City of Minnetonka

Minnetonka, MN

Mayor Brad Wiersum

Pledge Summary

Minnetonka is a fully developed suburban community of more than 53,000 residents located eight miles west of Minneapolis. The city's natural surroundings — including woodlands, prairies, wetlands and other bodies of water — set it apart from similar-sized suburbs and give the community a distinct character. Minnetonka has a long history of habitat protection and restoration, and in 2017 joined the Mayors' Monarch Pledge to focus new actions that benefit monarchs, pollinators and other wildlife. Minnetonka became a Monarch Champion city in 2020.

Action Items Committed for 2021

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.
- 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.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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.

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

- 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).
- 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).
- 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

- 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 Rebecca Schack	2026	12/12/2025	
Mayor Brad Wiersum	2025	1/30/2025	Monarch Champions
Mayor Brad Wiersum	2024	12/18/2023	Monarch Champions
Mayor Brad Wiersum	2023	12/12/2022	Monarch Champions
Mayor Brad Wiersum	2022	1/10/2022	Monarch Champions
Mayor Brad Wiersum	2021	12/21/2020	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.).

6000

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

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.)

We don't track this information.

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.

3

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.

City parks and open spaces; facilities with landscaping; rights-of-way

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

This work is being done alongside our other equity efforts. We have just started to use heat maps to locate areas of the city with less tree canopy cover and with large amounts of turf and impervious surfaces. Next, we'll begin to do direct outreach to those neighborhoods regarding turf alternatives and native plantings. That will include extending our subsidized tree sale and native plant sale to parts of the city and groups that can benefit most.

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

We were seeking a framework to formalize and extend the pollinator protection efforts already underway in the city.

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 webinar series and reports are helpful, as is the collection of mission and vision statements from other participating cities. I'd like more opportunity to interact with other cities and share successes or lessons learned - maybe a virtual conference? I'd also encourage you to make a small but significant change in the overall program, to acknowledge participating cities' staff, who make all this work come about, as well as the mayor who supports it.

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

2021 has continued to pose challenges for public engagement, which hampered our ability to meet some of the goals we set. At the same time, we were prompted to try entirely new approaches and tools. Those increased our online reach for education and, in the long run, engaged almost as many people as we normally see in person at our Monarch Field Day event.

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:

06-14-21

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

Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month - July 2021

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

MPAM proclamation 2021.pdf

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.)

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

NREblast_Pollinator awareness_July 2021.pdf

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Natural Resources has a long commitment to outreach and education about pollinators. This information is communicated via newsletter (print, to ~21,000 households; email, to more than 3,000 subscribers), on our website, via social media, on the employee intranet, and on a new community engagement portal. We also have interpretive signage (7 Monarch Waystations and a demonstration garden sign), and will add more interpretive signage about monarchs in 2022. Two new story maps were released this year: the Tree Trek describes pollinator benefits of native trees), and Monarchs in Minnetonka (describing monarch life history, habitat needs, and conservation strategies). The latter was applauded

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

by the National Association for Environmental Education, which invited city staff to contribute a guest blog on the topic in 2022.

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

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

We met with community gardeners in July, during the city's Monarch & Pollinator Awareness Month events, to inform them about the value of adding pollinator-friendly annuals (including species that attract monarchs) around their food plots, and provided information about ecological pest control methods.

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

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

L100 - Landscape Plan.pdf

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

"In 2019, Minnetonka amended landscape ordinance to require 25% or more native species in planting plans for new developments and redevelopment projects. Developers receive a packet from the city including extensive plant lists, and those resources are available to the general public on the city website. We require that all large development projects (commercial and residential – high density, not single-family) submit a landscape plan with their building permit application. They are required to meet the minimum landscape requirements that include at least 25% new plantings that are beneficial to pollinators from the city’s list of native and native cultivars. 100% of plans meet this requirement or they are not approved. Credit is sometimes given for sites that preserve existing spaces with established plant communities. Cultivars are more common than strictly native species – this is often due to salt tolerance, etc. Many larger sites are also working to establish native prairie areas rather than sod. "

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

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

Native plant sale_MNL 2021.pdf

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

3500

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

83

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

A local native plant grower, MNL (formerly Minnesota Native Landscapes)

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

12

What species were collected or propagated?

common milkweed, anise hyssop, gray-headed coneflower, joy pye weed, jewelweed, Culver's root, St. Johns wort, long-headed coneflower, big bluestem, switchgrass, and Indian grass.

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

West Metro Chapter of Minnesota Master Naturalists; University of Minnesota Extension

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

For National Public Lands Day, 12 Minnesota Master Naturalists from Minnetonka worked with our restoration staff to collect seeds at a city park. They then went to a second park, where high-priority restoration is underway at a Monarch Waystation site. They weeded the area and direct-seeded.

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.

Asters_Civic Center.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)

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

Civic Center (location of city hall and community center) at 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka MN 55345

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

None

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.

0.05

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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

Groveland Bay St Improvement Proj.jpg

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

Groveland Bay St map.jpg

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

In the northwest corner of the city

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

350

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.

Information not available

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

Residents will maintain their plantings. They received a handout and link to our raingarden maintenance video.

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).

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)

In 2017, site prep and installation of a native prairie were undertaken at Scenic Heights Elementary School. Minnetonka's restoration staff consulted on the project, which was led by Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District and Barr Engineering. That site is now in maintenance phase and is actively used by students and the community. In 2021, city staff connected with faculty at Gatewood Elementary about providing professional support on environmental education programs. City staff have also reached out to the two local high schools. Those city-school partnerships will be further developed in 2022.

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)

3

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

Scenic Heights Elementary Gatewood Elementary Hopkins High School

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

professional expertise (site review, curriculum development, staff training etc.)

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).

1000 students and 300 educators

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

Hopkins Public Schools, Hopkins Community Education, ICA (Intercongregation Communities Association)

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

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.

2

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

The school district manages maintenance, though city staff consulted on the original plan.

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).

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

Tree City USA/Arbor Day Foundation, GreenStep Cities

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

2021 is the 27th year of Minnetonka's participation in the Tree City USA program. Among other efforts, the city holds an annual tree sale and prioritizes offering species that offer pollinator benefit and will be climate resilient. Minnetonka is also one of just a few Minnesota cities to reach Step 5 of the GreenSteps Cities program, which focuses on sustainability metrics in categories such as buildings, lighting, renewable energy and environmental management.

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).

50

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

None

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

Minnetonka was unable to develop an in-house community science program in 2021, but we promoted several ongoing programs - Caterpillars Count, Journey North, and Nectar Connectors during our Monarch & Pollinator Awareness Month.

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.

2021 9 live plants.pdf

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

2021 prairie seed_11 spp for 1.5 acre.pdf

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

1.5

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.

This has been a major focus of the work done in Natural Resources for more than 20 years. In 2021, 1.5 acres of new parkland was prepared for establishment of a new pollinator superfood garden that will be planted in spring 2022. Restoration includes invasive species removal (primarily buckthorn and garlic mustard), spot-spraying for control, seeding and maintenance.

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.

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

MPAM snip.jpg

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

Miles for Monarchs.jpg

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

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

Miles for Monarchs_staff.jpg

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)

6000

What was the date of your festival?

Various dates through year

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

MNL (formerly Minnesota Native Landscapes) nursery, Monarch Joint Venture

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).

Minnetonka usually holds its Pollinator Field Day event in early July. This year, conditions were not yet suitable for large, in-person events so we got creative. In May, we held a small slow-roll bike event to celebrate the monarch migration. Every week in July, we released a new video with associated content and activities on our new engagement site, MinnetonkaMatters.com. There were more than 6,000 hits on the videos (posted to social media), and more than 350 people visited the engagement site. Weekly themes were: (1) Why are monarchs and pollinators important?; (2) Native plants (including an online native plant sale that ran through early Sept); (3) What is pollinator habitat? (including story maps about trees and monarchs); (4) Pollinator Food Day (education on the importance of pollinators to our food system, encouraging residents to make a meal from as many animal-pollinated ingredients as possible); (5) Pollinator Sit (reminding people to slow down and get outdoors). Visit https://www.minnetonkamatters.com/pollinator-month. Finally, in Sept we partnered with MJV to offer a fitness event Miles for Monarchs and Minnetonka, allowing residents and staff to track and report their active miles for 2 weeks so we could do a virtual monarch migration. Ten staff and residents participated. They submitted almost 850 miles - enough to get our virtual monarch to Oklahoma City, at the heart of the Eastern migratory pathway.

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)

8

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

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

There are 7 Monarch Waystation signs in Minnetonka parks, plus one interpretive sign at the demonstration pocket garden on the Civic Center campus (describing the value of native plants to monarchs and other pollinators). This year, staff also began to develop new interpretive signage for city parks. In the first set, three panels will deal with pollinator themes: Monarch Life Cycle + host plants; Rusty Patched Bumble Bee habitat + superfood plants; turf alternatives. Those signs will be installed in spring 2022.

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.

Amendment of landscaping ordinance 2019.pdf

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.

The city amended lawn regulations in 2019, allowing pollinator lawns and meadows as turf alternatives. We continue to promote this program, including providing lawn signs that help neighbors understand the plantings.

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.

2019

Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

NRMP for MMP.pdf

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

Barr Engineering

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

Draft

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

In 2021, Minnetonka's Recreation department put its draft Parks, Open Spaces and Trails plan up for public comment. That plan includes reference to pollinator habitat. The Natural Resources division also continued work on a new Natural Resources Master Plan with significant reference to pollinator needs. That draft was posted for public comment in Sept and presented to Park Board. The final version will go to City Council in December and implementation begins in 2022.

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.

Minnetonka's Natural Resources division has been discussing these topics with Parks and Streets staff for years.

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

In 2021, NR had an outside environmental contractor evaluate our mowing regimes and pesticide use protocols. They determined that the city is already ahead of the curve on these strategies compared to other small cities in our region. We will continue to track this work and train staff engaged in it, and test/implement new approaches that prove effective. We also work to educate residents on these topics, so they understand our program and implement best practices on their own property.

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.

PfP workshop_Mtka and Blue Thumb.pdf

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

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

PfP_cost share grant info.pdf

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

The city currently has a high-priority program to increase water efficiency. In addition to informing all residents, we reached out directly to HOAs. The program includes education about landscaping options that reduce water needs - most of which involve replacing sections of turf with native forbs, grasses, shrubs and trees that offer stacked benefits for monarchs and other pollinators. The city also did a three-part webinar series (Planting for Pollinators; Turf Alternatives; Rain Garden Maintenance) and offered a pilot cost-share grant program to cover some of the cost of plants for participants.

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

About 50 people attended the workshop series.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

None

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

0

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

We weren't able to prioritize staff time for this goal in 2021 due to the continued uncertainty of in-person events. However, we did connect with local public schools about a variety of programs, possibly including a pollinator-themed community art project for 2022.

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?

None

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]

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

100

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Staff worked with community gardeners to suggest monarch- and pollinator-friendly annuals for plots in the city's community food garden, and provided informational resources.

Created with the DynamicPDF Essentials Edition. [u263:v1.14.0.49966]