

# City of Madison

Madison, WI

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

## Pledge Summary

### 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 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 developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

#### 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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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).
- 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).
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

## Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway	2026	1/27/2026	
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway	2025	1/24/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway	2024	2/20/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway	2023	4/28/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway	2022	2/24/2022	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 (e.g., 50).**

30000

**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." (Only allow numerical values.)**

10000

**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).**

27

**Where is your habitat being created? This may include residences (yards, containers, balconies, etc.), schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community**

**gardens, culturally-significant locations, shared public spaces and common areas or parks.**

Medians, stormwater land (greenways, retention ponds in new developments), general park land, vacant lots, municipal buildings (Madison Municipal Building, Monona Terrace Events Center)

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

The City continues to engage marginalized communities in conservation work by: offering nature programming such as Parks-staff led nature walks with Shabazz High School and East High School at Demetral Park, as well as an elementary school on the north side in Warner Park; installing edible or pollinator plantings in parks or on stormwater land in low-income neighborhoods; siting tree plantings in disadvantaged areas of the city; red-flagging conservation positions for women or people of color during the hiring process; and continuing a robust relationship with Operation Fresh Start, a work-study program for local youth offering conservation education and training while providing disadvantaged youth an alternative path to a high school diploma. Both Parks and Engineering Division's hire OFS crews to assist with conservation work, and graduates of the OFS program often find their way into City employment in Parks or Engineering conservation positions.

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

The City of Madison has an active, outdoorsy culture and we take great pride in our many public parks and green spaces. We consider ourselves leaders in enhancing our use of public green space to include not just recreation or utilitarian function, but also wildlife habitat and refuge. Supporting monarch conservation fits right in with these visions and also supports the explicitly stated goals of the Pollinator Protection Task Force and our general sustainability goals. Pollinator conservation is also a great touchpoint to inform the public about the benefits of ecological restoration.

**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?**

Xerces Society has excellent resources for pollinator protection and habitat creation as well as an excellent annual conference ("Best Practices for Pollinators") regularly attended by City staff that work in restoration ecology. Citizen science programs like Monarch Watch and Journey North are great for engaging residents. We also have a great store of resources that were created in-house that we use and refer residents to, for example, Engineering has created pollinator friendly rain garden planting plans, Parks has created guides to invasive species control for volunteers, and the Pollinator Protection Task Force recommendations are also quite thorough. New this year, a helpful resource has been the inaugural year using a software program, "Get Connected," that manages volunteering city-wide. The software helped Parks and Golf to coordinate restoration efforts, particularly surrounding seed collecting and processing, planting efforts and trash clean-up efforts. In

the future it would be helpful for NWF to provide lists of grants municipalities can apply for related to pollinator/wildlife habitat creation and resident education.

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

The City of Madison continues to reaffirm its commitment to supporting pollinator conservation by adopting land management practices that benefit the overall ecosystem, including pollinators; by permitting our residents to plant natural landscapes in their yards, and by allowing prescribed burns to be used as a tool for managing these plantings; by offering pollinator-specific educational classes and events at Olbrich Botanical Gardens; by partnering to host rain garden educational workshops; by maintaining a goal of creating 1,000 rain gardens within City limits; by requiring developers to plant and maintain native vegetation on new stormwater land and with many other such conservation-minded actions.

## Selected Action Items

**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?**

**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.**

**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:**

February 24, 2025

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

“Board of Park Commissioners Proclaiming Commitment to Supporting Pollinator Health”

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

[BPC Pollinator & Monarch Proclamation 2025.pdf](#)

**Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.**

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

[202508\\_The Bumble Bees of Moorland Community Garden by Maggie Honig.png](#)

**Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.**

Dane County Parks, WI Dept. of Natural Resources B3 Bumble Bee Brigade and Rooted—a Madison urban gardening and farming organization collaborated to create a poster featuring photos of pollinators using native and edible plants from Madison Community gardens!

**Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.**

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

[DEVELOPER CONTRACT\\_rev 10.8.25.pdf](#)

**Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.**

The City of Madison Engineering Stormwater Utility oversees the creation of new stormwater land as development occurs. Since 1995, the Utility has required that all new stormwater land be planted with native seed mixes. During development, the developer is responsible for maintenance of these areas, but ultimately most stormwater land becomes the property and maintenance responsibility of the public utility. As a result of this requirement, the City does own quite a few acres of land that has valuable habitat potential, with a focus on native prairie and wetland plants, but there was a recognition in the late 20-teens that more could be done. At this time the Engineering division created the position of the "Stormwater Vegetation Coordinator" to oversee maintenance of vegetation on all stormwater land. The Stormwater Vegetation Coordinator identified the need to improve stormwater land before its acceptance by the utility, and updated the developer's contract in 2019, and again in 2021 to require that developers not only plant native seed, but also provide maintenance conducive to the growth of native plants. Early-years maintenance is crucial to the development of native prairie and wetland plantings. Without this maintenance, many native plants that were sown on site simply didn't have the opportunity to grow. The stormwater utility has been monitoring these updated requirements and working with developers to provide guidance and streamline compliance. Further updates were made to the Developer's Agreement in 2025 to try to encourage better compliance with vegetation

maintenance requirements by developers--see attachment for requirements for "Professional Ecosystem Establishment Plan." Updates such as requiring a copy of an executed contract with a certified ecological restoration contractor before issuing approval to start construction; requiring ecological restoration contractors to be at pre-construction meetings and requiring submittal of a Professional Ecosystem Establishment Plan. To provide additional guidance, the Public Works Standard Specifications were updated to provide native seed mixes for a variety of site conditions (based primarily on solar and mesic conditions), guidance on timing of planting native seed, and guidance on early-years maintenance of prairie plantings. In 2025, City Engineering held meetings every three weeks with the largest private residential development firm in Madison to go over historic stormwater land vegetation maintenance progress and prepare for newly developing areas. The City also hired a new position, the "Ecological Restoration Specialist" position, to be the main inspector and point of contact for private developers for ecological restoration or vegetation maintenance on stormwater land. Attachment shows the relevant section of the developer contract relating to native seed installation and maintenance. Link below is to the Public Works Standard Specifications. Relevant sections are: 207.2(a) Seed, 2-6; 207.3(a) Seeding; and 207.3(g) Maintaining Native Seedings After Planting

### **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.**

[Pinney Library Native Seed Packing Volunteer Event December 2025 2.jpg](#)

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

[Pinney Library Native Seed Packing Volunteer Event December 2025 3.jpg](#)

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

[Pinney Library Native Seed Packing Volunteer Event December 2025.jpg](#)

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

[Pollinators & Your Garden event Pinney.png](#)

**How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event?**

5,430+ packets of native seed given away

**How many people attended your event?**

56

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

i. Olbrich Botanical Gardens again hosted their Fall Pollinator Plant sale from Aug 4 – 24, 2025 <https://www.olbrich.org/calendar/fall-pollinator-plant-sale>. They also hosted their Halloween Trick-or-Treat event passing out not only candy but also seed packets of native seed <https://www.olbrich.org/calendar/member-trick-or-treating> ii. Madison Library partnered with Dane County Land & Water Resources Dept to package and give away in their Native Seed Library <https://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/collection/special-collections/madison-public-library-seed-library> iii. Engineering staff also created small packets of showy, pollinator-friendly forb seeds and placed them in Little Free Libraries across the City.

**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.**

[Final SWUVegetationPlan.pdf](#)

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

[2024.09.25 Oak Savanna.jpg](#)

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

[2025.03.25 Burn hole 4.jpeg](#)

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

City agencies that participated include the two largest land-owning agencies within the City of Madison, namely Parks and Engineering. Library, Golf, and Monona Terrace are three other City agencies that actively participate in pollinator conservation.

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

Pollinator Conservation and educational events are largely undertaken and driven by land-owning agencies, in fact, City Staff in charge of directing vegetation maintenance on the City of Madison's 1,500+ acres of stormwater land are writing this report. In 2025 the Engineering division formally adopted its "Stormwater Vegetation Management Plan" (SVMP). The purpose of this plan is to create a framework for sustainable and resilient vegetation management. The plan underwent a Racial Equity & Social Justice analysis, following by input from outside experts including a technical questionnaire, a focus group

workshop and consultant recommendations. The SVMP is specific to maintenance and vegetation goals of existing and future stormwater utility land at a citywide scale. Input by both the public and outside experts has shown there is a lot of interest in pollinator (and other wildlife) conservation. The conservation of natural resources on public lands within the City is a key goal of both Parks and Engineering division's management of their land. Both city agencies have restoration ecologists on staff who incorporate best management practices for pollinator conservation in line with the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and the City of Madison Pollinator Protection Task Force. City agencies use techniques like prescribed burns, targeted and timed mows for invasive species control, native seed collection and native plant propagation and supplemental seeding and planting to improve biodiversity and ecosystem functionality on public green spaces. In 2025 City agencies: Planted 11,145 native plant plugs, 626 native trees, 176 native shrubs; planted 21 acres of row crop to tallgrass prairie; performed prescribed burns on 450 acres; remove invasive shrubs from 50 acres; performed targeted ecological restoration work on 472 acres (279 from general Parks, 193 from Eng); collected 144 species of seed including 4 species of milkweed, totaling 291 pounds (PLS) native seed worth an estimated value of \$73,700; installed 12 new rain gardens and many more sites were supplementally planted with native plants. In 2025, Golf also continued with conservation initiatives on their land, continuing work on Yahara Hills Golf Course oak savanna and completing initial burns of 4+acres of prairies that were installed in 2021/2022 at The Glen Golf Park as part of renovation work funded by a donation from Michael and Jocelyn Keiser.

## **Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.**

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

[Eng\\_native\\_seed\\_drying.png](#)

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

[Eng\\_staff\\_seed\\_collecting\\_Greentree.png](#)

**How many people attended your event?**

25

**What species were collected or propagated?**

291 pounds pure live seed at an estimated value of \$73,718 and a total of 144 native species collected including many pollinator favorites: 4 species of milkweed and the monarch favorite, meadow blazing star. Species that bloom from early (Pasque flower, prairie smoke, cream wild indigo, Ohio spiderwort, golden Alexander), to mid (pale purple coneflower, white wild indigo, lead plant, black-eyed Susan) to late season (old field thistle, showy goldenrod, New England aster, sawtooth sunflower).

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

Operation Fresh Start youth crews helped Engineering staff collect seed. Dane County provided their state-of-the-art seed cleaning facility to City of Madison Engineering staff to facilitate the cleaning of native seed.

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

Engineering staff collected a record diversity of species on stormwater land in 2025. The 144 species and 291 pounds of seed was distributed across 49 different stormwater sites in late fall/early winter 2025. Some seed was saved and 25 species were planted into milk jug planters to grow plugs for use on stormwater land in 2026. Engineering also offered the opportunity for non-field based staff to participate in two different seed collection events in 2025. Engineers, Landscape Architects, Architects, Planners and other office staff enjoyed time learning about native plants with Engineering conservation staff.

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

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

[Britta 5.jpg](#)

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

[Garner volunteer planting.jpg](#)

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

[Olbrich 10.jpg](#)

**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)**

Madison Municipal Building (MMB) has two planters--this is highly visible to the public as it is downtown on a main thoroughfare in front of the municipal building and across from the City-County Building; Madison Municipal Building, 215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Madison, WI 53703 Monona Terrace events center also maintains native plantings on their rooftop patio--this space is highly used for major events including Ironman, major conferences, weddings and other private events; 1 John Nolen Dr, Madison, WI 53703 Olbrich Gardens maintains native plantings in their outdoor botanical area; 3330 Atwood Ave, Madison, WI 53704 Parks has a natural landscape planting that showcases conservation efforts employed within the Parks Division at their new Lakeside Offices containing over 200 prairie dropseed plants; 330 E. Lakeside St, Madison, WI 53715 Parks also maintains and plants native plants at Park entrances and signs. This year native

perennials were added, or in cases replaced non-native vegetation at the following Parks: Garner Park, Britta Park, Forest Hill Cemetery, Goodman Pool, Olbrich Park, Tenney Park Beach and Rennebohm Park.

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

ee City USA sponsored signage. Olbrich Botanical Society partners with the City of Madison to Operate Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

**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.**

10

**Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.**

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

[Inner Dr pollinator planting fall.png](#)

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

[New shrubs at McCormick Planting.JPG](#)

**Where is the monarch habitat located? (Please provide an address, if possible)**

McCormick Planting located at 538 McCormick Ave; Inner Dr Planting located at 109 Quarterdeck Dr AKA "Inner Dr Pollinator Planting"

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

Friends of Starkweather Creek, Faircrest Neighborhood Association

**What is the total acreage of land that has been converted? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones.**

0.25

**How many lots were converted to monarch habitat? Please limit your answer to only the number of lots in the answer field below (e.g., 3)**

**Please describe when the lots were converted to monarch habitat and the planned maintenance schedule.**

McCormick Ave & Commercial Ave: This corner lot owned by City of Madison Engineering runs along the shores of Starkweather Creek. The property has one large silver maple, and was vegetated with overgrown turf grass and reed canary grass along the shoreline. The local Friends of Starkweather Creek group approached Engineering about improving the lot. Engineering created a planting plan to convert the shoreline and one area near the curb along McCormick into native plantings. Engineering staff prepared the site for planting in summer 2020. The Friends group planted the seed in fall 2020, and plants in spring 2021. In 2022-2024 both the Friends group and Engineering staff performed invasive species control and removal including Eng staff spraying reed canary grass. New in 2024, Engineering staff sprayed off a swath of the adjacent turf grass to expand the planting area with plants donated by Eken Park Neighborhood Association and Dane Co Ripple Effects Program. The site is doing well and is growing a diverse array of native plants including conservative species such as purple milkweed, wild hyacinth and side-flowering skullcap.

Inner Dr: A section of turf grass along a bike path was converted into a pollinator planting beginning in 2019. The results, in 2024 are a diverse, aesthetically pleasing planting that provides interest for path users, screening for private property owners and a variety of pollinator friendly plants. The planting area spans an area of full sun, to mostly shade, so the species offering is further diversified. Species like gray-headed coneflower, bergamot, swamp milkweed, stiff goldenrod and biennial gaura dominate the sunny areas for early successional species, while compass plant, prairie dock and great blue lobelia amongst other species are starting to fill in. In shady areas, figwort, golden Alexander, Joe pye weed and brown-eyed Susan are currently flourishing. The site is maintained by regular visits from Engineering staff to perform invasive species control, supplemental seeding and planting as needed.

**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.**

[Penstemon grandiflorus Lake Mendota Dr TRG.png](#)

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

These locations are all around the City. Engineering started and Parks/Streets staff maintain three native planted medians. Many more terraces (roadside areas) are planted with natives as part of Engineering's Terrace Rain Garden Program: when a street is reconstructed some terraces may be eligible for installation of a native plant rain garden to take up street runoff: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/stormwater/programs-initiatives/rain-gardens/terrace-rain-gardens>

**How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted?**

2840

**What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants?**

10

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

Engineering staff plant, mulch and water terrace rain garden plantings initially. After that, residents are responsible for maintaining the plantings.

**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.**

[Insect fest 1.png](#)

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

[Insect fest 2.png](#)

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

[Insect fest 3.png](#)

**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)**

i. City of Madison Engineering staff partner with Dane County Land and Water Resources staff and local environmental engineers to host an annual gardening workshop. The 2025 workshop was our third year pursuing a series of one-on-one coaching sessions: "Dig into Rain Gardens-1:1 Coaching Sessions with Experts." The event was held March 2, 2025. Participants received guidance as well as materials on native plant selection, installation, maintenance and discounts for the Dane Co native plant sale. As in 2023 and 2024, the coaching sessions sold out within days of being posted <https://ripple-effects.com/Event/Detail/2216> ii. Madison Library hosted an educational event at the Pinney Branch Library called "Pollinators and Your Gardens" on June 3. iii. Olbrich

Botanical Gardens hosted Wisconsin Insect Fest on August 1, sharing the day with Butterfly Action Day. Insect Fest featured 9 educational talks, guided walking tours and activities led by entomologist as well as 10 entomology-themed booths. UW Madison Entomology Lab participated along with 8 other local community organizations, reaching an audience of 2,000 attendees. Children visiting the Blooming Butterflies event receive an ISpy Pollinators booklet that includes action steps people can take to support pollinators, including; 1) Creating habitat by planting native flowering plants, leaving plant material standing through winter to provide nesting habitat for insects, and say “no” to insecticides, and 2) Support conservation by volunteering with local prairie restoration botanical garden or arboretum, participate in citizen science projects, and donate to pollinator friendly organizations. iv. Olbrich Gardens features an outside garden that is free and open to the public. Throughout the garden they feature "Notable Natives" which have educational information about the interconnected relationship between insects and host plant species.

**How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"?**

12

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

None

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

Free educational talks and display booths at Olbrich Botanical Gardens and UW Madison Entomology Lab's Insect Fest. Free iSpy booklets for kids at Blooming Butterflies event.

**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).**

2000+

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

City of Madison Engineering, Parks, Library, Olbrich Botanical Garden, Dane County Land and Water Resources, UW Entomology Lab co-hosting Olbrich Botanical Garden's Insect Fest was a new partnership in 2025, and various local conservation-focused non-profits all tabled at Insect Fest.

**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.**

1

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

These educational programs focus on educating private landowners on how to create and maintain pollinator habitat.

**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).**

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

[Olbrich Nectar Connectors images.docx](#)

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

i. UW Urban Canid Lab <https://uwurbancanidproject.weebly.com/> ii. Tree City USA <https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/2024-04-26/city-of-madison-honored-as-a-tree-city-usa-for-35-years> iii. Bird City Wisconsin <https://birdcity.org/wisconsin/madison?tab=1> iv. Bee City USA <https://beecityusa.org/user/madison+wi/>

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

i. Urban Canid Project partners with University of Wisconsin--City staff contribute observations and sightings of fox and coyotes that visit Parks system. City of Madison is also a Tree City USA, Bee City USA and participant in the Bird City Wisconsin program. This year marked the 35th year of Madison’s participation in the Tree City USA program, and the 19th year in which Madison received the program’s “Growth Award.”

**Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.**

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

[Olbrich Mexico trip roosting monarchs.jpg](#)

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

[Olbrich monarch tagging 1.jpg](#)

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

[Olbrich monarch tagging 2.jpg](#)

**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 (e.g., 150).**

860

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

i. Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Project Monarch Watch, USA National Phenology Network, iNaturalist, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources B3 Bumble Bee Brigade, Friends of Owen Conservation Park, Monarch Joint Venture

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

i. In September, a team of 20 Olbrich staff and volunteers tagged monarchs in the gardens. This tagging is part of Monarch Watch and this is the 9th consecutive year of tagging at Olbrich Gardens. ii. Olbrich Botanical Gardens phenology team of volunteers were the top reporting team for the Nectar Connector's program through the U.S. National Phenology Network. In 2025, the volunteer recorded over 7000 observations which include monarch nectar and larval plants. They were the top team in the nation for observations. I'll forward the email to you from Nectar Connectors that shares this information. iii. Olbrich Botanical Gardens' Garden Scouts continue to document insect life throughout the Gardens using iNaturalist. To date, they have recorded 12,717 observations, identifying 1,258 insect species that are living on site. This growing dataset is becoming a true treasure trove of information about pollinators and the Gardens' overall biodiversity. iv. Engineering Stormwater staff and City of Madison residents continue to contribute to the Stormwater iNaturalist account, entering over 3,600 observations of insects, birds, plants and other species found on urban stormwater land <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/stormwater-species-of-madison-wisconsin> v. Olbrich Botanical Gardens staff found a Common Eastern bumble bee nest on the garden grounds and reported the nest to the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources B3 Bumble Bee Brigade program. Staff from B3 were able to monitor and photograph the nest over the course of the summer and the findings were reported in the Aug/Sept 2025 B3 Newsletter. vi. Engineering Stormwater staff contributes observations to B3 as well. City Engineering staff conducted 8 surveys on 7 different urban sites observing 58 bumblebees belonging to 6 different species. vii. Friends of Owen Conservation Park implements and reports for two Monarch Joint Venture programs: Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program and Monarch Larva Monitoring Project <https://mlmp.org/> <https://monarchjointventure.org/mjvprograms/science/integrated-monarch-monitoring-program>

**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.**

[Eagle trace weeding.jpg](#)

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

[Hiestand clearing.jpg](#)

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

[Eng spraying turf to replant natives Black Stallion Pond.png](#)

**What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants?**

2000

**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.**

i. The Parks and Engineering divisions have robust invasive species removal programs. The Stormwater Utility (SWU) owns 1,500+ acres of stormwater land. The Parks Division owns 6,000+ acres of land, including dozens of Conservation Parks that feature larger tracts of land in natural communities such as marshes, prairies, savannas and woodlands. City staff use a variety of approaches to control invasive species on this land in order to preserve and enhance the native plantings. Here are a few of the strategies used for invasive species control on Parks and Stormwater land: --Thousands of hours of monitoring, surveying and walking public land to locate and identify invasive species -- Creation of targeted invasive species removal plans with special emphasis on sites of highest biodiversity --Targeted removal of invasive plants via digging, pulling, cutting and bagging seedheads, spot mows or herbicide applications by Engineering's Stormwater Vegetation Coordinator, Conservation Technician, two seasonal Greenway Conservation Trainees, and Engineering's contracted youth crew, Operation Fresh Start (OFS) --Timed mows or spot mows by Operations crews to cut down invasive species during optimal periods --Partnership with WI DNR, Upper Sugar River Watershed Association to rear and release purple loosestrife beetles on Engineering land affected by purple loosestrife infestations --Brush cutting efforts by City staff, volunteers, contractors and Operation Fresh Start youth crews targeting invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, tree of heaven, mulberry and other non-native or aggressive woody species resulting in more than 40 acres of brush cleared --Monitoring for porcelain berry, tree of heaven, wild chervil, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed and other invasive species of special concern --Over 440 acres of City land received a prescribed burn to promote the health of the native vegetation and suppress invasive plants

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

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

[Olbrich signage.jpg](#)

**How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located?**

100

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

i. Olbrich Botanical Gardens is a designated Monarch Waystation (sign present in one of Olbrich rain garden) and they also display signage for Homegrown National Park, initiative created by Doug Tallamy to encourage planting natives (sign present near entrance to outdoor gardens). ii. General Parks has informational signs displayed at the Odana Golf Course and Washington Manor pollinator gardens. iii. As members of Bee City USA, we have posted signs with their logo and with links to information on the City website about our participation in the program at several pollinator plantings across the City. An educational sign at a rain garden planted alongside the Southwest Commuter Bike Path in 2021 lists names of native plants, fun facts and offers an "I Spy" native plant game. iv. Engineering posts signage in medians planted with native species to inform road users why medians may look different than traditional turf mowed medians. They have "Native Planting in Progress" signs that are used at new or in-progress native plantings. For sites where they partner with neighborhood groups, they use specialized signage to inform residents about City and volunteer involvement and the goals (increasing native plant diversity, providing pollinator habitat etc.).

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

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

[Noxious Weed Ord 23.29.pdf](#)

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

None

**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.**

Was never part of noxious weed list, see Madison General Ordinance 23.29

## **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?**

City of Madison Parks, Engineering, Building Inspection divisions; Bee City USA

**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.**

i. May 1, 2025 <https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/2025-05-01/what-you-need-to-know-about-low-mow-may-2025> ii. Madison General Ordinance 23.29 encourages homeowners to include plants native to Wisconsin within their landscaping because these plants provide a hardy, drought resistant, low maintenance yard while benefiting the environment. In 2024, Building Inspections made revisions to the Natural Lawns ordinance to make it easier for homeowners to convert traditional turf to natural lawns. Revisions removed a list of specific species allowed to grow past 8" height, and simplified language to allow intentional native plantings, but specifying that turf may not exceed 8" in height, except during "low mow May." The City of Madison again supported a "low mow May" approach to mowing in May wherein the City did not enforce ordinance MGO 27.05(2)(f) that normally requires lawns to be kept below 8 inches. The City of Madison Engineering and Parks Divisions classify each park, pond, greenway, shoreline or stormwater parcel with a qualitative and quantitative assessment based on native plant coverage and diversity. Based on these classifications, sites may be mowed on the traditional once annual schedule—in which case the low frequency of mowing does allow a wide variety of weed (including milkweed) species to flower, provide nectar and rearing habitat to pollinators. Sites may also be removed entirely from a regular mow schedule and maintained by digging, spot mowing, or other methods that have little to no potential to damage native plants but are targeted to control invasive species. An estimated 43% of stormwater land is not mowed annually, and is maintained solely by more labor-intensive and targeted invasive species control efforts. City staff are directed to leave milkweed when clearing medians for vision hazards, unless milkweeds present a true vision hazard, in which case staff are directed to first thin (by cutting, not pulling), then mow if necessary.

## **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.**

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

[MGO 27.05 Natural Lawn provision.pdf](#)

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

[Natural Lawn and Prairie Restoration Burn Permit Application.pdf](#)

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

City of Madison Engineering, Parks, Building Inspection, Fire Department; various private development firms, various private ecological restoration firms

**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.**

i. City of Madison General Ordinance 27.05 permits residents to plant natural landscapes in their yards, which include pollinator or rain gardens. Madison Fire Department allows residents to perform prescribed burns on these natural lawns. Not only are native plantings, native milkweed and other nectar plants allowed, they are actively encouraged by the City. There are numerous resources on City Engineering and Parks websites for how to grow native plants, install native plantings and Olbrich Botanical Gardens and City of Madison Library system and Engineering Divisions pass out free native seed packets, while Olbrich Botanical Gardens hosts a native plant sale annually. ii. City of Madison Engineering requires developers to plant new stormwater land and maintain as a native planting until the stormwater utility assumes maintenance responsibility for the land. The Developer's Agreement requires developers to hire a prequalified ecological restoration firm to write a Professional Ecosystem Establishment Plan; seed and maintain the area as a native planting for two years.

**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?**

Pollinator Protection Task Force, Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee, Parks Long-Range Planning Subcommittee and Board of Park Commissioners, Board of Public Works, Madison Common Council, Sustainability Committee

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

In Progress

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

i. Pollinator Protection Task Force Report was completed in 2015. Parks Land Management plan was updated in May 2023. City of Madison Sustainability Plan was completed on Aug 6, 2024. City Engineering Stormwater Utility Vegetation Management Plan was adopted on January 15, 2025. Parks 2025 – 2030 Park and Open Space Plan was adopted on October 28, 2025. ii. The City of Madison had a Pollinator Protection Task Force that wrapped up in 2015. All City agencies are directed to follow recommendations made in the Task Force report.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/business/pw/documents/Exhibit6-PollinatorProtectionTaskForceReport.pdf> iii. Progress was made on implementing the City of Madison Sustainability Plan which was unanimously adopted by City Council in 2024.

The office of Sustainability and Resilience convened a group of "Climate Champions," ambassadors from each City agency to implement and document progress towards Sustainability Plan goals, as well to create opportunities for intra-departmental collaboration. The plan is a roadmap to cut climate pollution, prepare for and minimize the impacts of climate change, improve environmental quality, and ensure the health and well-being of all Madisonians. The plan specifically calls out pollinator habitat protection and creation as part of the Goals & Actions to create Healthy Ecosystems. The file is too large to upload so a link to the doc is here: <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13293473&GUID=A9CC2D8D-7FD8-4883-A8B2-CFF358C02FEF> iv. Parks updated their Land Management Plan in 2023 and their Park & Open Space Plan in 2025.

These documents specifically identify pollinator conservation as part of the land management approach and reiterates the Parks Division's commitment to pollinator protection, setting goals and objectives to ensure that pollinator protection remains a focus in land management practices, including changing the time that clean-up is done to spring, as well as shifting to planting beds that do not require mulch, but will self-mulch over time. The Parks Division's newly adopted 2025 – 2030 Park & Open Space Plan provides actionable strategies for managing invasive species and creating and protecting pollinator habitat in both general parks and conservation parks . v. In 2025, City of Madison Engineering division adopted their first Stormwater Utility Vegetation Management Plan. The plan creates a framework for sustainable and resilient vegetation management, including considerations for pollinator protection and habitat creation. It also reflects anticipated climate change impacts and responds to community concerns. The plan is specific to maintenance and vegetation goals of existing and future stormwater utility land at a citywide scale and incorporates research related to ecology, stormwater, biodiversity, and climate. <https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/projects/city-engineering-stormwater-utility-vegetation-management-plan>

**Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.**

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

[Resolution 22-00482 Light Pollution.pdf](#)

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

None

**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.**

June 19, 2022