# City of Verona

Verona, WI

Mayor Luke Diaz

## Pledge Summary

The City of Verona is located in south-central Wisconsin, with a population of around 16,000. It is a fast-growing city that values its green spaces and provides habitat for wildlife of all sorts, including monarchs, other butterflies, and pollinators. Mayor Diaz has taken a special interest in sustainability and natural resource preservation. The Mayor's Monarch Pledge is a natural outcome of his passion for the outdoors. Verona looks forward to completing several monarch-focused projects in the coming year.

## Action Items Committed for 2026

### 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 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.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

## Past Pledge Archive

| 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

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**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.).**

52

**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.)**

5

**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.**

3.8

**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.**

City owned open space along the Ice Age Scenic National Trail and a stormwater basin along Whalen Road.

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

The City of Verona leverages the Mayors' Monarch Pledge to make conservation and environmental stewardship opportunities accessible to all residents. Through free educational workshops, volunteer habitat restoration events, public native plantings, and pollinator-friendly practices in parks and other public spaces, the City provides opportunities for residents from all backgrounds to engage with and benefit from local conservation efforts. Because these activities occur in publicly accessible spaces and are offered at no cost to participants, the City works to reduce barriers to participation and ensure that the educational, environmental, and quality-of-life benefits associated with pollinator habitat restoration are available to the entire community.

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

Verona's motivation for taking and continuing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge is simple: we value our natural environment and recognize the important role monarchs and other pollinators play in healthy ecosystems. As a rapidly growing city, we want to ensure that conservation remains part of our community's future. The pledge provides an opportunity to turn that commitment into action through habitat restoration, public education, native plantings, and community engagement.

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**What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?**

The resources provided on your website are well rounded and provide practical advice.

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

Over the past year, the City of Verona continued to enhance monarch and pollinator habitat within a 1.3-acre stormwater basin located along Whalen Road near Gatsby Glen Drive. The basin was prescribed burned in the spring and reseeded with native plants selected to both improve stormwater management functions and provide habitat and food resources for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Adaptive Restoration assisted the City with prescribed burning and targeted invasive species management to support the long-term success of the site. The project also included an educational component, as local elementary school students participated in reseeding efforts. Adaptive Restoration staff provided hands-on instruction about habitat restoration practices, helping students learn about native ecosystems, pollinator conservation, and the importance of active land stewardship. This project demonstrates Verona's commitment to integrating ecological restoration, environmental education, and pollinator habitat enhancement into everyday municipal land management practices.

## 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:**

January 26, 2026

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

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Days

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

2026 Mayors Monarch Pledge Proclamation.pdf

### 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.

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

Library Screenshot.pdf

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

3.31 pollinator_cal.pdf

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

The Verona Public Library hosted the event, assisted with advertising and provided its registration platform. The Verona Sustainability Task Force helped with the planning and brought beverages and snacks to the event. The Sugar River gardeners recruited the speaker and assisted with planning. The City of Verona got the word out on its social media sites and its monthly newsletter. Our speaker was Lisa Johnson. Lisa has a bachelor's degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's degree in Life Sciences Communication. Prior to that, she worked in the horticulture industry for eight years. She has been the Dane County Extension Horticulture Educator since 2004.

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

We had 30 attendees total. Five were under 18 and the rest varied from their 20s to 70s. The many good questions indicated that folks were excited to do more for butterflies and pollinators in the coming growing season.

## 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.**

Brush Piles from Work Day.jpeg

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

FBMCC Sign.jpeg

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

Maiden Hair Fern.jpeg

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

Woods Before Work Day.jpeg

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

Work area and Sign.jpeg

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

The FBMCC and the City of Verona have worked together to remove invasive species in an Oak woods/sedge meadow located along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. They are working on about a 5 acres total.

**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.**

The City and the FBMCC use several techniques used to remove invasive plants. The first method is mechanical cutting (lopper or chainsaw) of woody plants (i.e. buckthorn, honeysuckle) accompanied by herbicide application to the cut stump (usually Garlon 4). A second method is herbicide spraying clumps of invasive plants (i.e. Garlic mustard, birds foot trefoil, crown vetch) with either glyphosate, garlon, or milestone. The third method is seasonal mowing or brush cutting various plants like thistles, yellow parsnip, gray dogwood, etc. with no herbicide application.

## 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.**

Seed List CTH M Spring 2026 Planting.jpeg

**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)**

Working with the City of Verona, the Friends of Badger Mill Creek Conservancy gathered volunteers to plant a native seed mix at 675 S Main Street, Verona, WI in early 2026.

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

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Friends of Badger Mill Creek Conservancy, a local Alder, and a local city staff member volunteered to assist with the seeding.

**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.**

2.5

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