Village of Grayslake

Grayslake, IL

Mayor 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 2025

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 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

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

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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.).

500

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.)

500

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.

.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.

.5 (milkweed only). Village has maintained a half acre of milkweed for the past several years. Medians are not planted with milkweed, but with native flowers sourced by a locally owned business

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 local communities to come and enjoy our parks and open spaces

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

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The Village of Grayslake takes sustainability and helping the environment very seriously. The Mayors Monarch pledge is a program that the Village has supported for a long time and helps guide some of our decision making when it comes to environmental decisions.

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?

Templates for social media to help spread awareness in the Village

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

Village efforts are focused primarily on overall sustainability, and takes a multifaceted approach. We plan to continue expansions of our planting programs and use of native plants, including milkweed.

Selected Action Items

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 10th 2025

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

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day Proclamation (2025) - Signed.pdf

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.

November 2025 newsletter 5.pdf

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

The Village of Grayslake has been a long time supporter of environmental groups, and has been a Tree City USA for the past 30 years, and a Bird City for the last 6. Attached is confirmation of our Bird City renewal

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

Continued efforts in overall sustainability, especially focusing on tree canopy and covers. Village 50/50 tree planting program has continued to be popular, and the village received 2 separate grants to plant hundreds of trees.

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

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

Acreage on private property not available.

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 over 500 hours on Brush Removal during the calendar year, which consists of (but not exclusively) Buckthorn removal

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)

Various medians/entry ways around the Village. Coordinates are just one location. 42.33937869882582, -87.99802189724242

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

64000

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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.

.5 (milkweed only). Village has maintained a half acre of milkweed for the past several years. Medians are not planted with milkweed, but with native flowers sourced by a locally owned business

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Flowers are annuals planted in mid May, and maintained through the fall.

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 Flyer Updated 8.28.23.pdf

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

Sustainable Neighborhood Program Flyer w Logo.pdf

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

So far we have had no signups for these programs, however we have had discussions with a group from one neighborhood in the town regarding the program, and we hope that we may be able to have them sign up in 2026.

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.

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

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

The Village maintains a community garden for a small number of residents to utilize. We added information to our website for interested residents to encourage them to plant

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milkweed or other native plants in addition to their food producing crops. The Village is expanding the community garden to another parcel in town next year, and we will continue to encourage the planting of milkweed and other native plantings.

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.

Sustainable Neighborhood Program Flyer w Logo.pdf

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

Cul-de-sac Partnership Program Flyer Updated 8.28.23.pdf

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

Part of the neighborhood partnership programs, residents could get reimbursement for planting milkweed or other native gardens.

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

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

Worked with Morton Arboretum through a grant to update tree ordinance

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

In Progress

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

The Village in the past year passed an overhauled tree ordinance, which updated the standards within the code and altered the approved list of native trees to be planted on Village property. The Village also received a county grant to plant 200 trees in our downtown nature trail area, which has been completed. The Village also received a 2nd

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county grant to plant in an area that had been clear cut, although this work has not yet been started.

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