# City of Lincoln

Lincoln, NE

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

## Pledge Summary

The City of Lincoln is located in the heart of America and is the capital city of the state of Nebraska as well as the county seat of Lancaster County. As one of the top 10 college towns in the country, Lincoln covers 96.194 square miles with a population of close to 290,000 and is the second largest city in Nebraska. Lincoln has an impressive community wide parks and recreation system that includes 128 parks, 85 playgrounds, 133 miles of trails, 10 pools, 5 recreation centers, and 5 public golf courses. Amenities like these are vital for our community's health, safety, quality of life, and economic prosperity. Lincoln is committed the preservation of precious ecosystems and native habitats that protect the monarch butterfly and other pollinators.

## 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.
- 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 community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- 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.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

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- 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.
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

### Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- 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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird | 2026 | 3/16/2026 | |
| Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird | 2025 | 4/1/2025 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird | 2023 | 3/17/2023 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird | 2022 | 5/3/2022 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird | 2021 | 4/9/2021 | 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.).**

5000

**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.)**

estimate 2000 youth, 3000 adults

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**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.**

6

**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.**

parks, greenways, public spaces

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

We have plans to, but have not implemented them

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

We are an environmental conscious community that sees the Monarch as being a species that engages people. By supporting Monarchs we also support the larger environment.

**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?**

Best practices examples

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

Although we have only had a few acres of added habitat within the City, there are over 2,000 acres outside City limits that have been restored and preserved as prairie and wetland, either by the City or through partnerships.

## Selected Action Items

### Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

**Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.**

Parks and Recreation staff in the Planning and Construction, Greenways, and Public Garden divisions regularly present to gardening groups regarding native plantings. In 2021

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regular "Garden Gab" gatherings were held with Master Gardeners and others. These gatherings typically include 15 to 20 individuals and are held weekly. Staff discusses installation and care of a wide variety of plant material, including natives, while participants assist with garden activities. In 2021 Two native plant walks were conducted in Wilderness Park with a total of about 55 participants. During the walks, use of native plants and specifically those plants that provide wildlife habitat was the topic of the presentation. This was focused more on habitat restoration than formal gardening, but did include Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists in the group. Two tours of city managed prairie restoration project were conducted for nature educators. These tours covered restoration activity and plant identification. Greenways District Supervisor participated in an interview on the radio show "How's It Growing" where he was interviewed by the leader of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum regarding prairie and woodland restoration projects.

## 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).**

In 2021 two native plant walks were conducted in Wilderness Park with a total of about 55 participants. During the walks, use of native plants and specifically those plants that provide wildlife habitat was the topic of the presentation. The focus of the presentation was on pollinator habitat in a more naturalized setting. Two tours of city managed prairie restoration project were conducted for nature educators. These tours covered restoration activity and plant identification. Greenways District Supervisor participated in an interview on the radio show "How's It Growing" where he was interviewed by the leader of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum regarding prairie and woodland restoration projects. New signage was developed for existing "Prairie in the Parks" sites to help people understand the importance of native plantings.

## Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

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

approximately 1,000

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

200

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

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Arbor Day Foundation and Community Forestry Advisory Committee (tree giveaway), Friends of Wilderness Park (plant sale), Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center (plant sale)

## Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

25

**What species were collected or propagated?**

Common Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, Showy Milkweed along with many other native species

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

Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center

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

In fall of 2021 the Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center worked with Park staff to collect seed from the 600 acres of native prairie in the Nature Center. This seed is used to diversify other prairie plantings and to provide seed for patching spots where construction or other repairs have taken place.

## 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.**

Union Plaza Kids & Bikes.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)**

The most prominent pollinator garden in Lincoln is found in Union Plaza, located at 210 N. 2st Street and extending for three blocks along Antelope Creek. The landscaped park includes native plantings in formal beds and uses native grasses in lawn areas. The park includes a plaza, fountains, and an amphitheater. The public art included focuses is on plants and animals as well as geolgical features, particularly floodplain. This park is the site of multiple, regular community events.

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

This is a City park as was constructed and maintained with City funds.

**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.**

6

## 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?**

A working committee of environmental, development, and community representatives

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

Majority is complete and in force, however, special standards for the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (Fed. Endangered) Environs are still being developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service

**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.**

http://online.encodeplus.com/regs/lincoln-ne-ds/doc-viewer.aspx#secid-1008

## Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

This was a community wide effort with thousand of individuals and organizations participating over a multi-year process.

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

Complete

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**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.**

Climate Action Plan 3/22/2021 https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/files/sharedassets/public/projects-programs-amp-initiatives/resilient-lincoln/documents/climateactionplan.pdf Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan - Plan Forward 2050 - 12/2021 - https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Planning-Department/Long-Range-Planning/Comprehensive-Plan

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

These documents describe actions to support the protection, restoration and enhancement of habitat for pollinators, but not specifically for Monarchs

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

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

Over the past five years, approximately 45 acres of invasive vegetation, mostly woody plants such as eastern red cedar, have been removed and the property has been restored to a high diversity, local ecotype tallgrass prairie mix.

**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.**

Invasive species removal is done primarily through mechanical means either by hand with chainsaws or with forestry attachments on skid loaders. This is due to the size of trees in most of the areas we are attacking. In some cases we are able to use prescribed fires to kill smaller trees. Prescribed fire is also the primary tool for continued maintenance, although in areas surrounded by urban development haying is usually used. One important aspect to our maintenance plans is the used of biomass removal (fire, hay) techniques on no more than 40% of the area being maintained in order to provide sufficient habitat to any existing creatures. This also allows for different plant species to be favored in different areas of a project and creates a mosaic of habitat.

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

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

The medians along Cornhusker Highway from N. 1th Street to NW 12th Street

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

15000

**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

**Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.**

The Cornhusker Corridor project is maintain by hand weeding and replacement of vegetation as needed. Although some progress has been made in using more native grass species in rural roadside ditches, this action has not been completed as yet. The main factors being the increased cost of using a high diversity mix. We will continue to work with stakeholders to try to achieve this goal.

## Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

**How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).**

50

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

Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center, Master Naturalists, Wachiska Audubon, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center

**Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.**

Bird and butterfly counts are performed on multiple greenway properties owned and managed by the City.

## 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.

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

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Plug List for Two Creeks - Sept 2021.xlsx

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

Nebraska Master Naturalists, Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center, Parks and Recreation, Wachiska Audubon and Nebraska Audubon

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

In 2021 a group of 12 Master Naturalists engaged in a planting effort to increase the diversity, particularly of early blooming forbs, on a restored prairie. A total of 1,000 seedling plugs were installed by hand on upland slopes (see seedling list attached). 28 different species, including 4 species of milkweed, were included in the planting. These were chosen because their seed is often not included in the planting mixes used and they provide early season nectar resources which are important for many pollinators. In fall of 2021 25 volunteers assisted in the collections of milkweed and other seed at Pioneers Park Nature Center. This seed is used to further diversify prairie plantings and to provide a local ecotype seed to use in reseeding projects. Wachiska Audubon and Nebraska Audubon partnered to develop a tour of Lincoln area home gardens which feature native plants called Tour the Wild Side (see page 2 of Wachiska newsletter https://d63c6b7a-86a7-4eb0-a679-e1063bcb4482.filesusr.com/ugd/cd9e45_a446fa2330a4428ab0447fb058d0e466.pdf ) This tour was self guided and held over August 20-21 at 11 locations. Over 720 people participated in the event. There was information provided at each site promoting use of native plants to support pollinators in home landscaping.

## 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.**

Parks and Recreation, Transportation and Utilities, Lincoln Electric System

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

Discussions have begun between Parks staff and Transportation and Utilities to review the seed specifications used by the City. Lincoln Electric System is a member of the Electric Power Research Institute's Power-In-Pollinators Initiative to collaboratively accelerate the pace, scale, and effectiveness of electric power companies' pollinator projects. LES participated in the planting of the 13th Street Pollinator Flyway in downtown Lincoln to celebrate Nebraska Pollinators Week. This project planted 59 permanent planting beds along 13th Street from R Street to Lincoln Mall, a 5 block area. LES has also incorporated native plants that support pollinators in the landscaping of their new Operations Center. https://www.les.com/company/news/les-joins-epri-other-utilities-celebrate-pollinators-june-21-25

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## Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

Transportation and Utilities Watershed Management division, Lower Platte South NRD

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

https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/LTU/Utilities/Watershed-Management/Sustainable-Landscapes/Rainscaping-Lincoln Rainscaping program provides cost share opportunities to qualified homeowners to create raingardens using native plants. https://www.lpsnrd.org/programs/rain-ready-landscapes-program The Lower Platte South NRD Rain Ready Landscapes program provides cost share opportunities for homeowners outside the City of Lincoln to create raingardens and other stormwater management elements that incorporate native plants.

## Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

**Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.**

This item is on-going and was not completed this year.

## Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

South of Downtown Development Organization

**How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).**

20

**Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).**

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https://lincolnsouthdowntown.org/news-events/news.html/article/2020/12/11/the-community-turns-out-to-support-a-mural-about-our-ancestors Although this was not a City sponsored event, this community organization engaged in a public mural project that has cultural significance to Hispanic people and celebrated the lives of family members who had passed, some due to the COVID pandemic.

## Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

**How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)**

500

**What was the date of your festival?**

June 21-25

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

none

**Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).**

We have not been able to host our annual "Pollinators on the Plaza" festival for the past two years. However, Lincoln Electric System held a series of events associated with the Electric Power Research Institute called the Pollinator Power Party June 21-25 during National Pollinator Week. This virtual event featured daily keynote speakers on various topics and was promoted by LES https://www.les.com/company/news/les-joins-epri-other-utilities-celebrate-pollinators-june-21-25

## Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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

none

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

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complete

**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.**

Milkweed has never been included as a noxious weed

## 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:**

This item was not completed in 2021

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

This item was not completed

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

PPNC_prairieseedharvest2016-68.jpg

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