

Town of Normal

Normal, IL

Mayor Chris Koos

Pledge Summary

The Town of Normal, home of Illinois State University, is located in Central Illinois. Glaciers had created the prairie land that originally covered the northern two-thirds of the state. The monarch butterfly, the state insect, lived on these prairies. Illinois had become known as "The Prairie State." But unfortunately, most of Illinois ' prairies are gone. The majority of these lands were converted to agricultural fields. The Town of Normal is committed to preserving and restoring native prairie plantings that serves both as an aesthetic and recreational amenity while providing wildlife habitat, especially for the monarch butterfly.

Action Items Committed for 2022

Communications and Convening

- 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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

- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Chris Koos	2026	1/7/2026	
Mayor Chris Koos	2025	1/10/2025	Signatories
Mayor Chris Koos	2024	1/10/2024	Signatories

Mayor Chris Koos	2023	1/12/2023	Signatories
Mayor Chris Koos	2022	2/25/2022	Signatories
Mayor Chris Koos	2021	3/30/2021	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 (e.g., 50).

0

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." (Only allow numerical values.)

0

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).

0.75

Where is your habitat being created? This may include residences (yards, containers, balconies, etc.), schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, culturally-significant locations, shared public spaces and common areas or parks.

Some new habitat area was created within the Town, but the primary focus was placed on existing natural areas in parks and walking trail areas by restoring native plants and/or removing invasives.

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

Town of Normal efforts to increase native and/or butterfly habitat have continued to be focused throughout our community.

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

Continued work on the Mayor's Monarch Pledge has motivated Town of Normal staff to add an educational component to our efforts. Fun Fact educational/interpretive signs were installed at two natural areas within Town parks that explain and highlight the benefits of the monarch butterfly and the pollinator bee.

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?

We have not utilized any NWF resources to date.

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

Unfortunately, reduced summer and seasonal staffing this past year once again limited our desired accomplishments. However, our efforts will continue to grow as we have many future conservation projects planned.

Selected Action Items

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.

[Hidden Creek Plan.jpg](#)

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

Town of Normal Parks Maintenance staff

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

The Town of Normal Parks Maintenance staff continued work at the Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary, a Town-owned municipal property managed by the Parks & Recreation Department. An ecological restoration master plan for the 2.5-acre park was completed approximately five years ago. Restoration work has been accomplished in stages. The riparian area was planted this year with a forbs seed mix that included Black-eyed Susan and Pale Beardtongue. Over (1000) perennial plant plugs were also added to the savanna area that included Swamp Milkweed and Cardinal Flower.

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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

[Hidden Creek Plant List.jpg](#)

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary is located at 100 W. Sycamore Street in Normal Illinois. Over (1000) pollinator plant plugs of various species were planted in the savanna area of the sanctuary, including over (100) *Asclepias incarnata* (Swamp Milkweed) plants. These plants are commonly found in creek bottom and wet meadow areas. This plant species will fit very well within our habitat restoration plan and is ideal for the existing soil and water conditions within the sanctuary.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted?

1000

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants?

This year approximately 0.75 acres was planted.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

The ecological restoration plan calls for continual efforts to control recurrent or new populations of invasive and weedy species by cutting and removing and/or applying herbicide applications to the unwanted vegetation.

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

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

[Audubon.JPG](#)

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

JWP Audubon Society

How many plants were planted?

20

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

In partnership with the JWP Audubon Society, the Town of Normal Parks & Recreation Department permitted the organization to plant a native perennial garden along the Constitution Trail, a popular public bike and walk path constructed on an old railroad right-

of-way. The group maintains the garden with volunteers from their organization. Park maintenance staff, upon request, will supply hardwood mulch or assist with garden waste pick-up. To provide some needed revitalization to the garden, every spring the organization may plant between 15-20 replacement pollinator plants.

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

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

[Blackstone willows.jpg](#)

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

[Blackstone \(2\).jpg](#)

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

[Blackstone \(3\).jpg](#)

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants?

4.0

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.

Blackstone Trails Park is a municipal natural area consisting of a walking path that surrounds a 3.5-acre pond. Native pollinator plants provide a buffer between the trail and pond. Unfortunately, due to some park maintenance staff shortages, some invasive plants, mainly willow trees and phragmite reed grasses, became dominate in some areas of the pond. This past fall, the willow trees were cut and treated. The weedy grasses were mowed. A prescribed control burn will be performed this winter/early spring. Hopefully most of the existing pollinator plants stunted by the invasive competition can reestablish next season with continued stewardship throughout the year.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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

[Fell sign.JPG](#)

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

The Town of Normal Director of Parks & Recreation

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.

For years, the majority of flower beds within the Town, either in parks or other municipal properties, were comprised primarily of annual plants, generally grown from May through mid-October. Unfortunately, these beds laid empty in the early spring and late fall while pollinator insects still look for nectar. Through the support of the Director of Parks & Recreation, Town horticulturists have begun converting these landscape beds to primarily contain perennial pollinator plants. With thoughtful planning, most beds will have something in bloom through most of the growing season. The conversion should be completed by the summer of 2023.