City of Rapid City

Rapid City, SD

Mayor Steve Allender

Pledge Summary

Rapid City is a fast-growing community located in western South Dakota with a population of 78,000. The city is located at the base of the beautiful Black Hills, about 30 minutes from Mount Rushmore, and has an extensive greenway and parks system and many community gardens. This "City of Presidents" values its natural surroundings and understands the importance of maintaining high levels of environmental quality, from bees to trees, as demonstrated by its Bee City USA and Tree City USA designations. Mayor Allender, with the support of the Rapid City Parks & Recreation Department and Standing Committee on Sustainability, has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators with their signing of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to engaging residents in building more pollinator habitat throughout the city.

Action Items Committed for 2021

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

Systems Change

- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement

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Mayor Steve Allender	2022	3/10/2022	Signatories
Mayor Steve Allender	2021	3/31/2021	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.).

200

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 youth and 100 adults

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.

0.01

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.

In front of a high school and in front of City Hall. We also handed out pollinator friendly seed packets during two events, with enough distributed to potentially create another 1/3 acre of monarch habitat at residences.

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

Our community outreach efforts have so far been confined to two public events as well as pollinator awareness media coverage related to our Bee City USA efforts. We have not yet made intentional efforts to engage marginalized communities.

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

Many of our community members are committed to protecting our natural resources. The Black Hills region is a special ecosystem and a beautiful place to live or visit. Importantly, the Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota people (having been called "the heart of everything that is") as well as other tribes which make up the Nation of the Seven Council Fires / Oceti Ŝakowiŋ / Great Sioux Nation. Protecting pollinators goes hand in hand with protecting

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native plants and a well-functioning ecosystem. You can't save one and not save the other. Additionally, we had already achieved Bee City USA affiliation so the actions we pursue with the Mayors' Monarch Pledge have a complementary aim.

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 used materials from the Xerces Society thus far. It would be useful if MMP could provide materials with community engagement tips, especially in the area of equitable communication and engaging marginalized communities.

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

Our two pollinator related events went well. We hope to continue them next year and expand on pollinator and monarch specific education in Rapid City.

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:

June 26, 2021

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

Pollinator Week

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Executive Proclamation_Pollinator Week 2021.pdf

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.

CityHall_After.jpg

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

CityHall_After3.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)

City Hall located at 300 Sixth St, Rapid City SD 57701

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

The Standing Committee on Sustainability led this effort by coordinating with City staff and the Mayor to secure the planting location, ensuring irrigation was functional, planting, and maintaining it throughout the summer. The species planted were zinnias, basil, oregano, dill, catnip, verbena, calendula, gayfeather, purple coneflower, Dalea purpurea (Purple Prairie Clover), Solidago, bee balm, Black-eyed Susan, blue aster, Russian sage, butterfly milkweed, yarrow, beardtongue, and veronica.

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.

0.0007

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

City staff from three City departments (Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and Community Development), the Standing Committee on Sustainability, the Beautification Committee, Randy Fisher, a local landscape architect who was hired by the city to research and draft ordinance updates

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.

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Planting programs will be a topic of discussion next year as Rapid City considers updates to its Landscape Ordinance as well as composes an Integrated Pest Management plan as a part of the City's Bee City USA status. Native plants, including milkweed or other native nectar plants, will be considered. An initial version of the Integrated Pest Management plan will be ready by March 2023 for implementation in spring 2023. This will most likely include the recommendation to plant more native plants in place of ornamentals or lawn grasses to cut down on mowing, watering, and use of pesticides. The Rapid City Community Development department was intending to revise the city’s landscape ordinance this year, but due to staffing issues, this project is currently on hold. When work presumes, recommendations will be made to include requirements for native plants, shrubs and trees and encourage the use of milkweed. The effort to update the Landscape Ordinance has been on proponents' minds for the last decade with some discussions and attempts at adoption getting closer than others. We hope to finally convince the public and city officials that these upgrades are necessary for our town in terms of beautification, biodiversity, walkability, and water use among other benefits. With this enthusiasm, we hope to see the effort pay off in 2022 with an updated Landscape Ordinance.

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.

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

Staff from four City departments (Parks & Recreation, City Attorney's Office, Community Development, and Public Works' Code Enforcement division); Parks' subcommittees - the Urban Wildlife Committee and Beautification Committee; the Standing Committee on Sustainability; and a couple of Rapid City Councilors. Next, we plan to involve the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and ultimately, the Rapid City Common Council.

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

Staff from four City departments (Parks & Recreation, City Attorney's Office, Community Development, and Public Works' Code Enforcement division) have discussed what it would take to implement No Mow May in Rapid City. Furthermore, City staff and an interested committee member have sought support for the effort from Parks' subcommittees - the Urban Wildlife Committee and Beautification Committee - as well as the Standing Committee on Sustainability and two Rapid City Councilors. Next we will introduce the idea to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board in January or February 2022 and seek their support before taking it to the Rapid City Common Council. Conversations are ongoing at this time but our main challenge is to figure out are how to administer this program (yard signage, tracking, complaints, public education, etc.). We will propose an amendment to our Grass, Weeds, and Noxious Matter Ordinance to include an exemption for No Mow May participants. The Parks & Recreation Department has backed the idea and intends to reduce mowing on Parks properties in May 2022 as well as throughout the year, with the double benefit of creating more pollinator habitat and reducing staff time dedicated to mowing. Planting programs will be a topic of discussion next year as Rapid City considers changes to its Landscape Ordinance as well as composes an Integrated Pest Management

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plan as a part of our Bee City USA status. Native plants, including milkweed or other native nectar plants, will be considered.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

International Dark-Sky Association – South Dakota Chapter and the Standing Committee on Sustainability

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.

In partnership with the SD Chapter of the IDA, efforts to limit light pollution in the community are ongoing, including hosting an annual Darky Sky event educating the public, discussions with city planning staff, and working with the Rapid City Street Department on new historically-appropriate, energy efficient, dark-sky friendly street light fixtures for the West Boulevard neighborhood. Adoption of a lighting ordinance is going to require significant community support and political persuasion so this is a long-term goal that will continue to be worked on.

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