City of Denton

Denton, TX

Mayor Gerard Hudspeth

Pledge Summary

The City of Denton is a vibrant and growing community with many opportunities, no matter what your interest or passion. Throughout its history, Denton has been known as a university town, home to two state universities, the University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University. With a combined enrollment of over 50,000 students, the universities bring in a variety of cultural, sports, and entertainment amenities to the Denton community. Since becoming a member of Monarch City USA in 2018, the City of Denton has shown its commitment to protecting these important pollinators in a number of ways. The City has developed and maintained various pollinator gardens, partnered with local organizations to host gardening workshops, and developed outreach events such as the Monarch Madness which takes place in the Fall.

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

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

- 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.
- 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 Gerard Hudspeth	2026	2/23/2026	
Mayor Gerard Hudspeth	2025	3/3/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Gerard Hudspeth	2024	3/5/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Gerard Hudspeth	2023	4/6/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Gerard Hudspeth	2021	4/30/2021	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.).

5000

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.)

Approximately 50% youth and 50% adults

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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.

5

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.

Schools, rights-of-way, public demonstration gardens, nature preserves, parks, private residences/yards (through the Community Wildlife Habitat program)

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

We offer free classes focused on Monarch and pollinator conservation, such as our Monarch Madness and Sustainable Saturday programs. Most of our classes are offered for free. In addition, we provide free planting resources, such as native wildflower seed cups, at our outreach events, as well as financial assistance for tree planting through our tree rebate program.

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

We value Monarchs, as well as other native pollinators, for the important part they play in our ecosystems and as an iconic species native to our region. We recognize that our region is critical to the conservation of the Monarch due to its position along its migratory pathway.

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 informational resources NWF already provides have been helpful. From an equity perspective, it would be great to have resources and information for how lower-income communities/renters can be involved. A patio pollinator garden kit comes to mind as one possible idea.

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

We are bringing on a new Engagement Specialist in the coming weeks that will focus on community outreach and education related to these topics. We are also going to be launching a new program to incentivize citizens to certify their yards as wildlife habitats, which supports pollinator conservation. 2023 is set to be an exciting year for Monarch and pollinator conservation in Denton!

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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:

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

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.

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?

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.

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.

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Sustainability Newsletter Fall 2022 (1).pdf

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

We have a recurring section in our newly re-launched Sustainability Newsletter devoted to wildlife conservation. In our recent fall newsletter, we included information and resources on how to plant for pollinators, specifically focusing on Monarchs and raising awareness about their recent status change to Endangered by IUCN. We also held a Monarch Madness class this October in which we taught citizens about Monarchs and created over 100 native wildflower seed bombs to be dispersed in the community. Lastly, we post about planting for pollinators in the fall on our Sustainable Denton Facebook page.

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.

Wildflower map screenshot.PNG

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

Parks and Recreation, Sustainability

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

These city departments all work with the Sustainability staff on various projects related to this topic and will also participate in our new Wildlife Conservation Committee in early 2023. Part of this committee's goals will include implementing native plantings and pocket prairies for pollinators throughout the city's parks and open spaces. We are identifying areas where this would be appropriate, including a new pollinator garden outside the Sustainability office. Current native wildflower seeding areas are in progress at the sites in the map. In addition, the Parks department is currently conducting a pilot of IPM practices at three parks in Denton and will be expanding these practices throughout other open spaces in the year ahead. Our IPM program emphasizes the importance of resilient, native plantings that require less mowing. https://www.cityofdenton.com/219/Integrated-Pest-Management-IPM-Resources

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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We are currently in frequent contact with the following groups: Master Naturalists (Elm Fork Chapter), Denton County Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society (Trinity Forks Chapter), University of North Texas Bee Campus Committee, Texas Women's University Division of Biology

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

We are in the process of bringing together members of our local Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, and Native Plant Society chapters to team up on wildlife conservation efforts in the city through our new Wildlife Conservation Committee, launching in early 2023. We are also bringing faculty from University of North Texas, Texas Women's University, as well as Denton Parks and Recreation staff to the table. We will be promoting each other's events and conservation efforts, coordinating wildlife conservation and awareness events, and planning habitat enhancement initiatives in support of our many wildlife programs, including Mayor's Monarch Pledge, Bird City Texas, and NWF Community Wildlife Habitat. A key focus of this committee will be on installing pollinator habitats composed of native wildflowers in parks and other open spaces, including native milkweeds in some areas.

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?

University of North Texas We Mean Green Fund

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).

15

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).

The UNT We Mean Green Fund provides funding for student project proposals related to the environment. Last year, they funded a student artist's proposal to create a pollinator appreciation mural for the Community Garden (which also has a native planting area). The mural displays the pollinators of our area as well as their host plants and is intended to celebrate and inform community members of their beauty and value. Learn more about the project here: https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/we-mean-green-fund/projects/community-garden-pollinator-mural

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

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

Unknown

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

750

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

Each spring, Keep Denton Beautiful and Sustainable Denton host the annual Redbud Festival, at which vendors of native and adapted trees are featured. One of our local nurseries, Painted Flower Farm, regularly has a vendor station at this event and sells primarily native plants. We also have a year-round seed library at the Emily Fowler Library in Denton at which many native wildflower seeds, including milkweed, are featured.

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)

We have multiple pollinator-friendly native demonstration gardens throughout the city. The city planted and maintains 2 pollinator gardens at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center as well as demonstration pollinator gardens at Denia Rec Center and Fire Station 7 (which includes milkweeds). We also have a native pollinator planting in front of both City Hall and the Denton County Courthouse (located in the city of Denton). The Monarch butterfly, as well as our other native pollinators, are valued as important components of our North Texas ecosystems and history, which is why these gardens are planted at prominent municipal buildings. Locations: City Hall, 215 East McKinney Street, Denton, TX 76201 ; Denton County Courthouse, 1 Courthouse Drive, Suite 3100 Denton, TX 76208; Denia Rec Center, 1001 Parvin Street, Denton, TX 76205; Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center, 3310 Collins Road, Denton, TX 76208

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

Parks and Recreation, Sustainability, Master Naturalists (Elm Fork Chapter)

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.

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1

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.

Median 1.jpg

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

Median 2.jpg

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

Median 3.jpg

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

Median 4.jpg

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

Wildflower map screenshot.PNG

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

The pictures depict one of several planted medians involving native Texas wildflowers and grasses. The map includes areas identified as suitable for wildflower plantings in rights-of-way and open spaces. Four of these areas have already been seeded: Audra Open Space on the east side of Audra, north of McKinney Street and Evers Park baseball fields; small attempt at the corner of Bell and Robertson, between Dallas Drive and the railroad bridge; wildflowers at Fire Station 7 on the perimeter of an attempted control burn by the fire department. Sustainability is working with the Parks department to ensure that seeding takes place at the other mapped areas identified as suitable for wildflowers.

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

150

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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.

Unknown, working to attain this information from Parks department

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Unknown, working to attain this information from Parks department

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).

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

thumbnail_IMG_4812.jpg

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

thumbnail_IMG_4822.jpg

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)

Denton Sustainable Schools program

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)

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10

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

WINDLE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG CHILDREN KOAN SCHOOL SHULTZ ELM RYAN HS STRICKLAND MID GUYER HS DENTON ISD VIRTUAL ACADEMY PECAN CREEK ELM BORMAN ELM HODGE ELM

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

The program works with participating schools to expand recycling efforts and encourage educational opportunities in several focus areas: Materials Resource Management, Air and Water Quality, Energy Efficiency, Conservation of Resources, Transportation, and the Environment. We are also partnering with schools and assisting them with resources and information to certify their habitats as Community Wildlife Habitats with your organization. Recently, we installed a native pollinator bed at Strickland Middle School and are working on a plan to install an additional bed in the spring. We are encouraging other schools to take similar action and are providing guidance.

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).

1480 students and educators are currently engaged in this program, though not all are focused on pollinators and wildlife.

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

This program is run by City of Denton Sustainability office.

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.

0.1

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

We are providing guidance to Strickland Middle School on the upkeep and watering of the recently installed pollinator bed. Currently, the bed is being watered multiple times per week. The school's Green Team conducts weekly maintenance activities related to their vegetable and pollinator gardens.

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

Native Plant Society (Trinity Forks Chapter), Master Naturalists (Elm Fork), Master Gardeners, Parks and Rec. department, UNT environmental science department

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

We are in the process of attaining a Community level certification through the Community Wildlife Habitat program. Currently, we have 119 properties certified and are on our way toward attaining 400. Sustainability has been regularly promoting this program in the community at tabling events, through our Denton Sustainable Schools program, in newsletters, and on social media. We are also partnering with schools to certify and had two schools certify this fall (Strickland Middle School and Koan Elementary). We are developing a new incentive program that provides free resources, such as seeds, to those who certify and plan to launch this in 2023.

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.

Draft Privet Removal and Habitat Restoration SOP FINAL 11.14.2022.pdf

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

TBD

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.

Environmental Services & Sustainability and Parks and Recreation have developed an SOP for the removal of Chinese Privet and the establishment of native plants at removal sites. Privet removal techniques, including cutting, treatment, and hand pulling of seedlings, are described on pages 4 and 5 and restoration activities, including prioritization of native plants, are described on pages 6 and 7 of the attached SOP. Sustainability is relaunching its city Green Team in 2023 and is planning some invasive species removal days to aid in this process.

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?

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Parks and Recreation, Sustainability

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.

Our tall grass and vegetation code allows for wildflowers to grow until seeds have matured and grasses to grow until the majority have gone dormant. https://library.municode.com/tx/denton/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SPACOOR_CH17PRMA_ARTIVGRWEOTVE_S17-40GRWEEXTW12INHEDENUPR

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

Complete

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?

Sustainability Department authored the Sustanainability Framework. Parks and Recreation department oversees the IPM plan.

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.

Our IPM plan emphasizes the importance of native wildflower plantings such as milkweed. https://www.cityofdenton.com/219/Integrated-Pest-Management-IPM-Resources Our Simply Sustainable Framework was recently updated. Chapter 8 focuses on Pollinator Conservation https://www.cityofdenton.com/DocumentCenter/View/352/Simply-Sustainable---A-Framework-for-Dentons-Future-PDF?bidId=

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

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In addition to our Sustainability Framework, we are also working on a new Climate Action and Adaptation Plan with a consultant, Sustainable Solutions Group. This plan is being developed and will incorporate habitat preservation for native species as a component of climate mitigation and resilience. It is set to be adopted in summer 2023.

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?

Denton Parks and Recreation

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

The City of Denton recently adopted an updated version of its Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM). The mission of this policy is “to manage pests that are harmful to the health, function or aesthetic value of City landscapes and public health in a manner that is efficient, effective, environmentally-responsible, and with careful attention to the safety of the public and department employees.” We are currently piloting the IPM program at multiple park sites throughout the city and are promoting IPM methods among our residents.

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.

https://www.cityofdenton.com/219/Integrated-Pest-Management-IPM-Resources

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

The IPM plan is in the pilot phase, currently under way at three park sites (Avondale, Denia, and Mack Park). We are expanding the program to include more sites and acreage, with a rough goal of 20 additional acres over the next two years.

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