City of Cedar Rapids

Cedar Rapids, IA

Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell

Pledge Summary

Cedar Rapids is the second-largest city in Iowa and is the county seat of Linn County. The city lies on both banks of the Cedar River and has a population of approximately 137,900. 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 2026

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 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.

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
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.).

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800

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.)

350

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.

10

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.

The Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department has been creating pollinator habitat in urban settings for more than 10 years, beginning with prairie plantings along the trail system. Since then, the City has expanded its commitment through initiatives such as Pollinator Zone, the 1,000 Acre Pollinator Initiative, and Prairies in Parks. Pollinator habitat is also incorporated into planning efforts, including the Garden in Parks Plan. Residents are encouraged to plant native species and create pollinator habitat on their properties, with guidance from City staff to ensure compliance with visibility and accessibility standards. In 2026, 10 acres of pollinator habitat were planted at Bever, Jones, and Tuma Parks.

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

During the development of the Garden in Parks Program, low-income communities were included as a criterion for determining priority locations.

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

Pollinators play a critical role in maintaining diverse ecosystems. The decline of pollinators is striking, with some estimates putting today's population of monarchs at less than 5 percent of the population 15 years ago. Pollinators contribute to the production of more than 30 percent of our food and increase that value of nations' crops by $15 million dollars. Located in a heavily agricultural state, and a City that thrives because of the agricultural sector, the City has committed to several initiatives to support the environment.

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?

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Our Master Gardener volunteers have been an invaluable resource for the Parks and Recreation Department, providing expertise and hands-on support for garden projects and community engagement efforts. To help meet our goals, we would like to recruit additional volunteers to support our Garden Buddies program, which assists with cleaning, maintaining, and preparing community gardens for each growing season.

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

On July 15, 2026 there was a Monarch event that took place at the Noelridge Greenhouse where we tagged and released monarch butterflies.

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:

11/3/2026

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

Monarch Butterfly Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Butterly Day-Proclamation.pdf

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.

Monarch Butterfly Release at Noelridge Park.docx

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

Monarch Research, Iowa State University

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

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On July 15, Monarch Research hosted a monarch butterfly release at Noelridge Park, providing a unique opportunity for community members to learn about monarch conservation. We appreciate their partnership with Iowa State University and their efforts to educate and engage residents in protecting this important pollinator.

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

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

The Friends of Noelridge-Annual Plant Sale Events 2026.docx

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

3200

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

3157

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

Approx. 3,200 plants sold between Easter and Mother’s Day Showcases, 3,157 people attended the 2 events. The Friends of Noelridge is our biggest partner, but we also invite the Linn County Master Gardeners, The Harshbarger Hosta Society, and the Eastern Iowa Orchid Society.

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