

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 2024

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

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- 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.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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

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).

2.5

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.

City parks and shared public spaces including the Sun Prairie Public Library

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

The city has expanded the number and location of pollinator gardens and as a part of these efforts have been working with various community organizations. For example, one of the organizations the city worked with was Team Anjani, a local South Asian youth and adult group who dedicate their efforts to community service.

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

Participation in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge allows the city to strategically identify priorities and projects that align with our sustainability goals and best practices across the country. It allows for collaboration across departments and with community members looking to take action to support pollinators and increase native plantings in our community.

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 city has benefited from county grant programs for free and low-cost native plants as well as plant donations from local nurseries. Resources that would be helpful include sample ordinances or toolkits to help adopt ordinances relevant to the program (i.e. adopting an ordinance reducing light pollution) could be helpful to advance those efforts in our community.

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

The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department facilitated two prescribed burns on city properties to restore native habitats at both the library and city-owned parkland. In addition, the city is actively working to restore prairie habitat by removing invasive shrubs in city parkland.

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:

3/19/2024

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

Proclamation - Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Mayors' Monarch Pledge

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

[Supporting Document for - Proclamation - Earth Day Arbor Day and Mayors .pdf](#)

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.

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

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

Sustainability Committee, City Council and Sun Prairie Area School District

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.

Resolution suspending enforcement of noxious weeds for No Mow May for the month of May was adopted on 3/19/2024 and can be found here:

<https://agendas.cityofsunprairie.com/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Documents/DownloadFileBytes/Resolution%20for%20-%20RESOLUTION%20DESIGNATING%20THE%20MONTH%20OF%20MAY%20AS%20NO%20MOW%20MAY%20AND.pdf?documentType=1&meetingId=2821&itemId=54949&publishId=57398&isSection=False&isAttachment=True>

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

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event?

The city held a community presentation titled "10 Actions YOU Can Take This Year to Help Pollinators THRIVE." At this event and throughout Earth Month, a total of 300 tree and shrub seedlings were given away.

How many people attended your event?

250

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

Sun Prairie Public Library, Sun Prairie Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Sun Prairie Historical Museum, University of Wisconsin-Madison Gratton Lab.

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?

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission, Community Members

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.

We are including the Mayor's Monarch Pledge initiative and associated conservation measures in our Park and Open Space Plan. This plan will be adopted in 2025.

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)

Westside Community Services Building, located at 2598 W. Main Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. This building houses Police, Fire and EMS, and the Parks and Recreation offices. The building hosts several public and private events and receives significant foot traffic. It is a significant community location where several community members have the opportunity to interact with the demonstration garden.

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

Plant Dane Program through Dane County and White Pelican Farm.

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.

0.01

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.

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

[IMG_0682.jpeg](#)

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

1.6 acres

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.

New in 2024, the city worked with Pheasants Forever as well as the Sun Prairie Parks Friends to remove invasive shrubs and return prescribed fire to an old field and overgrown shrub area in an effort to maintain it as a tallgrass prairie.

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.

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

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

Sun Prairie Area School District, Baehr Inc., Sun Prairie Park Friends., Pheasants Forever

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

The city implemented No Mow May practices in 14.4 acres of city parkland. The city also planted and/or facilitated the planting of native plants at 7 additional locations (totaling 770 square feet) in 2024. In addition, the city returned prescribed burning as a management method to existing prairies at the city library as well as to begin restoration of a new prairie area in a city park. In total, the city actively created and/or restored approximately 2.5 acres of monarch habitat in 2024. To implement these measures, the city worked with Pheasants Forever, Sun Prairie Park Friends, as well as an Eagle Scout.

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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.

In progress.

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

We are actively identifying ways to reduce use of herbicides throughout city parks. Our current practices include only using herbicides when necessary in athletic field maintenance as well as landscape management and restoration activities. We are creating a Standard Operating Procedure for Chemical Use in City Parks. We hope to complete it in 2025.