City of Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor, MI

Mayor Christopher Taylor

Pledge Summary

Ann Arbor is a city located along the picturesque Huron River in southeast Michigan. With a population of about 120,000, it is home to over 160 parks, totaling about 2,200 acres. Over half of those acres are comprised of natural areas which are managed and maintained by the Natural Area Preservation division of the Parks and Recreation Services Unit. The University of Michigan and Washtenaw County also own and maintain significant natural acreage within the city. Mayor Christopher Taylor has signed the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in recognition of the importance of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators to the health of our ecosystems and our citizens. We are committed to protecting and restoring our precious pollinator habitat.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- 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.
- 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.)

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.
- 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.

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- 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

- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2026	1/13/2026	
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2025	1/17/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2024	2/2/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2023	1/12/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2022	1/25/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Christopher Taylor	2021	1/5/2021	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.).

121000

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.)

40000 youth and 81000 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.

0.07

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared

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public spaces, and more.

Parks 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?

In 2023, NAP hired an Environmental Education and Engement Coordinator, whose job specifically entails reaching out to underserved members of our community. We look forward to sharing our efforts to protect and enhance pollinator habitat through future environmental education programming.

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

We are committed to protecting and enhancing pollinator habitat, due to the fact that monarchs and other pollinator species populations are experiencing widespread declines. We understand the importance of pollinators to the health of our ecosystems, and we want to share this information with our community to inspire them to take action as well.

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?

Educational webinars have been very helpful and have proved to be a great resource to share with members of the community. In the past, grants have also been very helpful for community organizations to purchase or be gifted native plant material, and it would be nice to see more of these. Bigger picture, additional grants for the purpose of hiring more staff could help us expand our habitat restoration and creation efforts into new areas of our city.

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

Pollinator conservation continues to be a hot topic in Ann Arbor. Residents, city staff, and community leaders and partners are enthusiastic about enhancing pollinator habitat in our city.

Selected Action Items

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.

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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.

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.

400

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.

Natural Area Preservation continued its extensive ongoing invasive species removal program in natural areas within city parks, which in part focuses on expanding native prairie and wetland habitat where milkweed and other nectar plants thrive. Throughout the year, new areas of invasives were removed in order to restore areas of lower ecological quality. Ann Arbor follows an Integrated Pest Management plan, which considers a wide variety of techniques for controlling invasive species. These include mechanical methods such as pulling, mowing, and bagging stumps; burning with prescribed fire or propane torches; and biological controls, in addition to the use of herbicides. When herbicide use is

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deemed necessary, our goal is always to use the least toxic product, applied at the lowest effective concentration, in the most targeted manner possible, with timing that is most effective for the species we are trying to control. Similarly, the GIVE 365 program removed invasive plants from several native plantings in parks around the city, by pulling, cutting, and bagging stumps. The Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner also regularly removes invasive species from public rain gardens though herbicide treatment, manual cutting and pulling, controlled burns and cutting below the water line as methods of treatment. Where large amounts of invasives are removed, annual seed mix is added during each maintenance visit to reduce the amount of invasive resprouts.

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.

PAYC Yard Sign - Front & Back.pdf

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

The Office of Sustainability and Innovation launched the Pollinator-Aware Yard Care (PAYC) program in the spring 2023, with the goal of increasing resident awareness regarding yard-care strategies that support pollinators and their habitat. This program consists of a webpage that lists actions residents can take to protect pollinators in their yards and serves as a compendium of resources for residents interested in taking those actions. In addition, yard signs are available that indicate that the resident's yard is a part of the program and direct those who are interested to the webpage. In addition, the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner advertised their design assistance visit program, in which staff visit residents' homes by appointment and offer advice and information on how to build a rain garden, natural shoreline, or native garden. The program recommends native plants that will work well for individual sites and match the homeowner’s aesthetic tastes.

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.

The GIVE 365 and Adopt-A-Park programs, the Park Operations Department, the Office of Sustainability and Innovation the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, volunteers

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

The GIVE 365 program and Ann Arbor's Park Operations department initiated a pilot program to test alternative mowing in eight parks. Designated areas in these parks were not mowed during May to investigate ecological benefits, including whether any pollinator-supporting plants would grow. The pilot included community engagement to inform park neighbors and to partner with Park Adopters to identify appropriate areas for testing. Mowing resumed in June and the results of the pilot will be used to inform future alterations in mowing routines. In addition, a small area in Wurster Park was permanently removed from the mowing cycle, and at Veterans Memorial Park, an alternative lawn demonstration garden was installed. To promote pollinator-friendly mowing practices on private property, the Office of Sustainability and Innovation's Pollinator Aware Yard Care program makes the following recommendations: "Mow turfgrass portions of your yard less frequently and set your mower to cut turfgrass to a taller height - we recommend keeping your grass at between 6 and 12 inches. Turfgrass at this height can provide more habitat for pollinator species and allow for pollinator-friendly plant species mixed into the turfgrass to bloom and provide a food source for pollinators. Cutting grass height down by more than about one third to one half of the blade can damage the grass - so keeping your yard in the 6-12 inch range also helps to prevent mowing damage to your lawn." The Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner also worked with the City of Ann Arbor's Parks Department and a restoration ecology contractor to replace a section of turf grass with native grasses and sedges. The site is maintained by a volunteer rain garden adopter.

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.

The Natural Area Preservation and GIVE 365 programs, the Leslie Science and Nature Center, the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, The Stewardship Network, Michigan Conservation Stewards, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Master Gardeners

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

The City's Natural Area Preservation program supported the Leslie Science and Nature Center for their annual Monarch Migration Festival (See Action Item 21). NAP also partnered with the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner to maintain rain gardens in city parks that are planted with native pollinator plants. NAP and the WCWRC are coordinating partners of the Michigan State University Extension's Conservation Stewards Program, both of which seek to educate and involve individuals in environmental and conservation issues in Michigan. Both of these programs focus on the importance of conserving native habitats for the benefit of all flora and fauna, including butterflies and other pollinators. NAP is also a financial supporter of The Stewardship Network, which connects, equips, and mobilizes people and organizations to care for land

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and water in their communities, which includes conserving and enhancing pollinator habitat. The GIVE 365 program offers approved volunteer activities for the Michigan State University Extension's Master Gardener program. One Master Gardener adopted the gardens at Bryant Community Center, weeding out nonnative and invasive plants in the gardens and helping to plant natives in the rain garden.

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.

Natural Area Preservation staff continued to actively work with developers to incorporate native plants and rain gardens into the landscaping of their developments. NAP staff reviewed seed mixes and plant lists for appropriateness, and advised on conserving existing wildlife habitat on development sites.

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 Report 2023.pdf

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

At the Washtenaw County Conservation District's 2023 Native Plant Expo, 10,394 plants were sold, and 2,888 native milkweed plants were given away. As part of the City of Ann Arbor's 10,000 Trees Initiative, 1,842 native tree seedlings were given away.

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

3000

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

The Washtenaw County Conservation District hosted the 2023 Expo, in partnership with the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commisioner and the City's Natural Area Preservation division. The 10,000 Trees Initiative giveaway was hosted by the City's Office of Sustainability and Innovation.

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

Veteran’s Memorial Park Display Garden.pdf

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)

A butterfly garden was maintained at Gallup Park (3000 Fuller Rd), one of the busiest parks in Ann Arbor. This garden has high visibility, and is likely to make a significant impact upon visitors to the site. A native shoreline habitat near a highly-visited playground was also maintained an expanded in the same park. At Veteran's Memorial Park, an Alternative Mowing Demonstration Garden was planted with native prairie plants and grasses that can tolerate mowing.

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

Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North, Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, City of Ann Arbor's GIVE 365 and Adopt-A-Park programs

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.

0.14

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).

7

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

Michigan Butterfly Network

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

The Natural Area Preservation division continued to be the Ann Arbor hub for the Michigan Butterfly Network (naturecenter.org/michiganbutterfly). Volunteers were trained in the

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identification of monarchs and other butterfly species, and they were trained in the Pollard method of surveying. Volunteers completed 71 surveys in 12 city parks and public areas, and they reported all the butterflies they saw along their survey routes to www.pollardbase.org. Attendees of the Leslie Science and Nature Center's Monarch Migration Festival also released tagged butterflies in order to enhance local butterfly populations and to contribute to the national tracking and monitoring effort. See Action Item 21.

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?

Volunteer park adopters

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

400

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

The Adopt-A-Park and GIVE 365 programs planted native and nectar-producing shrubs and forbs, including milkweed, in garden beds and native plantings in 23 parks around the city. They planted over 400 plants and weeded and removed invasive species from these plantings, with the help of volunteers and park adopters.

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.

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)

500

What was the date of your festival?

9/10/23

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

Leslie Science and Nature Center

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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).

The Monarch Migration Festival was held at the Leslie Science and Nature Center on September 10. Attendees of the festival got their own tagged monarch butterfly to release, as well as access to onsite activities, games, a butterfly tent, information from local partners. Attendees also had the option to purchase a pollinator pack, which had included resources to help them learn about our local pollinators, and seeds to start their own pollinator garden. The Leslie Science and Nature Center is conveniently located near downtown Ann Arbor, and has several nearby bus stops, making it easily accessible to members of the community. The event was advertised throughout the community by several local and regional news outlets.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

PAYC Yard Sign - Front & Back.pdf

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

284

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

The attached sign was used to educate and inform residents about the Pollinator-Aware Yard Care program, which encourages residents to adopt pollinator-friendly yard care practices. A QR code on the sign takes you to a website with extensive details, but short bullet points on the sign encourage residents to plant native plants, reduce mowing and mow taller, leave fallen leaves, and avoid pesticides. The signs were displayed in private yards throughout the city that participated in the program.

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?

The entire Ann Arbor community was invited to give feedback as the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan was being drafted.

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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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.

The city's Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan was adopted by Ann Arbor City Council on 1/9/23. It can be found at the following link. The section of the plan relevant to pollinators is on pages 16-17. https://www.a2gov.org/departments/Parks-Recreation/administrative/Pages/Park-Planning.aspx

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