

Town of Normal

Normal, IL

Mayor Chris Koos

Pledge Summary

The Town of Normal, home of Illinois State University, is located in Central Illinois. The northern two-thirds of the state was originally covered in prairie land. And while Illinois is known as "The Prairie State", most of the state's prairies are gone as the majority were converted to agricultural fields. The monarch butterfly, the state insect, had lived on these prairies. Milkweed and other flowering plants are needed to help restore the lost prairie habitat. 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 2023

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).

0.50

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.

A small 1/2-acre site of habitat was created on a neglected segment of public property along the Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek. However, staff continues to focus on the maintenance of existing natural areas within our park areas.

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?

The continuing participation in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge has emphasized the need of creating additional monarch butterfly habitat within our parks.

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?

We have many future conservation projects planned; however, staff time limitations and funding have always seemed to create some challenges.

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.

[Water Tower - Summer.jpeg](#)

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

[Skunk Island - Summer.jpeg](#)

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

[Water Tower - Fall.jpeg](#)

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

[Skunk Island Map.docx](#)

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

Town of Normal Parks Maintenance Staff, local disc golf course club members, and local bird watching groups.

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

The redesigned Maxwell Park Disc Golf Course recently expanded into the Skunk Island section of the park. The unofficial Skunk Island name signifies the natural and unnatural separation of this tract of park land by the creek (Skunk Creek) and Interstate 55/74. Prior to the disc golf course expansion, this area of the park was used by wildlife watching enthusiasts. Birds flock to the groves of dogwood shrubs and butterflies flutter in the goldenrod. However, many invasive plants also exist including bush honeysuckle, poison ivy, wild parsnip, poison hemlock and ragweed. The groups worked together to layout the course fairways that would have the least impact on the natural habitat. While mowed areas were developed, many invasives plants were removed and the narrow trails were improved. Work is still on-going. And while yellow Indian grass, foxglove beardtongue and switchgrass are widespread on the island, milkweed is sparse. Future improvements include the planting of additional milkweed and other pollinating plants.

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.

[Orlando - rough.jpeg](#)

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

[Orlando - complete.jpeg](#)

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

[Orlando GIS.docx](#)

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

[Prairie Moon Seed.pdf](#)

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

A small 1/2-acre site of habitat was created on a neglected segment of public property along the Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek. This area had been used for many years to dispose of soil waste with the goal of raising the grade along the creek. The dumping had eventually reached capacity and unfortunately the site became neglected resulting in the growth of invasive weeds and volunteer trees. These plants have since been removed and the area was graded and prepared for seed. A native seed mix was used that includes milkweed and other pollinator plants.

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

10000

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

0.50

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

The area will be monitored and reseeded if necessary. Invasive plants will be moved as needed.

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.

[Normandy Garden 1.jpeg](#)

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

[Normandy Garden 2.jpeg](#)

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

[Normandy Garden 3.jpeg](#)

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

[Doc1.docx](#)

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

[Normandy Garden Plant List.docx](#)

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

Town of Normal Parks and Recreation, Normandy Village

How many plants were planted?

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The old rose garden on the former campus of the Illinois Soldier's and Sailor's Childrens School has been transformed into a picturesque perennial garden. The rose garden had been a source of pride on the campus of the old school, but after the facility closed in 1979, local volunteers took over the maintenance. The Town of Normal parks maintenance staff had recently been given the responsibility for the upkeep of the garden. The garden had greatly deteriorated and many of the rose bushes had been removed. Staff decided to remove the remainder of the formal plant material and designed a perennial garden that includes many native pollinator species.

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 Trails.jpeg](#)

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

1.0

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 an asphalt trail surrounding a 3.5-acre pond. Native pollinator plants buffer the area between the trail and water. Unfortunately, some invasive plants, including willow trees and phragmite reed grasses, have become dominate in some of the areas. Town of Normal parks maintenance staff have continually addressed the problematic areas along the pond with some success, but there is still work to do. A prescribed control burn was performed this past early spring. The willow trees were manually cut, and the stumps treated with herbicides. The phragmite seed heads were removed prior to pollination.

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.

[Ironwood sign.jpeg](#)

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.

Just a few years ago, many of the landscape beds in Normal's parks and municipal properties included a multitude of annual flowers. Through the support of the Director of Parks and Recreation, Town horticulturalists have converted most of these beds to primarily consist of nectar-producing perennials. Most beds now have some plant material in bloom though most of the growing season. This conversation was hoped to be complete by the end of the 2023 season, however plans are now in place to complete by the end of the 2024 summer.