City of Moorhead

Moorhead, MN

Mayor Shelly Carlson

Pledge Summary

The City of Moorhead is a small city of 44,668 people in the Lake Agassiz basin. The land is prone to flooding, and some land along the Red River has been restored to native prairie or enhanced through the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative through Audubon Great Plains. We are also working with Wildlife Forever and United Prairie Foundation on prairie plantings in two parks totaling 14 acres. We added 3 smaller pocket prairies (~300 square feet each) in 3 parks. Many residents in the community are interested in pollinator conservation.

Action Items Committed for 2023

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 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.
- 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 Shelly Carlson	2026	3/9/2026	
Mayor Shelly Carlson	2025	3/21/2025	Signatories
Mayor Shelly Carlson	2024	3/26/2024	Signatories
Mayor Shelly Carlson	2023	3/30/2023	Signatories

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City of Moorhead Mayor Shelly Carlson	2022	2/8/2022	Signatories
Mayor Shelly Carlson	2021	4/26/2021	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.).

171

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.)

19 youth. 159 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). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.64

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.

Private yards, along the Red River corridor, City Parks and Open Space, City boulevards.

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

City Insights – Spring/Summer 2023 – information on Natural Lawn options – sent to all Moorhead households.

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

There is recognition within our community of the importance of pollinators and how we can take steps, individually and together, to support them. This was evident in comments received during public input for the Onward Moorhead! Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, In a community survey completed in fall of 2022, the respondents listed "planting flowers/pollinator plants and natural lawn options" as the strategy they were most interested in pursuing as a community. Food production (gardens, keeping of chickens) and food forests also scored high.

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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?

N/A

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

N/A

Selected Action Items

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).

City Insights – Spring/Summer 2023 – information on Natural Lawn options – sent to all Moorhead households. Updated information on our city Food Resources page on our website, encouraging and providing information about gardening, backyard chickens, composting, and natural lawns.

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.

-Resilient Moorhead -Wildlife Forever -United Prairie Foundation -Concordia College -Audubon Great Plains -Minnesota Native Landscapes/MNL -River Keepers -Public Works (City of Moorhead) -Parks and Recreation (City of Moorhead) -Planning (City of Moorhead)

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

We have been working in the public works department to find ways to increase pollinator habitat. We worked with a non-profit called Wildlife Forever and the United Prairie Foundation and recieved a grant to convert about 15 acres of turf grass into prairie plants which was seeded in 2023. We have also been working with the group Resilient Moorhead, which is a task force comprised of about 21 organizations in Moorhead. Resilient

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Moorhead helped fund many of the plug plants for the larger plantings. Within the city, Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works have all been involved with site preparation and maintenance. Organizations such as Audubon Dakota and River Keepers helped with recruiting volunteers for the planting at Southside Regional.

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)

Planting areas included two city buildings (700 15th Ave N and 1300 15th Ave N) and micro planting sites along Center Avenue.

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

City staff planted the sites at the two City buildings and MNL planted the sites along Center Avenue.

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.

0.23

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.

Ordinance 2022-22.docx

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

A community survey was completed to prioritize strategies around various sustainability efforts, including natural plantings. Allowing and supporting natural planting lawns both on private and public properties scored as a high priority throughout the survey. Additional engagement included having three local experts review and provide comments on the natural lawn ordinance prior to adoption. The Moorhead Planning Commission was also engaged in the review.

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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.

2nd Ordinance ereading approved November 14, 2022.

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.

1.32

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.

Moorhead enlisted volunteers to hand cut and pull buckthorn at different parks within the city. To reduce the use of chemicals, buckthorn baggies were used to prevent potential regrowth after the buckthorn was removed. After, follow up was done to ensure any possible regrowth could be kept in check.

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