City of Lincoln

Lincoln, NE

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

Pledge Summary

Monarch pledge 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 101.65 square miles with a population of just over 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, 134 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 2023

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 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

Systems Change

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- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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.).

415

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.)

65 Youth 350 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.

179

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.

28 acres in 207 private residential lots, 6 acres in open space (in city limits), 125 acres of restored tallgrass prairie in greenspace (outside city limits), 20 acres of diversified plantings in greenspace (outside city limits), 10 acres of woody invasives removed (outside City limits)

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

We have used GIS to identify neighborhoods of risk (low income, hi minority, poor health) and need (limited access to greenspace, high tree loss) and focused plant and tree planting in

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those areas.

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

The Monarch Pledge dovetails nicely with our wider efforts to improve resiliency as part of our Climate Action Plan.

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?

The program has helped us to maintain focus and has increased the effort to reach individual citizens.

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

In addition to efforts within the City of Lincoln, the City is a partner in two multi-agency conservation partnerships focused on restoration and protection of native habitat. The Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership expanded by 20 acres and the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch expanded by 350 acres.

Selected Action Items

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?

Mayor's Climate Resilience Task Force, Sustainability Working Group, Mayor's Environmental Task Force all of which represent multiple community, environmental, and social equity organizations, and public agencies.

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

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.

Too large to upload. Please see P. 25 numbers 99-103 and 107 https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/projects-programs-amp-initiatives/resilient-lincoln/documents/climateactionplan.pdf Comprehensive Plan Environmental Stewardship section

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https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/20cbd02786a149d3a5448a76b5a143bc/page/G7%3A-Environmental-Stewardship-and-Sustainability/

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

The Climate Action Plan itself is complete, however many of the actions are still in progress. The Comprehensive Plan is complete, however many of the actions are still in progress.

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

Lancaster County Weed Authority

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

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.

Native prairie has always been allowed. This link shows information encouraging native prairie produced by the County Weed Authority https://www.lancaster.ne.gov/391/Planting-Prairie-Grass-Wildflowers

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

NA

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?

NA

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

NA

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.

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Milkweed has never been included in the list of Nebraska or local noxious weeds

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

NA

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

Prairie in the Parks signs.pdf

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

PCHB-Wildlife and Plants Sign-PRINT (2).pdf

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

25

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

10 Prairie in the Parks signs located in 10 different parks, 15 PCHB Wildlife and Plant signs located in the Prairie Corridor outside of the City limits. Signs can be seen in attachments. These signs were developed by City and Natural Resource District 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.

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

20

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.

Primarily removal of eastern red cedar on prairie properties. Also removal of non-native honeysuckle in woodlands. Cedars are cut to the ground and do not regrow. Honeysuckle must be treated with herbicide (tordon) in order to not regrow.

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

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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).

75

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

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lower Platte South NRD, Friends of Wilderness Park, 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.

Watchable Wildlife program used several City properties to conduct citizen surveys of a wide variety of species, including monarchs. 2023 Bioblitz held in Wilderness Park invited the community to engage with scientists and use iNaturalist to gather data on living things in the park. Butterfly survey conducted on prairie properties by Nebraska Game and Parks, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center and citizen volunteers.

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.

UnionPlaza-Sept252021WEB.jpg

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

UnionPlaza5-30-13- lightened.jpg

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

Discovery 2013.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)

210 North 21st Street, Union Plaza. This park is located in the middle of the City and is the site for regular community events involving music, food, dancing, story telling, family festivals.

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

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This pollinator garden was originally planted in 2012 through grants and gifts from a wide variety of corporate, agency, organization, and individual partners. The planting are refreshed each year through various volunteer efforts, mostly with local businesses and organizations. The plantings stretch over three city blocks adjacent to a stream and are entirely connected.

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

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, Antelope Milkweed, Showy Milkweed, Whirled Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed, and other non-milkweed species such as iron weed, Big and Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, Sideoats Grama, rudbeckia, purple coneflower, wild indigo, and more.

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

Master Naturalists, Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center

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

This is actually done throughout the year as seeds are available. These volunteers are experienced and recognize the plants, but a quick review is always conducted at the beginning. Seed is collected separately by species and spread out to dry in a cool dark place. Once seeds are dry, they are stored in a well-ventilated but cold place over winter. This seed is used to diversify prairie areas or to seed small areas in need of restoration.

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

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

LPR-Volunteers-June 2023-47.jpg

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

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Woods Park Keep it Green Westminster Presbyterian Church

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

Pollinator garden planting and maintenance

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.

LPR-Volunteers-June 2023-26.jpg

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

Nebraska Master Gardners Nebraska Master Naturalists Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center Friends of Wilderness Park Sunken Gardens' Garden Gab group Individual volunteers

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

Nebraska Master Gardeners participate in several public garden planting and maintenance activities. They also "adopt" various small garden plots and planters in public areas that they maintain throughout the year. In some cases plant material is supplied by the City, in others, Master Gardeners supply their own. In all cases, focus is on pollinator habitat and various species of milkweed are incorporated in designs. These gardeners meet as needed for project support and continually maintain "adopted" garden space. Nebraska Master Naturalists assist with restoration work on various properties. Annually a minimum of 1,000 native seedlings are installed in restored or low diversity prairie properties. These seedlings represent plant species that are often absent from seed mixes due to the difficulty of collecting seed or germinating the plants. Focus is on Prairie violets that are critical resource for the Regal fritillary butterfly, a state threatened species. This group meets as needed for project support. Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center focus on the gardens at the 630 acre Pioneers Park Nature Cetner. There are approximately 1 acre of landscaped garden entirely incorporating native plants, and other smaller plantings around buildings that focus on pollinator and bird habitat. This group meets weekly to work on gardens during the season. Friends of Wilderness Park support the 1,470 acre Wilderness Park by assisting with the removal of invasive woodies, St. Johns wort, garlic mustard, and other non-native species in order to support prairie remnants and restored prairies. This group conducts monthly restoration work. The Garden Gab Group focuses on the public gardens in the Antelope Park triangle - Sunken Gardens, Rotary Gardens, the Strolling Garden, and the Rose Garden. The Rotary Graden and Strolling Garden are focused on native plants, while the others have exotic species but include nectar resources. This group meets weekly to do gardening work. In addition, there are several regular planting and winterizing events that the community at large is invited to attend.

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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.

LPR-Volunteers-June 2023-50.jpg

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

Lincoln Parks and Recreation Lincoln Public Schools Lancaster County Engineering Lincoln Transportation and Utilities

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

Annual mowing programs are reviewed to identify mowing responsibilities and schedules. Areas where "low mow" policies may be applied without safety concerns are identified and mow schedule is adjusted to favor grasses and forbs while still providing control of woody plants. Seed mixes are currently being reviewed for diversification and inclusion of species that provide nectar resources while still providing erosion control benefits and being hardy enough to survive extreme conditions along roadsides. Parks and Recreation is implementing a Prairie in the Parks program in all parks that currently have low mow areas that are appropriate for conversion to a diverse prairie seeding.

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

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

IMG_0611.jpg

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

Delivered programs to Lincoln Rotary clubs focused on using native plants and trees in private landscaping. Worked with Community Gardens organization to encourage planting of pollinator friendly plants within vegetable gardens. Woods Park Keep It Green - pollinator garden planting event and introductory discussion of native plant use. Westminster Presbyterian Church - Pollinator Week event, proclamation, and plater garden planting MMC Manufacturing - Pollinator garden planting of Windstream Fountain Lincoln Public Schools Sustainability group Garden Night presentation

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.

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Date of Proclamation:

6-19-23

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

Pollinator Week

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Pollinator2.pdf

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

LPR-Volunteers-June 2023-03.jpg

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