City and County of Denver

Denver, CO

Mayor Michael Hancock

Pledge Summary

In 2016, Denver's Mayor, B. Michael Hancock, took the pledge and made the commitment to using sustainable practices that help the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. "Denver is committed to establishing and restoring habitat for the monarch butterfly and we encourage our residents to do the same," said Mayor Michael Hancock. "By doing this, we are creating sustainable practices that will support the increase of native pollinating insects in our city, which is important to the health and beauty of Denver."

Action Items Committed for 2021

Communications and Convening

- 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 gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- 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).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- 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

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- 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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- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Denver Mayor Michael Johnston	2025	2/20/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor of Denver Colorado Mike Johnston	2024	3/1/2024	Signatories
Mayor of Denver Colorado Michael Hancock	2023	1/11/2023	Signatories
Mayor of Denver Colorado Michael Hancock	2022	3/14/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Michael Hancock	2021	3/12/2021	Leadership Circle

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.)

300 Youth, 200 Adults

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.

* park gardens, shared public spaces.

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

Creating neighborhood parks with pollinator gardens in low income areas, and providing environmental education and programs in these neighborhoods.

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

* The goals of this program are complimentary to Denver Parks (DPR's) goals for creating, enhancing, and restoring natural spaces that are more resilient and sustainable.

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?

Resources such as staff, funding, support from the communities, partner support, training and education in natural resource management and native plants, will all be helpful in our effort to creating and maintaining pollinator gardens citywide and parkwide.

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

* The COVID pandemic has definitely created some challenges and road blocks in our participation of the Mayor's Monarch Pledge program. We hope to increase our efforts in the coming year.

Selected Action Items

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.

DPR works collaboratively with local community gardens, such as the Denver Botanic Gardens, and CSU Extension on programs related to planting native plants and milkweed. DPR also works with volunteers in communities where pollinator gardens are planted.

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.

Denver Parks & Recreation works closely with Denver's Mayor and other city agencies to plan and create pollinator gardens throughout the city and parks, and businesses. DPR has incorporated resilient and sustainable practices in to their program for managing natural spaces and wildlife habitats. The city works with various community organizations and youth/volunteers/community groups to plan and create habitats for pollinators.

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

The extent of engagement with these groups was limited in 2020 and 2021 due to the Pandemic, and limited resources, so the size of groups and engagements were much smaller from previous years. DPR does have a "mowing guideline" and uses "best management practices" in natural and native areas.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

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

Denver Botanic Gardens, CSU Extension, Audubon Master Gardeners, local botanic businesses.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

Propagation of native plants, plant sales, education, etc.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Our Annual "Purge the Spurge" Event did not happen due to the Pandemic. Instead, native plants were distributed to homeowners in exchange for their spurge.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

64

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Denver Parks

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

6

What species were collected or propagated?

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Milkweed species: ASCLEPIAS INCARNATA, ASCLEPIAS INCARNATA 'CINDERELLA', Asclepias subverticillata, ASCLEPIAS TUBEROSA

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Denver Parks Greenhouse

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

Propagated 630 milkweed species.

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)

Denver city-wide medians and park properties.

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

5000

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.

50

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Spring through summer annually.

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).

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

Denver Parks & Rec is currently working toward becoming certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat.

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

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CWH

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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

Covid restricted this past year. Small community engagements.

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

3000

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Plantings of native and pollinator friendly gardens are part of DPR's mission.

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.

5,000

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.

Denver abides by the state mandatory noxious weed guidelines to manage noxious weeds city and park wide, using biological, chemical, and manual strategies of weed management.

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?

Denver Botanic Garden, CSU Ext, Denver Parks

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

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In progress

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

DPR and DBG is planning to increase their propogation of native plants which includes milkweed in the coming year and beyond.

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

Any city agency or community wishing to join in the effort of creating and managing natural spaces and pollinator gardens.

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.

DPR and other city agencies in Colorado are incorporating more resilient and sustainable management in to their land practices.

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

DPR has implemented a new mowing guideline for managing native spaces and plant habitats in a conceptual way and as a way to work toward changing mowing practices, but no SOP has been developed yet. Working on that.

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.

Newly implemented, so will be a continuous practice for managing natural areas.

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Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

2021 LOD Flyer.pdf

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

Denver Audubon, Greenwood Wildlife Rehab, Museum of Nature and Science, Community College of Denver, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and Wild Birds

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

Denver Parks in on the 2nd year of leading the effort in Lights Out Denver, bird conservation effort.

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.

https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Parks-Recreation/Trees-Natural-Resources/Wildlife/Lights-Out-Denver

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

Denver Parks will continue to lead this effort, working with partners for bird conservation.

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