

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 by 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 2024

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

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.

Our habitat has been primarily created on public lands managed by the Normal Parks and Recreation Department, that include park areas, trail right-of-way, and other municipal property.

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?

Continuing to participate in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge has strengthened our desire to add monarch butterfly habitat with every community project.

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?

The challenges of staff limitations and funding still continue to slow progress towards adding monarch butterfly habitat.

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.

[Possibility Place Nursery Invoice.pdf](#)

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

[Allers Shelter Native Habitat - 1.jpeg](#)

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

[Allers Shelter Native Habitat - 2.jpeg](#)

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

[Allers Shelter Native Habitat - 3.jpeg](#)

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

[Allers Shelter Native Habitat - 4.jpeg](#)

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

(4) Grand Prairie Bird Alliance, Friends of the Constitution Trail, State Farm Century of Good Grant Program, and Chizmar Landscaping.

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

Allers Shelter, located adjacent to the Connie Link Amphitheater along the Constitution Trail, had been an under-utilized picnic amenity of the Normal Parks and Recreation Department. The shelter was fronted by a landscaped area primarily of mowed grass along with a natural wooded area at the rear. A vision, shared by our community partners, involved transforming the entire area into a natural habitat to attract birds and insects. A

grant from State Farm was utilized to build a waterfall structure on the sloped terrain of the wooded area. Native plant material was then blended into the flowing and ponded areas of the water feature that including natural stone outcropping. The planting list was made up of many pollinator plants that attract songbirds, hummingbirds, bees, caterpillars, and other insects, including Buttonbush, Coralberry, Swamp Rose, and Spicebush. Additional pollinator-friendly perennial plants will be added in the Spring of 2025.

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.

[Possibility Place Nursery Invoice - 2.pdf](#)

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

[Line Clearance Restoration.jpeg](#)

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

The planting area is a small 1/2-acre site of the Constitution Trail right-of-way property located at the junction of the Bloomer and Illinois Central trail segments in Normal Illinois. The site is a shared area/easement between the Town of Normal and the local electric company, Ameren. An approximate one-half acre of property was completely forested for power line clearance. Since the area had been cleared many years ago, the plants removed consisted primarily of invasive volunteer trees, shrubs and weeds. To end this clearcut management practice, an ecological habitat restoration of the site is underway. The project included the planting of native trees, shrubs and perennials, including woody pollinator plants such as Buttonbush, Coralberry, Spicebush, and Early Wild Rose.

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

100

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.

Unfortunately, winter came too quick to complete the project. A native seed mix will be used in the Spring of 2025 that includes milkweed and other pollinator plants. Additional pollinator-friendly perennials will also be planted. The area will be monitored and reseeded as necessary. Invasive planted will be removed throughout the season.

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.

[Constitution Trail.jpeg](#)

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

1.25

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.

The Constitution Trail, within the municipalities of Bloomington and Normal, was built on the abandoned Illinois Central Railroad right-of-way. Prior to the development of the trail system, the old railway property had become overgrown with invasive volunteer trees and shrubs. Much of the existing growth consists of bush honeysuckle, black locust and buckthorn. A selected area along the trail is selected each year to remove the invasive plant material. The plants were manually cut, and the stumps were treated with herbicides.