City of La Crosse

La Crosse, WI

Mayor Mitch Reynolds

Pledge Summary

Nestled between the banks of Mississippi River and the bluffs of the Driftless Region, La Crosse is a vibrant community boasting a variety of natural resources and opportunities for recreational activity. The city's breathtaking landscapes offer endless hiking, biking, fishing, and kayaking opportunities. The community has taken several steps to protect these vital species, including planting native wildflowers and milkweed, reducing pesticide use, and educating the public on the importance of pollinators. These efforts have helped maintain the ecological balance and created a beautiful and sustainable environment for residents and visitors alike.

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.
- 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.
- 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

- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

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- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

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

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Mitch Reynolds	2025	2/7/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Mitch Reynolds	2024	12/5/2023	Signatories
Mayor Mitch Reynolds	2023	12/1/2022	Signatories
Mayor Mitch Reynolds	2022	3/28/2022	Signatories
Mayor Timothy Kabat	2021	3/17/2021	

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.)

50

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.

3

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.

Much of this habitat is being created by expanding bluffland prairies in city owned lots.

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

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Gardens and demonstration plots are accessible to all members of the community. We have also started outreach events, and plan to expand these to focus on other neighborhoods and areas of the community.

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

Showcasing the need to continue to build on existing projects to enhance habitat.

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?

Tool Kits would be most helpful in outlining events and outreach to effectively engage community members.

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

We've been expanding many of our sustainability programs to be seasonally focused, and ultimately would like to convert some of our mowed properties to no mow or pollinator habitat. We struggle with ongoing maintenance and budget to continue some of these programs.

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:

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

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

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How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

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

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

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

When did this challenge take place?

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

Please describe your challenge and the results.

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

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

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Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

City Hall - 400 La Crosse Street. The garden is located on a governmental lot and accessible to members of the public. The garden demonstrates that small pockets of monarch habitat provide value, even in downtown and urban areas.

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

Garden was installed and is maintained by City of La Crosse staff.

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.1

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.

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

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

City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department, contracted mowers of city properties, La Crosse Habitat For Humanity.

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

During the month of May, the La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department advertises for and participates in the "No Mow May" initiative. Throughout the month, educational signage is displayed within selected parks, alongside No Mow May demonstration patches where we ask our contracted mowers to forego mowing during this time. During participation, the parks are not mowed for the entire month of May to

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encourage the establishment of pollinators, and to offer visible examples of what the No Mow May program can do.

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.

Beautify La Crosse Guidance Document_2024.pdf

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

2, Habitat for Humanity, Hogan-Weigent Neighborhood Association

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

The City worked with Habitat for Humanity of La Crosse to provide informational material on lawn alternatives. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry worked to provide information on the Beautify La Crosse program, offering incentives to property owners for converting their boulevard, and also providing private parcel lawn alternatives. This was completed by hosting events and attending Neighborhood meetings to disseminate information and answer homeowner questions.

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?

The City of La Crosse

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

0

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Plants were maintained. Various garden beds throughout City Property and Parks are planted with milkweed, these are maintained throughout the growing season and offer demonstrations to other property owners within the City.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

LookoutSignLowResScrews_2023-0617.pdf

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

Sign is located on a rare bluff prairie along a popular trail in Hixon Forest.

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

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

Minutes (11).pdf

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

Resolution.pdf

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

City of La Crosse Common Council & City of La Crosse Judiciary & Adminstrative Committee

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

Completed.

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.

The resolution was adopted at Common Council on January 1th, 2024, and the ordinance suspension was approved at the January 2, 2024 meeting. Resolution designating May as "No Mow May", and copy of minutes approving ordinance suspension are attached above.

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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.

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

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

3 Wisconsin Master Naturalists Flawn CEO, Anthony Nied Habitat For Humanity La Crosse

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

Wisconsin Master Naturalists and Flawn founder, Anthony Neid came together to present information about lawn alternatives during a "No Mow May" Kick off event in April of 2024. During this event, attendees interacted with native seeds, creating a plan for lawn conversion, and were able to ask questions and speak to Wisconsin Master Naturalists in attendance. They were also provided a lawn alternative demonstration from Anthony Neid, Flawn founder and CEO. During his conversation he covered lawn alternatives that homeowners could easily implement to better their private land ecosystem.

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