# City of Palm Springs

Palm Springs, CA

Mayor Ron deHarte

## Pledge Summary

The City of Palm Springs is a desert city located in southern California, within the Coachella Valley. Sheltered by the San Bernadino Mountains to the north, the little San Bernardino Mountains to the east, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the west, Palm Springs is home to many beautiful and important nature parks, recreational parks, trails, gardens, and other natural areas. Mayor Ron deHarte of Palm Springs, California has committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to continuing the encouragement and promotion of establishing and protecting pollinator habitat throughout the City of Palm Springs.

## 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.
- 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 milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

### Systems Change

- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

## Past Pledge Archive

| Mayor Name | Program Year | Pledge Date | Achievement |
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|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor Ron deHarte | 2025 | 1/27/2025 | Signatories |
| Mayor Jeffrey Bernstein | 2024 | 3/28/2024 | Signatories |
| Mayor Lisa Middleton | 2022 | 3/8/2022 | Signatories |
| Mayor of Palm Springs Christy Holstege | 2021 | 5/11/2021 | 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 (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).**

1200

**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.)**

250

**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.**

1.5

**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.**

Community gardens, parks, landscaping areas such as medians and parkways, re-naturalized sites, and private yards.

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

We intentionally hold outreach events in historically underserved or disadvantaged neighborhoods to ensure residents have a voice in landscape changes on public properties. Community members help guide decisions about pollinator habitat, and we host native plant giveaways including monarch-friendly species to increase equitable access to nature and sustainable landscaping.

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

Palm Springs sits directly along the monarchs' summer migratory route, making the City an important stopover habitat. Our residents recognize the monarch as a symbol of resilience

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and environmental health, and the community continues to be motivated by a shared responsibility to protect this species and support biodiversity in the desert.

**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?**

Social media continues to be a key resource for community education and event promotion. It allows us to share science-based information and connect residents with local conservation opportunities. Additional resources such as multilingual outreach materials, culturally relevant engagement guides, and tools for co-designing public green spaces would further support equitable access to nature.

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

Over the past year, the City and community partners significantly reduced high-water turf in public areas and replaced it with drought-tolerant, pollinator-supportive landscaping. This transformation supports monarch habitat while improving long-term water efficiency. We also hosted the first Earth and Arbor Day festival.

## 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:**

04/25/2025

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

Earth and Arbor Day

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

Earth Day Pledge 2025.pdf

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

Arbor Day Pledge 2025.pdf

### Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain

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## mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

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

6 organizations and departments participated: Palm Springs Disposal Services Prema Culture Composting Palm Springs High School City of Palm Springs Parks and Recreation Department City of Palm Springs Streets and Maintenance Department West Coast Arborists

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

In 2025, the City of Palm Springs Sustainability Department collaborated with multiple City departments, educational institutions, service providers, and community partners to support monarch and pollinator habitat through landscape maintenance coordination, planting efforts, and education. Engagement with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Streets and Maintenance Department focused on identifying opportunities to adjust mowing practices where feasible and to incorporate native, drought-tolerant, and nectar-producing plants within City-managed parks, medians, and landscaped rights-of-way. These discussions emphasized seasonal considerations, reduced mowing in appropriate areas, and compatibility with public safety and maintenance standards. West Coast Arborists supported tree and landscape management efforts by providing guidance on tree care and habitat-friendly maintenance practices that complement pollinator-supportive landscapes. Palm Springs Disposal Services and Prema Culture Composting contributed through composting and organic waste diversion efforts that support healthy soils for native and pollinator-friendly plantings, reinforcing sustainable landscape maintenance practices. Engagement with Palm Springs High School included educational and awareness-building activities that connected students to monarch conservation, native plants, and sustainability practices, helping foster community stewardship and long-term environmental awareness. Together, these collaborations supported the maintenance and enhancement of pollinator-friendly areas, promoted native plant use, and strengthened cross-sector partnerships advancing monarch conservation while aligning with the City’s sustainability, water conservation, and operations goals.

## Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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

West Coast Arborists, City of Palm Springs Parks and Recreation Department, City of Palm Springs Streets and Maintenance Department, Local environmental and sustainability advocates, Community stakeholders providing input on urban forestry and native landscaping

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

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In progress

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

In 2025, the City began the development of a Tree Ordinance aimed at strengthening urban forestry practices and expanding the use of native, drought-tolerant, and pollinator-supportive plants on City-managed properties. Sustainability staff are coordinating with Parks and Recreation, Streets and Maintenance, and arborist professionals to align ordinance language with operational needs, water conservation goals, and habitat considerations. The ordinance is currently in the drafting and internal review phase, with continued stakeholder engagement and policy refinement underway. A target completion date is anticipated in late 2026, pending departmental review and City approval processes.

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

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

Milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants have been planted along multiple City-managed medians, roadsides, and public rights-of-way, including: E. Tahquitz Canyon Way (between N. Indian Canyon Drive and S. Sunrise Way) N. Palm Canyon Drive medians (downtown corridor) Gene Autry Trail medians (select intersections) Various neighborhood rights-of-way in partnership with Parks and Recreation and Streets Maintenance Department

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

150

**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.**

The planted areas cover approximately 0.5–1 acre of City medians, roadsides, and public rights-of-way.

**Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.**

Planted areas are maintained through coordinated efforts between the City of Palm Springs Parks and Recreation Department, Streets and Maintenance Department, and Sustainability staff. Watering: Supplemental irrigation is provided via existing drip systems or hand watering during establishment periods, with ongoing seasonal monitoring for drought conditions. Mowing and Trimming: Mowing is reduced in pollinator-friendly areas, with targeted trimming only when necessary to maintain safety and visibility. Weed Control: Invasive weeds are monitored and removed regularly to reduce competition with native

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plants. Monitoring: Sustainability staff perform periodic site visits to track plant health, bloom success, and overall habitat conditions for pollinators. These maintenance practices are designed to support long-term survival of milkweed and nectar plants while balancing operational needs and public safety.

## 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?

Palm Springs High School – students and environmental club members, Local neighborhood associations participating in garden projects, Community volunteers engaged through City sustainability outreach events, Prema Culture Composting – provided guidance and soil amendments, City of Palm Springs Sustainability Department staff – coordination and support

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

150

### Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The City of Palm Springs Sustainability Department collaborated with schools, community groups, and local volunteers to plant and maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in community gardens. This effort included: Hosting volunteer planting events with students and residents Providing educational guidance on native and pollinator-friendly plants Coordinating with Prema Culture Composting to ensure soil health and proper planting techniques Monitoring plant survival, bloom success, and habitat use by pollinators Integrating the plantings into ongoing garden maintenance schedules to ensure long-term success These efforts contributed to local pollinator habitat, increased community engagement, and supported the City’s broader sustainability and biodiversity goals.

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