City of Lincoln

Lincoln, NE

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

Pledge Summary

Lincoln is the capital city of Nebraska and home to almost 300,000 people. Lincoln has a long and strong tradition of land use planning that prioritizes greenspaces and natural areas. Lincoln also has a long history of working with partners to preserve natural resources, with tallgrass prairie, riparian areas, and rare Eastern Saline Wetlands being the focus of efforts.

Action Items Committed for 2025

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.

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.
- 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

- 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

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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.).

2500

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.)

500

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.

5

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.

primarily in open, unused areas of parks, but also in a few small, more landscaped areas.

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

We have been focusing on engaging more cultural centers in our outreach and volunteer efforts

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

Nebraska is an important part of the central migratory route for the Monarch butterfly. Lincoln and Lancaster County have been working hard to restore and protect native tallgrass prairie which provides

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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?

difficult to say

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

We are very focussed on large scale land restoration and preservation. We hope to add an additional 100 acres in the coming year.

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?

City Employees, Mayors Environmental Task Force

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.

Climate Action Plan https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/projects-programs-amp-initiatives/resilient-lincoln/documents/climateactionplan.pdf Natural Solutions section

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 16 - 22, 2025

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

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Pollinator Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Pollinator proclamation.pdf

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

56

What species were collected or propagated?

Over 250 species of tallgrass prairie forbs, sedges, legumes and grasses

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

Audubon Society, Master Naturalists, Friends groups

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

Multiple collections of seeds at different times of the year as various species became available.

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.

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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)

Union Plaza Park, N. 22nd and O Street

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

ASEZ STAR World Mission Church Of God Students volunteer group

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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.

.03

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).

500

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

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Master Naturalists, Nebraska Natural Legacy Project

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

Nebraska's Big Butterfly Count is a community-science project designed to determine the diversity of butterflies in Nebraska. Participants choose the location they would like to survey. Surveys should be completed a minimum of once a month from May through September. The results are recorded and entered into a database. The information collected is used to establish baseline data of the diversity of butterflies in the state, distribution of species, and help inform butterfly-related conservation.

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

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

Planting.pdf

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

master gardeners, volunteers, neighborhood associations, corporate volunteers

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

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25000

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Every year hundreds of volunteers help plant annuals and perennials in Lincoln's public parks and gardens. While not all of these plants are native, of 50,000 planted each year, over 1/2 of them are native prairie plants.

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.

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 listed as a noxious weed in Nebraska or Lincoln

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?

none

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.

https://www.lancaster.ne.gov/415/Managing-Natural-Areas The County Weed Authority policy for management of natural and native vegetation. These areas are not considered to be "worthless vegetation" as long as they are managed.

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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)

12

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

Signs are displayed on prairie properties (7) describing the importance of native habitat for pollinators as well as other animals. Signage is also posted at 5 different native plantings in the city explaining the importance of using native plants.

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.

AMAZ8465.pdf

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

Burn Plan.pdf

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

2000

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.

Farm land is usually restored to tallgrass prairie habitat by planting to soybeans for one year then seeding to high diversity local ecotype prairie during the winter months. Non-native pasture is more difficult and may need a couple of seasons of chemical suppression of cool season grasses before reseeding. Low diversity native grass can be diversified with forb, sedge and legume mixes interseeded and several seasons of fall burning to suppress warm season grasses. Generally, we use prescribed fire, grazing or haying, and rest in a three to five-year rotation on all of our restored prairie properties to maintain native habitat. Initial removal of invasives may involve chemical or mechanical means. We have used large scale heavy equipment on red cedar or hand cutting in difficult terrain or sensitive habitat. We have used a "hack and squirt" method on other invasive trees. Chemical is usually done by hand on individual plants rather than broadcast. Small gardens may be

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hand weeded and replanted on a regular basis in order to maintain the landscaped appearance desired in urban areas.

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