

City of Sun Prairie

Sun Prairie, WI

Mayor Paul Esser

Pledge Summary

Sun Prairie is a vibrant and thriving community located in northeastern Dane county, just east of the City of Madison. Sun Prairie has become known in the region for its high quality of life, its excellent parks and recreation programs, historic downtown, exceptional public school system, and progressive approach to the development and redevelopment of the community. The city is committed to making Sun Prairie a leading sustainable, vibrant and environmentally friendly community by taking steps to conserve energy, reduce waste, and preserve our natural resources. The city is looking forward to engaging residents in building more pollinator-friendly habitats throughout the community.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

Systems Change

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

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Steve Stocker	2026	2/20/2026	

Mayor Paul Esser	2025	3/25/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Paul Esser	2024	3/21/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Paul Esser	2023	3/28/2023	Signatories
Mayor Paul Esser	2022	3/29/2022	Signatories
Mayor Paul Esser	2021	4/19/2021	Signatories

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 (e.g., 50).

300

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." (Only allow numerical values.)

100 youth, 200 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).

.25

Where is your habitat being created? This may include residences (yards, containers, balconies, etc.), schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, culturally-significant locations, shared public spaces and common areas or parks.

Community Garden and common areas of parks and city facilities.

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

We expanded the pollinator garden located in a low-income community and provided educational opportunities for the youth held at the garden.

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

Mayor's Monarch Pledge is an opportunity to engage and educate the community on the importance of pollinators and native plants and species. We continue to use the pledge annually to add projects, build capacity, and complete as many recommendations as is feasible for our organization. The city is also participating in the Thriving Earth Exchange in partnership with American Geophysical Union (AGU) and UW-Madison's UniverCity

Alliance on a 2023 No Mow May pilot project in order to engage and educate residents about green infrastructure and encourage their participation in the City's overall goal for sustainable development, building on the success of the 2022 pilot.

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?

Reference materials and the recommended project activities have been helpful. We would be interested in an opportunity to receive grants or funds to help support programming and outreach opportunities.

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

We are focusing our efforts on creating small patches of habitat throughout our park system and other city facilities by planting with native plants and installing education signs to increase awareness of these activities and how just starting with a few plants can make a difference. It is our hope that our efforts spark interest and engagement among our residents and that they feel empowered to participate in the city's efforts to increase the abundance and diversity of pollinators.

Selected Action Items

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:

5/3/2022

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

Mayors Monarch Pledge

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

[Mayors Monarch Pledge.pdf](#)

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.

[No Mow May Impact Report FINAL_1.pdf](#)

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

[NMM Resolution Signed.pdf](#)

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

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, Planning Department, Administrator's Office, Sun Prairie Parks Friends, SEWA International, Neighborhood Navigators, Sun Prairie Community Gardens, Sun Prairie Area School District, Dane County, and Ripple Effects (Madison Area Stormwater Partnership).

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

As a part of No Mow May Efforts, the city provided options for how residential properties could maintain mowing during a critical time when pollinators are foraging for resources. Final report included resources and ideas for residents to continue efforts.

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.

[westside_june22.jpg](#)

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

[westside_sept22.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)

In 2022, with the help of volunteers from the Sun Prairie Parks Friends group installed demonstration gardens at approximately six locations throughout the Sun Prairie. The largest is at the Westside Community Services building in the parking lot. Sunny Valley Park, located at 900 Castle Drive; Hunters Ridge Park, located at 951 Huntington Drive; and Vandenburg Heights Park, which is located at 1020 Vandenburg St. Westside Community Building, located at 2598 W. Main St. Thoreau Park, located at 1521 Thoreau Dr. West Prairie Village Park, located at 130 N Mallard Dr.

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

Sun Prairie Parks Friends, SEWA International, Plant Dane, Lettuce Dream Community Garden, and residents volunteering to install the gardens and park signs

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.

.25

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.

[Vandenburg Heights Park.jpg](#)

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

[VANDENGURG_JS081722.jpg](#)

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

[SPPF GARDEN 1.jpg](#)

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

[SPPF GARDEN 2.jpg](#)

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

Plant Dane, White Pelican Farm, Sun Prairie Park Friends

How many plants were planted?

350

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

In 2022, with the help of volunteers from the Sun Prairie Parks Friends group and plant donations from the Plant Dane program and White Pelican farms, we planted over 350 plants at six separate locations throughout the Sun Prairie.

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.

[CitySunPrairie_DEC2021.pdf](#)

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants?

2

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.

City's PRF department received a \$1,000 grant from the Dane County Environmental Council for invasive species removal. The grant funded invasive woody shrub removal (buckthorn and honeysuckle) in Sheehan Park in the winter. There was a volunteer opportunity at Sheehan Park on 5/14/2022 from 9am – noon sponsored by the Sun Prairie Parks Friends to support invasive species removal. A free informational training session was offered from 9:00-9:30am on how to identify invasive plants and properly remove and dispose of them. Volunteers were then able to apply their training and help with invasive plant removal at the park.

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

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

[NMM Resolution Signed.pdf](#)

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

[No Mow May Impact Report FINAL_1.pdf](#)

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

[Staff Memo No Mow May 2022 Pilot.docx](#)

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

Sustainability Committee, Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, Building Inspection Department, Sun Prairie Area School District, residential homes, and a Sun Prairie Condo Association.

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.

The Common Council temporarily suspended the city's mowing ordinance earlier this year to support the program objectives of No Mow May (see attached resolution). City staff plan to continue this effort in 2023 with the assistance of the AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange. City staff are re-writing the city's Zoning Code with the assistance of a consultant in 2023. We intend to incorporate re-writing ordinances related to the city's green infrastructure. This larger initiative consists of several project components (natural lawn permit update, raingardens, landscaping, terrace use), with an overall objective to promote residential green infrastructure (followed by other property types). There are several contributors and project activities, building on the foundation of this year's No Mow May efforts. The goal is to complete this effort by EOY 2023.