City of Des Moines

Des Moines, IA

Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie

Pledge Summary

The City of Des Moines is a beautiful Midwest community in the middle of the fall Monarch Migration flight way. In an agricultural state, the City of Des Moines has an opportunity to help make a difference in Monarch conservation. Mayor Cownie has committed to conservation practices that promote habitat to help Monarchs and other pollinators in our city.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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 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 Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

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).

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- 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).
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- 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.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- 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 Connie Boesen	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor Connie Boesen	2025	4/8/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Connie Boesen	2024	3/28/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie	2023	3/28/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie	2022	3/22/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie	2021	4/16/2021	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.).

2440

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.)

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youth 1604 adult 730

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.

0.91

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.

We are creating habitat in yard, containers, rights-of-way, community gardens, city parks and stormwater retention basins.

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

We are including our program in our Summer Equity Camp Program and also working with the Oak Ridge Neighborhood to help introduce milkweed and pollinator species into some of their food plots.

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

The city of Des Moines follows the national Recreation and Parks Association directive of Improving the health of communities for all people through parks, recreation and conservation.

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?

Anything to help expand equitable engagement.

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

Education programs and planting milkweed in the City of Des Moines are taking place with many different groups including Parks and Recreation, the Blank Park Zoo and the Des Moines Botanical Center.

Selected Action Items

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

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

Naturalist presentations on request for civic groups.

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, Public Works, Sustainability, Blank Park Zoo and the Des Moines Botanical Center have all participated and collaborated on projects.

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

Parks and Recreation maintains no mow areas, does annual milkweed plantings, and designs public stormwater areas incorporating native vegetation. Blank Park Zoo and The Des Moines Botanical Center have extended or enhanced areas with natives on their property.

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.

44 Neighborhood Associations

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

Neighborhood Associations order flowers from our greenhouse at no cost to them to plant in the neighborhood rights-of-way, libraries and schools. Included in the orders are annuals and Iowa Native species. The order must contain at least 10% natives.

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

When designs for city parks are being developed, the planners incorporate locations for native plantings as part of the master plans. Open areas, stormwater basins, rain gardens and ornamental beds are all considered.

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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)

Plants given away at several events. 200

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

165

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

Libraires, Senior Living facility. Parks and Recreation

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

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)

Maintain Garden. Located at the Iowa State Capitol Complex, north parking entrance.

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

Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines Parks and Recreation, Polk County Soil and Water, Des Moines Botanical Center, Polk County Conservation Board

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.

0.04

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 City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation works with Des Moines Neighbourhood Associations for planting in public right-of-ways

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

300

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.

0.849

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

The Neighborhood Associations are responsible for care and maintenance of the plantings.

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).

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

BFILogo.jpg

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

Des Moines Audubon, Blank Pak Zoo, Trees Forever, National Heritage Foundation, Des Moines Parks and Recreation

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

Bird Friendly Iowa https://birdfriendlyiowa.org/

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

44

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

Neighborhood Associations

When did this challenge take place?

Fall orders placed for receiving flowers in May.

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.

0.85

Please describe your challenge and the results.

The Neighborhood associations are challenged to plant 10% of their plant order in natives along with the annuals. The results have been good and year by year the number of natives grows.

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).

195

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

Des Moines Parks and Recreation, Blank Park Zoo, Libraries

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

Monarch Watch Monarch Tagging https://monarchwatch.org/tagging/

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?

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Des Moines Parks and Recreation

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

38

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Meadow blazing star and Swamp milkweed were added to the Franklin Community Garden pollinator plot.

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.

1

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.

Volunteers pull invasive plants that are then upcycled to the Blank Park Zoo for animal enrichment. If woody vegetation is cut, it is also chemically treated. A local brewery that shares the property line sponsors the program.

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)

2189

What was the date of your festival?

September 11, 2022

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

DSM Parks & Recreation – Polk County Conservation – Iowa Monarch Conservation – Good Neighbor Iowa - RDG Planning /ADAPT DSM Ted Lare Garden Center Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge - Conservation Corp Latina Dancers – Danza Folkorica Sones de mi Tierra

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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).

The event was held at the Zoo and activities were available for all zoo guests to participate in.

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)

2

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

Gray's Lake Franklin Community Gardens Information includes the lifecycle of the monarch butterfly

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?

For ADAPT DSM, the City’s first climate action and adaptation plan, we partnered with local community based organizations, and education organizations to introduce specific actions to protect pollinator habitat. Groups include the Des Moines Botanical Garden, the Blank Park Zoo, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. We met with winter camp kids at the Botanical Gardens to teach them about the importance of pollinator habitat protection and restoration. At Blank Park Zoo we attended the Monarch festival and worked with staff during the CAAP planning process to refine specific actions. We also worked WILPF to pass a No Mow May Proclamation and are providing educational resources for homeowners about the critical importance of maintaining migratory habitats for pollinators. Lastly we worked with INHF to embed the importance of conservation and habitat restoration.

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.

Development of ADAPT DSM is approximately 80% complete. We anticipate the plan will be adopted by Council in August 2023. Solutions to address conservation, habitat

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restoration and food systems resilience are supported by specific actions to protect pollinator and monarch habitat, recognizing the critical importance of this element in protecting local food systems and enhancing community resilience.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

15

What species were collected or propagated?

New England Aster, Common Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, Hoary Vervain, Showy Goldenrod, Stiff Goldenrod, Prairie Dock, Compass Plant, Grey Headed Coneflower, Purple Prairie Clover, Wild Bergomot, Meadow Blazingstar, Purple Coneflower, Pale Purple Coneflower,

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

Parks and Recreation, Confluence Brewery

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

Some seeds collected were spread to other Parks locations to increase diversity. Some seeds were spread in display plots at public gardens.

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).

Videos for Social Media about Monarchs in our city parks. Plant.Grow.Fly. program online with the Blank Park Zoo.

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).

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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)

Plant.Grow.Fly. from the Blank Park Zoo, maintained.

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)

1

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

Oakridge Teen Center, BE REAL Middle School Program

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

Naturalist programs, live flowers and online information.

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).

20

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

Oakridge Neighborhood Association

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.

0.01

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

The students are responsible for planting and maintaining the flowers.

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