City of Evanston

Evanston, IL

Mayor Daniel Biss

Pledge Summary

Evanston is deeply committed to biodiversity preservation and expansion. We recognize the importance of pollinators to a thriving ecosystem and are excited to be a part of this essential program again.

Action Items Committed for 2025

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 gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.
- 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.
- 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).

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- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- 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 Daniel Biss	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor Daniel Biss	2025	4/8/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2024	3/29/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2022	5/5/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Stephen Hagerty	2021	4/27/2021	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.).

7000

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.)

50

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.

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2

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.

Residences, public natural areas, community gardens, city property, beaches

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

Planting in public areas that are near historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, so that low-income and marginalized folks have access to these benefits.

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

The work is important to our community and participation is a part of our Climate Action and Resilience Plan

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?

Example projects and engagement materials would be helpful.

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

The following report captures only a portion of the work being done to expand native pollinator habitat. There are many individuals and organizations whose efforts we cannot capture due to time and capacity restraints.

Selected Action Items

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?

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).

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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).

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

What species were collected or propagated?

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

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

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.

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

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Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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

N/a

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

Complete

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:

June 9, 2025

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

2025 Pollinator Week Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2025 Pollinator Week Proclamation.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.

June Sustainability Newsletter.pdf

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

May Sustainability Newsletter.pdf

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

August Community Garden Newsletter.pdf

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

Email communications promoting native pollinator planting and education were sent through the Sustainability and Resilience Newsletter, Community Garden Newsletter, reaching a combined total of 8,000 individual emails

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.

Evanston Ecology Center staff engaged with community garden members to plant milkweed and pollinator plants in their own plots and common spaces.

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.

Ladd Arboretum Stewards, Natural Habitat Evanston, Evanston Grows, Edible Evanston, Jens Jensen Gardens, Evanston Ecology Center, Evanston Parks and Recreation, Evanston Public Works Authority

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

The above groups each participated in native pollinator planting efforts throughout Evanston. The volunteer groups advocate for "low mowing" in the Spring (delaying mowing until May 15) and transformation of non-native grassy areas to native pollinator plantings on public and private property. The City of Evanston has installed many native gardens containing pollinator-friendly species in 2025.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

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

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Evanston Ecology Center, Evanston Environmental Association, Evanston Farmer's Market, Shady Grove Wildflower Farm

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

The Evanston Ecology Center supported the Evanston Environmental Association's annual native plant sale, which includes pollinator plants (including milkweed). Any leftover plants were planted in City demonstration gardens by volunteers. Master Gardeners were present at each Evanston Farmers' Market event, answering any questions about gardening, including care and planting of native pollinator plants. Shoppers could then visit Shady Groves Wildflowers, Oosterhoff and Son Flowers, and Hoffman Nursery stalls, all of whom sell native pollinator plants at the Farmers' Market.

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.

The Evanston Ecology Center recently underwent renovations and added native, pollinator friendly gardens to their exterior space to get points for LEED Gold certification. City Sustainability and Resilience staff communicates with developers during planning review meetings and advises planting native pollinator plants whenever landscaping is a part of the planned development. This is incentivized as a "community benefit" for which the developer gets credit during the planning process.

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)

2,824

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

155

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

Evanston Environmental Association, Evanston Ecology Center

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

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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)

Evanston Ecology Center

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

Evanston Environmental Association, Evanston Township High School's Mayor's Summer Youth Program

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.

.10

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?

Bird-Friendly Evanston, the Evanston North Shore Bird Club, Natural Habitat Evanston, Arbor Day Foundation

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

Bird City designation https://birdcity.org/illinois/evanston, Tree City designation https://www.arborday.org/our-work/tree-city-usa#component--id--16791

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?

Ladd Arboretum Stewards, Natural Habitat Evanston, Evanston Grows, Edible Evanston, Jens Jensen Gardens, Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, Boy Scouts of America

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

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1840

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The City of Evanston coordinated native plantings of 800 plugs at Dempster Beach, with volunteer community members coordinated through the Ecology Center, including Boy Scouts. Community gardeners planted milkweed in common areas totaling approximately 50 plants. In the Ladd Arboretum, the largest contiguous natural area in the City of Evanston, volunteer stewards added more than 320 native forbs in 2025; they also added approximately 150 native trees and shrubs, which include pollinator-friendly plants like native viburnums and fragrant sumacs. Other channelside natural areas (notably Harbert-Payne Park) added a similar number of plants. Canal Shores trails and other smaller locations, such as Lovelace Park, planted native pollinator plants as well, on a smaller scale. The above reported number is a conservative estimate.

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.

15

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.

Volunteer stewards who manage Evanston's natural areas continue ongoing work to clear non-native invasives (primarily buckthorn, Asian honeysuckle, tree-of-heaven) and manage aggressive native plants (e.g., Canada goldenrod), primarily by cutting, digging, and pulling. Woody plant removal takes place mostly in the winter months.

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).

2 educational signs are located at the pollinator garden at 2100 Ridge Avenue, the site of the former Evanston Civic Center.

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

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

CARP Final.pdf

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

Citizens' Greener Evanston (now Climate Action Evanston), District 65 Green Teams, Evanston Environment Board, Evanston Utilities Commission, Evanston Community Foundation, Experience Climate Change Collaborative, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments, Sierra Club Illinois Chapter

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.

December 2018. The Climate Action and Resilience Plan is an outline for climate work in Evanston. CARP includes includes commitments to expand and greenspace for pollinators and to annually report on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and

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

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

20-R-10 SustainablePestControl&PesticideReduction (1).pdf

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

Citizens Greener Evanston, Ladd Arboretum Stewards

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

Complete

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March, 2010. The City of Evanston passed a resolution to limit the frequency and intensity of herbicides and pesticides. Necessary action to use such chemicals includes signage at the affected area, posting in local newspapers, and a contact for any questions. City staff have not used herbicides in the past 3 years.

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