City of Verona

Verona, WI

Mayor Luke Diaz

Pledge Summary

The city of Verona is in Dane County Wisconsin, with a population of around 14,000. The city of Verona is situated at the crossing of two trails: The Military Ridge Trail and the Ice Age Trail. Mayor Diaz of Verona, Wisconsin, an avid native plant gardener, has championed conservation efforts throughout the city. Mayor Diaz has also committed to making sure Verona does its part by signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and looks forward to expanding the use of native plants in Verona.

Action Items Committed for 2022

Communications and Convening

- 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

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

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- 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

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Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Luke Diaz	2026	12/2/2025	
Mayor Luke Diaz	2024	1/19/2024	Signatories
Mayor Luke Diaz	2023	3/15/2023	Signatories
Mayor Luke Diaz	2022	3/7/2022	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.).

10

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.)

0 youth and 10 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

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.

There is a lot of stuff planned, but it hasn't been created yet. We have a lot to look forward to.

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

Parks, natural areas, and community gardens are available for all Verona residents.

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

A belief in taking care of our corner of the planet.

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

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help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

Model ordinances and other examples in cities.

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

We have worked with neighboring municipalities and Dane County to make a land purchase adjacent to the Ice Age Trail. This land will become a pollinator haven, but it's not there yet - it needs rehabilitation still. https://www.nbc15.com/2021/11/18/dane-co-area-cities-set-purchase-40-acres-expand-ice-age-trail/ There are other areas where land is set aside, but it hasn't been developed for pollinator habitat yet. Finally, I uploaded a copy of our ordinance regarding a 75% native plant requirement in our ordinances. This has been a big success in getting native plants, especially trees and shrubs, planted. I think this is really important for the overall environmental health of our community. Perhaps this could be a model for other communities?

Selected Action Items

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.

I've been working with the City of Verona Parks department to work on identifying new areas that could be no mow and areas to fill in with native plants.

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

I was working through this issue with the previous Park Director. We're in the process of onboarding a new Parks Director, and I'll be working with the new Parks Director when he starts.

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

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

Landscaping Ordinance.PNG

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

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NA

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.

May 10, 2021

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?

NA

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

0

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Currently in progress. Refer to action 7.

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.

Milkweed.PNG

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

NA

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

Complete

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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.

See above.

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

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

20449351_10100540399966339_6950145926023428405_o.jpg

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

NA

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.

https://library.municode.com/wi/verona/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8HESA_CH1HESA_S8-1-5NALA

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

If you'd like, I included a picture of my front yard which includes numerous prairie plants.

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.

Pollinator.PNG

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

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The city approved an educational pollinator garden as part of a new park in the center of the city https://www.veronapress.com/news/business/council-in-brief-park-plan-design-for-century-school-park-approved/article_47d4766e-0475-11ed-be20-87609cf8249f.html This action involved engagement with elected officials, the developers, and Verona residents.

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?

City department heads and elected officials.

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 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.

NA

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

We have just hired a new Parks Director and he hasn't started yet. I need to talk to him as I believe he is probably the most critical staff member for this task. The target date is the end of the year.

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)

The walking path along the Badger Mill Creek. The city continues to maintain and improve native plant areas, which include the corridor along the Badger Mill Creek. I mention the Badger Mill Creek path specifically since that has taken place entirely within my time as Mayor of the city. This restoration effort was done in conjunction with a utility project along the Badger Mill Creek and is ongoing through 2022 - and beyond. You can see the very early restoration efforts and location in this video that a local bicycling group made when the path was complete: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6RlGeGACHM The area was seeded, so technically no plants were planted, so if you were wondering about my answer in the next question, that's why I picked it. The following seed mixes from Agrecol were used: **Flood Plain Mix** Wildflowers: Common Water Plantain, Marsh Milkweed, New

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England Aster, Red-Stemmed Aster, Spotted Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Sneezeweed, Saw-Tooth Sunflower, Marsh Blazing Star, Cardinal Flower, Great Blue Lobelia, Mountain Mint, Wild Golden Glow, Cupplant, Riddell's Goldenrod, Blue Vervain, Ironweed, Golden Alexanders Grasses, Sedges & Rushes: Fringed Brome, Brown Fox Sedge, River Bank Wild Rye, Virginia Wild Rye, Reed Manna Grass, Rice Cut Grass, Dark-Green Bulrush, Wool Grass, River Bulrush, Soft-Stem Bulrush, Prairie Cord Grass **Savanna/Woodland Edge** Wildflowers: Purple Hyssop, Nodding Onion, Tall Anemone, Wild Columbine, Arrow-Leaved Aster, Partridge Pea, Lance Leaved Coreopsis, Prairie Coreopsis, Pale Purple Coneflower, Purple Joe Pye Weed, Woodland Sunflower, Early Sunflower, Great St. John's Wort, False Boneset, Prairie Blazing Star, Wild Bergamot, Smooth Penstemon, Yellow Coneflower, Black-Eyed Susan, Sweet Black-Eyed Susan, Early Figwort, Showy Goldenrod, Spiderwort, Culver's Root, Golden Alexanders Grasses, Sedges & Rushes: Big Bluestem, Side Oats Grama, Fringed Brome, Prairie Brome, Copper-Shouldered Oval Sedge, Beak Grass, Canada Wild Rye, Silky Wild Rye, Bottlebrush Grass, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass **Economy Prairie** Wildflowers: Butterfly Weed, New England Aster, Partridge Pea, Lance-Leaf (Sand) Coreopsis, Purple Prairie Clover, Purple Coneflower, Early Sunflower, Prairie Blazing Star, Foxglove Beard Tongue, Yellow Coneflower, Black-Eyed Susan, Sweet Black-Eyed Susan, Stiff Goldenrod, Ohio Spiderwort, Golden Alexanders Grasses, Sedges & Rushes: Big Bluestem, Side Oats Grama, Canada Wild Rye, Virginia Wild Rye, Switchgrass, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass

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

0

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.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

At the moment, the city is working with Friends of Badger Mill Creek to work out a maintenance program for the area around the Badger Mill Creek. https://www.ci.verona.wi.us/751/Badger-Mill-Creek-Restoration

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