Town of Zionsville

Zionsville, IN

Mayor John Stehr

Pledge Summary

Zionsville is a town of about 31,000 residents located in Central Indiana. Often called a town within a park, Zionsville has preserved over 800 acres of parks, most left in its natural habitats. Along with preserving and restoring our native wetlands, forest and prairie habitats, Mayor Stehr has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other native pollinators by signing the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. The Zionsville community looks forward to continuing to build native habitat throughout Zionsville.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- 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.
- 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.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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 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 John Stehr	2026	3/16/2026	
Mayor John Stehr	2025	2/5/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Stehr	2024	1/31/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Emily Styron	2023	1/5/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Emily Styron	2022	2/1/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Emily Styron	2021	12/10/2020	Leadership Circle

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.).

600

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.)

450

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.

0.02

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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.

Heritage Trail Park, and along roadways and paths with the Big-4 Rail Trail extension

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

Native Education Garden installed near our community gardens, which have a large minority participation. All Zionsville Parks and Recreation events and programs are open and inclusive to all in the community.

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

Mayor's decision

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?

Have not used any of the resources. Do not receive any email correspondence from Mayors Monarch Pledge

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

Continue to do what we have always done for the past 50 years, supporting native habitats, environemental education and conservation in our community.

Selected Action Items

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

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.

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

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

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

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?

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

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.

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

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

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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.

Native Plant Sale.jpg

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

Zionsville Parks Foundation gave away 100 spicebush shrubs, 855 plants sold

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

166

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

Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District and Zionsville Parks Foundation

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

5

What species were collected or propagated?

common milkweed, whorled milkweed

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

Boone County Master Gardeners

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

Volunteer work day in coordination with Boone County Master Gardeners, several species were collected in addition to the two milkweed species listed. Seed was cleaned and then sowed following winter sowing methods. Plant plugs will be used in 2026 restoration projects. Plants will germinate in Heritage Trail Park hoop house.

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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

Boone County Invasives Cooperative, Zionsville Parks Foundation

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Community Wildlife Habitat recertified for 2025

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.

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

Boone County Master Gardeners Boone County Invasive Cooperative Zionsville Parks Foundation Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District

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

Zionsville Parks and Recreation have active MOU with Boone County Invasive Cooperative and Boone County Master Gardeners to provide education, training and volunteer opportunities for invasive plant removal, native seed collection and planting. ZPF and BCSWCD helped organize first ever native plant sale.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Nature Connections 3rd Grade Program with Zionsville Community Schools

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

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Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

Eagle Elementary, Pleasant View Elementary, Trailside Elementary, Boone Meadow Elementary. Nature Connections is a partnership between ZCS and ZPR to provide an opportunity for elementary students for an intentional, extended environmental education series over the course of a school year. Naturalists partner with 3rd grade classrooms for the course of a school year for a deep dive into local ecology and our place within the ecosystem. We visit the same class for two outreach programs, one in the fall and another in the winter, followed by a field trip to one of the Zionsville Parks in the spring, and wrapped up with a service project with ZPR near the end of the school year, which could take place at the school or in one of the parks. Each meeting builds upon the previous, providing students with a foundational understanding of local ecosystems and their place within them. It is our goal that students end the school year with a deep appreciation of the natural resources in our community and an understanding of how their actions can positively or negatively impact ecosystems.

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

Pre and post assessments, outreach programs and 1.5 hour field trip at a park in addition to 1.5 hour service project.

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

700 students 25 educators

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

Zionsville Parks Foundation

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? 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.

.25

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Areas planted are maintained by Natural Resource staff

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

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What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

7

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.

Working with Boone County Invasives Cooperative to remove invasive species from several areas including Turkey Foot Nature Park, the Big-4 Rail Trail, Elm Street Green. Fall 2025 worked with FFA day of service and removed .25 acres of invasive honeysuckle from Carpenter Nature Preserve. MOU with Pheasants Unlimited to remove invasive species from Carpenter Nature Preserve and restore with native prairie plantings. Zionsville Parks Foundation funded invasive removal and replanting at entrance to Carpenter Nature Preserve.

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

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

NA

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

250

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Continue to maintain native habitat in several parks in Zionsville Parks and Recreation. Additional plantings at Big-4 Rail Trail, Mulberry Fields Park, Elm Street Green and Heritage Trail Park. Canada Thistle removal targeted in Elm Street Green and the Big-4 Rail Trail

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.

Big-4 Rail Trail Prairie Restoration.jpg

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

Big-4 Rail Trail Prairie Restoration2.jpg

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

Big-4 Rail Trail near Heritage Trail Park and 400 S

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

250

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

8.25

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Big-4 Rail Trail Northern Extension Prairie is an active restoration with Zionsville Parks and Recreation to convert 8.25 acres of mowed grass along the Big-4 Rail trail to prairie meadow. The project has continued in 2025 to monitor milkweed planted in 2023 and 2024 and to add additional species in 2025 to diversify the planting. A portion of the additional plantings were done with the help of Trailside Elementary 3rd Grade students in 5/2025. Additional species came from donations and purchased plugs including additional milkweed species, rosinweed, new england aster, stiff goldenrod, monarda and purple coneflower.

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.

Heritage Summer.jpg

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

Nature Connections.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)

Heritage Trail Park, 4050 S 875 E, Zionsville, IN 46077

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

Native Plants Unlimited, Zionsville Community Schools, Indiana Native Plant Society

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.

0.02

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