/1/2022	
Mayor Rhett Taylor	2021	3/10/2021	

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

2000

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

2000

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

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0.5

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

Conservation@Home efforts through Openlands, share public space, parks

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

We invite all outside communities to visit Grayslake and our parks

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

We love to create a sustainable habitat for our Monarch butterflies! This adds to the beautification of our town and aligns with our sustainability plan.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

The National Wildlife Federation website has been helpful. Templates for social media and our website would be helpful.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

We plan to continue to expand our conservation efforts of the monarch butterfly. We plant hundreds of thousands of milkweed seeds each year!

Selected Action Items

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Community Garden Application.pdf

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

We do have a Community Garden here in Grayslake. This sustainability initiative provides access to locally grown foods and plants to the garden participants.

Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Ordinance 2021-0-08.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Community Garden, Grayslake Park District

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete.

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

April 6, 2021

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

Complete

Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

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Thousands of Milkweed seeds were planted in Gelatin Park which is managed by the Grayslake Park District in 2023. Gelatin Park is located in Grayslake. Please see below for the exact location.
https://www.google.com/maps/place/Gelatin+Park/@42.3465049,-88.038995,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x880f9be40cde4ed3:0x2f2a8ea7dc7ca88.038995!16s%2Fg%2F11fmbl9hp8?entry=ttu

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.

Milkweed is maintained by the Village of Grayslake public works department. All other groups involved were advised not to mow, water, fertilize, or do anything to potentially damage the areas where milkweed has been planted. Any maintenance required is handled by the Village of Grayslake. Additionally , we have added permanent Native Planting areas in several areas around town along with our annual planting program.

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Cul-De-Sac Partnership Program.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Sustainable Neighborhood Program.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Neighborhood Partnership Program.PDF

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

The Cul-De-Sac and Sustainable Neighborhood Program are new programs that have not had signups yet, although there have been discussions with residents/groups. We intend to market these programs more aggressively in the upcoming year. The Neighborhood Partnership program has had several successful projects, and implemented new landscaping designs with native plantings.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions implemented for mowing and maintenance programs.

They will have to submit lists of plants they wish to plant in these programs, so we are able to make sure that they are only approved native plantings, and encourage residents to add more monarch friendly choices like milkweed. We also intend to begin encouraging residents who take part in our community garden to plant milkweed or other monarch friendly plants.

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Gelatin+Park/@42.3465049,-88.038995,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x880f9be40cde4ed3:0x2f2a8ea7dc7ca88.038995!16s%2Fg%2F11fmbl9hp8?entry=ttu

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

64000

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.5 (milkweed only)

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

The Village planted 64,000 milkweed seeds in 2023 to help grow and protect monarch butterflies and other pollinator habitats. These plants continued to be maintained. The Village also plants hundreds of annuals every year both in entrance areas to the Village, and on Village Right-of-Ways and medians. These are native annuals, provided by a local business.

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

2023 Arbor Day Foundation Letter.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

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The Village has been designated as a Bird City for a few years. Grayslake has also been named a Tree City USA for the 30th consecutive year.

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

A variety of programs/general operations involved to maintain these awards. Last year we completed a multi year application and implementation process with the Morton Arboretum to receive a tree planting grant, which resulted in the planting of 250 trees on village owned property.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation (2024).pdf

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

The Mayor's Monarch Pledge was presented at one of our Village Board meetings. In the past we have posted about the program on social media, but missed it this year due to some personnel changes internally. We intend to restart out social media campaign about the program again shortly after the new year.

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

ZS2 - 2024-0-25 Tree Preservation.docx

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Grayslake Tree Planting Program.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Openlands and our residents - this is not required but something we offer through the Village. Morton Arboretum for Tree Planting grant.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

Starting in 2023, we began work on an overhaul of the Village tree preservation ordinance to bring it into line with the previously mentioned Arboretum grant requirements. This not only meant an update to the list of trees/shrubs that we accepted as Native, but an overhaul of every aspect of the ordinance. This ordinance was adopted this year.

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

April 26, 2024

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation (2024).pdf

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Conservation at Home poster_202012221524131179.pdf

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

We don't have an exact number. This program is done on private homeowner property and they are reimbursed for their improvements so we don't have exact numbers. Grayslake also contains a Lake County Forest Preserve, which is consistently treated for buckthorn and invasive species removal. Grayslake also has several protected prairies, which are burned to promote healthy growth. Our Public Works team also spent 967 hours on Brush Removal during the calendar year, which consists of (but not exclusively) Buckthorn removal

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

The Conservation at Home program is done on private homeowner property and they are reimbursed for their improvements so we don't have exact numbers. Grayslake also contains a Lake County Forest Preserve, which is consistently treated for buckthorn and invasive species removal. Grayslake also has several protected prairies, which are burned to promote healthy growth. Our Public Works team also spent 967 hours on Brush Removal during the calendar year, which consists of (but not exclusively) Buckthorn removal

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