City of Cedar Rapids

Cedar Rapids, IA

Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell

Pledge Summary

Cedar Rapids is the second-largest city in Iowa and in the county seat of Linn County. The city lies on both banks of the Cedar River and has a population of approximately 136,429. Cedar Rapids is happy to take part in this pledge and is committed to participating in environmental initiatives that help with monarch and pollinator conservation.

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 developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell	2026	2/25/2026	
Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell	2025	12/2/2024	Signatories

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Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell	2024	4/29/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell	2022	4/29/2022	Signatories
Cedar Rapids Mayor Brad Hart	2021	3/25/2021	Signatories

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.).

10000

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.)

100

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.

2

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.

Shared Public Spaces and Parks

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

The traffic signal box artwork that was installed this year are located in a section of town with a high number of low-income and immigrant residents. This is an area with significant vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

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

Cedar Rapids is committed to restoring native habitat on public land and prioritizing green infrastructure.

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

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help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

We are in a period of staff transition in the Parks Department (the primary department engaged in this effort), so a review of the goals and benefits of participating in the Mayors' Monarch Pledge would be helpful.

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

During this period of transition, our monarch conservation efforts have slowed, but with a new Park Superintendent, we hope to regain our momentum.

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:

06/17/2024

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

Monarch Butterfly Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Cedar Rapids Iowa Monarch Proclamation 2024.pdf

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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

Cedar Rapids Greenway Parks Final Report_Ecology.pdf

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

This year, the final concept plans for the Cedar Rapids Greenway Park were presented to the public. Working with consultants, the City of Cedar Rapids created an actionable and forward-thinking update for the Greenway Parks Plan. This plan prioritizes collaboration,

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community engagement, technical innovation, flood resilience, and thoughtful stewardship. Informed by the community and the conditions of the floodway, this updated plan outlines critical interventions to improve connections to the waterfront and provide a range of public programs that support local needs. A key feature of the plan is the introduction of naturalistic, native plantings and the creation of wildlife habitat. At the residential level, Cedar Rapids incentivizes residents to install rain gardens and bioswales comprised of natives plants to provide habitat and address stormwater runoff.

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)

2,500 native plants, which included over 90 species of local Iowa native plants.

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

3965

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

Friends of Noelridge, Wild Ones Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Area Chapter

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

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

Monarch Tent at Noelridge Park.jpg

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)

There are several native gardens at Noelridge Park (4900 Council Street NE, Cedar Rapids) that serve as educational gardens. We also have added native plants to other City parks, including Fairview Park (502 Vernon Drive SE, Cedar Rapids), Anderson Park (505 21st Street SE), and Bever Park (2700 Bever Avenue SE). City staff also installed a native garden with over 30 species of plants at the Cedar Rapids Art Museum in 2022 and will be adding more species next spring. In addition, the City has restored 343 acres of native prairie in parks and on public property throughout the city.

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

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N/A

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.

350

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Cedar Rapids Butterfly Sign.jpg

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

Prairie Pollinator Sign.jpg

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

10

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

The City has installed educational signs at restored prairie in Noelridge and Hughes Parks and in the native gardens at Noelridge. These signs explain why native plants are beneficial and highlights the pollinators that are associated with them. The City also posts signs at events such as the Mother's Day Expo/Native Plant Sale explaining what the native plants available for purchase will look like when they are full grown. These signs also provide information about each species.

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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

N/A

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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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.

In the past, the Noelridge Greenhouse would be sprayed with pesticides weekly or biweekly. We now rely on beneficial insects and have not sprayed pesticides in Noelridge Greenhouse for more than 2 years.

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

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

Cedar Rapids Climate Action Plan.pdf

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

iGreenCR Action Plan_Biodiversity.pdf

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

Monarch Research Project

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 City continues its effort to encourage the planting of native plants and reducing the use of pesticides. These two goals are components of Cedar Rapids' Climate Action Plan and iGreenCR Action Plan.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

Cedar Rapids SolidWasteRecycling Truck Wrap.jpg

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

Cedar Rapids Traffic Signal Box Art1.jpg

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

Cedar Rapids Traffic Signal Box Art2.jpg

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

Cedar Rapids Noelridge Mural.jpg

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

Local artists, Friends of Noelridge

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

10000

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

A mural depicting native Iowa ecosystems was completed this year on the Noelridge Park Greenhouses. The three Iowa native ecosystems featured are the Oak Savannah, Tallgrass Prairie, and Prairie Garden. A total of over 40 species are depicted on the mural, representing native plants, pollinators and birds that call Iowa home. This project was the culmination of three years of hard work by the Friends of Noelridge to pay for the mural. "We hope visitors to the Greenhouse will embrace the I Spy theme of all the native plants and animals either with a self-guided tour or a scheduled guided tour. The three children depicted in the mural are from the Noelridge Neighborhood," said Mary Moore, Friends of Noelridge President. The City also worked with artists to install traffic signal box art featuring monarch butterflies at five southwest Cedar Rapids locations in the spring of 2024. The signal box art projects feature a theme of monarch butterflies in a variety of color and graphic schemes to enhance these public spaces in highly visible areas. In addition, artists were invited to create designs inspired by sustainability and climate action for vinyl art "vehicle wraps" that were installed on some of the City's solid waste and recycling trucks. This vibrant artwork featuring pollinators rolls into neighborhoods on a weekly basis.

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